

# Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios



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## Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios\*

\* As of this edition, the year that appears in the title of the yearbook will refer to the period of analysis and not to the year of publication. Consequently, and exceptionally, the title this year is the same as the previous year.

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# 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 2020. 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 40 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2020 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 2020.

## Peace processes and negotiations in 2020

| AFRICA (13)  | ASIA (11)   | EUROPE (7)   |
|--|---|--|
| Burundi<br>Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)<br>CAR<br>DRC<br>Eritrea – Ethiopia<br>Libya<br>Mali<br>Morocco – Western Sahara<br>Mozambique<br>Somalia<br>South Sudan<br>Sudan<br>Sudan – South Sudan | Afghanistan<br>DPR Korea – Republic of Korea<br>DPR Korea – USA<br>India (Assam)<br>India (Nagaland)<br>Myanmar<br>Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)<br>Philippines (MILF)<br>Philippines (MNLF)<br>Philippines (NDF)<br>Thailand (south) | Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)<br>Cyprus<br>Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)<br>Moldova (Transdniestria)<br>Serbia – Kosovo<br>Spain (Basque Country)<br>Ukraine |
|  | AMERICA (4)   | MIDDLE EAST (5)  |
|  | Colombia (FARC-EP)<br>Colombia (ELN)<br>Haiti<br>Venezuela  | Iran (nuclear programme)<br>Israel-Palestine<br>Palestine<br>Syria<br>Yemen  |

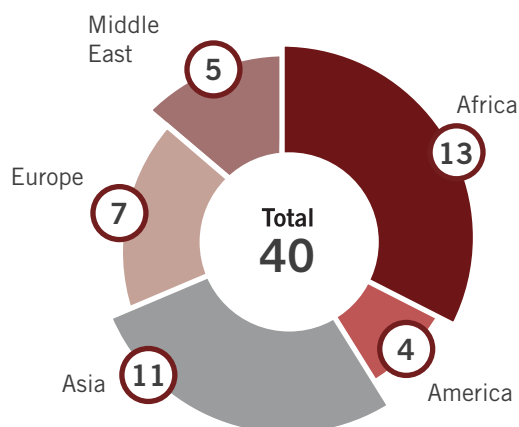
## Negotiations in 2020: global overview and main trends

A total of 40 global peace processes and negotiations were identified in 2020: 13 in Africa (32.5% of the total), 11 in Asia (27.5%), seven in Europe (17.5%), five in the Middle East (12.5%) and four in the Americas (10%). Compared to the previous year, there was decrease in the number of peace processes and negotiations studied around the world. There were 50 such processes in 2019 and 49 in 2018. The decrease took place mostly in Africa (13 peace processes, compared to 19 in 2019), where the agreements made in previous years were being implemented in some

places and were no longer analysed in this publication as part of peace negotiating processes, such as the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Ethiopia (Oromia). In other cases, various dialogue initiatives and peace efforts active in previous years ceased to be counted as such after they were considered to have become discontinued. This was the case in Nigeria (Niger Delta), the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram) and Senegal (Casamance). The lack of talks and negotiations in 2020 also led to the exclusion of cases that had been covered in the previous year outside of Africa:



## Regional distribution of peace negotiations in 2020



Iran (northwest), Iraq (with information emerging about exploratory contact in these two processes the previous year), Nicaragua and China (Tibet). Unlike in 2019, no new negotiating process was reported in 2020.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** had an impact on peace processes around the world in various ways. On one hand, the need for negotiated solutions became clear in light of the severity of the pandemic in many conflicts and socio-political crises, which worsened access to health care, impacted the economic situation and access to livelihoods, hindered freedom of movement and access to services for populations in divided territories and increased violence against women, among many other things. Faced with this situation, the UN Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire in March 2020. Although some governments and armed opposition groups decreed and honoured ceasefires, on the whole most armed state and opposition actors continued to prioritise armed action, so the impact of the appeal was limited and uneven. The coronavirus pandemic also had a negative impact by slowing down peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreements. In this sense, COVID-19 created obstacles for negotiating actors and mediators to travel, delayed rounds of negotiations and posed technological challenges.

Regarding the **actors involved in the peace processes and negotiations**, national governments were one of the negotiating parties in all the peace processes and negotiations. The governments of the respective countries conducted direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors, according to the peculiarities of each context, which generally included armed groups (directly or through political representatives, and in some cases through coalitions of armed groups), as was usually the case in Asia; a combination of armed groups and political and social actors, prevalent in Africa and the Middle East; and representatives of political/military bodies seeking secession or recognition as independent territories, which dominated the cases in Europe. To a lesser extent, cases involving governments and the political and social opposition were also identified, as in the Americas.

Regarding the **third parties** involved in peace and negotiation processes, although in many cases one can clearly identify the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment activities, in others these tasks were carried out discreetly or behind closed doors. Third parties participated in the vast majority of the peace processes (33 of 40, or 82.5%), in line with the previous year (80%). Yet again this year, there was third-party support for processes with different formats, including internal and direct negotiations (24), national dialogues (one), international negotiations (seven) and other formats (one). On a regional basis, while third-party support was very high in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East, peace processes involving third parties represented only 55% of the cases in Asia. In nearly all processes with a third party (28 of the 33), more than one actor performed mediation or facilitation tasks. The many different types of international actors included intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, IGAD, OIC, SADC, EAC, CEEAC and OIF, national governments, religious organisations and civil society actors, including specialised centres. Intergovernmental organisations played a dominant role, except in Asia, where they were much less involved. The UN was involved in 60% of the peace processes that involved at least one third party

With regard to the **negotiating agendas**, one must consider the particular aspects of each case and bear in mind that the details of the issues under discussion did not always become known to the public. For yet another year, the search for **truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities** was among the most outstanding issues on the agenda. In 2020, this became more important due to the COVID-19 pandemic and UN Secretary-General António Guterres' call in March for a global ceasefire that would help people to deal with the pandemic and facilitate humanitarian access to the most vulnerable populations affected by violence. According to United Nations data, in June around 20 armed groups and their organisations or political fronts had responded positively to the global appeal, while the states' response was more limited. In contrast, violence worsened in some cases. Armed groups that explicitly endorsed the call included the SLM/A-AW, which declared a unilateral ceasefire in Sudan's Darfur region; the ELN, in Colombia, for a period of one month; the Communist Party of the Philippines, which unilaterally ordered a halt to the offensive activity of its armed wing (the NPA) between 26 March and 15 April; and the armed group FLEC, which announced a four-week ceasefire in the Cabinda region of Angola; among others. In Thailand, the BRN announced a cessation of offensive armed actions in April, citing humanitarian reasons and prioritising the response to the pandemic. Though the government did not reciprocate, the announcement was followed by a substantial drop in hostilities by both parties. In Myanmar, unilateral ceasefires were declared by both the government and various armed groups in response to the appeal. In relation to Yemen, Saudi Arabia announced a truce in April that was criticised by the

## Internal and international peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2020

| Peace processes                                 | INTERNAL                                      |                                      |  |   |                   | INTERNATIONAL                                 |                                     |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|   | Direct negotiations without third parties (4) | Negotiations with third parties (24) | National dialogues without third parties (2) | National dialogues with third parties (1) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Burundi   | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West-South West)      |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| CAR   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| DRC   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Eritrea-Ethiopia                                |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Libya   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Mali  |   | x                                    | x  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Morocco – Western Sahara                        |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Mozambique                                      |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Somalia   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| South Sudan                                     |   | x                                    | x  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Sudan <sup>1</sup>                              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Sudan – South Sudan                             |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| <b>AMERICAS</b>                                 |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Colombia (FARC)                                 |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Colombia (ELN)                                  |   |                                      |  |   | x                 |   |                                     |
| Haiti   |   |                                      |  | x   |                   |   |                                     |
| Venezuela                                       |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>ASIA</b>                                     |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Afghanistan                                     |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Korea, DPR–Korea, Republic of                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   | x   |                                     |
| Korea, DPR – USA                                |   |                                      |  |   |                   | x   |                                     |
| Philippines (MILF)                              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Philippines (MNLF)                              | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Philippines (NDF)                               |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| India (Assam)                                   | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| India (Nagaland)                                | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Myanmar   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)                 |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Thailand (south)                                |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)         |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Cyprus  |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) <sup>11</sup> |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Moldova (Transnistria)                          |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Serbia – Kosovo <sup>12</sup>                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Spain (Basque Country)                          |   |                                      |  |   | x                 |   |                                     |
| Ukraine (east) <sup>13</sup>                    |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                              |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Iran (nuclear programme)                        |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |

| Peace processes    | INTERNAL                                      |                                      |  |   |                   | INTERNATIONAL                                 |                                     |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|                    | Direct negotiations without third parties (4) | Negotiations with third parties (24) | National dialogues without third parties (2) | National dialogues with third parties (1) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b> |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Israel-Palestine   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Palestine          |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Syria <sup>i</sup> |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Yemen              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. 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.

Houthi, who demanded that it be part of a broader agreement and presented an alternative proposal, without committing the country to a ceasefire. According to the United Nations, in most cases the parties to the conflict declared unilateral ceasefires that did not last long (between 15 and 90 days). Implementation of the ceasefires was mostly uneven and limited in time. During the year, armed actors in different contexts tried to negotiate, establish or agree on ceasefires without necessarily having any relation to the Secretary-General’s global appeal, though they yielded different results, as in South Sudan, Cameroon, Libya, Ukraine and Syria, among others.

Other important issues on the negotiating agendas were related to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, such as in Mali, Mozambique, CAR and the Philippines (MILF), among others; the status of territories in dispute, in contexts such as Sudan (Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile), Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), the Philippines (MILF), Thailand (south), Serbia-Kosovo, Moldova (Transdnistria), Cyprus, among others; and issues related to the distribution of political power, including aspects related to governance, the formation of national unity governments and elections (in Haiti, Venezuela, South Sudan, Burundi, Mali, among others). 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 **evolution**, the peace processes analysed in 2020 confirmed a great diversity of trends. Progress was made in some negotiating processes in Africa, such as in Mozambique, with the launch of the DDR programme after the 2019 peace agreement, despite failing to achieve the objective of dismantling all the RENAMO bases; Sudan, with the signing of the historic peace agreement between the government, the SRF rebel coalition and the SLM/A-MM faction

following a year of negotiations; Sudan-South Sudan, with the continuation of the approaches begun in 2019 and headway made in diplomatic relations and border delimitations; and South Sudan, where progress was made in the implementation of some clauses of the 2018 peace agreement, mainly those related to the formation of the unity government and territorial decentralisation, as well as in negotiations with groups that had not signed the agreement. Asia also witnessed notable progress, such as in Afghanistan, with the historic agreement between the Taliban and the US government and the beginning of the intra-Afghan dialogue. In the Philippines, very significant progress was made in the implementation of the peace agreement with the MILF, mainly in terms of the demobilisation of its combatants and in the institutional rollout of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In Papua New Guinea, its government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government agreed on the foundations of the process to negotiate the political status of the region. And in Thailand, a new peace process began between the government and the armed group BRN, after the failure of the previous negotiating format between the government and a coalition of rebel groups. In contrast, many negotiating processes faced difficulties and some remained at an impasse. The general scene in the Middle East in 2020 followed in line with previous periods, with dynamics of chronic deadlock (as in Israel-Palestine), the widening of gulfs between the parties with respect to previous commitments (the Iranian nuclear programme) and rounds of meetings with no or limited results (intra-Syrian talks). Other peace processes that faced obstacles and problems were those in Burundi, Cameroon, Libya, the CAR, the DRC and Somalia, in Africa, as well as the inter-Korean dialogue and the process between the US and North Korea and the negotiations between the Philippines and the NDF, in Asia. The negotiations in Europe faced significant obstacles and dynamics of deadlock for the most part, and the outbreak of the war between Armenia

## Main agreements of 2020

| Peace processes                         | Agreements   |
|---|--|
| Afghanistan                             | Agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban, and the United States of America. Signed on 29 February 2020, it establishes the gradual military withdrawal of the United States, the Taliban's pledge that terrorist attacks against US interests will not be planned or perpetrated on Afghan soil and the beginning of an intra-Afghan negotiating process between the Taliban and the Afghan government.   |
| Armenia - Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | Nine-point agreement signed by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Russia that was mediated by Russia on 9 November and went into effect on 10 November. The points included: 1) a complete ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities; 2) the transfer of the Agdam district and the Armenian-controlled territories of the Qazakh district to Azerbaijan; 3) the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces along the line of contact and the Lachin corridor; 4) the terms of the deployment (parallel to the withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces, for a renewable period of five years); 5) the establishment of a peacekeeping centre to monitor the ceasefire and implementation of the agreements; 6) the transfer to Azerbaijan of the Kalbajar and Lachin districts, with the exception of the Lachin corridor, which will guarantee the connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, without affecting the city of Shusha, and a plan to build a new route along the Lachin corridor that connects Stepanakert and Armenia and will be under the protection of Russian forces, as well as security guarantees by Azerbaijan for the movement of people, vehicles and goods; 7) the return of internally displaced people and refugees to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas, under the control of UNHCR; 8) the exchange of prisoners of war and other detainees, as well as the remains of deceased persons; and 9) the unblocking of all economic and transport communications in the region, Armenia's provision of a connection between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan enclave and traffic control conducted by the Russian Federal Security Service's border control agency. |
| Libya                                   | Permanent ceasefire agreement between the main parties to the conflict signed on 23 October by representatives of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the LNA (or ALAF) forces of Khalifa Haftar in Geneva after several meetings of the 5+5 Libyan Joint Military Commission (the negotiating format adopted after the Berlin Conference on Libya in January 2020). The agreement stipulates that within a maximum period of three months, all military units and armed groups must withdraw from the battle lines to their bases and all mercenaries and foreign fighters must leave Libyan soil, airspace and waters. It also provides for the suspension of military training programmes until a new government is formed, the start of the demobilisation of armed groups and some confidence-building measures.  |
| Mali                                    | Agreement between the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform on security arrangements to avoid confrontation between their respective local factions in Ménaka.   |
| South Sudan                             | Rome Declaration on the Peace Process in South Sudan, signed on 12 January between the government of South Sudan and the SSOMA rebel alliance, in which the parties committed to a ceasefire, to guarantee humanitarian access and to maintain continuous dialogue under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio and regional organisations.  |
| Sudan                                   | Juba Peace Agreement signed on 31 August by the Sudanese government and the rebel coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Minni Minnawi (SLM/A-MM).   |
| Sudan-South Sudan                       | Agreement in September to form a joint technical committee to resume oil production in the state of Unity and other key oil fields. In late October, the governments of both countries signed a joint military and defence cooperation agreement.  |
| Ukraine (east)                          | Agreement on measures to strengthen the ceasefire, reached on 23 July by the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) with the participation of representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. The seven points of the agreement included: 1) a ban on offensive, reconnaissance and sabotage operations and of operating any type of aerial vehicle; 2) a ban on gunfire, including by snipers; 3) a ban on the deployment of heavy weapons in or near settlements, especially in civil infrastructure, including schools, nurseries, hospitals and public places; 4) the use of disciplinary action for ceasefire violations; 5) the creation of and participation in a coordination mechanism to respond to ceasefire violations facilitated by the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination; 6) specification of the limited circumstances in which opening fire is permitted in response to an offensive operation; and 7) a ban on non-compliance under any order. The agreement went into effect on 27 July.  |

and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh revealed the underlying difficulties of the process thus far.

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. In a year that marked the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which recognises the specific impacts of war on women and their role in peacebuilding and demands commitments in this area from states and other actors, the warring governmental and opposition parties' lack of political desire to integrate a gender perspective and to implement mechanisms and guarantees for effective female participation became apparent once again, with regard to both negotiating parties involved in conflict and female civil society activists. Despite the limitations, there were cases in which some progress was made at formal levels, such as in Mali, where nine women (three

for each signatory party) participated in the sessions of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Peace Agreement, even though women had yet to be included in the four subcommittees and other executive bodies, and in Libya, where the political dialogue (known as the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, or LPDF) included 16 women out of 75 total participants, despite threats to their safety. In the intra-Afghan negotiations, the government's negotiating panel included four women and in the Philippines, a woman became the head of the NDF's negotiating panel. Women active in civil society continued to demand greater participation in formal processes around the world, denouncing violence and putting forward proposals in multiple areas related to conflicts and their impact. Though excluded from the negotiating processes in Somalia, Burundi and the CAR, women demanded to participate in the elections under way. Women's organisations continued to call for ceasefires and supported the call of the UN Secretary-General, as in

Yemen and Syria. They denounced the specific impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, including in the form of a rise in violence and gender inequality.

## Regional trends

### Africa

- Thirteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa throughout 2020, accounting for 32.5% of the 40 peace processes worldwide.
- The chronic deadlock and paralysis in diplomatic channels to address the Western Sahara issue favoured an escalation of tension at the end of the year.
- At the end of 2020, the parties to the conflict in Libya signed a ceasefire agreement and the political negotiations tried to establish a transitional government, but doubts remained about the general evolution of the process.
- In Mozambique, the Government and RENAMO made progress in implementing the DDR program envisaged in the 2019 peace agreement.
- The first direct talks were held between the government of Cameroon and a part of the secessionist movement led by the historical leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe to try to reach a ceasefire agreement.
- In Sudan, the government and the rebel coalition SRF and the SLM/A-MM signed a historic peace agreement that was not endorsed by other rebel groups such as the SPLM-N al-Hilu and the SLM/A-AW.
- In South Sudan, the transitional government was formed and peace talks were held with the armed groups that had not signed the 2018 peace agreement.

### America

- Four dialogue processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia, one in Venezuela and one in Haiti, which account for 10% of the negotiations that took place during 2020.
- Turkey facilitated dialogue and an agreement between the Venezuelan Government and Venezuelan opposition leader and former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles.
- Despite pressure from the international community to resume the inter-Haitian national dialogue, it did not continue throughout the year or lead to significant agreements.
- The implementation of the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC continued, though with serious difficulties due to the increasing violence in the country and the murder of human rights activists and defenders.

### Asia

- There were 11 negotiating processes in Asia in 2020, accounting for more than a quarter of all international cases.
- The US government and the Taliban signed a peace agreement in February and subsequently began a process of intra-Afghan dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which included four women in the government negotiating delegation.
- In the region of Mindanao in the Philippines, both the institutional development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and the reintegration of some of the 40,000 former MILF fighters progressed satisfactorily.
- The government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government agreed to appoint former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern as a facilitator of negotiations on Bougainville's political status.
- Despite the signing of a ceasefire, both the government and the NDF ended negotiations during Duterte's current term in the Philippines.
- A new peace process began in southern Thailand between the government and the BRN, the main armed group in the south of the country.
- The Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong was revived in Myanmar, which held its fourth session after two years of deadlock, albeit with significant difficulties due to the absence of non-signatory groups to the national ceasefire agreement.

### Europe

- In 2020, seven of the 40 peace processes in the world (17.5%) took place in Europe.
- For the most part, peace processes in Europe continued to lack institutionalised mechanisms for the participation of women and other sectors of civil society.
- The resumption of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh ended with a Russian-mediated agreement that divided the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and guaranteed Baku's control of the adjacent districts, while leaving the political status of the area unresolved.
- In Ukraine, the parties to the conflict agreed on measures to strengthen the ceasefire, which helped significantly to reduce the violence.
- The EU-facilitated negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo, which has been at an impasse since late 2018, resumed, but disagreements continued on important issues, such as the creation of the association of Serbian municipalities of Kosovo.
- There were calls for the resumption of the 5+2 negotiating format in Moldova regarding the conflict around Transdniestria.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked

during the year, while the conflict worsened, with increased militarised tension in the eastern Mediterranean.

## Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of five cases of negotiation that accounted for 12.5% of all processes in the world in 2020.
- Problems in keeping the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme afloat persisted throughout the year amidst high tension between Washington and Tehran.
- In Yemen, there were mediation and facilitation initiatives to try to achieve a cessation of hostilities and attempts to implement prior agreements between the parties alongside constant escalations of violence.
- The chronic impasse in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations persisted, with no prospects for dialogue after Netanyahu's plan to formalise the annexation of occupied territories and Trump's initiative for the region.
- The rejection of plans proposed by Israel and the US in 2020 led to rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas and an agreement to hold presidential and legislative elections, although the differences between the parties were once again evident by the end of the year.
- The complexity of the armed conflict in Syria had its correlation in the ceasefire and diplomatic initiatives, with a high role for regional and international actors in the negotiation schemes put in place.
- Women's groups in the region continued to demand greater participation in formal negotiations. In Syria and Yemen, they demanded ceasefires to reduce violence and face the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Introduction

**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 in 2020. The examination of the evolution and the dynamics of these negotiations at a global level offers a global view of the peace processes, identifying trends and facilitating a comparative analysis among the different scenarios. One of the main aims of this report is to provide information and analysis for those actors who take part in the peaceful resolution of conflicts at different levels, including those parties in dispute, mediators and civil society, among others. The yearbook also seeks to reveal the different formulas of dialogue and negotiation that are aimed at reversing the dynamics of violence and that aim to channel conflicts through political means in numerous contexts. As such, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts that are aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

With regard to **methodology**, this report draws mainly from on qualitative analysis of studies and information from numerous sources –the United Nations, international organizations, research centres, the media, NGOs, and others–, in addition to experience gained in field research. The report also incorporates the gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes in a cross-cutting manner.

The analysis is based on a **definition** that understands **peace processes** as comprising all those political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and transforming their root causes by means of peaceful methods, especially through peace negotiations. **Peace**

**negotiations** are considered as the processes of dialogue between at least two conflicting parties in a conflict, in which the parties address their differences in a concerted framework in order to end the violence and encounter a satisfactory solution to their demands. Other actors not directly involved in the conflict may also participate. Peace negotiations are usually preceded by preliminary or exploratory phases that define the format, place, conditions and guarantees, of the future negotiations, among other elements. Peace negotiations may or may not be facilitated by **third parties**. The third parties intervene in the dispute so as to contribute to the dialogue between the actors involved and to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict. Other actors not directly involved in the dispute may also participate in peace negotiations. Peace negotiations may result in comprehensive or partial **agreements**, agreements related to the procedure or process, and agreements linked to the causes or consequences of the conflict. Elements of the different type of agreements may be combined in the same agreement.

With respect to its **structure**, the publication is organized into six chapters. The first presents a summary of those processes and negotiations that took place in 2020, and offers an overview of the main trends at a global level. The following five chapters detail the analysis of peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each of the cases present in the regions, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda.





# 1. Negotiations in 2020: global overview and main trends

- 40 peace processes and negotiations were identified around the world in 2020. The largest number of cases were reported in Africa (13), followed by Asia (11), Europe (seven), the Middle East (five) and the Americas (four).
- The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down negotiating processes and the implementation of peace agreements, while aggravating the humanitarian situation in armed conflicts and socio-political crises.
- Various armed actors in conflict announced ceasefires in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, though follow-up and implementation were limited.
- Progress was made in some negotiating processes in 2020, such as in Mozambique, Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Papua New Guinea.
- Many peace processes faced serious difficulties, such as in Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, Yemen, Syria, North Korea-South Korea, the US-North Korea, the Philippines (NPA) and others.
- There was support from at least one third party in 82.5% of the peace negotiations studied in 2020, though this was only true of 55% of the cases in Asia.
- The UN was involved in 60% of the processes with third-party support, while regional organisations and various states also actively supported negotiations.
- Women's organisations around the world continued to demand participation and integration of a gender perspective in the peace negotiations in a year that marked the 20th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, though little progress was observed in this area.

During 2020, a total of 40 peace processes and negotiations were identified on a worldwide level. The analysis of the different contexts reveals a wide variety of realities and dynamics, a result of the diverse nature of the armed conflicts<sup>1</sup> and socio-political crises<sup>2</sup> that the negotiations are linked to. Without losing sight of the need to consider the specific characteristics of each case, it is possible to draw several conclusions and offer reflections on the general panorama of peace processes and negotiations, as well as to identify some trends. Several conclusions are presented below regarding the geographical distribution of the negotiations, those actors involved in the negotiation processes, the third parties who participated, the main and recurrent issues in the negotiation agendas, the general development of the processes, inclusiveness and the gender dimension in these peace negotiations.

Table 1.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations                      | Negotiating actors   | Third parties   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>AFRICA</b>   |  |   |
| <b>Burundi</b>  | Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED)   | --  |
| <b>Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)</b> | Government, political-military secessionist movement formed by the opposition coalition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako) and Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku) | Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue  |
| <b>CAR</b>  | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Séléka coalition, anti-balaka militias  | 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, OIC, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan |

1. The School of the Culture of Peace (Escola de Cultura de Pau, ECP) defines armed conflict An armed conflict is any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence a) causes a minimum of 100 battle-related deaths in a year and/or a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructures or of natural resources) and human security (e.g. wounded or displaced population, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or disruption of basic services) and aims to achieve objectives that are different than those of common delinquency and are normally linked to a) demands for self-determination and self-government or identity issues; b) the opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of the government, which in both cases leads to fighting to seize or erode power; or c) control over the resources or the territory.
2. A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by different actors leads to high levels of political, social or military mobilisation and/or the use of violence with a level of intensity that does not reach that of an armed conflict and that may include clashes, repression, coups d'état and bombings or attacks of other kinds, and whose escalation may degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control of resources or territory.

| Peace processes and negotiations     | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>AFRICA</b>                        |   |  |
| <b>DRC</b>                           | Government led by Cap pour le Changement (coalition led by Félix Tshisekedi), in coalition with Front Commun pour le Congo (coalition led by Joseph Kabila, successor to the Alliance for the Presidential Majority), political and social opposition, armed groups from the East of the country            | Congolese Episcopal Conference (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 on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU, EU, UN, OIF and USA                         |
| <b>Eritrea – Ethiopia</b>            | Government of Eritrea and government of Ethiopia  | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA  |
| <b>Libya</b>                         | Presidential Council and Government of National Accord (GNA), House of Representatives (HoR), National General Congress (NGC), LNA or ALAF  | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, among other countries; Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue  |
| <b>Mali</b>                          | Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), MNLA, MAA and HCUA, Platform, GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA   | Algeria, France, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, The Carter Center, civil society organisations, Mauritania  |
| <b>Morocco – Western Sahara</b>      | Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO)   | UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)   |
| <b>Mozambique</b>                    | Government, RENAMO  | National mediation team, Community of Sant'Egidio, Catholic Church, UN, Southern African Development Community (SADC), AU, EU, Botswana, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, United Kingdom   |
| <b>Somalia</b>                       | Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political military movement Ahlu Sunna WaJama'a, clan and sub-clan leaders, Somaliland   | UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others   |
| <b>South Sudan</b>                   | Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) and SSOMA (NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC)   | “IGAD Plus”: the IGAD, which includes 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, Community of Sant'Egidio |
| <b>Sudan</b>                         | 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), Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions | African Union High Level Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), Troika (EEUU, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda   |
| <b>Sudan - South Sudan</b>           | Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan   | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU   |
| <b>AMERICA</b>                       |   |  |
| <b>Colombia (ELN)</b>                | Government, FARC  | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)   |
| <b>Colombia (FARC)</b>               | Government, ELN   | --   |
| <b>Haiti</b>                         | Government, political and social opposition   | Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee, United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Apostolic Nunciature, Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and governments of Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain and USA)  |
| <b>Venezuela</b>                     | Government, political and social opposition   | Norway, Turkey, International Contact Group  |
| <b>ASIA</b>                          |   |  |
| <b>Afghanistan</b>                   | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA   | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN  |
| <b>DPR Korea – Republic of Korea</b> | North Korea, South Korea  | --   |
| <b>DPR Korea – USA</b>               | North Korea, USA  | --   |
| <b>India (Assam)</b>                 | Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD   | --   |
| <b>India (Nagaland)</b>              | Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF   | --   |
| <b>Myanmar</b>                       | Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA   | China  |

| Peace processes and negotiations               | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>ASIA</b>                                    |   |  |
| <b>Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)</b>         | Government, Autonomous Region of Bougainville   | Bertie Ahern   |
| <b>Philippines (MILF)</b>                      | Government, MILF  | Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body   |
| Philippines (MNLF)                             | Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)   | --   |
| <b>Philippines (NDF)</b>                       | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation for different communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)  | Norway   |
| <b>Thailand (south)</b>                        | Government, BRN   | Malaysia   |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                                  |   |  |
| <b>Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)</b> | Armenia, Azerbaijan   | OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), <sup>3</sup> Russia, Turkey <sup>4</sup>     |
| <b>Cyprus</b>                                  | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus   | UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)  |
| <b>Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)</b>       | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia <sup>5</sup>   | OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia <sup>6</sup>   |
| <b>Moldova (Transdniestria)</b>                | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria   | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU  |
| <b>Serbia – Kosovo</b>                         | Serbia, Kosovo  | EU, UN, USA  |
| <b>Spain (Basque Country)</b>                  | ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK) | Permanent Social Forum, Bakea Bidea  |
| <b>Ukraine (east)</b>                          | Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia <sup>7</sup>  | OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia <sup>8</sup> also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate <sup>9</sup> ) |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                             |   |  |
| <b>Iran (nuclear programme)</b>                | Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China, plus Germany), EU   | UN   |
| <b>Israel-Palestine</b>                        | Israeli government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, Islamic Jihad  | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Egypt, France   |
| <b>Palestine</b>                               | Hamas, Fatah  | Egypt, Qatar   |
| <b>Syria</b>                                   | Government, political and armed opposition groups   | UN, EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran  |
| <b>Yemen</b>                                   | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia   | UN, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia   |

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.  
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

3. In the run-up to the outbreak of war in 2020, the OSCE Minsk Group was the main mediating actor in the peace process. The November 2020 agreement, mediated by Russia and ending hostilities, made no reference to the negotiating format to be followed thereafter, although the OSCE Minsk Group expressed its willingness to continue to be involved in the search for solutions to the conflict.
4. Turkey's status as a third party may be subject to dispute. It is included in this table due to the establishment by Russia and Turkey of a peacekeeping centre for monitoring the ceasefire. The creation of the centre was ratified in a Memorandum between Russia and Turkey.
5. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
6. Ibid.
7. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

**Most of the peace processes and negotiations studied in 2020** were concentrated in Africa, which hosted 13, equivalent to 32.5% of the total. Asia was the region with the second-highest number of cases, with a total of 11, representing 27.5% of the negotiations in 2020. The rest of the negotiations were distributed between Europe, with seven (17.5%), the Middle East, with five (12.5%) and the Americas, with four (10%). Compared to the previous year, there was decrease in the number of peace processes and negotiations studied around the world. There were 50 such processes in 2019 and 49 in 2018. The decrease took place mostly in Africa (13 peace processes, compared to 19 in 2019), where the agreements made in previous years were being implemented in some places and were no longer analysed in this publication as part of peace negotiating processes, such as the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Ethiopia (Oromia). In other cases, various dialogue initiatives and peace efforts active in previous years ceased to be counted as such after they were considered to have become discontinued. This was the case in Nigeria (Niger Delta), the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram) and Senegal (Casamance). The lack of talks and negotiations in 2020 also led to the exclusion of cases that had been covered in the previous year outside of Africa: Iran (northwest), Iraq (with information emerging about exploratory contact in two processes the previous year), Nicaragua and China (Tibet). Unlike in 2019, no new negotiating process was reported in 2020.

***Most of the negotiations in 2020 took place in Africa (32.5%), followed by Asia (27.5%), Europe (17.5%), the Middle East (12.5%) and the Americas (10%)***

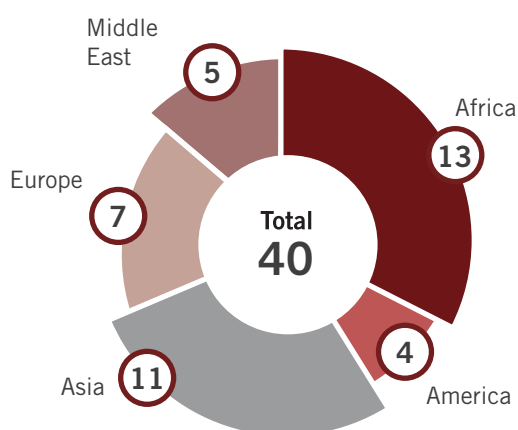
The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on peace processes around the world in various ways. For instance, the need for negotiated solutions became clear in light of the severity of the pandemic in many conflicts and socio-political crises, which worsened access to health care, impacted the economic situation and access to livelihoods, hindered freedom of movement and access to services for populations in divided territories and increased violence against women, among many other

***Unlike in 2019, no new peace process was accounted for in 2020***

things. Faced with this situation, the UN Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire in March 2020. Although some governments and armed opposition groups decreed and honoured ceasefires, on the whole most armed state and opposition actors continued to prioritise armed action, so the impact of the appeal was limited and uneven. In contexts where there were ceasefires, not all responded to the call, or it intersected with factors specific to each context and process. The coronavirus pandemic also had a negative impact by slowing down peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreements. In this sense, COVID-19 created obstacles for negotiating actors and mediators to travel, delayed rounds of negotiations and posed technological challenges. Among other cases, the negotiations in South Sudan were suspended for months due to the pandemic situation, in combination with other factors. The pandemic also delayed rounds of international dialogue over the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while Georgia accused Russia of instrumentalising the pandemic to obstruct the negotiations. In Syria, the meetings of the constitutional committee as part of the UN-sponsored negotiations were postponed several times due to the pandemic, though problems in reaching a consensus on the agenda also played a role. In Yemen, the exploratory meetings established early in the year to implement some confidence-building measures between the government, the Houthis and Saudi Arabia were halted by the onset of the pandemic and by the rise in violence. In Mali and Mozambique, sanitary restrictions slowed down implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes for combatants envisaged in the peace accords. The pandemic highlighted the urgency of integrating environmental protection in approaches to conflicts amidst a worldwide loss of biodiversity, the weakening of such protection, the overexploitation of natural resources and other issues.

National governments were one of the negotiating parties in all the peace processes and negotiations. The governments of the respective countries conducted direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors, according to the peculiarities of each context, which generally included armed groups (directly or through political representatives, and in some cases through coalitions of armed groups), as was usually the case in Asia; a combination of armed groups and political and social actors, prevalent in Africa and the Middle East; and representatives of political/military bodies seeking secession or recognition as independent territories, which dominated the cases in Europe. To a lesser extent, cases involving governments and the political and social opposition were also identified, as in the Americas.

**Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations**



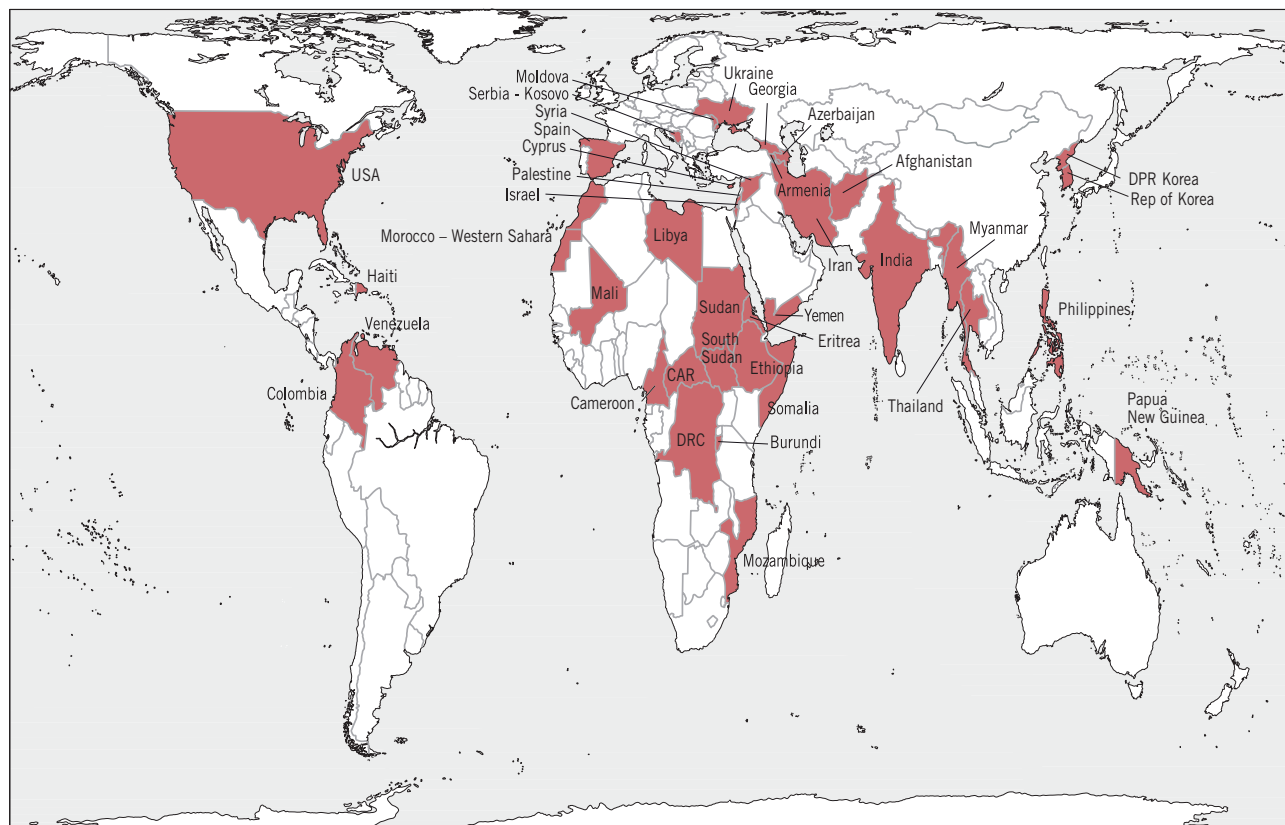
Various governments had specific institutional structures to conduct the negotiations. This was the case of the High Council for National Reconciliation in Afghanistan, the Office of the Presidential Advisor for Peace Process in the Philippines and others. In a significant number of contexts, parallel or complementary negotiations were carried out, linked to a global scenario of highly complex armed conflicts in terms of the actors and disputes. In Yemen, the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi continued to be involved in the UN-sponsored negotiating process with the Houthis. Meanwhile, contact continued between the Hadi government and southern pro-independence groups under the Southern Transitional Council, which led to the creation of a new unity government in late 2020. In Afghanistan, the Taliban and the US reached an agreement in early 2020, while in September the start of the intra-Afghan negotiating process was formalised. Other cases from Asia, such as the Philippines (both in relation to Mindanao and the conflict with the NDF), Thailand and Myanmar, held parallel or complementary formats. The negotiating processes in Libya, Cameroon, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and the DRC also followed highly complex formats in terms of actors and channels of dialogue in Africa, while in the Middle East, the conflict in Syria revealed the importance of regional

***The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down negotiating processes and the implementation of peace agreements, while aggravating the humanitarian situation in armed conflicts and socio-political crises***

and international actors in the dynamics of negotiating processes for yet another year. In this scenario, Bashar Assad's government continued to prioritise a military solution in 2020, though it remained linked to the Astana process, led by Russia, Turkey and Iran, and to the UN-backed Geneva process, and also maintained contact with Kurdish actors, at Moscow's behest.

Another type of negotiation involved various governments. Thus, 10 of the 40 peace processes and negotiations in 2020 were international in nature: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, Sudan-South Sudan, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Serbia-Kosovo, Iran (nuclear programme) and Israel-Palestine. In 2020, the outbreak of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh revealed the limits of the negotiating process thus far, while the agreement reached in November left many questions open, both on the negotiating format and on the background of the conflict. In relation to the negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme, the countries that had signed the 2015 agreement stayed in contact to ensure its implementation, with the exception of the United States, which abandoned the deal in 2018. The victory of opposition candidate Joe Biden in the 2020 US presidential election raised expectations about the

Map 1.1. Peace negotiations in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in 2020

possibility of the US returning to these multilateral negotiations. Two processes with unique aspects were related to the conflict over Western Sahara, involving the Moroccan government and the POLISARIO Front, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which deals with the governments of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The UN continues to consider Western Sahara a territory pending decolonisation, whose alleged possession by Morocco is not recognised either by international law or by any UN resolution. Likewise, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) proclaimed by the POLISARIO Front has not received any international majority recognition. Meanwhile, decades of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders have not led to the full configuration of a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, Palestine has been recognised as such by other states and has been an “observer member” of the UN since 2012.

Regarding the **third parties involved in peace and negotiation processes**, although in many cases one can clearly identify the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment activities, in others these tasks were carried out discreetly or behind closed doors. Third parties participated in the vast majority of the peace processes (33 of 40, or 82.5%), in line with the previous year (80%). Yet again this year, there was third-party support for processes with different formats, including internal and direct negotiations (24), national dialogues (one), international negotiations (seven) and other formats (one) (see table 1.2.). Most international negotiations enjoyed third-party support (77%). While third-party support was very high in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East on a regional basis, peace processes involving third parties represented only 55% of the cases in Asia, while the international negotiations between North Korea and South Korea and between North Korea and the US, as well as the internal negotiations in the Philippines (MNLF), India (Assam) and India (Nagaland), took place without third-party support. Other cases without third parties in other continents included the dialogue process in Burundi following the resignation of the official facilitator, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, in 2019, and the national dialogues in Mali and South Sudan, although both countries had other negotiating formats at the same time that had third-party support.

In nearly all processes with a third party (28 of the 33), more than one actor performed mediation or facilitation tasks. In contrast, in other cases a single third party was observed, such as Norway in the peace process in the Philippines (NDF), China in the peace process in Myanmar, former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern in the peace talks in Papua New Guinea and Malaysia in the negotiations in Thailand (south). The many different types of international actors included intergovernmental

organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, IGAD, OIC, SADC, EAC, CEEAC and OIF, national governments, religious organisations and civil society actors, including specialised centres. Intergovernmental organisations played a dominant role, except in Asia, where they were much less involved.

Local, regional and international third parties were involved through various formats, including support structures. These assumed different forms and degrees of complexity. Some included only states participating in diverse structures, such as the Normandy format in Ukraine (Germany, France, Ukraine, Russia), the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, UK and

Russia) and the Troika in Sudan (USA, UK, Norway). Others included a combination of states and intergovernmental organisations, such as the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR (the AU and ECCAS, with support from the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad), the IGAD-Plus, made up of 19 members (six from the IGAD (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda), five from the AU (Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa), the AU Commission, China, the EU, the Troika (USA, UK and Norway), the UN and the

IGAD Partners Forum), the International Contact Group on Venezuela (made up of Bolivia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Uruguay, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the EU), the Core Group of Haiti (Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain, USA, the UN, OAS and EU), the International Monitoring Team and the Third Party Monitoring Team support structures in the Philippines (MILF) and the Quartet on the Middle East (USA, Russia, the UN and the EU) in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In some cases, intergovernmental organisations coordinated through specific structures, such as the Libya Quartet, made up of the UN, Arab League, AU and EU, while in others the coordination occurred on a practical level, without specific platforms.

Overall, for yet another year the UN stood out as the main intergovernmental organisation involved in peace processes. It was present in different formats (mainly envoys and special representatives and missions) and served various support functions (mediation, co-mediation, verification, ceasefire supervision, assistance, support, the use of good offices and others) in 20 of the 40 peace processes during the year and in 20 of the 33 that involved at least one third party (60%, a similar percentage to the previous year, 56%). The UN played a prominent role in the negotiating processes in Africa, where it supported ten of the 13: Libya, Mali, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan.

***In the vast majority of the cases analysed in 2020 (82.5%), a third party participated in the peace negotiations, though only 55% of the peace processes in Asia had third-party support***

Table 1.2. Internal and international peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2020

| Peace processes                                 | INTERNAL                                      |                                      |  |   |                   | INTERNATIONAL                                 |                                     |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|   | Direct negotiations without third parties (4) | Negotiations with third parties (24) | National dialogues without third parties (2) | National dialogues with third parties (1) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Burundi   | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West-South West)      |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| CAR   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| DRC   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Eritrea-Ethiopia                                |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Libya   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Mali  |   | x                                    | x  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Morocco – Western Sahara                        |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Mozambique                                      |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Somalia   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| South Sudan                                     |   | x                                    | x  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Sudan <sup>1</sup>                              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Sudan – South Sudan                             |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| <b>AMERICAS</b>                                 |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Colombia (FARC)                                 |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Colombia (ELN)                                  |   |                                      |  |   | x                 |   |                                     |
| Haiti   |   |                                      |  | x   |                   |   |                                     |
| Venezuela                                       |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>ASIA</b>                                     |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Afghanistan                                     |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Korea, DPR–Korea, Republic of                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   | x   |                                     |
| Korea, DPR – USA                                |   |                                      |  |   |                   | x   |                                     |
| Philippines (MILF)                              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Philippines (MNLF)                              | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Philippines (NDF)                               |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| India (Assam)                                   | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| India (Nagaland)                                | x   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Myanmar   |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)                 |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Thailand (south)                                |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)         |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Cyprus  |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) <sup>11</sup> |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Moldova (Transnistria)                          |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Serbia – Kosovo <sup>11</sup>                   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Spain (Basque Country)                          |   |                                      |  |   | x                 |   |                                     |
| Ukraine (east) <sup>11</sup>                    |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                              |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Iran (nuclear programme)                        |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |



| Peace processes    | INTERNAL                                      |                                      |  |   |                   | INTERNATIONAL                                 |                                     |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|                    | Direct negotiations without third parties (4) | Negotiations with third parties (24) | National dialogues without third parties (2) | National dialogues with third parties (1) | Other formats (2) | Direct negotiations without third parties (2) | Negotiations with third parties (7) |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b> |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Israel-Palestine   |   |                                      |  |   |                   |   | x                                   |
| Palestine          |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Syria <sup>v</sup> |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |
| Yemen              |   | x                                    |  |   |                   |   |                                     |

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. 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.

In addition to the UN, regional organisations played an important role both in their respective areas or proximity zones and beyond their most direct territorial spheres. For instance, the EU carried out third party functions in 16 contexts, including in six peace processes in Africa (Libya, Mali, Mozambique, CAR, DRC and South Sudan). The AU was a third party in eight African negotiating processes (the same as the EU, but also in Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan), the OSCE in four peace processes (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and the IGAD in three (South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Somalia). Other organisations such as ECOWAS, OIC, SADC, EAC, ECCAS, OIF, the Arab League and the OAS played a lesser role.

Along with intergovernmental organisations, a growing number of states became involved in negotiating processes, often while projecting their national interests. The role of Middle Eastern countries continued to grow, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Egypt, partly linked to their regional struggle to expand their areas of influence, among other issues. In 2020, Oman facilitated an agreement between the Houthis, Saudi Arabia and the United States for a prisoner exchange and Egypt facilitated talks between Hamas and Fatah and promoted truces when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated. Norway, Malaysia, Qatar and China were involved in peace processes in Asia, such as the one between the Philippines and the NDF, between the Philippines and the MILF, in Afghanistan (both in relation to the talks between the Taliban and the US and in the intra-Afghan dialogue) and in Myanmar. German diplomacy continued to expand in support of processes such as Libya, Sudan, Haiti and Ukraine. Turkey also raised its profile in support of dialogue in 2020, engaging in Venezuela, in addition

to other peace processes where it was already involved, such as Somalia. Russia continued to mediate in various contexts, such as Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), where it played a dominant role in facilitating the agreement that ended hostilities after the outbreak of war in 2020 while the future of the OSCE Minsk Group’s mediating role remained uncertain. The role of several of these countries continued to be controversial due to their roles as warring parties or supporting actors involved in conflicts, such as Russia and Turkey in Syria and Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

***The UN was involved in 60% of the peace processes that involved at least one third party***

With regard to the **negotiating agendas**, one must consider the particular aspects of each case and bear in mind that the details of the issues under discussion did not always become known to the public.

For yet another year, the search for **truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities** was among the most outstanding issues on the agenda. In 2020, this became more important due to the COVID-19 pandemic and UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ call in March for a global ceasefire that would help people to deal with the pandemic and facilitate humanitarian access to the most vulnerable populations affected by violence.<sup>10</sup> By June, 179 UN member states had supported the call, although in some cases only in relation to specific conflicts or while defending the right to continue counter-terrorism operations. Dozens of regional organisations, sub-state government actors and women’s and civil society networks and organisations also heeded the call. Various armed actors in conflict joined the call, though the implementation and length of the ceasefires were sometimes questionable. According to United Nations data, in June around 20 armed groups and their organisations or political fronts had responded positively to the global appeal, while the

10. For further information, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, “Ceasefires in Armed Conflicts during the Coronavirus Pandemic” and “Cessation of hostilities in times of COVID-19 Pandemic”, *ECP notes on conflict and peace*, no.4 (April 2020) and no.7 (July 2020).

Table 1.3. Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2020

| <b>UN (20)</b>                    |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>AFRICA</b>                     |  |
| CAR                               | UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA)<br>UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the CAR<br>UN is member of the International Support Group for CAR   |
| DRC                               | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region<br>UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO)<br>UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the DRC   |
| Libya                             | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya<br>United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)<br>The UN forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, Arab League and EU   |
| Mali                              | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mali<br>United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)   |
| Morocco – Western Sahara          | UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara<br>UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara<br>United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)  |
| Mozambique                        | UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mozambique   |
| Somalia                           | United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)   |
| South Sudan                       | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for South Sudan<br>United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)   |
| Sudan                             | United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)<br>United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)   |
| Sudan-South Sudan                 | United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)   |
| <b>AMERICA</b>                    |  |
| Colombia                          | United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia  |
| Haiti                             | United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)<br>The UN is member of the Core Group  |
| <b>ASIA</b>                       |  |
| Afghanistan                       | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)   |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                     |  |
| Cyprus                            | United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)<br>Mission of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus<br>UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus<br>Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Cyprus (OSASG) |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) | United Nations Special Representative in the Geneva International Discussions  |
| Serbia – Kosovo                   | United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)  |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                |  |
| Iran                              | International Atomic Energy Agency<br>The UN Secretary-General regularly reports on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which validated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015)   |
| Israel-Palestine                  | The UN participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the EU to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict<br>Special Envoy for the Peace Process in the Middle East  |
| Syria                             | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria   |
| Yemen                             | UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen<br>United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeida Agreement (UNMHA)  |
| <b>EU (16)</b>                    |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                     |  |
| CAR                               | EU is a member of the International Support Group for the CAR  |
| DRC                               | EU delegation in the DRC<br>EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region  |
| Libya                             | The EU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, UN and Arab League  |
| Mali                              | EU Special Representative for the Sahel  |
| Mozambique                        | EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Mozambique   |
| South Sudan                       | The EU forms part of the IGAD Plus mediation group   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>AMERICA</b>                          |   |
| Haiti                                   | The EU forms part of the Core Group   |
| Venezuela                               | The EU forms part of the International Contact Group  |
| <b>ASIA</b>                             |   |
| Philippines (MILF)                      | The EU forms part of the International Monitoring Team and has lent support to the Third Party Monitoring Team  |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                           |   |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia  |
| Cyprus                                  | High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission   |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)       | EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia<br>EU Observation Mission in Georgia (EUMM)  |
| Moldova (Transnistria)                  | EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM)<br>The EU has an observer role in the 5+2 format of the peace process   |
| Serbia – Kosovo                         | High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission<br>EU Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo)<br>EU Office in Kosovo / EU Special Representative for Kosovo  |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                      |   |
| Israel-Palestine                        | The EU participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the UN to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict<br>High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy<br>EU Special Envoy for the Middle East                            |
| Syria                                   | The EU and the UN co-organised the third international conference on the future of Syria and the region   |
| <b>AU (8)</b>                           |   |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                           |   |
| CAR                                     | The AU leads the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR (the AU with the support of the ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad)  |
| DRC                                     | The AU leads the Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC   |
| Libya                                   | The AU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the Arab League, UN and EU   |
| Mali                                    | AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel<br>The AU participates in the Mediation Team, which supports implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali   |
| Mozambique                              | The AU is a guarantor of the peace agreement  |
| South Sudan                             | Integrated into IGAD Plus, represented by Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria   |
| Sudan                                   | AU High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP)<br>African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)   |
| Sudan – South Sudan                     | African Union Border Programme (AUBP)   |
| <b>OSCE (4)</b>                         |   |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                           |   |
| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | Minsk Group<br>Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Conflict Related to the Minsk Conference of the OSCE  |
| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)       | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the South Caucasus   |
| Moldova (Transnistria)                  | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Transnistrian Settlement Process<br>OSCE Mission in Moldova  |
| Ukraine                                 | Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group<br>OSCE Special Observation Mission in Ukraine (SMM)<br>OSCE Special Observation Mission at the Gukovo and Donetsk Checkpoints<br>Coordinator of OSCE projects in Ukraine |
| <b>ECOWAS (1)</b>                       |   |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                           |   |
| Mali                                    | ECOWAS in Mali  |
| <b>IGAD (3)</b>                         |   |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                           |   |
| Somalia                                 | IGAD delegation   |
| South Sudan                             | The IGAD, which consists of Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda, is part of “IGAD Plus” in South Sudan   |
| Sudan – South Sudan                     | IGAD delegation   |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>OIC (1)</b>   |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>    |  |
| CAR              | OIC delegation in the CAR                      |
| <b>SADC (2)</b>  |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>    |  |
| Mozambique       | The SADC is a guarantor of the peace agreement |
| DRC              | SADC representation in the DRC                 |
| <b>EAC (1)</b>   |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>    |  |
| Burundi          | EAC delegation in Burundi                      |
| <b>CEEAC (1)</b> |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>    |  |
| CAR              | CEEAC delegation in the CAR                    |
| <b>OIF (1)</b>   |  |
| <b>AFRICA</b>    |  |
| DRC              | OIF delegation in the DRC                      |
| <b>OAS (1)</b>   |  |
| <b>AMERICA</b>   |  |
| Haiti            | The OAS forms part of the Core Group           |

states' response was more limited.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, violence worsened in some cases, especially in conflicts in which the parties had foreign support. In its analysis of the response to the call, the United Nations found that parties in conflict cited various motivations for responding positively, including to explore or reactivate channels of dialogue (the underlying logic being that the government may be under greater pressure to respond, although governments may also be reluctant to consider such a ceasefire lest it internationalise certain conflicts); to claim moral authority and seek political relevance and legitimacy and gain attention and recognition; to reaffirm or consolidate authority and legitimacy to govern in areas where control is disputed; to prolong an advantageous situation; or, finally, to avoid military setbacks. In its mid-year conclusions, the United Nations indicated that in the absence of realistic recognition of the impacts of the pandemic, this did not seem to be a central concern in the calculations of the parties to the conflict.

Armed groups that explicitly endorsed the call included the SLM/A-AW, which declared a unilateral ceasefire in Sudan's Darfur region; the ELN, in Colombia, for a period of one month; the Communist Party of the Philippines, which unilaterally ordered a halt to the offensive activity of its armed wing (the NPA) between 26 March and 15 April; and the armed group FLEC, which announced a four-week ceasefire in the Cabinda region of Angola; among others. In Thailand, the BRN announced a cessation of offensive armed actions in

***Various actors in conflict announced truces in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to facilitate the humanitarian response to the pandemic, though the response was limited and fragile in its implementation***

April, citing humanitarian reasons and prioritising the response to the pandemic. Though the government did not reciprocate, the announcement was followed by a substantial drop in hostilities by both parties. In Myanmar, unilateral ceasefires were declared by both the government and various armed groups in response to the appeal. In relation to Yemen, Saudi Arabia announced a truce in April that was criticised by the Houthis, who demanded that it be part of a broader agreement and presented an alternative proposal, without committing the country to a ceasefire. According to the United Nations, in most cases the parties to the conflict declared unilateral ceasefires that did not last long (between 15 and 90 days). Implementation of the ceasefires was mostly uneven and limited in time.

In July, the UN Security Council approved UNSC Resolution 2532 (2020), which backed the Secretary-General's call by issuing a demand for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all war situations that were part of the Security Council agenda. The resolution supported the Secretary-General's efforts and called on the parties to the conflicts to immediately participate in a humanitarian truce for at least 90 consecutive days to allow humanitarian activity. However, unlike the general appeal made by the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the text of Resolution 2532 indicated that it was not applicable to military operations against ISIS, al-Qaeda, the Al-Nusra Front and other groups classified as terrorists by

11. United Nations (Mediation Support Unit, Policy & Mediation Division), *Policy Note on the United Nations Secretary-General's Call for a Global Ceasefire: Challenges and Opportunities*, June 2020.

the Security Council. The Security Council's position contrasted with approaches being considered in various countries regarding dialogue with jihadist groups. This was the case of Mali, where in 2020 the government and other actors considered the possibility of exploring avenues of negotiation with some of these actors, which led to an agreement between Bamako and the JNIM on a prisoner exchange. Moreover, some in Somalia called for dialogue with al-Shabaab, though no contact was disclosed.

During the year, armed actors in different contexts tried to negotiate, establish or agree on ceasefires without necessarily having any relation to the Secretary-General's global appeal, though they yielded different results. In South Sudan, for example, the government and groups that had not signed the 2018 agreement committed to a ceasefire, humanitarian access and dialogue with the facilitation of the Sant'Egidio community and regional organisations, even though the truce was later broken. After three years of serious violence in Cameroon, confidence-building talks were held in an attempt to reach a ceasefire, though only a sector of the separatist movement participated and the talks stalled. In Libya, a permanent ceasefire agreement was reached in October that provided for the withdrawal of military units and armed groups within three months and the departure of foreign fighters. However, various violations of the ceasefire were reported until the end of the year. The ceasefire breaks were a constant in the CAR as well. The Taliban and the US reached an agreement that included the Taliban's commitment not to plan or carry out terrorist attacks against US interests in exchange for Washington's withdrawal from the country. In Ukraine, the parties took steps that bolstered the ceasefire and led to a significant reduction in violence. In Syria, Russia and Turkey reached a cessation of hostilities agreement in Idlib in March. The truce in this part of northwestern Syria reduced levels of violence during the first half of the year, but air strikes resumed in June and it was formally maintained amid growing violations at the end of the year.

As in previous years, another issue in the negotiations was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants. In Mozambique, the DDR process agreed in 2019 was launched in 2020 after the peace agreement signed that same year, although the objective of dismantling all the RENAMO bases was not achieved by August 2020 and the armed group's dissidents continued with their armed activity. In Cameroon, talks launched during the year after three years of serious violence between the government and part of the separatist movement not only addressed attempts at a ceasefire, but also the demilitarisation of English-speaking regions, albeit with significant difficulties. In Mali, differences were found in the implementation of

DDR and in the reform of the defence and security sector. In the CAR, limited progress was made in establishing special mixed security units, made up of soldiers and members of demobilised armed groups. In the DRC, a demobilisation agreement was reached between the government and some CODECO factions. In Colombia, many former FARC combatants were killed, which demonstrated the risks of implementing agreements in stages. The situation of the former combatants was described as particularly worrying by the Kroc Institute, which verifies compliance with the peace accords. In the Philippines, progress was made on DDR in relation to the MILF, culminating in the second stage of the demobilisation process in March (which included 30% of the members of the former guerrilla group) and the third stage began. The COVID-19 pandemic affected demilitarisation processes throughout the year, such as in Mozambique, by reducing the mobility of the technical teams responsible for implementation.

*Progress was made in some negotiating processes in 2020, such as Mozambique, Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Papua New Guinea*

As in previous years, another relevant issue on the negotiating agenda was the **status of disputed territories** and issues related to self-government. In Sudan, Darfur came to be considered a single region, as part of the peace process and agreements on administrative status. As such, the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) and West Kordofan will expand their autonomy. In Papua New Guinea, the foundations were laid for the negotiating process between the government and the autonomous government of Bougainville to prepare the proposal on the status of the region, which must be voted on by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea. However, the status issue remained deadlocked in the peace processes in Europe, where in some cases it was not part of the negotiating agenda (Georgia, in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and in others it remained stagnant (Moldova, in relation to Transnistria). Regarding the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the outbreak of interstate war in October was followed by an agreement in November ratifying the transfer to Azerbaijan of territories adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, Baku's takeover of some areas of the former Soviet autonomous region was accepted by default and the status of the disputed territory was left unresolved. Turkish Cypriot and Turkish government actors called for a two-state option to be considered a solution to the dispute over the divided island of Cyprus, weakening the prospect of a bicomunal and bizonal federation on which the stalled peace process was based. Negotiations remained blocked on the recognition and definitive status of "Greater Nagaland", territories divided into different Indian states and inhabited by the Naga population. The peace process in Mindanao pivoted mainly on the institutional development of the self-government recognised for the Moro people in the 2014 peace agreement between the Philippine government

Table 1.4. Main agreements of 2020

| Peace processes                         | Agreements   |
|---|--|
| Afghanistan                             | Agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban, and the United States of America. Signed on 29 February 2020, it establishes the gradual military withdrawal of the United States, the Taliban's pledge that terrorist attacks against US interests will not be planned or perpetrated on Afghan soil and the beginning of an intra-Afghan negotiating process between the Taliban and the Afghan government.   |
| Armenia - Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) | Nine-point agreement signed by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Russia that was mediated by Russia on 9 November and went into effect on 10 November. The points included: 1) a complete ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities; 2) the transfer of the Agdam district and the Armenian-controlled territories of the Qazakh district to Azerbaijan; 3) the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces along the line of contact and the Lachin corridor; 4) the terms of the deployment (parallel to the withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces, for a renewable period of five years); 5) the establishment of a peacekeeping centre to monitor the ceasefire and implementation of the agreements; 6) the transfer to Azerbaijan of the Kalbajar and Lachin districts, with the exception of the Lachin corridor, which will guarantee the connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, without affecting the city of Shusha, and a plan to build a new route along the Lachin corridor that connects Stepanakert and Armenia and will be under the protection of Russian forces, as well as security guarantees by Azerbaijan for the movement of people, vehicles and goods; 7) the return of internally displaced people and refugees to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas, under the control of UNHCR; 8) the exchange of prisoners of war and other detainees, as well as the remains of deceased persons; and 9) the unblocking of all economic and transport communications in the region, Armenia's provision of a connection between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan enclave and traffic control conducted by the Russian Federal Security Service's border control agency. |
| Libya                                   | Permanent ceasefire agreement between the main parties to the conflict signed on 23 October by representatives of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the LNA (or ALAF) forces of Khalifa Haftar in Geneva after several meetings of the 5+5 Libyan Joint Military Commission (the negotiating format adopted after the Berlin Conference on Libya in January 2020). The agreement stipulates that within a maximum period of three months, all military units and armed groups must withdraw from the battle lines to their bases and all mercenaries and foreign fighters must leave Libyan soil, airspace and waters. It also provides for the suspension of military training programmes until a new government is formed, the start of the demobilisation of armed groups and some confidence-building measures.  |
| Mali                                    | Agreement between the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform on security arrangements to avoid confrontation between their respective local factions in Ménaka.   |
| South Sudan                             | Rome Declaration on the Peace Process in South Sudan, signed on 12 January between the government of South Sudan and the SSOMA rebel alliance, in which the parties committed to a ceasefire, to guarantee humanitarian access and to maintain continuous dialogue under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio and regional organisations.  |
| Sudan                                   | Juba Peace Agreement signed on 31 August by the Sudanese government and the rebel coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Minni Minnawi (SLM/A-MM).   |
| Sudan-South Sudan                       | Agreement in September to form a joint technical committee to resume oil production in the state of Unity and other key oil fields. In late October, the governments of both countries signed a joint military and defence cooperation agreement.  |
| Ukraine (east)                          | Agreement on measures to strengthen the ceasefire, reached on 23 July by the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) with the participation of representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. The seven points of the agreement included: 1) a ban on offensive, reconnaissance and sabotage operations and of operating any type of aerial vehicle; 2) a ban on gunfire, including by snipers; 3) a ban on the deployment of heavy weapons in or near settlements, especially in civil infrastructure, including schools, nurseries, hospitals and public places; 4) the use of disciplinary action for ceasefire violations; 5) the creation of and participation in a coordination mechanism to respond to ceasefire violations facilitated by the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination; 6) specification of the limited circumstances in which opening fire is permitted in response to an offensive operation; and 7) a ban on non-compliance under any order. The agreement went into effect on 27 July.  |

and the MILF, while one of the main aspects of the substantive agenda of the negotiations between the Thai government and the BRN was linked to degrees of autonomy and decentralisation in the southern provinces of the country.

Another theme recurring as the root cause of many conflicts was the distribution of political power, including aspects related to governance, the formation of national unity governments and elections. Thus, all the negotiating processes in the Americas had to do with governance, including aspects of institutional and political functioning in Haiti, with disagreements between the government and the opposition regarding the suitability of constitutional reform and the holding of new elections. In Venezuela, the election issue, along with others such as the situation of exiled and imprisoned people, was the focus of a large part of the

agenda of the meetings between the government and opposition groups. In Africa, progress was made in South Sudan in implementing the clauses of the 2018 peace agreement regarding the formation of the national unity government. In contrast to previous opposition electoral boycott strategies, part of the political opposition ran in the elections in Burundi, but the negotiations between the government and the rest of the political and military actors remained blocked. After the coup in Mali, the new transitional government included representatives of the armed movements CMA and Platform for the first time since the signing of the 2015 peace agreement.

Regarding the **evolution of the peace processes and negotiations**, it is usually possible to identify a great variety of trends: a good development of meetings leading to draft agreements; the establishment of negotiations where there had been no talks or the

reactivation of dialogue after years of standstill; intense exploratory efforts fuelling expectations; rounds of negotiation that make no progress on key points, but keep a channel of dialogue open; situations of serious impasse and an absence of contact despite the efforts of third parties to facilitate negotiations; obstacles and difficulties in implementing agreements; and contexts in which violence and ceasefire violations have a profound impact on the prospects for peace processes. Our analysis of the different cases in 2020 confirms these diverse dynamics.

On a positive note, progress was made in some negotiating processes in Africa, such as in Mozambique, with the launch of the DDR programme after the 2019 peace agreement, despite failing to achieve the objective of dismantling all the RENAMO bases; Sudan, with the signing of the historic peace agreement between the government, the SRF rebel coalition and the SLM/A-MM faction following a year of negotiations; Sudan-South Sudan, with the continuation of the approaches begun in 2019 and headway made in diplomatic relations and border delimitations; and South Sudan, where progress was made in the implementation of some clauses of the 2018 peace agreement, mainly those related to the formation of the unity government and territorial decentralisation, as well as in negotiations with groups that had not signed the agreement. Asia also witnessed notable progress, such as in Afghanistan, with the historic agreement between the Taliban and the US government and the beginning of the intra-Afghan dialogue. In the Philippines, very significant progress was made in the implementation of the peace agreement with the MILF, mainly in terms of the demobilisation of its combatants and in the institutional rollout of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. After two years of impasse in Myanmar, the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong was restarted, reuniting the government with many of the insurgent groups. The government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government agreed on the foundations of the process to negotiate the political status of the region. And in Thailand, a new peace process began between the government and the armed group BRN, the most active in the southern part of the country, after the failure of the previous negotiating format between the government and a coalition of rebel groups. Some dynamics that could be described as progress in the Middle East, such as the agreement to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in Palestine in 2021 and the agreement between the Hadi government and southern secessionist groups to form a unity government in Yemen in line with the provisions of the 2019 Riyadh agreement, appeared to be on shaky ground at the end of the year. There was little

***In a year marking the 20th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, women around the world continued to face obstacles to their participation in peace processes, though relative progress was made in contexts such as Mali***

progress in Europe, although the agreement on fresh action to bolster the ceasefire in Ukraine stood out.

In contrast, many negotiating processes faced difficulties and some remained at an impasse. In the Americas, little positive headway was made and all the peace processes were very fragile as a result of the serious ongoing political and social crises. There were significant obstacles and permanent deadlock between the Colombian government and the ELN, for example, as the ELN's temporary ceasefire in response to the UN Secretary-General's call did not reactivate the peace talks because Bogotá remained firm in its demand for preconditions. Likewise, the general scene in the Middle East in 2020 followed in line with previous periods, with dynamics of chronic deadlock (as in Israel-Palestine), the widening of gulfs between the parties with respect to previous commitments (the Iranian nuclear programme) and rounds of meetings with no or limited results (intra-Syrian talks). Impasse and even regression prevailed in several negotiating processes in Asia, such as the deadlock in the peace process in Nagaland, the deterioration of the dialogue between North and South Korea and between the US and North Korea, and the disruption of negotiations between the Philippines and the NDF. The peace processes in Burundi, Cameroon, Libya, the CAR, the DRC and Somalia in Africa also faced obstacles and difficulties. In Burundi, regional initiatives to promote inclusive political dialogue failed. Although some divisions in the opposition led to contact between the government and some opposition sectors and the return of some of their representatives to the country, in practice the atmosphere of violence, insecurity and repression prevailed. In Africa, the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia remained frozen, despite the signing of a historic peace agreement two years before, as did the process between Morocco and Western Sahara, where tensions escalated at the end of the year. In Sudan, South Sudan and Mozambique, the major peace agreements reached in recent years faced the challenge of incorporating the different armed groups that had not signed them and maintained hostilities. The negotiations in Europe for the most part faced significant obstacles and dynamics of deadlock, such as in Cyprus, where it was not possible to restart the talks and positions on the status of the island continued to diverge, in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) and in Moldova (Transdniestria). The outbreak of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh revealed the fundamental difficulties of the process thus far and although an agreement put an end to hostilities, it was surrounded by uncertainty in many respects, such as the future negotiating format and the political status of the region.

Finally, regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, the analysis of the different peace processes in

2020 confirms, like in previous years, the obstacles that women face in participating in formal processes and the difficulties in incorporating a gender perspective in negotiations. In a year that marked the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which recognises the specific impacts of war on women and their role in peacebuilding and demands commitments in this area from states and other actors, the warring governmental and opposition parties' lack of political desire to integrate a gender perspective and to implement mechanisms and guarantees for effective female participation became apparent once again, with regard to both negotiating parties involved in conflict and female civil society activists.

Despite the limitations, there were cases in which some progress was made at formal levels. In Mali, the participation of nine women (three for each signatory party) in the sessions of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Peace Agreement represented real progress compared to the body's previous composition, even though women had yet to be included in the four subcommittees and other executive bodies. In Libya, the political dialogue (known as the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, or LPDF) included 16 women out of 75 total participants. The female participants issued a joint statement on the importance of Libyan women's involvement in the peace process, political talks, reconstruction and reconciliation in the country. At the end of the year, however, UN Women warned of threats to the safety of female delegates in the LPDF. In the Philippines, a woman became the head of the NDF's negotiating panel. In the intra-Afghan negotiations, the government's negotiating panel included four women. In Somalia, the agreement on the election model guaranteed 30% female representation in Parliament. Colombian women's organisations remained active in the process to implement the Colombian peace agreement and continued to exercise leadership so that the rights of women and the LGTBI population were not excluded from that implementation. In 2020, they participated in the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. Even so, there was still a noticeable gap between the degree of implementation of the agreement as a whole and the lesser implementation of specific gender provisions

***Women's organisations continued to call for ceasefires and supported the UN Secretary-General's call, such as women from Yemen and Syria***

in Colombia. In contrast, in Syria while in 2019 the establishment of a constitutional committee that included 28% women was considered a positive step, in 2020 it was verified as having a limited capacity for action amidst the impasse in the negotiations aggravated by the pandemic. At the same time, in Syria, meetings continued between the UN special envoy and the Syrian Women's Advisory Council.

Women active in civil society continued to demonstrate around the world, demanding greater participation in formal processes, denouncing violence and putting forward proposals in multiple areas related to conflicts and their impact. For example, the Afghan Women Leaders Peace Summit was held in Afghanistan, in which women's organisations demanded 30% participation in intra-Afghan peace negotiations and the formation of a technical gender committee. In alliance with international actors, female civil society activists in Kosovo demanded effective female participation in Kosovo's delegation in the talks with Serbia. Though excluded from the negotiating processes in Somalia, Burundi and the CAR, women demanded to participate in the elections under way. In Myanmar, the Alliance for Gender Inclusion met with the armed groups that had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to discuss female involvement in the peace process and political talks, as well as gender equality. Yemeni women's groups hailed the formation of a unity government on the anti-Houthist side, but criticised the exclusion of women and the breach of previous commitments regarding a minimum of 30% female participation in decision-making spheres.

Likewise, women's organisations in multiple conflict areas expressed their support for the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, in line with many women's efforts to broker a ceasefire there. In the context of the pandemic, their calls for ceasefires increased. This was the case of women from Syria and Yemen who mobilised around demands for an urgent ceasefire, linking their demand to the need to prioritise a humanitarian response and face the impact of the pandemic amidst the serious deterioration of health infrastructure and the accumulated effects of years of violence on human security in both countries.





## 2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Thirteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa throughout 2020, accounting for 32.5% of the 40 peace processes worldwide.
- The chronic deadlock and paralysis in diplomatic channels to address the Western Sahara issue favoured an escalation of tension at the end of the year.
- At the end of 2020, the parties to the conflict in Libya signed a ceasefire agreement and the political negotiations tried to establish a transitional government, but doubts remained about the general evolution of the process.
- In Mozambique, the Government and RENAMO made progress in implementing the DDR program envisaged in the 2019 peace agreement.
- The first direct talks were held between the government of Cameroon and a part of the secessionist movement led by the historical leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe to try to reach a ceasefire agreement.
- In Sudan, the government and the rebel coalition SRF and the SLM/A-MM signed a historic peace agreement that was not endorsed by other rebel groups such as the SPLM-N al-Hilu and the SLM/A-AW.
- In South Sudan, the transitional government was formed and peace talks were held with the armed groups that had not signed the 2018 peace agreement.

This chapter analyses the peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2020. First, it examines the general characteristics and trends of peace processes in the region, then it delves into the evolution of each of the cases throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the beginning of the chapter, a map is included that identifies the African countries that were the scene of negotiations during 2020.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations                      | Negotiating actors   | Third parties   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Burundi<sup>1</sup></b>                            | Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED)   | --  |
| <b>Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)</b> | Government, political-military secessionist movement formed by the opposition coalition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako) and Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku)   | Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue  |
| <b>CAR</b>  | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Séléka coalition, anti-balaka militias  | 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, OIC, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan |
| <b>DRC</b>  | Government led by Cap pour le Changement (coalition led by Félix Tshisekedi), in coalition with Front Commun pour le Congo (coalition led by Joseph Kabila, successor to the Alliance for the Presidential Majority), political and social opposition, armed groups from the East of the country | Congolese Episcopal Conference (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 on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU, EU, UN, OIF and USA                        |
| <b>Eritrea – Ethiopia</b>                             | Government of Eritrea and government of Ethiopia   | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA   |
| <b>Libya</b>  | Presidential Council and Government of National Accord (GNA), House of Representatives (HoR), National General Congress (NGC), LNA or ALAF   | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, among other countries; Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue   |
| <b>Mali</b>   | Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), MNLA, MAA and HCUA, Platform, GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA  | Algeria, France, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, The Carter Center, civil society organisations, Mauritania   |
| <b>Morocco – Western Sahara</b>                       | Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO)  | UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)  |

1. The East African Community (EAC) finalised its facilitation in 2019.

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Mozambique</b>                | Government, RENAMO  | National mediation team, Community of Sant'Egidio, Catholic Church, UN, Southern African Development Community (SADC), AU, EU, Botswana, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, United Kingdom   |
| <b>Somalia</b>                   | Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political military movement Ahlu Sunna WaJama'a, clan and sub-clan leaders, Somaliland   | UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others   |
| <b>South Sudan</b>               | Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) and SSOMA (NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC)   | "IGAD Plus": the IGAD, which includes 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, Community of Sant'Egidio |
| <b>Sudan</b>                     | 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), Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions | African Union High Level Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), Troika (EEUU, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda   |
| <b>Sudan – South Sudan</b>       | Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan   | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU   |

## 2.1 Negotiations in 2020: regional trends

Throughout the year 2020, **there were 13 peace processes and negotiations in Africa**, which accounts for 32,5% of the 40 peace processes identified worldwide. This figure is lower than in 2019, when there were 19 peace processes, and in 2018, when there were 22. The decrease in 2020 compared to 2019 is due to further implementation of some previously reached peace agreements, which have stopped being analysed in the yearbook, such as in the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Ethiopia (Oromia). In other cases, no active peace negotiations were identified: Nigeria (Niger Delta), the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram) and Senegal (Casamance).

**Nine of these 13 peace negotiations were linked to armed conflicts.** This was the case in Burundi, Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), CAR, DRC, Libya, Mali, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The remaining four processes were related to socio-political crises: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan. Armed conflicts in Africa continued to severely affect the civilian population despite the appeal of UN Secretary-General António Guterres in March, and peacekeeping missions and humanitarian responses were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as noted in an OECD report.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the virus created significant obstacles

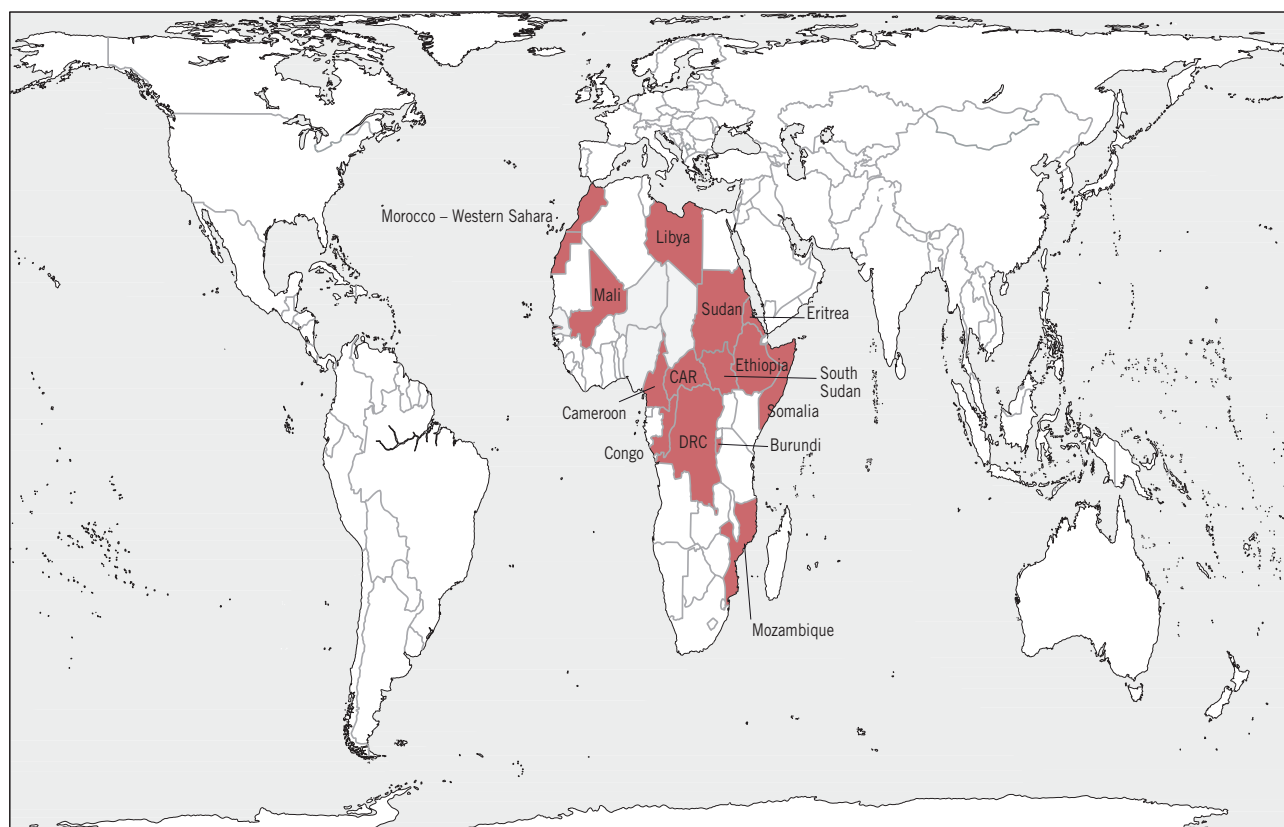
### *The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected peace processes in Africa*

for peacemakers, as diplomatic missions were reduced to their essential staff, UN special envoys interrupted their travels and mediation efforts stopped in response to COVID-19, as highlighted by the organisation. For actors linked to diplomacy in conflicts in Africa, the spread of the virus represented a fundamental challenge regarding access.<sup>3</sup> As a result, as highlighted by AU Peace and Security Commissioner Smail Chergui, COVID-19 clearly contributed to delays in the implementation of critical peace accords.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the actors involved in the negotiations, in 2020 **only two cases exclusively involved the governments of the respective countries and armed groups or political-military movements in the negotiations.** These were the peace processes in Mozambique, between the government and the opposition group RENAMO, and in the Central African Republic (CAR), between the government and the different member groups of the former Séléka coalition and anti-balaka militias. **Meanwhile seven of the 13 peace processes were characterised by a more complex map of actors, with governments, armed groups and political and social opposition groups.** This was true in processes in Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), where the meetings involved political actors linked to insurgencies; Mali where the

2. OCDE, *OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), COVID-19, crises and fragility*, Paris, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 29 April 2020.  
3. Mutazilite, K., "From Bad to Worse? The impact(s) of Covid-19 on conflict dynamics," Institute for Security Studies, Conflict Series Brief 13, 11 June 2020.  
4. Chergui, S., "Op-ed: Peace and Security amidst COVID-19", AU, 17 April 2020.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2020

negotiating process has involved national authorities and many political actors in recent years and armed forces from the Azawad region (north); Libya, between political and military actors controlling different areas of the country; Somalia, between the federal government, the leaders of the federal states and other political and military actors in the country; Sudan, between the government, the political opposition and insurgents from various parts of the country; South Sudan, between the government, the armed group SPLM/A-IO and other smaller political opposition and armed groups; and the DRC, where the negotiations involved the government and opposition parties and coalitions on the one hand, and government and different armed groups in the eastern part of the country on the other. **In other cases, however, governmental and political and social opposition actors participated.** This was the case in Burundi, where the meetings involved the government and parts of the CNARED. **Other negotiating processes were led by the governments of neighbouring countries as part of inter-state disputes.** Examples were the peace process between Sudan and South Sudan and the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. One case, that of Morocco-Western Sahara, involves the Moroccan government and the POLISARIO Front, which proclaimed the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976 and is considered an international dispute because it is a territory described by the UN as pending decolonisation.

**All the peace processes and negotiations analysed had the support of third parties, with the exception of Burundi,**

since the official facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, announced that he was resigning from his role in February 2019. Since then, the talks have been direct between the government and parts of the CNARED. Although there are many cases where the actors performing mediation, facilitation and accompaniment tasks are publicly known, in other contexts this work is carried out discreetly and behind closed doors. In all cases with third parties, there was more than one actor performing mediation and facilitation tasks. The most prominent actor in this regard was the UN, which was involved in nine of the 13 peace processes in Africa: Libya, Mali, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Another notable actor was the AU, as part of its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which is participating in eight processes: 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 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 (ECCAS) in the CAR; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Mozambique; and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan. In addition to African intergovernmental organisations, other intergovernmental organisations also participated as

third parties in African peace processes, such as the EU in Mozambique, Mali, the CAR, DRC, South Sudan and between Sudan and South Sudan, and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) in the CAR.

**States also played a prominent role as third parties in the peace processes and negotiations in Africa.** One peace process had only states involved as third parties: the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia were mediated and facilitated by Saudi Arabia, the United States and especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the rest of the cases with state mediating actors, many national governments in Africa and elsewhere became involved in processes in which other mediating and facilitating actors also participated. At the same time, religious, local and international actors also played roles as third parties. Examples include 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 Church of Christ in the Congo in the DRC; the Anglophone General Conference (AGC), made up of Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders in Cameroon; and the South Sudan Council of Churches in South Sudan. Specialised organisations also performed mediation and facilitation roles, such as the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which was active in Cameroon, Libya, Mali and the CAR.

As part of this proliferation of mediators, **the participation of third parties in joint formats continued to be frequent, as in previous years**, 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. At the same time, competition between third parties continued, as exemplified by the peace process in Libya, where Russia and Egypt support actors opposed to other actors backed by Turkey.

The topics of the negotiations were diverse in nature and included **ceasefires and cessations of hostilities**. Several **ceasefire agreements that were signed were violated**, highlighting the fragility of this aspect of the peace processes and the lack of political will to keep the promises made. Various ceasefires were broken systematically in Libya and the weapons embargo was

persistently violated by many regional and international actors supporting one side or another. Despite the beginning of the implementation of the agreement reached in February 2019 between the Central African government and the 14 armed groups, the ceasefire violations were constant in the CAR.

Another security-related aspect was the issue of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants (DDR) in some processes, such as in Mali, South Sudan, Mozambique and others. In **Mozambique**, after the signing of the **peace agreement in 2019 between the government and RENAMO, during 2020 implementation began on the DDR programme** for RENAMO's approximately 5,000 combatants and the dismantling of the 17 military bases in the centre of the country. Although progress was made in demobilisation during the year, the impact associated with the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the goals from being achieved, as was the case in many other peace processes.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, there was an absence of women in the negotiating processes and a lack of gender issues in the different peace agreements reached in 2020, with the exception of Mali, though in most contexts, various women's movements and organisations demanded active participation in peace processes. In **Mali**, according to the Carter Center, both the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) and various international partners actively promoted the participation of women in the bodies monitoring the peace agreement. During the CFA sessions in June and November, nine women participated (three for each signatory party), which represents real progress over the composition of previous CFA sessions. However, the Carter Center pointed out that women have yet to be included in the four subcommittees and the other executive bodies and that women's observatories have not yet been created in the northern regions. The political negotiations in **Libya**, known as the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), were held from 9 to 15 November in Tunis. The 16 Libyan women (out of a total of 75 participants) in the LPDF or political track issued a joint statement in mid-November stressing the importance of female involvement in the peace process, dialogue, rebuilding of the state and reconciliation in the country.

There were also some interesting initiatives in different countries. Civil society groups led by women in **Cameroon** have been at the forefront of developing innovative approaches to address the rise in violence and promoting peace with gender equality. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) of Cameroon worked with civil society organisations to advocate for women's full and meaningful political participation, address the impact of gender in growing security challenges linked to conflict and take advantage of the women, peace and security agenda (WPS). In other contexts, such as in **Somalia, Burundi and the CAR**, though absent from formal negotiations, women demanded to participate in ongoing electoral processes

and managed to reach deals and agreements with the support of UN Women and women's organizations in order to guarantee and strengthen their political participation in upcoming political events. The UN Security Council continued to support efforts to increase women's participation in conflict prevention and mediation activities in the Horn of Africa, and particularly through the **Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation**. UN Women continued to support the network, which included the deployment of network members in South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia.

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), Pravina Makan-Lakha, the General Manager and Advisor on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) of the South African think tank ACCORD, participated the virtual dialogue entitled "Twenty years of African women's participation in the women, peace and security agenda: civil society perspectives". The meeting took place on 23 October 2020 at a crucial moment for the WPS agenda, as stakeholders around the world seized the opportunity to take stock of progress and address gaps in the agenda over the past 20 years. The event was jointly organised by 11 civil society organisations in Africa, including: Human Sciences Research Council; Africa Institute of South Africa; Women's International Peace Centre; Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS); South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID); West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP); African Women in Dialogue (AWID); African Leadership Centre; Institute for Security Studies (ISS); Training for Peace (TfP); ACCORD; and finally, the South Africa Department of Science and Innovation. The objectives of the meeting were to listen to women's voices and perspectives on progress and challenges since the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325 and to chart new paths for women in Africa in the field of peace and security. The meeting focused on four themes: prevention and protection, mediation, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

During the discussion, Pravina Makan-Lakha talked about the mixed results. For example, in southern Africa, even though there is growing female representation in parliaments, this progress is not reflected in realities in the community as the countries continue to receive poor rankings in the Gender Inequality Index. To illustrate, in January 2019, 46.8% of South Africa's MPs were women, yet the country ranked 97th on the Gender Inequality Index. Moreover, **out of the 16 peace agreements signed between 1992 to 2011, only two included women as signatories and only three included women as lead mediators**. Pravina Makan-Lakha added that more recently, women from Libya, the CAR, Sudan and South Sudan have faced many obstacles, as well as outright resistance, to their demands to participate in peace processes. She concluded by saying although the numbers are not a cause for celebration, success

in establishing, promoting and strengthening female conflict prevention and mediation networks must be acknowledged. However, one of the main conclusions was that, as the data show, there is still a long way to go before we can say that the objectives have been achieved.

#### **Regarding the evolution of the peace negotiations, during 2020 we continued to witness progress**

in Mozambique, Sudan, between Sudan and South Sudan and in South Sudan. Implementation of the 2019 peace agreement in **Mozambique** began in 2020 with the launch of the DDR programme, although the planned objective of dismantling all RENAMO military bases (17) by August 2020 was not achieved. In mid-June, the UN special envoy for Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni, announced the demobilisation of around

300 combatants and the dismantling of the first military base in Savane, Dondo District, Sofala Province. This was welcomed as an important step in building trust between both parties, paving the way and fulfilling expectations for the rest of the combatants, as well as for the gradual closing of 16 RENAMO military bases. During the third quarter of the year, it was reported that approximately 500 former combatants had demobilised, which represents 10% of the 5,000 planned. The initial disagreements between the parties, as well as the start of the global health crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic and the containment restrictions in the country, made it difficult to implement the clauses of the peace agreement. According to ACCORD, the levels and characteristics of community transmission of COVID-19 in the country required implementation of major containment restrictions by the government, which affected the demilitarisation process in different ways.

In another example of progress, after a year of peace negotiations held in the South Sudanese capital, Juba, **the Sudanese government and the rebel coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Minni Minnawi (SLM/A-MM) signed a historic peace agreement on 31 August**.

Although the agreement represents a fundamental step to achieving peace in the country, not all the armed actors signed it. The faction of the rebel group North Sudan People's Liberation Movement headed by Abdelaziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N) and the faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement headed by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM/A-AW) refused to ratify the agreement. However, the government is holding separate talks with the groups that did not sign it, inviting them to do so. Similarly, in neighbouring **South Sudan**, progress was also made during the year in implementing some of the clauses established in the 2018 South Sudan Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS), as well as in relation to peace negotiations with actors that had not signed the agreement. Developments in the R-ARCSS included the **formation of the long-awaited unity government and the agreement on administrative-territorial distribution**,

points that posed the greatest obstacle to implementing the agreement. Meanwhile, a new negotiating process was begun with the armed groups that had not signed the peace agreement, articulated through the **South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA)**, though internal tensions in the alliance made the negotiations more complex. Finally, the dynamics of rapprochement between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan that began in 2019 after the formation of the new Sudanese government were maintained during the year, achieving progress in diplomatic relations and border delimitations between both countries. Highlights of the year included the mediation role played by the South Sudanese authorities in the Sudanese peace negotiation process, which led to the signing of the peace agreement in Juba in August 2020. Also significant was the agreement reached between both countries in September to form a joint technical committee with the aim of resuming oil production in Unity State and other key oil fields. In late October, the governments of both countries signed a joint military and defence cooperation agreement.

In contrast, **other processes faced many obstacles and problems during the year** (Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, the CAR, the DRC and Somalia). In **Burundi**, the failure of regional initiatives to promote inclusive political dialogue and divisions within the Burundian opposition coalition led to a series of meetings between government representatives and some opposition leaders that ended with their return to the country. This agreement had no consequences on the ground, however, since the violence, insecurity and repression of the political opposition continued ahead of the elections held in May. In **Cameroon**, the first talks were held between the government and a part of the separatist movement led by the historical leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe on 2 July, three years after the start of the armed conflict, in an attempt to reach a ceasefire agreement. Although many local and international actors and important members of Cameroonian civil society participated in the meeting, the talks were rejected by other separatists in Cameroon and abroad, since the secessionist movement is fragmented into various factions, and divisions were also observed within the government over the peace initiative. In **Mali**, very little progress was made during the year in the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement due to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the socio-political crisis in the country that led to a coup d'état and the establishment of a transitional government. Attempts to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict in **Libya** was dogged by problems throughout 2020, partly as a result of the growing involvement of regional and international actors that tried to influence the negotiations while they continued supplying arms to one side or the other in open defiance of the weapons embargo imposed by the UN. It was not until the second half of the year that some progress was made, although at the end of

*The headway made in the negotiations in Sudan contributed to progress in the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan*

2020 there were many doubts about how the process was developing. In the **CAR**, the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 2019 was problematic, as several armed groups continued to violate the agreement and obstruct the restoration of government authority, which hampered preparations for the 27 December general elections. In addition, there was a resurgence of violence in the country. In the **DRC**, the coalition government led by Félix Tshisekedi that emerged from the controversial 2018 elections was affected by many crises and obstacles that led to its breakdown in late 2020. In **Somalia**, various people called for dialogue between the federal government and al-Shabaab, although no meetings were disclosed. In addition, tension between the federal government and the federated states over holding the parliamentary and presidential elections between December 2020 and February 2021 increased during the year, though an agreement was reached in September in order to move forward in the electoral process, breaking the deadlock that threatened to delay them beyond the constitutional limits of the current government, which would have added more uncertainty and tension to the situation.

**Some peace processes were completely stalled during the year, such as the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia and Morocco and Western Sahara.** Two years after the historic peace agreement was signed between **Eritrea and Ethiopia**, the process of implementing the agreement remained at a standstill as a result of the escalating tension and start of the armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray region. Although progress had been made in some areas, others remained completely paralysed as a result of tensions and the war that started in the Tigray region in November, compounded by unresolved animosity between Tigray and Eritrean leaders. The conflict over **Western Sahara** continued to be characterised by chronic impasse and paralysis of the diplomatic channel to address and resolve the dispute, a situation that favoured an escalation of tension towards the end of the year.

A final significant aspect to highlight was the **openness** of some state actors in different armed conflicts to **explore spaces for dialogue with jihadist armed actors.** Even though the government of **Mozambique** headed by Filipe Nyusi, had ruled out starting talks with the rebels in the Cabo Delgado region in January, it later announced its willingness to start peace talks. Similarly, the government of **Mali** opened the door to starting peace negotiations with some jihadist groups that have not signed the the Algiers Peace Agreement, especially with the leaders Amadou Kouffa (Macina Liberation Front) and Iyad ag Ghaly (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, or GSIM). This subsequently allowed for an agreement between the GSIM and the government for a prisoner exchange, which was hailed by African Union Peace and Security Commissioner Smail Chergui and by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who

also expressed their openness to dialogue with jihadist militants in the Sahel. Reluctant to start negotiations with these actors, the French government opened the possibility of dialogue with a counterpart that was “representative and legitimate” at the end of the year, a description interpreted as an allusion to the GSIM. There were similar developments in **Somalia**, where officers of the Kenyan Armed Forces who have participated in AMISOM indicated that a change of strategy was necessary in the war in the neighbouring country, since the military activity was proving ineffective. Various analysts argued that the securitisation strategy of the United States and that of the international community as a whole, backed by the Somali government, has been revealed as a failure because it has not reduced the impact of al-Shabaab’s activities and has killed many civilians. As such, various people have demanded an approach to al-Shabaab to promote a negotiating process similar to the one in Afghanistan between the US and the Taliban. However, experts remain divided over the effective possibility that a negotiating process could be pursued today. The change in position of the different actors involved in these armed conflicts reflected the need to involve all armed actors in dialogue to stop the violence, regardless of their ideological beliefs.

## 2.2. Case study analysis

### Great Lakes and Central Africa

| Burundi                    |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | 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) |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | --  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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.

#### In Burundi, the talks between the government and the opposition had been completely deadlocked since 2019 and various events led to their cancellation in 2020.

The meetings held during 2019 between representatives of the government and 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) to study the conditions of the return of exiled leaders were the prelude to the CNARED’s announcement in December 2019 that it was willing to participate in the general elections in May 2020. The announcement took many by surprise. On 11 December 2019, the executive secretary of the coalition, Anicet Niyonkuru, arrived in the capital, Bujumbura, from Brussels, along with 15 other opposition politicians who have lived in exile for the last four years. Upon his arrival, Niyonkuru affirmed that the elections were the only way to improve the situation in the country, which has been immersed in a serious political crisis and a warlike atmosphere since the 2015 elections in which Pierre Nkurunziza ran for a third presidential term that many described as unconstitutional. Nkurunziza was declared the winner amidst a climate of political violence and accusations of fraud and irregularities, in addition to a boycott by the opposition. Niyonkuru claimed that his party, the CDP, and the CNARED coalition, would not repeat the same mistakes made in 2010 and 2015 when they boycotted the elections, paving the way for an easy victory for the CNDD-FDD, and that they would participate whether or not the political situation improved. The decision drew both criticism and praise from other political organisations. Some politicians argued that the decision was a capitulation of the alliance’s initial tough stance on the president’s third term, which critics still consider unconstitutional.

The CNARED’s position has evolved since 2015. At the start of the crisis, the CNARED announced that it would not hold talks with the Nkurunziza government until it resigned and accepted a transitional government. The CNARED later agreed to participate in the dialogue in Burundi under the auspices of regional mediator and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and international facilitator and former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa. The inter-Burundian dialogue ended in failure three years later, when Mkapa announced that he was



resigning from his role as facilitator on 9 February 2019. During 2019, the CNARED's leaders travelled between Belgium and Uganda to explore their chances of returning to Burundi. In this sense, the divisions within the CNARED were revealed in January 2019, with the withdrawal from the coalition of four opposition parties and former Vice President Frédéric Bamvuginyumvira, all of them reluctant to return without firm commitments to real change by the government, as well as the various meetings held between representatives of the government and the CNARED during 2019, such as those held on 28 August and 2 September in Nairobi with the ombudsman, former Interior Minister Edouard Nduwimana (an ally of Nkurunziza). In early October 2019, Anicet Niyonkuru visited Burundi and met with Deputy Interior Minister Tharcisse Niyongabo to discuss the return of exiled CNARED members.

To some extent, the coalition leaned toward a rollback because of the harsh reality of the political situation, analysts say. On 7 December 2019, days before the return of Niyonkuru and the rest of the leaders in exile, the East African Court of Justice ruled that President Nkurunziza did not violate the Constitution of Burundi or the laws of the East African Community (EAC). The decision is in line with that taken by the Constitutional Court of Burundi just after the opposition challenged Nkurunziza's third term.

The months leading up to the May elections were characterised by reports of human rights violations, including forced disappearances and arbitrary arrests, as well as acts of violence such as clashes between members of rival political parties. In mid-February, the government refused to extend visas to allow six politicians in exile in Uganda to travel to Burundi, thereby de facto banning them from returning to the country. Consequently, the CNARED's decision had little influence on the government and the CNDD-FDD's opening of the political space, according to various analysts. In addition, the incoming government formed by the new President Evariste Ndayishimiye was dominated by representatives of the regime's hardline wing, and even international sanctions were considered against new Prime Minister Alain Guillaume Bunyoni and Interior Minister Gervais Ndirakobuca for their involvement in repression and violence against civilians since 2015. Opposition sectors in exile denounced the lack of representation of the Tutsi minority in the new government and among regional governors, with only one minister and three governors.

## Gender, peace and security

Women have been excluded from the different peace initiatives since the signing of the Arusha accords. Although the constitutional quota of 30% representation in the National Assembly (36.4%) and the Senate (47%) was reached and exceeded in 2015, the representation of women in decision-making at the local level remains low.

They represent 17% at the colline council level (2015 elections), 32.7% of the heads of townships and 6.4% of the colline chiefs. This is why the UN Women office in Burundi and the National Women's Forum signed a partnership agreement in July aimed at strengthening the political participation of women in upcoming political events. The project aims to increase the participation of female candidates from the collines, thereby reaching at least a proportion of 20% female candidates in the four most populated provinces of the country, Gitega, Karusi, Makamba and Ngozi. This project was also expected to allow elected female leaders to promote the common agenda of women during the new legislature.

| CAR                        |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | 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; Russia, Sudan |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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 ("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 and that it contributed to reaching the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of February 2019, in the implementation phase, despite the difficulties.

The implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was problematic, as various armed groups continued to violate the agreement and obstruct the restoration of government authority, hindering preparations for the general elections on 27 December. There was also a resurgence of violence in the country. The UN Security Council extended MINUSCA's mandate until 15 November 2021 and extended the sanctions, including the arms embargo, until 31 July 2021.

The return of the government's authority to the interior of the country was cosmetic due to the insecurity and the lack of human and material resources. The same was true of the scarce deployment of the Central African Armed Forces, which suffers from an insufficient logistical endowment and is dependent on MINUSCA, according to the International Crisis Group in December.<sup>5</sup> Former President Michel Djotodia returned from a six-year exile on 10 January and the next day, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra gave him an audience to congratulate him on his return. On 21 January, former President Bozizé, who had secretly returned from in December exile and was subject to a search and arrest warrant, also met with Touadéra. On 12 May, President Touadéra deployed the first battalion of the special mixed security units (USMS). Stipulated in the 2019 agreement and made up of soldiers and members of demobilised armed groups, the USMS was deployed in the town of Bouar, in the prefecture by Nana-Mambéré. In May, the national defence and security forces and administrative authorities were deployed to the Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture for the first time since 2013. The prefects of Nana-Grébizi and Ouaka launched security committees in Ippy and Mbrès on 9 and on August 17, respectively. On 16 June, the executive committee to monitor the Political Agreement held a session to discuss the violence in Ndélé (Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture). It was agreed to give priority to transitional justice in resolving the conflict between the Gula and Runga ethnic groups. National initiatives were complemented by local mediation initiatives. However, the progress made in establishing the USMS as envisaged in the agreement was limited. As of 1 October, a total of 216 unit members had been deployed to Bouar from Paoua, while 346 remained in Bouar. However, they had not yet started their operations. On 18 August, the strategic committee of the USMS selected Birao, Bria, Ndélé and Kaga Bandoro as locations for future deployments.

However, in January the armed groups FPRC, UPC and MPC jointly denounced the delays in the implementation of the peace agreement and called for new peace talks. Subsequently, some armed groups abandoned the 2019 agreement, and the government was in constant contact with these groups and those that had threatened to do the same. On 25 April, seven armed groups that had signed the February 2019 peace agreement announced that they were ending their participation in the government and

in the implementation mechanisms of the 2019 peace agreement, accusing the government of failing to fulfil its commitments. Days earlier, President Touadéra and Prime Minister Firmin Ngrébada had met, respectively, with UPC leader Ali Darassa and FPRC leader Abdoulaye Hissène in Bangui, to explore the possibility of achieving a compromise in reducing the violence ahead of the elections, since both groups signed the communiqué. The meetings were not successful, however. On 20 April, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions (travel ban and freezing of assets) on FDPC leader Abdoulaye Miskine, accused of recruiting fighters, and on 5 August it imposed sanctions on the leader of the 3R, Sidiki Abbas, on charges of being involved in arms trafficking and in killing civilians. On 30 July, the prime minister met in Bangui with UPC leader Ali Darassa. According to the minutes of the government meeting, which Ali Darassa himself signed, he promised to respect the reassertion of government authority, to participate in disarmament and demobilisation operations and to allow the free movement of election workers and officials, in exchange for him to be authorised to re-establish himself in Bambari with a direct line of communication with the prime minister. In a statement dated 1 August, Ali Darassa rejected this version of events and indicated that he had signed the minutes of the meeting under duress, so he did not commit to the agreement. On 21 August, the African Union led a delegation made up of representatives from the government, CEEAC and MINUSCA that met with MPC leader Mahamat Al-Khatim in Kaga Bandoro to encourage the group to implement the Political Agreement. In this regard, on 2 September, some armed groups that had signed the Political Agreement issued a joint statement complaining about shortcomings in its implementation. They asked ECCAS President Ali Bongo Ondimba to organise an arbitration meeting among the heads of state of the region, as provided in Article 34 of the Political Agreement. Between 3 and 5 October, representatives of the government and MINUSCA and guarantors of the peace agreement met with 3R leader Sidiki Abbas in Kouï, in the prefecture of Ouham-Pendé, to discuss preparations for the elections, at which Abbas vowed not to block the voter registration process in the northwest and released three police officers kidnapped in the same prefecture in September. However, violence and attacks between armed groups continued in the northwest. Finally, the interreligious platform celebrated a national day of prayer, fasting and forgiveness on 8 August. Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga and Imam Oumar Kobine Layama, leaders of the platform, travelled to Bossangoa, in Ouham prefecture, on 2-3 September to promote reconciliation and social cohesion between the Christian and Muslim communities.

## Gender, peace and security

Women were absent from decision-making spaces and from political negotiation initiatives and processes.

5. ICG, "Réduire les tensions électorales en République Centrafricaine", International Crisis Group no. 296, 10 December 2020.

According to the UN Secretary-General's report on the country, in view of the December elections, MINUSCA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women all undertook initiatives to encourage women to participate as voters and as female candidates. Eleven women's situation chambers were created in Bangui and the prefectures in order to strengthen women's roles in monitoring the elections. The different security forces in the country gradually incorporated women into their ranks: as of 1 October, the national forces had a total strength of 8,651 soldiers, of which 660 were women; 1,464 police officers (344 women) and 2,164 gendarmes (228 women) deployed in all prefectures except Bas Kotto. On 28 August and 1 September, 1,350 police officers and gendarmes graduated, including 395 women. In addition, on 9 July, President Touadéra appointed 21 judges, including four women, in the first expansion of the judicial staff in four years.

| DRC                        |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government led by Cap pour le Changement (coalition led by Félix Tshisekedi), in coalition with Front Commun pour le Congo (coalition led by Joseph Kabila, successor to the Alliance for the Presidential Majority), political and social opposition, armed groups from the eastern part of the country |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | 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                      |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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. Meanwhile, the actions of various armed groups persisted in the eastern part of the country, some of which negotiated the cessation of their activities with the political and military authorities.

**In the DRC, the coalition government led by Félix Tshisekedi that emerged from the controversial 2018 elections was affected by much tension and many obstacles that led to the breakdown at the end of 2020.**

Furthermore, the political and military authorities continued in their attempts to end the activities of armed groups, either through military pressure or dialogue and negotiation, and were supported in their efforts by MONUSCO. The different initiatives include the political process that began in 2018, which resulted in a peace agreement between the government and the armed group Front pour la Résistance Patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI). On 28 February 2020, the government and the FRPI signed a peace agreement. In its September report, the UN stated that continued progress in the implementation of the peace agreement between the government and FRPI had had a positive effect on the security situation in southern Irumu (Ituri province). The process will ultimately lead to the demobilisation of around 1,100 FRPI combatants and their reintegration into their communities of origin. However, the demobilisation process had not yet started due to challenges related to COVID-19 and persistent disagreements over the FRPI's demand for the release of its members, as well as amnesty and integration of some of its leaders into the FARDC.

Moreover, in relation to the violence in South Kivu, in May a local Mai-Mai militia decided to surrender to the military authorities in the territory of Walungu, in South Kivu province. In July, President Félix Tshisekedi sent a delegation of former warlords from the Lendu community to negotiate a demobilisation agreement with different factions of the armed group Cooperative pour le Développement du Congo (CODECO) in the territory of Djugu, in Ituri province. The CODECO faction in the town of Kambutso expressed its willingness to initiate a peace process that would lead to the group's disarmament. However, other factions refused to join the process. On 17 August, the commander of a faction of the Nduma Défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) surrendered to the Congolese Army together with his 485 combatants in the town of Kashuga, in the territory of Masisi, in North Kivu province.

However, a highlight of the year in terms of peace-building in the region was the announcement that took place on 16 September when **around 70 armed groups active in South Kivu pledged to end the hostilities in the areas under their control**, according to local media reports collected by Anadolu Agency on 17 September.<sup>6</sup> The announcement was made on 16 September at the end of a two-day dialogue that took place in Muresa, near the city of Bukavu, under the auspices of the Interprovincial Commission to Support the Awareness, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Community Reintegration Process (CIAP-DDRC). The CIAP-DDRC is a Congolese government initiative for the stabilisation of the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, affected by various armed conflicts. This body formed after President Félix Tshisekedi visited Bukavu in October 2019. The disarmament initiative is also supported by MONUSCO.

## Gender, peace and security

MONUSCO continued to promote the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda through specific partnerships with national, provincial and local authorities, in addition to promoting greater female representation, especially in decision-making processes related to COVID-19. MONUSCO also stepped up its efforts to support community-based structures for conflict prevention and reconciliation led by women, helping to deliver a gender-inclusive response to protection issues, including new risk patterns in the context of COVID-19. Moreover, in relation to criminal violence, after persistent attacks by assailants in Ituri province, the network of women's organisations in Ituri issued a joint statement urging all the actors involved to take concrete steps to end violence, tackle insecurity in the province and promote a protective environment for women and girls.

In April, a meeting was organised by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), with the support of the NAMA Women Advancement Establishment. It was the first time that women involved in the GNWP Young Women Leaders for Peace (YWL) programme from DRC, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Sudan came together to share and discuss peace and security issues and solutions amid the pandemic and despite network connectivity problems. Furthermore, in the second half of the year, in accordance with the principles of the Peacekeeping Action aimed at promoting political solutions for the conflict with national involvement, MONUSCO provided support to the Ituri provincial authorities with a view to holding a series of meetings that led to the signing of a peace deal in the territory of Mahagi by 42 traditional chiefs and leaders from the Lendu community, including eight women, as well as the adoption of a road map by 60 local leaders, including nine women from the Alur community.

## South Sudan

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) and SSOMA (NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC)  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | 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, Community of Sant'Egidio |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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 SPLA-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.

**Progress was made on implementing some clauses established in the 2018 South Sudan Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS) during the year, including the**

6. Anadolu Agency, "70 armed groups agree to end hostilities in DR Congo", 17 September 2020.

**formation of the unity government and the agreement on administrative-territorial distribution, and a new peace negotiating process was also launched with the armed groups that had not signed the peace agreement.** Talks related to the implementation of the peace agreement of September 2018 were held throughout the year and mediated by former South African President David Mabuza, with the main obstacles being the **formation of the unity government** and, above all, aspects related to the formula of territorial-administrative division for the country. Although early in the year there were many misgivings about the parties' ability to form a unity government on the date established (22 February), the agreement was finally fulfilled and the transitional government was formed between Salva Kiir's party, the SPLA-IO and the SSOA, due in part to heavy internal and external pressure. The new government, called the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU), appointed the five vice presidents established in the agreement, including Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLA-IO, as the first vice president. In early March, the new government cabinet was presented, composed of 35 ministers and 10 vice ministers with the following representation: 20 ministers elected by Kiir's party, nine by the SPLA-IO, three by the SSOA, two by the FD and one by other parties.

***A unity government was formed in South Sudan in February, but tensions remained for much of the year over the country's administrative and territorial divisions***

Alongside the formation of the government, the negotiations remained deadlocked over the number and borders of the states, as well as over **security measures** related to the unification of government troops and rebel forces in the national South Sudanese Army. Although in this last respect the SPLA-IO troops began to move to the billeting sites in the states of Jonglei, Torit and Wau at the beginning of the year, the training programme of the new South Sudanese Army, which will consist of 85,000 soldiers, was suspended on 27 March as part of the COVID-19 containment measures put in place by the government. In June, with no significant progress made, the official body that supervises the unification of the armed groups warned that the training and cantonment sites were "on the verge of collapse" due to a lack of resources and logistical support. Moreover, in relation to the **administrative and border division of the country**, the formation of the unity government led to the dismissal of all state governors and the return to the administrative formula of the 10 states that existed before the armed conflict, plus three administrative areas with special status: Pibor, Ruweng and Abyei. The agreement on the appointment of new state governors was delayed until June due to a lack of consensus between the

parties. On 29 June, the government announced the appointment of eight of the 10 governors and it was agreed that the SPLA-IO would designate the governor of the state of Upper Nile and the SSOA would name the governor of the state of Jonglei. The SPLA-IO nominated General Johnson Olony to be the governor of Upper Nile, but he was rejected by Kiir's government due to his refusal to billet his troops as stipulated in the peace agreement. After a period of deadlock and flaring tension between the signatory parties, which included the breakdown of the ceasefire between 18 and 19 July in Wau, President Kiir's party, the SPLA-IO, the SSOA and other political parties signed an agreement on power sharing at the state and local (county) level on 10 August. This agreement which complemented the June agreement on the appointment of state governors, also stipulated the allocation of seats for each party in state cabinets and parliaments, as well as in county commissions and councils. This agreement led to new negotiations on the assignment of offices at the state and local levels. In mid-November, Kiir accepted the SPLA-IO's nomination of Johnson Olony to be the governor of the state of Upper Nile, putting an end to the dispute over the last governor to be appointed.

Meanwhile, between 2 and 15 November, a **national dialogue** was summoned by the president in Juba, but the main opposition forces did not participate. Kiir stated that his various solutions would be incorporated into the country's permanent Constitution, as they reflect the views of the South Sudanese. These include the limitation of presidential terms to two, lasting five years each. However, the SPLM-IO and the NDM did not participate in the conference, arguing that the revitalised peace agreement supersedes any other process and instead called for its comprehensive implementation.

**Peace talks were held with groups that had not signed the R-ARCSS during the year, organised through the South Sudan Opposition Movements' Alliance (SSOMA),** which includes different groups: the National Salvation Front (NAS), the South Sudan United Front (SSUF), the South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC), the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement (R-SPLM), the National Democratic Movement Patriotic Front (NDM/PF) and the United Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (UDRA). The negotiations were held at the end of the year in Rome (Italy), facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and mediated by the IGAD. The first major progress was achieved on 12 January with the signing of the **"Rome Declaration on the Peace Process in South Sudan"**, in which the

7. "Rome Declaration On The Peace Process In South Sudan" 12/01/2020.

8. See the summary on South Sudan in the chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 2021.

parties committed to upholding a ceasefire, ensuring access and maintaining continuous dialogue under the auspices of the Community of Sant’Egidio and regional organisations.<sup>7</sup> The deal prompted the government to grant amnesty to all SSOMA factions on 29 January. The second round of talks took place in mid-February, reaching a resolution on implementation of the truce negotiated in January. However, the negotiations stalled and the military truce was broken, leading to fighting in the Central Equatoria region between government forces and the NAS.<sup>8</sup> After months of inactivity in the peace negotiations due to the new government’s inability to appoint new delegates and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the negotiations were resumed on 9 October. At that time, the SSOMA rebel coalition split into two groups due to disagreements between the leaders after it emerged that secret talks had been held between the SSUF/A, led by Paul Malong, and the government. Thomas Cirillo, the leader of the NAS and the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA), an armed coalition that is a member of the SSOMA, withdrew the SSUF/A from the SSOMA, which was followed by the departure of the Real-SPLM led by Pagan Amum. This created divisions within the coalition, which sought out different negotiating processes, while the SSUF/A and the Real-SPLM were left out of the peace talks. After this split, the talks in Rome continued with a new commitment to the ceasefire by the SSOMA-Cirillo faction, which included the NAS, SSNMC, NDM/PF and UDRA. On 16 November, both factions of the SSOMA factions agreed to adhere to the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism in South Sudan (CTSAMVM), aimed at maintaining the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in the country.

### Gender, peace and security

With regard to female participation in the executive and legislative branches, Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior was appointed the fourth vice president of the unity government. Twenty-six of the 35 ministries created in the new government were occupied by men and nine by women, including Defence Minister Angelina Teny, the first woman in that office, and Foreign Minister Beatrice Khamis. The other ministries given to women were of Parliamentary Affairs; Agriculture and Food Security; the Environment and Forests; Education and Instruction; Health, Gender and Social Affairs; and Culture, Museums and National Heritage. The UN Security Council continued to support efforts to increase female participation in conflict prevention and mediation activities throughout the year, particularly through the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. UN Women continued to support the network, which deployed members in South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia.

| Sudan                      |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | 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) Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions. |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, UNAMID, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) (2006), Road map Agreement (2016), the Juba Declaration for Confidence-Building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation (2019), Juba Peace Agreement (2020)  |

#### 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 Minnawi, 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 revolve 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.

**After a year of peace negotiations in the capital of South Sudan, Juba, the government and the rebel coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minnawi (SLM/A-MM) signed a historic peace agreement on 31 August. However, the agreement was not signed by the faction of the rebel group North Sudan People’s Liberation Movement headed by Abdelaziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N), which withdrew from the peace talks on 20 August, or by the faction of the Sudan Liberation**

**Movement headed by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM/A-AW), which refused to participate.** Based on the peace negotiations that began in September 2019, with the road map for peace called the Juba Declaration of Confidence-Building Measures and Preparation for Negotiation, signed by the government and the armed groups SRF, SLM-MM and SPLM-N led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, mediated by the government of South Sudan and backed by regional leaders such as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the parties resumed peace negotiations at the beginning of the year. In January, talks were held between the government and the SRF, though without the participation of the SPLM-N led by al-Hilu, which did not end in the signing of a comprehensive agreement by the agreed deadline of 14 February. Subsequently, on 21 February, the government and the SRF reached an agreement that established administrative status for the eastern states of the country and created a reconstruction fund. The talks between the government and the SRF again failed to meet the self-imposed deadline of 7 March to reach a comprehensive peace agreement, so they were postponed for a few days due to the death of Sudanese Defence Minister Jamal Omer from a heart attack. After months of negotiations that failed to meet the deadlines imposed on several occasions due to internal disagreements within the SRF rebel coalition, the SLM/A-MM faction and the JEM faction led by Bakheet Abdelkarim separated from the coalition in mid-May, establishing new peace negotiations with the government. Finally after a year of negotiations, the rebel coalition of the SRF,<sup>9</sup> the SLM/A-MM faction and the government of Sudan **signed a peace agreement in Juba on 31 August**, which was not ratified by al-Hilu's SPLM-N or by al-Nur's SLM/A-AW. The agreement was later formalised on 3 October, approved by the Sovereign Council and the cabinet on 12 October and incorporated into the constitutional declaration on 18 October. On 12 November, the chairman of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, signed the **decree granting a general amnesty to the leaders of the armed movements that had signed the agreement, as well as to the military and paramilitary forces involved in the armed conflicts.** The decree allowed SRF leaders and Minnawi to arrive in the capital, Khartoum, on 15 November to begin implementing the agreement. Some of the clauses established in the text establish the beginning of a three-year transitional period; the integration of former rebel leaders into the Sovereign Council (three positions), the ministerial cabinet (five portfolios, equivalent to 25% of the Council of Ministers) and the Transitional Legislative Council (25%, which is equivalent to 75 of the 300 seats); the establishment of

***The Sudanese government and the SRF and SLM/A-MM rebel groups signed a peace agreement after a year of negotiations to end the armed conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile***

a federal regional government system in Sudan; and the formation of a joint security force in Darfur with 12,000 initial members, half of them from the state security forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the other half consisting of former rebel fighters. In addition, according to the agreement, Darfur is considered a single region where power will be shared. The Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, plus West Kordofan, will have autonomy, where power will be divided as follows: the SPLM-N Agar will hold the position of governor in the state of Blue Nile and deputy governor in South and West Kordofan, entitled to 30% of the executive and legislative bodies in the state of Blue Nile and South and West Kordofan. Sudanese Finance Minister Heba Mohamed Ali Ahmed reported that the implementation of the peace agreement will cost 7.5 billion dollars over the next 10 years, of which 1.3 billion will be allocated to the reconstruction of Darfur.

Meanwhile, alongside the peace negotiations with the SRF and the SLM/A-MM, the government held **separate talks with the SPLM-N factions led by Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu.** On 24 January, a preliminary agreement was signed between the government and the Agar faction in which special status was granted to South Kordofan and Blue Nile, paving the way for the militants to integrate into the Sudanese Army. On 19 April, the parties entered into talks on wealth-sharing in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, reaching an agreement on 21 April that would also apply to the state of West Kordofan. Regarding the development of the peace negotiations with the SPLM-N faction headed by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, the year began with the extension of the unilateral ceasefire in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which was subsequently extended until January 2021. The al-Hilu faction had abandoned the peace negotiations that the government was conducting with the SRF and had signed a Declaration of Principles with Khartoum in 2019, establishing a different roadmap on the peace process in South Kordofan to study the movement's demands for self-determination and a secular state. After months without establishing spaces for dialogue between the parties, on 17 June the peace talks resumed, then stalled again in August. Between 2 and 5 September, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and al-Hilu met in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, agreeing to hold informal talks to discuss contentious issues, such as the separation of religion and the state and the right to self-determination with a view to resuming formal peace talks. On 29 October, talks between the parties resumed and continued until the end of the year. Finally, although the **Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM/A-AW)** announced the end

9. When the Peace Agreement was signed, the SRF coalition was made up of the faction of the Sudan-North People's Liberation Movement in the state of Blue Nile led by Malik Agar (SPLM-N Agar) and various rebel groups from Darfur: a faction of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the SLM Transitional Council, the Sudan Liberation Forces Group and the Sudanese Alliance, which includes 15 smaller rebel factions.

of violence in Darfur on 30 March, responding to the international appeal made by the UN Secretary-General to achieve a ceasefire allowing the application of health measures and prevent the spread of COVID-19, it also repeated its refusal to join the peace process, asking the United Nations to provide humanitarian support to civilians affected by the war in Darfur and to maintain UNAMID.

Finally, in early February, the UN Secretary-General agreed to the Sudanese government's request to establish a political mission in the country to support peacebuilding and development. In June 2020, the UN Security Council decided in UNSC Resolution 2524 (2020) to establish the **United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)**. The new political mission will complement the work of United Nations agencies and programmes in Sudan and will work closely with the transitional government and the people of Sudan in support of the transition, among other things, to promote gender equality and women's rights. In turn, UNITAMS will work closely together with the peacekeeping mission deployed in Darfur, UNAMID, focusing on the Juba peace process, peacebuilding and the protection of civilians, especially in Darfur. The UN Security Council intends for the mission to be deployed in the country on 1 January 2021.

## Gender, peace and security

The UN Security Council continued to support efforts to increase female participation in conflict prevention and mediation activities throughout the year, particularly through the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. UN Women continued to support the network, which included the deployment of network members to Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan. Furthermore, the Kampala-based women's organisation Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) reported that cases of sexual violence in Darfur, mainly in camps for internally displaced persons in the north, had increased by 50% between March and June since the application of the decreed anti-COVID-19 measures. The organisation called on the transitional government to establish mechanisms for prevention, justice and the protection of civilians, especially women.

| Sudan – South Sudan        |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government of Sudan, Government of South Sudan  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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.

**The rapprochement between the governments of South Sudan and Sudan that began in 2019 after the formation of the new Sudanese government continued, with progress made on diplomatic relations and border delimitations between both countries.** The highlights of the year included the mediation role played by the South Sudanese authorities in the Sudan peace process, which led to the signing of the peace agreement in Juba, South Sudan in August 2020 between the transitional government of Sudan and two armed groups, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minnawi (SLA-MM). Also significant was the agreement reached between both countries in September to form a joint technical committee with the aim of resuming oil production in the state of Unity and other key oil fields. In late October, the governments of both countries signed a joint military and defence cooperation agreement. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by South Sudanese Defence Minister Angelina Teny and her Sudanese counterpart, Ibrahim Yassin. The agreement includes “training, the exchange of experiences, the promotion of peace, disaster support and management and the fight against cross-border crimes, smuggling, human trafficking and activities that endanger peace”. The agreement was an important step in the normalisation of relations between the two countries after years of confrontation and mutual accusations of supporting and covering for rebel groups on both sides. The text also paved the way to resolve the situation of the disputed Abyei region, as well as the border demarcation issues pending resolution between both countries. Regarding this last aspect, **both parties agreed to open 10 border points, as well as to actively cooperate in oil production.** In October and November, the Sudan and South Sudan Boundary Demarcation Commission held a new round of negotiations. It is charged with defining the borders of five disputed areas under the auspices of the African Union.



The political process regarding the **final status of Abyei** and other border areas was relaunched during the year. A significant development was both sides' appointment of their respective administrators of the Abyei Special Administrative Zone, Lieutenant General Kuol Diem Kuol by Sudan and Gumaa Dawood Musa Hamdan by South Sudan. This was the first time that Abyei had two main administrators. In its report S/2020/1019 on the situation in Abyei, issued on 15 October 2020, the UN Security Council reported that bilateral relations were improving between Sudan and South Sudan. On 12 November, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) until May 2021, maintaining the maximum authorised deployment of 3,550 soldiers and 640 policemen.

The **negative events** of the year included the increase in instability in the Abyei region during the first half of the year due to armed clashes between members of Misseriya communities and Dinka herders. An attack by members of Misseriya communities in Abyei was reported in January that left 32 people dead. This generated tension and prompted both countries to sign an arms control protocol at the respective border checkpoints on 19 February. In April, clashes between nomadic Dinka herders and Misseriya were again reported, leaving at least six dead. Due to the deteriorating security situation in Abyei, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan agreed to cooperate to end the violence on 30 April. Subsequently, on 24 June, UNISFA reported an attack on a mission vehicle by unidentified armed agents, violating the ceasefire. At least four attacks on UNISFA personnel were reported in 2020. At different times of the year, the UN Mission held meetings with Dinka and Misseriya authorities, as well as with the authorities of the region, to try to promote a peace process at the local level. However, discrepancies between both sides, the continuation of sporadic violent episodes and measures to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 all hampered the resumption of the dialogue.

## Gender, peace and security

UNISFA reported several positive developments during the year in regard to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. For example, it highlighted the call for female participation in peace processes made by the co-chair appointed by South Sudan of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee in April. Furthermore, UNISFA heeded the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire on 12 May in cooperation with the Abyei Women's Association. A part of the Dinka community, the association issued a press release urging all armed groups to hold a ceasefire.

***Sudan and South Sudan made progress in the normalisation of diplomatic relations and border delimitation issues between them***

## Horn of Africa

| Eritrea – Ethiopia         |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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.

Two years after the signing of the historic peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, **the process to implement the agreement remained sat a standstill as a result of the escalating tension and start of the armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and the government of the Tigray region.** Although progress has been made in some areas, others have remained completely paralysed as a result of tension and the war that started in November between the federal government of Ethiopia and the region of Tigray, to which was added the unresolved animosity between Tigray and Eritrean leaders. In this last aspect, although the epicentre of the dispute is the border town of Badme, which is claimed by both countries, the causes run deeper, as indicated by the South African ISS in September.<sup>10</sup> These include

10. Tadesse Demissie, S. (2020), "The Eritrea-Ethiopia peace deal is yet to show dividends", *Institute for Security Studies*, 11 September.

historical rivalries, political and economic differences and hegemonic competition between the ruling elites of both countries, specifically between Eritrean leaders and the ruling party in Ethiopia's Tigray region, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopia's dominant political party until Abiy Ahmed came to power.

While the 2018 peace accord and the first steps in its implementation raised high expectations, two years later this potential waned due to the tensions generated in Badme. The region of Tigray and Eritrea share the contested border. Badme is also under Tigray's administration, so TPLF leaders in the region share responsibility for implementing the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC). However, the peace process started in Addis Ababa and there was no proper consultation or consensus building among stakeholders like the TPLF, as the ISS has pointed out. This exclusion, along with other political differences related to the TPLF's loss of power,<sup>11</sup> aggravated the division between the government of Abiy Ahmed and the TPLF government in Tigray. One point of contention is how to interact with Eritrea. In his inaugural speech in April 2018, Abiy announced his administration's unconditional acceptance of the stalled Algiers agreement signed in 2000 and aimed at ending the border war. In February 2020, Debretsion Gebremichael, the president of the Tigray region and leader of the TPLF, said that a structured peace process was needed that included all relevant parties, not just the two national leaders. The 2018 peace agreement requires the participation of the main political actors from both countries, including from the Tigray region. Added to this is hostility between the ruling elites of Eritrea and those of the Tigray region, which also hampers progress. Consequently, as the ISS stressed, rebuilding trust between the TPLF, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki is imperative for the implementation of the agreement to move ahead.

| Somalia                    |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | 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 |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | ONU, IGAD, Turquía, entre otros, UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Road map to end the transition (2011), Kampala Accord (2011), Provisional Federal Constitution (2012), Mogadishu Declaration of the National Consultative Forum (2015)   |

11. See the summary on Ethiopia (Tigray) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

12. See the summary on Somalia in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

### 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. Questioned for its ineffectiveness and corruption, this government managed to hold elections between 2016 and 2017, achieved progress and agreements in implementing the electoral process and the process of building the federation between the different Somali states and organised the elections between 2020 and 2021.

**The actions of the armed group al-Shabaab persisted during the year, as did operations launched by AMISOM and the United States against the armed group, causing hundreds of fatalities.<sup>12</sup> Some called for dialogue between the federal government and al-Shabaab, although no meetings were disclosed.** Meanwhile, tensions rose throughout the year between the federal government and the federated states regarding the holding of the parliamentary and presidential elections between December 2020 and February 2021, although in September an agreement was reached to make progress in the electoral process, breaking the impasse that threatened to delay the date beyond the constitutional limit for the current government, which would have added more uncertainty and tension to the situation.

The consultations between the federal government and the leaders of all the federated member states,

which began with a series of meetings in Dhusamareb in July, concluded in Mogadishu on 17 September with an agreement on the electoral model. On 22 June, President Mohamed Abdullahi “Farmajo” Mohamed had held a virtual meeting with the leaders of the federated member states and the governor of the Banaadir region. **It was the first time that all federal and state leaders met in a decision-making forum since June 2018**, marking an important step toward resuming dialogue and cooperation. The leaders agreed to hold a face-to-face summit in July.

In early September, President Farmajo met with the presidents of the member states of Puntland and Jubaland after they distanced themselves from the agreement in August. The heads of the five federal member states (the previous two plus Galmudug, Hirshabelle and South West) met on 13-17 September and agreed on an indirect framework for the 2020-2021 elections. In July, the Federal Parliament's Lower House passed a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Khairi, with 170 votes in favour and eight against. In introducing the motion, Speaker of Parliament Mohamed Sheikh Mursal Abdirahman accused the prime minister of not having prepared a clear plan to hold elections based on the principle of one person, one vote; completing federalism; deciding on the status of Mogadishu; finalising the review of the Constitution and holding a referendum on the issue; and establishing the political party system. President Farmajo announced that he accepted the decision and on 19 October the Lower House approved a new cabinet led by the new Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, who in turn had been appointed by Farmajo on 17 September. The 188 MPs voted in favour of the new cabinet, much of which was shaken up, while other ministers continued in their positions.

The model agreed in September was similar to the 2016 electoral model, as the electoral MP selection and clan-based constituencies were maintained. The electoral process will be carried out by newly established federal and state electoral committees rather than by the National Independent Electoral Commission. Compared to 2016, the new model increases the number of MPs for each member of Parliament in the Lower House from 51 to 101. MPs will be selected by traditional elders, state governments and civil society representatives. Voting will take place in Mogadishu and in two population centres in each federated member state, whereas only one site per state was enabled in 2016. Under the agreement, a 30% quota was also guaranteed for female representation in Parliament. The legislative bodies of the federated member states will select the members of the Upper House and the vote of the MPs representing “Somaliland” will take place in

Mogadishu. However, delays in preparations in 2020 sowed doubts about the process, as accelerating it could be detrimental to its transparency and legitimacy, which is why the International Crisis Group proposed delaying it for a few months.<sup>13</sup>

A new political party called Justice and Security was registered, notable due to the implications it entails, as it is led by the former vice-commander of al-Shabaab and a spokesperson for the group, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali, also known as Abu Mansur. Robow was under house arrest in Mogadishu and had left al-Shabaab in 2017 over disagreements with the group's leadership. Since then, he has suffered various attacks by al-Shabaab, and in December 2018 he was arrested after being prohibited from running for the president of South West state, which triggered protests and riots by young people in the region, including some that become very popular. Although the upcoming elections will not be based on a multi-party system, party registration means that Robow will attempt to run in future national elections, which must be multi-party. It should be recalled that the former UN Special Representative in Somalia Nicholas Haysom was expelled by the government at the end of 2018 on charges of meddling in the internal affairs of Somalia, as Haysom had questioned the arrest of Mukhtar Robow. Haysom was replaced in May 2019 by the American diplomat James Swan as the new UN envoy for Somalia.

Kenyan military officers who have participated in AMISOM pointed out that a change in strategy was necessary in the war in Somalia, as the military activity was proving ineffective against a group whose strength is based on faith in Islam. Various analysts have highlighted that the security strategy of the United States and the international community as a whole, which is backed by the Somali government, has been revealed to be a failure because it has not reduced the impact of al-Shabaab's activities and has killed many civilians. As such, various people have demanded a negotiating process with al-Shabaab similar to the one held in Afghanistan between the US and the Taliban. However, experts on the issue are divided on whether negotiations are actually possible today.

In June, direct talks were held between the federal government and Somaliland, the first since 2014. The last attempt at dialogue took place in 2015 at the initiative of Turkey and failed before it started. Thus, at the initiative of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Djiboutian President Ismaël Omar Guelleh, a direct meeting was held between the presidents of the federal government, Farmajo and of Somaliland, Muse Bihi Abdi. This meeting took place in Djibouti on 14 June in order to help to resume the dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland. The meeting had

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13. International Crisis Group, Staving off Violence around Somalia's Elections, Briefing 163 / Africa, International Crisis Group, 10 November 2020.

the support of the US and the EU. The two parties agreed to form a joint committee that met in Djibouti on 15-17 June, mediated by the Djiboutian foreign minister and facilitators from the US and the EU. The committee deliberated on the way forward for the talks, established three technical subcommittees on aid coordination, airspace management and security cooperation, and agreed to resume its work in Djibouti within 45 days.

## Gender, peace and security

The federal government assigned specific seats for the election in order to ensure the 30% quota of women foreseen in the agreed electoral model. On 3 September and 19 October, UNSOM consulted with women leaders on the steps necessary to reach the 30% quota and improve female political participation beyond the elections. Meanwhile, on 27 September, the Somaliland House of Representatives voted to remove a 22% quota for women's representation from the Somaliland election law.

In preparation for the upcoming elections, with financial assistance from a multi-partner trust fund, UN Women, the ministry of women's affairs and civil society organisations organised a training course for 200 female leaders and aspirants to hold political office in Gaalkacyo, Baidoa, Garoowe and Hargeysa. In addition, following a recent assessment of violence against women during elections in Somalia, UN Women facilitated the training of 100 representatives of civil society organisations on monitoring and reporting election-related violence in two courses that were held in Hargeysa and Garoowe on 30 September and 4 October, respectively. On 21-22 October, the Somali Women's Leadership Initiative held a forum on the political empowerment of women. The forum was attended by around 150 participants, including MPs, the chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission and prominent female leaders from the federated member states, the Banaadir region and Mogadishu, who discussed and debated options for ensuring the 30% representation quota for women. The female leaders issued a statement urging Somali leaders and international partners to support and reach the 30% quota for women in the 2020-21 elections and to support female goodwill ambassadors, who had played a key role during the 2016 electoral process. Finally, on 14 June, female leaders from the city of Xuddur met with the president of South West state, Abdiyaz Hassan Mohamed, aka "Laftagareen", to discuss the lack of representation of women in the current district council. The president assured them that the upcoming elections in Xuddur would follow a model implemented in the Diinsoor district, whereby 47% female representation had been achieved.

## Maghreb – North Africa

| Libya                      |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN), LNA or ALAF  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU); Italy, France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, among other countries; Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Libyan Political Agreement or Skhirat Agreement (2015)   |
| <b>Summary:</b>            | 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. |

In this scenario, **the Berlin Conference on Libya was held on 19 January, which had been postponed several times** previously. The meetings of the "Berlin process" had been activated in the previous semester and were part of the three-step initiative proposed by UN Special Envoy for Libya Ghassan Salamé in mid-2019. This included a ceasefire, an international meeting of the third countries involved in the Libyan crisis to guarantee an effective arms embargo and an intra-Libyan dialogue in three military, political and economic "tracks". The summit in Berlin brought together 12 countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, Algeria and the Republic of the Congo), as well as representatives of the UN, the EU, the Arab League and the African Union, but not the Libyan parties directly involved in the conflict. The conference, which by its composition and underlying dynamics encouraged comparisons with the meeting that decided the partition of Africa in 1885,<sup>14</sup> included a 55-point statement calling for a ceasefire, urging renewed commitment to the arms embargo and explicitly supporting a mediation process led by the UN and the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 as a frame of reference.<sup>15</sup> The military component, known as the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, made up of five

14. Ruth Ferrero, "La Cumbre de Berlín o la escenificación de un nuevo orden westfaliano", El Periódico, 21 January 2020.

15. UNSMIL, Berlin International Conference on Libya: Conference outcomes, Operational Paper, 19 January 2020.

representatives from each of the Libyan sides, held its first meeting in Geneva in early February. The political component began its meetings on 26 February, also in the Swiss capital, while the economic one held its first meeting in Tunis. The Berlin Conference also led to the establishment of an International Committee to monitor the process, with specific commissions following the evolution of different topics (including one on human rights and international humanitarian law).

Although UN Security Council Resolution 2510, approved on 12 February, ratified the results of the Berlin Conference, the process continued to face several obstacles in the following months, in which violations of the embargo and foreign support for the parties continued. In fact, **the hostilities did not stop, but intensified, despite the spread of COVID-19 and the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire** that would allow efforts to be focused on responding to the pandemic.<sup>16</sup> In this context, the UN special envoy for Libya, Ghassam Salamé, resigned. Evidencing his frustration, the Lebanese diplomat attributed his resignation to the hypocrisy of certain members of the UN Security Council who he accused of torpedoing his mediation efforts. The US diplomat Stephanie Williams remained as special envoy and the “acting” head of the UNSMIL, given the differences within the UN Security Council to designate a successor to Salamé. Nickolay Mladenov a Bulgarian diplomat and former special envoy for the Middle East was appointed to the post in December, but he declined days later and the position remained vacant at the end of the year.

In late April, Haftar announced in a televised statement that he accepted the “popular mandate” to abandon the political agreement promoted by the UN in 2015 and that his forces would assume control of the country's institutions. The movement generated divisions on his own side and accusations of coup by his adversaries. It was also interpreted as manoeuvring to block possible negotiations between the Tripoli government and the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and its leader Aghela Saleh, allied but not always fully aligned with Haftar's positions.<sup>17</sup> In the months that followed, some initiatives tried to prevent a further escalation of violence in the central part of the country given the evolution of the conflict, Haftar's withdrawal from the Libyan capital, the advance of the GNA forces and the oscillation of hostilities from Tripoli towards Sirte. In June, Turkey and Russia again issued a proposal that did not lead to a ceasefire. At the same time, Egypt, another key supporter of Haftar, which warned that Sirte

constituted a red line, outlined a road map for political negotiations that was rejected by the GNA and Turkey. It was not until two months later that movements began to be observed that led to a reduction in the fighting. On 21 August, the GNA announced a unilateral ceasefire and called for elections to be held in 2021. There was no direct response from Haftar, but one of his allies, the leader of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives, Aquila Saleh, also announced a truce. The coordinated declaration by the rival sides was interpreted as an attempt to outline a new scenario.

***At the end of the year, the parties to the conflict in Libya signed a ceasefire agreement and there were political negotiations to attempt to establish a transitional government, while doubts persisted about how the process was generally developing***

**On 23 October, the parties formalised a permanent ceasefire agreement.** The deal became official after several days of meetings in Geneva (in the fourth round, but the first in person) of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. All 10 delegates of the Libyan groups were men, but the acting UN special envoy was a woman. Analysts said that two previous meetings of representatives of the rival sides in late September were key to the signing of the truce: one meeting held in Sochi, Russia, to end the oil blockade, and another between senior military officials in the Egyptian resort of Hurgada, facilitated by the UNSMIL.<sup>18</sup> The ceasefire agreement provides that all military units and armed groups must withdraw from the battle lines

to their bases within a maximum period of three months and that all mercenaries and foreign combatants must leave Libyan territory, airspace and maritime space. Likewise, military training programmes are planned to be suspended until a new government is formed. The beginning of the demobilisation of armed groups and some confidence-building measures are also planned. In early November, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission held its first meeting in Libya in the western town of Ghadames. Some analysts said at the time that the ambiguous wording of the agreement and the lack of specificity on some points could favour disparate interpretations and make implementation difficult. Others pointed out that foreign powers would hardly withdraw without obtaining dividends from their military involvement.

At the same time, political negotiations known as the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) held their key sessions between 9 and 15 November in Tunisia. In it, a road map was designed that plans for the parliamentary and presidential elections to be held on 24 December 2021, the 70th anniversary of the Libyan Republic. This forum was preceded by other attempts at dialogue, including a meeting of key Libyan actors in Montreux (Switzerland) facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and attended by the UNSMIL in September. Morocco also promoted spaces for intra-Libyan

16. See the summary on Libya in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Libya, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

17. International Crisis Group, *Interpreting Haftar's Gambit in Libya*, Middle East & North Africa, 4 May 2020.

18. International Crisis Group, *Fleshing Out the Libya Ceasefire Agreement*, Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Briefing No.80, 4 November 2020.

dialogue, including a meeting of delegations from the House of Representatives and the High Council of State in Bouznika, in October; and a meeting of more than 120 Libyan MPs in Tangiers in late November, where after five days of debate they pledged to put an end to the hate speech undermining Libyan institutions.

At the end of the year, however, doubts and scepticism about the process in general persisted. The acting special representative for Libya announced that the LPDF had failed to agree on the mechanism to designate a transitional government to lead the country until the elections, despite the holding of six virtual rounds since the November appointment in Tunis. According to her, differences persisted on how to choose the three members of the Presidential Council and the prime minister. Despite this, the UN also decided to activate a committee in December to define the legal framework for the 2021 elections. In the economic sphere, the most complex controversies revolved around how to channel the income from oil sales. Amid cross accusations of violations of the truce agreement and complaints about the military reinforcement of both sides, at the end of the year (29 December), the UN Secretary-General proposed to establish an international monitoring group to support compliance with the ceasefire. Some analysts suggested that despite the negative signs, the powers involved in the conflict did not seem to have the will to resume hostilities and that some regional dynamics, such as the détente between Qatar and other Arab countries, could shrink Libya's prospects as a theatre of indirect confrontation for these actors.<sup>19</sup>

## Gender, peace and security

The 17 Libyan women of the total of 75 participants in the LPDF political dialogue or political “track” issued a joint statement in mid-November in which they underlined the importance of the involvement of women in the peace process, dialogue, the reconstruction of the state and reconciliation in the country. Raising UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and the results of prior meetings facilitated by the UNSMIL, the participants expressed their adherence to a set of principles and made recommendations for the process. They included guarantees of effective female representation in making up the executive branch of government (not less than 30%); pledges to respect the rights of women and their participation in political life; demands that one of the two deputy prime minister posts be a woman; action to combat discrimination against women, including survivors of violence related to the conflict; special protection for female politicians and activists; and the promotion of fair representation of all components of society, including at least 20% of them young people.<sup>20</sup>

The road map approved by the LPDF included a commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and to gender equality. Some key principles for sustainable peace developed by representatives of civil society were also “appended” to the road map. These principles were identified in two sessions in October and November that were facilitated by the international monitoring committee in charge of human rights and IHL issues (coordinated by the Netherlands, Switzerland and UNSMIL). They included guarantees of equal rights for women, of equitable and meaningful female participation in all spaces conducive to peace and of the consideration of specific gender impacts in any peace agreement before its adoption, as well as a gender analysis during implementation. In December UN Women warned about threats to the women participating at LPDF and demanded protection and security guarantees to the female participants and women involved in other activities at the political sphere.

Meanwhile, Libyan women's organisations such as Together We Build It stressed the importance of more specific references to women's participation and the promotion of gender equality in the UN resolutions on Libya and of promoting accountability mechanisms. Activists from the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP) also warned of a lack of confidence among political actors in women's abilities and stressed that the empowerment of women must go hand-in-hand with the disempowerment of men of war. Women's groups criticised the persistence of violence against women despite the ceasefire agreement, especially after the murder of anti-corruption activist and human rights promoter Hanan Elbarassi.

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

19. International Crisis Group, Foreign Actors Drive Military Build-up amid Deadlocked Political Talks, Crisis Group Libya Update #2, 24 December 2020.

20. UNSMIL, Statement of the Libyan Women Participating in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, 15 November 2020.

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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.

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The Western Sahara issue continued to be characterised by chronic deadlock and paralysis of the diplomatic channel to address and resolve the dispute, a situation that fuelled an escalation of tension towards the end of the year.<sup>21</sup> Morocco persisted in defending that its autonomy plan was the only viable way to move towards a solution to the conflict. Meanwhile, the POLISARIO Front blasted the inability of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to fulfil its mandate, which includes holding a referendum, as the name suggests, and warned that it was reconsidering its participation in the UN peace process. In this sense, it should be noted that **the office of the personal envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara remained vacant throughout 2020 and in his annual report on Western Sahara in September, António Guterres acknowledged that there was a “pause” in the political process resulting from the resignation of Horst Köhler in May 2019.** At the time, the former German president managed to activate a timid round table process between Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania that held two rounds (in December 2018 and March 2019). The process was completely paralysed after Köhler’s resignation attributed to health reasons.

The UN Secretary-General’s annual report on Western Sahara also warned of increasing violations of the provisions relating to the ceasefire in force since 1991, particularly east of the berm, in the period between October 2019 and August 2020. Guterres expressed his concern about the distancing of the parties, the persistent lack of trust between them and the multiplication of gestures that could undermine the ceasefire and be a source of tension, to the detriment of a negotiated solution. Thus, he called on Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to participate in the political process in good faith and without conditions as soon as he appointed a personal envoy and emphasised the need to find a “fair, lasting and mutually acceptable solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara”. In October, shortly before the renewal of the MINURSO mandate, the head of the mission again warned the UN Security Council about an increase in violations of military agreement number 1, which regulates the truce.

**This scenario gave rise to an escalation of tension. The epicentre was Guerguerat, an area that had already been the subject of disputes in recent years** and that was the scene of Sahrawi demonstrations and barricades throughout 2020. The POLISARIO Front has repeatedly denounced Guerguerat as an illicit passage or illegal breach. On 21 October, around 50 Sahrawis blocked traffic in this area, located between Mauritania and the part of Western Sahara occupied by Morocco, and they demonstrated to ask that the UN Security Council –which at that time was discussing the renewal of the MINURSO mandate–, to fulfil the task of holding a referendum on self-determination. In line with what happened in recent years, Resolution 2548 was approved on 30 October with wording supportive of the Moroccan position: with no explicit mention of the referendum and emphasising the need for a “realistic, practicable and lasting political solution” to the question of Western Sahara. The Sahrawi protests in Guerguerat persisted and on 13 November, Moroccan forces entered theoretically demilitarised area (buffer zone) to break them up and re-establish commercial traffic. Faced with the incursion, the POLISARIO Front ended the ceasefire and declared a state of war. Morocco avoided using the term “war” and assured that it remained committed to the ceasefire, but warned of a forceful response in the event of a threat to its security.

***The peace process in Western Sahara continued to be characterised by chronic deadlock and paralysis of the diplomatic channel to address and resolve the dispute, a situation that fuelled an escalation of tension towards the end of the year***

Various analysts said that with this approach, the POLISARIO Front intended to shake up the status quo, respond to the frustration of generations of young people in refugee camps who have been waiting for decades for a political solution and challenge the Moroccan strategy of silencing and covering up the conflict. The UN Secretary-General lamented the failure of his organisation’s efforts to prevent escalation, expressed his concern, called to maintain the integrity of the ceasefire and underlined his determination to remove obstacles to reactivate the political process. Despite its responsibilities as the administering power of Western Sahara, Spain maintained a discreet position, formally limited to supporting the UN initiatives to guarantee the truce.

Since mid-November, the POLISARIO Front mobilised its forces, carried out periodic attacks on Moroccan bases and announced casualties on the enemy side, though these were not confirmed by Rabat, though it did not report any casualties among its own ranks. Other sources reported exchanges of low-intensity fire at points along the 2,700-kilometre barrier built by Morocco. At the same time, there was an increase in harassment and repression in the Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara, including raids, arrests, attacks, increased surveillance and suppression of demonstrations in towns such as

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21. See the summary on Morocco-Western Sahara in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

Laayoune, Smara, Dakhla and Boujdour. The general situation was complex to assess due to the lack of access by independent observers. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch stressed that although no civilian victims had been reported in the hostilities, the events reinforced the need for an effective mechanism to monitor the human rights situation, including competences in this area by MINURSO, which Rabat has continuously rejected.

In this context, on 10 December, the **United States issued a declaration “proclaiming” Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a position that the Trump administration adopted in exchange for Rabat “normalising” diplomatic relations with Israel** and breaking with Washington’s traditional position on the matter. In fact, while other countries have been in favour of Western Sahara’s future status as an autonomous territory within Morocco, Trump’s decision made the US the first country to recognise Morocco’s unilateral annexation of the territory. The US described its support for the Moroccan autonomy plan as the sole basis for a “serious, credible, realistic and lasting” solution to the dispute, but added that the US “recognizes Moroccan sovereignty over the entire territory of Western Sahara” and underlined that “an independent Sahrawi state is not a realistic option to resolve the conflict”.<sup>22</sup> The POLISARIO Front condemned the announcement, claiming that it violated the legitimacy of international resolutions and obstructed efforts to reach a solution. Washington announced that it would open a consulate in Laayoune. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), which also signed an agreement with Israel in August at the request of the United States, opened a diplomatic office in the same city in November and media outlets reported that Bahrain and Jordan, two other allies of Washington in the region, would follow this path. Previously, throughout the year, various African countries (Burundi, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, CAR and São Tomé and Príncipe) also decided to inaugurate “general consultants” in Laayoune and Dakhla, which was criticised by the POLISARIO Front for threatening the non-autonomous territorial status of Western Sahara.

Although Trump’s deal with Morocco was presented as a success and strengthened Rabat’s position, no changes were foreseen in the approach of the UN, the African Union or the European Union and the position that the new US administration starting in 2021 would take in this regard was unclear. In late 2020, at Germany’s request, a closed-doors videoconference was held with the members of the UN Security Council to analyse the evolution of the most recent events. According to reports, the videoconference was attended by Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita and the special representative and head of MINURSO, Colin Stewart. Council members were expected to insist on the swift appointment of a new personal envoy to prevent a deterioration of the situation and to strengthen UN mediation efforts.

## Gender, peace and security

Faced with the developments in 2020, some Sahrawi groups, including Sahrawi feminists and pacifists, asked the Spanish authorities to assume their responsibility in the decolonisation process of Western Sahara and to show greater political initiative at the recent crossroads. Likewise, they stressed the need for a non-violent solution and called on the POLISARIO Front to de-escalate due to the serious consequences that resuming the armed conflict may have for the Saharawi population. At the same time, Sahrawi activists continued their protests and denunciations of Moroccan repression in the part of Western Sahara controlled by Rabat.

## Southern Africa

| Mozambique                 |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, the RENAMO armed group   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Rome peace agreement (1992), Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2019)  |
| <b>Summary:</b>            | 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, 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, achieving the signing of a new peace agreement in August 2019, though sporadic clashes persist. |

22. White House, *Proclamation on Recognizing the Sovereignty Of The Kingdom Of Morocco Over The Western Sahara*, 10 December 2020.



**The implementation of the 2019 peace agreement began in 2020 with the launch of the combatant disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme, although the planned objective of dismantling all RENAMO military bases by August 2020 was not achieved.** One of the fundamental points of the peace agreement signed in August 2019 between the Mozambican government and RENAMO, known as the Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, concerns the DDR programme for around 5,000 RENAMO combatants and the dismantling of the 17 military bases in the centre of the country. The programme started with a significant delay, and it was not until April that the President Filipe Nyusi and RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade announced that the programme would resume. In mid-June, the UN special envoy for Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni, announced the demobilisation of around 300 combatants and the dismantling of the first military base in Savane, Dondo District, Sofala Province. This was welcomed as an important step in building trust between the parties, paving the way and fulfilling expectations for the rest of the combatants, as well as for the gradual closing of 16 RENAMO military bases. During the third quarter of the year, it was reported that approximately 500 former combatants had demobilised, which represents 10% of the 5,000 planned. The initial disagreements between the parties, as well as the start of the global health crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic and the containment restrictions in the country, made it difficult to implement the clauses of the peace agreement. According to the African NGO ACCORD, the levels and characteristics of community transmission of COVID-19 in the country required implementation of major containment restrictions by the government, which affected the demilitarisation process in different ways: by reducing the mobility of the technical team members in charge of implementing the DDR process; by preventing large sessions from being held due to social distancing and the prohibition of holding meetings of more than 20 people; and by inhibiting some social practices, such as how the community welcomes former combatants, which makes reintegration difficult. This reality created an extension of the planned schedule, with an impact on the increase in the logistical costs of the programme, since, for example, RENAMO combatants will have to spend more time at the billeting bases, which will require new funds from the government and the international community.

Meanwhile, the dissident splinter group of RENAMO, calling itself RENAMO's Military Junta (JMR), which refused to recognise the August 2019 peace agreement, continued with its armed actions in the central part of the country, which meant new complications for the implementation of peace. On 19 March, Mariano Nhongo, the leader of the dissidents, threatened to increase armed activity if the government refused to comply with his demands. On 5 June, US Special Envoy

Mirko Manzoni announced his intention to meet with Nhongo to start peace talks. However, days later, on 19 June, he reported that attempts to negotiate had failed. Subsequently, on 24 October, the government announced a week-long unilateral ceasefire in the provinces of Sofala and Manica, the areas affected by the violence, in an attempt to boost peace talks. Nhongo declared that he was willing to negotiate with Nyusi but not with RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade. However, this negotiation attempt also failed. Nhongo denounced violations of the ceasefire and harassment of his combatants by government forces. At the end of the year, the attacks in the central area resulted in at least 30 people killed, mainly due to ambushes carried out on the roads in the area. RENAMO distanced itself from the violent actions of the dissident group, reaffirming its commitment to the peace agreement. On 23 December, Nhongo announced a unilateral ceasefire on behalf of JMR, promising to negotiate with the government.

At the same time, in relation to the violence in the northern province of Cabo Delgado,<sup>23</sup> Nyusi's government had ruled out starting talks with the rebels in January. However, on 12 February, it announced that it was willing to initiate peace talks. Although there is no evidence that these occurred during the year, in August the government announced that the solution to the armed conflict in Cabo Delgado was not solely military, reporting the creation of a new economic development agency for the northern province, the Integrated Northern Development Agency (ADIN). According to the government, its main functions included providing humanitarian aid and promoting economic development and youth employment in order to avoid their recruitment by the armed groups operating in the region.

## West Africa

| Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>                      | Government, political-military secessionist movement formed by the opposition coalition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako) and Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku)  |
| <b>Third parties</b>                           | Catholic Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>                     | Buea Declaration (1993, AAC1), National Dialogue (30th September-4th October, 2019)   |
| <b>Summary:</b>                                | 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 |

23. See the summary on Mozambique (north) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 2021.

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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. In July 2018, the religious leaders of the Anglophone community (Muslims, Protestants and Catholics) announced a plan to hold an Anglophone general conference (which would be the AAC3) but it has not yet taken place. In June 2019 a part of the separatist opposition, led by the ACT coalition, met with government representatives in Switzerland under the auspices of HD, with the rejection of the main political-military movement, the AGovC. In October 2019, Paul Biya's government carried out the National Dialogue without the secessionist movement present. None of the initiatives to date has made substantial progress.

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After three years of a high climate of violence and serious human rights violations as a result of the armed conflict affecting the two regions with an English-speaking majority in Cameroon, on 2 July the first talks were held between the government and part of the separatist movement led by the historical leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe to try to reach a ceasefire agreement. Many local and international actors participated in the meeting, along with important members of Cameroonian civil society. Ayuk Tabe participated in the talks along with nine other separatist leaders in response to the call made by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in March for a global ceasefire during the course of the coronavirus pandemic. The government delegation was led by the head of the Cameroonian intelligence services, Léopold Maxime Eko Eko, and consisted of officials from

the presidency and the office of Prime Minister Joseph Ngute. However, other separatist groups in Cameroon and abroad rejected the talks, since the secessionist movement is fragmented into various factions, some of which do not recognise Ayuk Tabe's leadership, and argued that he did not have a mandate to negotiate. The government made no statements about the meeting later and Secretary of the Presidency Ferdinand Ngoh denied information reported by the secessionist movement regarding tension within the government regarding the peace initiative.

The secessionist forces number between 2,000 and 4,000 combatants and are divided into two rival interim governments known as the Interim Government (IG). One is led by Ayuk Tabe, who is currently serving a sentence of life in prison for terrorism, and the second is led by Samuel Ikome Sako, a pastor based in Maryland in the United States. IG Sisiku is locally considered the stronger of the two groups.<sup>24</sup> The split came after Ayuk Tabe's arrest in Nigeria along with other senior officials known as the Nera 10 (after the hotel where they were detained) and their subsequent extradition to Cameroon in January 2018. Ayuk Tabe was the president of the IG, but after his arrest, Sako was chosen to be the new president of the IG. This step was criticised by many groups and described as lacking transparency. In 2019, peace talks took place in Switzerland between the government and separatist leaders in exile linked to Sako's group, but the talks were dismissed by Ayuk Tabe and had no tangible results on the ground.<sup>25</sup> Friction between both groups, mostly based on the diaspora, is shifting to Cameroon, and one of the important issues was what real control the diaspora leadership had over its combatants on the ground. After the national dialogue held in October 2019, the government announced a new special status for English-speaking regions in January, which led to the creation of more regional legislative bodies, but this did not involve any substantial changes either and had no consequences on the ground, so the clashes and the security forces' counterinsurgency activity continued.

The three rounds of talks between the government and Ayuk Tabe's group, the last of which was publicised on 2 July, were held outside Kondengui central prison, where Ayuk Tabe is being held, and were considered confidence-building measures. The first secret meeting took place in Ghana between Eko Eko and secessionist diaspora figures such as Ebenezer Akwanga and Herbert Boh. The second meeting took place on 13 April in the episcopal centre of Mvolyé, in Yaoundé. It was facilitated by the Catholic Church, which is seen as neutral, and Ayuk Tabe participated in it.<sup>26</sup> The third round took place in Mvolyé. The demands raised included the demilitarisation of the Anglophone regions (such as the concentration of the Cameroonian Armed Forces in their barracks, so that

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24. Bone, R. Maxwell, "Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist movements", *The New Humanitarian*, 8 July 2020.

25. See *Escola de Cultura de Pau, Peace Talks in Focus 2020: Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Barcelona: Icaria, January 2020.

26. *Jeune Afrique, Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: Rivalries hamper peace talks*, 11 August 2020.

the police and the gendarmerie would have absolute responsibility for the security of the two regions), the release of prisoners and an amnesty to allow leaders in exile to return. Ayaba, the head of the AGovC, indicated that he would comply with a ceasefire if the government accepted it. According to analysts, the talks could reflect the population's fatigue after three years of conflict, as well as pressure from the international community, which has pushed the secessionist movement and the government to the talks. In a statement addressed to the insurgency, the secessionist political leaders said that "no war has been won only on the battlefield and that real and sustainable peace and independence are the product of the negotiating table". However, the peace talks stalled due to a power struggle between Prime Minister Ngute and Secretary of the Presidency Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh.<sup>27</sup> Ngute reportedly excluded Ngoh Ngoh from the talks, despite having been the one who had led the meetings in the Swiss track. After the Mvolyé meeting, Ngoh Ngoh denied that these talks were real and reactivated the Swiss track. On 2 August, a Swiss delegation led by the diplomat and former Swiss ambassador to Georgia, Günter Bächler, met in Yaoundé with political actors linked to the separatist movement and other supporters of federalist and decentralisation options. On 4 August, they met with Cardinal Ntumi in Buea and later with the lawyer Felix Agbor Balla and other English-speaking figures. Thus, the government was divided into two camps: those who advocate a negotiated solution to the conflict, led by Ngute, and those who oppose the talks, led by Ngoh Ngoh. The division does not follow along linguistic lines and could hide a struggle to replace Paul Biya as head of the government, according to analysts.<sup>28</sup> If the hard line prevails and the Mvolyé track fails, the consequences for the country could be serious. Events on the ground in the latter part of the year seemed to strengthen the groups most reticent to participating in the talks.

## Gender, peace and security

Civil society efforts led by women in Cameroon have been at the forefront of developing innovative approaches to address the rise in violence and promote gender-equal peace. The Cameroonian branch of the Women's International League for Peace (WILPF Cameroon) worked with civil society organisations to advocate for women's full and meaningful political participation, address the gender impact of growing security challenges linked to conflict and harness the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda for action. As part of its mission to build sustainable peace with women as key strategic actors, WILPF Cameroon has established partnerships with media companies to raise awareness of the WPS agenda and raise awareness among communities for change. WILPF Cameroon also published a report in

October analysing the gender dimension of conflicts in Cameroon.<sup>29</sup> The study had been conducted between 2019 and March 2020 in order to better understand the current divisions producing conflict and instability in Cameroon. This analysis specifically captures the lived experiences and grievances of women and girls from different parts of Cameroonian society on their own terms and seeks to create a space to support women's efforts in prevention, mediation and participation in conflict resolution, despite the significant and persistent obstacles to effective female participation in peace and security processes.

| Mali                       |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) –MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA      |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Carter Center, civil society organisations, Mauritania |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 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.

**Very little progress was made during the year in implementing the Algiers Peace Agreement of 2015 due to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the socio-political crisis in Mali that led to a coup d'état and to the establishment of a transitional government. Regarding the headway made in implementing the peace agreement, the year began with talks on security**

27. Op. Cit.

28. Bone, R. Maxwell, "Political Infighting Could Obstruct a Nascent Peace Process in Cameroon", WPR, 22 September 2020.

29. WILPF, Gender Conflict Analysis in Cameroon, 29 October 2020.

and pacification in the north of the country held by the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and Platform in Ménaka, between 7 and 8 January. During the talks, the parties that had signed the peace agreement signed an accord on security arrangements to avoid confrontation between their respective local factions, committing to join forces in the Ménaka region. An important step in the implementation of the peace agreement came in mid-February, when the reconstituted Malian Army, a mixed force made up of national troops and integrated forces of armed groups that signed the 2015 agreement, began to deploy in the northern regions, with the first mixed military unit reaching Kidal on 13 February, a milestone that returned the Malian Armed Forces to the city after six years of absence. In its first follow-up report of the year, dated April 2020,<sup>30</sup> the Carter Center, designated in 2017 as an independent observer centre for the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement, highlighted two major challenges to it: (1) the recurring problem of the redistribution of administrative and electoral districts, which led to the under-representation of the northern regions in the legislative elections of March and April 2020; and (2) the persistent inconsistencies and disagreements between the groups that signed it, which could undermine the deployment of the reconstituted Malian Army. Regarding the second point, the Carter Center stressed the disagreements between the signatory parties in the application of DDR and the reform of the defence and security sector, which are linked to inconsistencies and problems in the process of reintegrating combatants due to delays in the programme and the attrition of soldiers who were already integrated; disagreements over redeployment locations, their plan and the number of soldiers deployed; problems related to a lack of government resources; and obstacles to redeployment of the reconstituted Malian Army due to a lack of clarity about the role and responsibilities of units, struggles over the command structure and the ambiguity surrounding the future of the Operational Coordination Mechanism (MOC). The Carter Center concluded that although the greatest efforts are being made to promote the Technical Security Committee (CTS), with a focus on security issues, the problems demonstrated the fragility of the process related to the deployment of integrated troops in the north and their possible future obstacles. Thus, the report argued that the enormous importance of the implementation of security sector reform is neglecting progress in other political aspects that were fundamental to the 2012 rebellion, as represented by the breach of the commitments of political decentralisation, threatening

*The government of Mali and other domestic and foreign actors opened the possibility of exploring ways to negotiate peace with jihadist groups*

to undermine sustainable peace in Mali. In the second report, dated 16 December, the Carter Center indicated the little progress made in the implementation of the agreement in 2020 due to the country's socio-political crisis, which resulted in the fall of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's government in August to a military coup. The coup opened a new transition process led by the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), which declared that all past agreements will be respected, which included the Algiers Peace Agreement, support for MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, the G5 Sahel force and the European special forces of the Takuba initiative.<sup>31</sup> Later, after a few months of negotiations and internal and external pressure on the Military Junta, **a civilian and military transitional government was formed in October in which the armed groups that had signed the Algiers Peace Agreement agreed to participate and were awarded some ministerial portfolios such as the ministry of agriculture and fishing and the ministry of youth and sport.** This meant that representatives of all the movements that signed the agreement were members of the government for the first time. According to the Carter Center assessment, five years after the agreement was signed, even though all the intermediate steps have been completed, the challenge lies in acting on the central provisions of the agreement, which include improving representation the northern population in national institutions and decentralising governance; completing the DDR process; reforming the security sector, including the training and effective redeployment of the reconstituted Malian Army; implementing economic development projects in the northern regions as established in chapter 4; promoting the reform of the judicial system; and taking key steps in transitional justice, with a view to enhancing national reconciliation.<sup>32</sup>

In other developments during the year, the Malian government opened the door to beginning **peace negotiations with some jihadist groups that had not signed the Algiers Peace Agreement.** On 10 February, President Keita announced his support for talks between the government and the jihadist leaders Amadou Kouffa (Macina Liberation Front) and Iyad Ag Ghaly (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, or GSIM) for the first time. The appeal prompted the GSIM to announce its willingness to enter into talks on 8 March, on the condition that the French forces of Operation Barkhane and the UN mission in the country (MINUSMA) withdraw from Mali. In turn, according to media reports, the GSIM's position disillusioned members opposed to negotiations with the government, leading to desertions

30. The Carter Center, "Report of the Independent Observer. Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Resulting from the Algiers Process", April 2020.

31. See the summary on Mali in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

32. The Carter Center, "Report of the Independent Observer. Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Resulting from the Algiers Process", December 2020.

from the organisation as they joined the ranks of Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP or ISGS). The GSIM's decision also started an open war against ISWAP. Subsequently, on 3 June, French forces announced the death of AQIM leader Abdelmalik Droukdal in an operation in Kidal. His death gave GSIM leader Iyad Ag Ghaly more room to manoeuvre. Later, **the GSIM and the government agreed to a prisoner exchange, which was welcomed by African Union Peace and Security Commissioner Smail Chergui and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, expressing their openness to dialogue with jihadist militants in the Sahel.** The change in these actors' position reflected the need to involve all armed groups in dialogue to stop the violence, regardless of their ideological beliefs. However, while the prime minister of the Malian transitional government, Moctar Ouane, also said that the Malian people were ready to enter into dialogue, France publicly rejected any talks with jihadist groups. However, at the end of the year,

the French position became more nuanced in this regard, opening up the possibility of dialogue with a representative and legitimate counterpart.

### **Gender, peace and security**

According to the Carter Center's December report, the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) and various international partners have actively promoted female participation in peace agreement monitoring bodies. During the CSA sessions in June and November, nine women participated (three for each signatory party), which represents real progress over the composition of previous CSAs. However, the Carter Center indicated that the inclusion of women in the four subcommittees and the other executive bodies is still pending, as well as the creation of the women's observatories in the northern regions.

## 3. Peace negotiations in America

- Four dialogue processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia, one in Venezuela and one in Haiti, which account for 10% of the negotiations that took place during 2020.
- Turkey facilitated dialogue and an agreement between the Venezuelan Government and Venezuelan opposition leader and former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles.
- Despite pressure from the international community to resume the inter-Haitian national dialogue, it did not continue throughout the year or lead to significant agreements.
- The implementation of the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC continued, though with serious difficulties due to the increasing violence in the country and the murder of human rights activists and defenders.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in the Americas in 2020, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on both continents 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 the Americas that hosted peace negotiations during 2020.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors                          | Third parties   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Colombia (FARC)                  | Government, FARC                            | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)  |
| Colombia (ELN)                   | Government, ELN                             | --  |
| Haiti                            | Government, political and social opposition | Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee, United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Apostolic Nunciature, Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and governments of Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain and USA) |
| Venezuela                        | Government, political and social opposition | Norway, Turkey, International Contact Group   |

### 3.1 Negotiations in 2020: regional trends

In 2020, the Americas were the scene of four peace processes, one less than in 2019. As in previous years, two of the processes took place in Colombia, one in Venezuela and one in Haiti, while the talks in Nicaragua were terminated. The implementation of the peace agreement reached in 2016 between the Government of Colombia and the FARC continued in a process marked by obstacles and difficulties, but also by some progress and by the proper functioning of several of the institutions that emerged from the peace agreement, such as the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The process between the Government and the ELN guerrilla group continued to be officially deadlocked, although calls for their resumption continued and a ceasefire was observed during the year motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the UN Secretary-General's call for a global cessation of hostilities to facilitate the fight against the coronavirus. In Venezuela and Haiti, attempts at dialogue between governments and the opposition continued to be political in nature and were aimed at solving the socio-political crises in both countries.

Regarding the **actors**, the participation of respective governments should be highlighted in all the different negotiating processes, although in Colombia, the Government did not negotiate directly with the ELN, since it continued to reject any formal negotiating process so long as the guerrilla group does not accept the conditions proposed by Bogotá. The ELN was the only active armed group in the Americas to demand a negotiating process to resolve the conflict. In the process to implement the agreement with the FARC, the main actors were the Government and the political party that emerged from the demobilisation of the FARC-EP guerrilla group as a result of the peace agreement. Both in Venezuela and in Haiti, the main protagonists of the negotiating processes were the respective governments and political and social opposition organisations.

**Third parties** played an important role in the negotiating processes in the Americas and participated actively in facilitating them. However, it should be noted that in the dialogue between the ELN and

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2020

the Colombian Government, the breakdown of the formal peace negotiations led to the deactivation of the current facilitation scheme while the active process lasted, in which guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile) and accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy) had participated. In the implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC, the format of previous years was maintained in which the third parties in charge of verifying said implementation were the UN Verification Mission in Colombia and the International Component of Verification formed by the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute and the Notables, whose technical secretariat was held by the Colombian organisations CINEP and CERAC. In Venezuela, Norway and the International Contact Group continued to promote dialogue between the opposition and the Maduro Government. It is worth highlighting Turkey's involvement in the process, which included a visit to the country by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, after which agreements were reached regarding prisoners and exiles. The Venezuelan process was characterised by a high degree of internationalisation and the involvement of multiple governments and international organisations, not only in facilitating dialogue, but also with their own political agendas. In other cases, a combination of local and international actors carried out different tasks to facilitate and support the negotiations. In Haiti, the actors who performed facilitation tasks acquired a more important

role than in previous years in the search for a solution to the country's political crisis, with the involvement of both local and international actors. The Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee, the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the Apostolic Nunciature and the Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and the governments of Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain and the USA) were the central actors there. Some international facilitators worked closely with local actors, as in the case of the Apostolic Nunciature and the Haitian Episcopal Conference. Cooperation between international and local actors also took place in Colombia, as established by the 2016 peace agreement itself.

The different **negotiating agendas** in the Americas were closely related to the particular aspects of each context, although all of them were connected to the governance of the different countries. In the Haitian crisis, aspects of the country's institutional and political operation were the central issues around which differences between the Government and the opposition revolved, such as the convenience or inconvenience of constitutional reform and the holding of new elections. In Venezuela, both the electoral issue and the situation of exiled and imprisoned opposition figures dominated much of the agenda in the different meetings held. In Colombia, the process with the FARC was focused on the implementation of the peace agreement and the fulfilment of the different commitments, but a large part of the agenda was shaped by the security situation in the country, given the growing number of murders of social leaders,

human rights defenders and former FARC combatants. The Colombian Government held to its position of not resuming peace talks with the ELN so long as the armed group did not comply with the demands for a unilateral end to the violence and an end to kidnappings.

Regarding the **evolution** of the different negotiating processes, there was little notable progress for yet another year and all the processes in the Americas were in a highly fragile situation as a consequence of the serious political and social crises that the different countries were going through. Thus, the different processes faced significant obstacles and even situations of permanent impasse, as in the case of the talks between the ELN and the Colombian Government, suspended since 2019. The positive response of the armed group to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic did not serve to reactivate the peace process, given the government's rejection of the armed group's proposal. As in previous years, some negotiations took place in contexts of violence (such as in Colombia and Haiti) and continued to be affected by serious mistrust between the parties and towards the facilitating actors, once again shaping attempts to overcome the different crises.

Regarding the **women, peace and security agenda**, gender equality continued to be excluded from most negotiating processes and was only relevant in the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia. Colombian women's organisations remained active in the implementation process and exercised leadership to ensure that the rights of women and the LGTBI population were not excluded from said implementation. Its participation in the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice and Reparation is especially noteworthy. However, as in previous years, the gender gap between implementation of the peace agreement as a whole and the specific provisions related to the gender approach was verified, as the Kroc Institute found in its follow-up report on the implementation of said focus. There was no significant participation or inclusion of gender agendas in the rest of the negotiating processes that took place in the Americas.

## 3.2 Case study analysis

### North America, Central America and the Caribbean

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Haiti                      |   |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, political and social opposition   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee, United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Apostolic Nunciature, Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and governments of Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain and USA) |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | --  |

#### Summary:

In recent years, especially after former President Jean Bertrand Aristide left the country in February 2004 and the subsequent deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH), there have been several attempts at consultation and dialogue between various political and social sectors to cope with the institutional fragility, political-social polarisation and economic and security crisis facing the country. Yet none of these initiatives, most of which have had international support, have turned into meaningful agreements or have led to permanent or stable spaces or mechanisms for negotiation. Though President Jovenel Moïse's mandate has been controversial since its inception after he was accused of electoral fraud in the 2015 election, his attempts to create a national dialogue in 2019 came in response to the deepening crisis in mid-2018 and the outbreak of protests and episodes of violence in 2019.

**During the first few months of the year, the Government and various opposition and civil society groups continued the talks that had already started in late 2019, but they did not reach any significant agreement or continue throughout the rest of the year, despite repeated calls by the international community for the inter-Haitian national dialogue to resume.** These calls were especially insistent at the beginning of the year, coinciding with the deepening of the political and institutional crisis in the country. After the postponement of the parliamentary and municipal elections scheduled for November 2019, in mid-January President Jovenel Moïse announced that the terms of several members of both houses of Parliament had expired, immediately stripping them of their representative functions and blocking their access to Congress with the security forces since then. This decision meant that two-thirds of the Senate seats were empty, so from mid-January the president governed mainly through presidential decrees. This situation provoked concern among the international community and was criticised by various sectors of the opposition and civil society, deploring what they consider a dictatorial drift by Moïse. In these circumstances, OAS Secretary-General Luis Almagro paid a visit to the country, stressing the importance of cross-cutting political dialogue and a national unity Government to overcome the political crisis. Almagro also publicly declared that he agreed with Moïse on the need to reform the Constitution, electoral reforms and a firmer fight against corruption, which was one of the catalysts for the massive protests that took place in 2019. At the end of January, the Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee convened a round of dialogue between the country's president and representatives of opposition political groups and civil society, such as the Conference of Rectors and Presidents of Universities of Haiti. This meeting was supported and facilitated by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the Apostolic Nunciature, which provided its facilities for the meeting. In full coordination with the Episcopal Conference of Haiti, the Apostolic Nunciature issued a statement clearly asserting its political neutrality. The main objective of the meeting was to reach a consensus on a wide-ranging political agreement that would pave the way for structural reforms. However, various media outlets and some of the organisations participating in



the meeting declared that it ended without agreement. As such, the Core Group (made up of the UN, the OAS, the EU and the governments of Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain and the US) regretted the lack of progress in the national dialogue. However, the Government issued a statement indicating that the parties participating in the talks had reached an agreement on the need to draft a new Constitution, establish a Constituent Assembly and create a road map with the participation of the United Nations and the OAS.

***With the support of the United Nations and the Apostolic Nunciature, the Haitian Patriotic Initiative Committee convened a round of talks in January between the president and representatives of opposition political groups and civil society***

Despite the lack of agreement, a new round of negotiations was held between 11 and 14 February at the Apostolic Nunciature, with the sessions organised and facilitated by the same organisations. On this occasion, there was also no agreement between the parties. According to some, several of the political parties called for Moïse's resignation, while others claimed that the current presidential mandate does not end in February 2022, as the Government argues, but a year earlier. Furthermore, trust between the Government and certain opposition parties was greatly eroded by Moïse's decision to end the term of various members of Parliament by decree, some of whom sued Moïse, and to govern by government decree. Despite the lack of agreements, the BINUH stated that at the end of February, informal meetings were held between representatives of the president and a smaller number of political parties. **Faced with impasse in the national dialogue, Moïse appointed a new prime minister (Joseph Jouthe) and a new government at the beginning of March and continued with his political agenda, which mainly focused on two issues: the drafting of a new Constitution and the holding of the legislative elections that did not take place in 2019.** Regarding this last point, in August, after the Government announced its intention to hold the aforementioned legislative, municipal and presidential elections during 2021, more than 300 political parties and civil society groups rejected the plan and declared their intention not to participate. At the end of November, the Core Group urged the Government to accelerate preparations for the elections and to specify an electoral calendar in order to restore institutional normality in the country. Regarding the reform of the Constitution, in late October Moïse charged the Independent Consultative Committee with preparing the text, which was supposed to be submitted to public debate by December and to a referendum in the first quarter of 2021, prior to the legislative, presidential and municipal elections. Moïse said that if the population rejected the new Constitution, the Government would organise the elections under the current Constitution. A good part of the political opposition and many civil society organisations opposed such a constitutional reform, saying that it was illegal or that it was only intended to establish a presidential regime and benefit Moïse's political aspirations.

Faced with the international community's insistence (mainly the BINUH and the Core Group) that the national dialogue must resume as the only way to solve the serious crisis gripping the country, in late October Moïse declared that he had been negotiating the elections and a referendum to approve a new Constitution with the main political forces of the opposition for three months and that the dialogue was at a very advanced stage. However, the Democratic Opposition, a platform that brings together several opposition parties, categorically denied such claims and demanded that the president resume a genuine, inclusive and sincere national dialogue.

## South America

| Colombia (FARC)            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, FARC  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | The Havana peace agreement (2016)   |
| <b>Summary:</b>            | Since the founding of the first guerrilla groups in 1964 there have been several negotiation attempts. In the early 1990s several small groups were demobilized, but not the FARC and the ELN, which are the two most important. In 1998, President Pastrana authorized the demilitarization of a large region of Colombia, around the area of San Vicente del Caguán, in order to conduct negotiations with the FARC, which lasted until 2002 and were unsuccessful. In 2012, and after several months of secret negotiations in Cuba, new talks began with the FARC in Cuba based on a specific agenda and including citizen participation mechanisms. After four years of negotiations, a historic peace agreement for the Colombian people was signed in late 2016. |

**The process to implement the peace agreement signed between the FARC and the Colombian Government in 2016 continued to face multiple difficulties due to the impact of violence and obstacles set up by Bogotá. Many former FARC combatants were killed (242 since the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 according to the FARC party, 19 between June and September 2020, according to United Nations figures), which led hundreds of former combatants to demonstrate in November, demanding government protection. The continued armed activity of dissident FARC groups also represented a serious obstacle to the smooth running of the peace process, as well as the armed conflict with the ELN and with criminal armed groups. Furthermore, the killing of social leaders and human rights activists continued to hinder the consolidation of peace in the country. About 1,100 have been assassinated**

since the peace agreement was signed, 695 during the government of Iván Duque.<sup>1</sup> The work of many of these leaders is linked to the implementation of the peace agreement. However, the different institutions that emerged from the agreement continued their work, such as those that are part of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition like the Truth Commission, which collects testimonies and public acts of recognition to the victims, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and the Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons. Cases addressed by the JEP during 2020 included that of the Valle deputies, for which the former FARC commander Héctor Julio Villarraga Cristancho appeared, acknowledging his responsibility for the kidnapping and murder of 11 deputies.

**The situation of violence in Colombia hampered progress in the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement**

The Kroc Institute presented its fourth follow-up report on the implementation of the peace agreement, which found that during 2019 there was less progress in implementation than in previous years.<sup>2</sup> Particularly important was the progress made regarding the end of the conflict and the victims, since the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition was fully operational. The situation of former FARC combatants was particularly worrying, since the Kroc Institute found that only 24% of former FARC-EP guerrilla members were participating in one of the productive projects approved by the National Reincorporation Council. Moreover, in December 2019, some of the support provided to the combatants after the end of the conflict was suspended, such as basic monthly income. The Kroc Institute pointed out that some initial progress was made on comprehensive rural reform. The implementation of political participation and the solution to the problem of illicit crops were what made the least progress and suffered the most difficulties.

**Gender, peace and security**

The gender approach continued to be a cross-cutting part of the entire implementation process. Several initiatives took place as part of the Truth Commission's work, such as the listening sessions on reproductive violence in the armed conflict in which testimonies of the victims of this violence were heard and it was recognised as a systematic practice as part of the armed conflict perpetrated by both the FARC and government forces. Furthermore, the Fundación Círculo de Estudios published the report *Derecho de Vozs: informe sobre 479 casos de violencia sexual por motivo del conflicto armado en Colombia* ("Right to Voice: report on 479

cases of sexual violence caused by the armed conflict in Colombia"). Women's organisations demanded that the JEP open a macro process for cases of sexual violence committed during the armed conflict. The Kroc

Institute also issued its follow-up report on the implementation of the gender approach in the peace agreement, noting that there is still a gap with respect to the gender provisions of the agreement, whose degree of implementation is less than that of the agreement as a whole. The main progress was made in processes that allowed the participation of women, the LGTBI and indigenous people in the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, although not as much headway was made in other points of the agreement as had been achieved in participation. Especially serious was the situation of security and protection guarantees, given the many threats and attacks against female human rights activists and leaders. A platform of civil society organisations called GPAZ also evaluated the implementation of the gender approach, noting a slowdown in implementation.<sup>3</sup>

| Colombia (ELN)             |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, ELN   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Guarantor countries (Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy)  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | "Heaven's Door" Agreement (1988)  |
| <b>Summary:</b>            | Since the ELN emerged in 1964, various negotiating processes have tried to bring peace to the country. The first negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN date from 1991 (Caracas and Tlaxcala). In 1998, both parties signed a peace agreement in Madrid that envisaged holding a national convention. That same year, the "Puerta del Cielo" agreement between the ELN and civil society activists was signed in Mainz, Germany, focused on humanitarian aspects. In 1999, the Colombian government and the ELN resumed meetings in Cuba, which ended in June 2000. The government of Álvaro Uribe resumed peace negotiations with the ELN in Cuba between 2005 and 2007, though no results were achieved. At the end of 2012, the ELN showed its willingness to open new negotiations with President Juan Manuel Santos, appointing a negotiating commission, and exploratory meetings were held. Formal peace negotiations began in 2017, which broke off in 2019 after a serious attack by the ELN in Bogotá. |

**The peace process between the Government of Colombia and the ELN guerrilla group remained at an impasse throughout the year, after its suspension in 2019.**

1. Indepaz, *Posacuerdo traumático: coletazos en la transición desde el acuerdo de paz al posconflicto*, Indepaz, diciembre de 2020.  
 2. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. *Tres años después de la firma del Acuerdo Final de Colombia: hacia la transformación territorial. Diciembre 2018 a noviembre 2019*. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.  
 3. GPAZ, *La paz avanza con las mujeres. Observaciones sobre la incorporación del enfoque de género en el Acuerdo de Paz*, GPAZ – 2019, GPAZ, 2020.

Despite repeated calls by the ELN to resume the peace negotiations, the government of Iván Duque refused, arguing that the armed group had not complied with the conditions that it had established for doing so. Thus, Bogotá said that the ELN's armed and criminal activity had continued unabated and that not all the hostages held by the guerrilla group had been released, so dialogue was not viable. The ELN carried out various initiatives throughout the year aimed at promoting a peace process. The most important took place on 31 March with the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire during the month of April, in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire during the coronavirus pandemic. The ELN described this as a "humanitarian" gesture while urging the Government to resume dialogue with its negotiators in Havana and suspend its military operations. However, Peace Commissioner Miguel Ceballos said that the announcement was not enough and that more concrete actions were necessary. The Government's failure to reciprocate during the announcement of the ceasefire prompted the ELN to state that it would not extend it, though in July the negotiating team in Havana presented a proposal to the Government for a three-month bilateral ceasefire that "would create a climate of humanitarian détente, favourable to restarting the peace talks". This proposal was rejected by the Government and Pablo Beltrán, the head of the ELN negotiating team in Havana, said that there would be no more unilateral ceasefires. Previously, in June, the ELN had released eight hostages with the support of the ICRC, one of the Government's preconditions for restarting the negotiations, although the Government asserted that kidnapped people were still being held by the armed group. The calls to restart the negotiations were repeated in the final months of the year without the Duque Government changing its position, citing the ELN's failure to meet the required conditions.

*The ELN observed a month-long ceasefire in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire during the coronavirus pandemic*

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Venezuela                  |   |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, political and social opposition |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Norway, Turkey International Contact Group  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | --  |

**Summary:**

Faced with the worsening political and social crisis that Venezuela experienced after the death in 2013 of President Hugo Chávez, the leader of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, his successor Nicolás Maduro's narrow victory in the presidential election of April 2013 and the protests staged in the early months of 2014, which caused the death of around 40 people, in March 2014 the government said it was willing to accept talks with the opposition facilitated by UNASUR or the Vatican, but categorically rejected any mediation by the OAS. Shortly after Pope Francis called for dialogue and a group of UNASUR foreign ministers visited Venezuela and held many meetings, preliminary

talks began between Caracas and the opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) in April 2014, to which the Secretary of State of the Vatican, the former Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela, as well as the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, were invited as witnesses in good faith. Although the talks were interrupted in May 2014 due to developments in the political situation, both UNASUR and the Vatican continued to facilitate through Apostolic Nuncio Aldo Giordano. In May 2016, shortly after a visit to Venezuela by the former leaders of Spain (Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero), Panama (Martín Torrijos) and the Dominican Republic (Leonel Fernández) at the request of UNASUR, the Venezuelan government and opposition met in the Dominican Republic with the three aforementioned ex-leaders and UNASUR representatives. After a meeting between Maduro and Pope Francis in October, both parties met again in Venezuela under the auspices of the Pope's new special envoy, Emil Paul Tscherrig. In late 2017, both sides decided to resume the talks in the Dominican Republic starting in December, accompanied by several countries chosen by both parties (Chile, Mexico and Paraguay by the opposition and Nicaragua, Bolivia and San Vicente and the Grenadines by the government). Although some agreements were reached during the several rounds of negotiations that took place between December 2017 and February 2018, Maduro's unilateral call for a presidential election for 2018 brought them to a standstill and caused the withdrawal of several of the accompanying countries designated by the opposition to facilitate them.

**Many meetings were held between the Government and some opposition parties during the year as part of the National Dialogue Roundtable; some direct meetings were held between Maduro's Government and two-time former presidential candidate Henri Capriles, with the facilitation of the Government of Turkey; and some attempts were made to resume the Norwegian-facilitated negotiating process between the Government and the opposition led by Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly and recognised by 59 countries as president of the republic.** Regarding this last point, at the end of July a delegation

from the Government of Norway travelled to the country and met with the Government and the opposition to assess the conditions for resuming the negotiations. Juan Guaidó acknowledged the meeting with the Government of Norway, but added that the negotiations facilitated by Norway came to an end in September 2019 and categorically ruled out any possibility of resuming the dialogue with the Government. Similarly, other opposition leaders regretted that the previous negotiating processes (a dozen, according to the opposition), only served to gain time for the ruling party, to strengthen it, to demobilise the citizenry and to delegitimise and divide the opposition. However, Maduro claimed that the negotiations were being resumed and that the head of the Government's negotiating team in Norway and Barbados, Jorge Rodríguez, was in contact with the Oslo for this purpose. Previously, in June, Jorge Rodríguez had revealed that discreet contacts between the Government and the main opposition parties, known as G4 (Acción Democrática, Voluntad Popular, Primero

Justicia and Un Nuevo Tiempo), continued even after the negotiations were interrupted in Barbados at the end of 2019. The Government withdrew from them in August, accusing the opposition of promoting the introduction of sanctions against Venezuela, and the opposition withdrew in September, accusing Caracas of not obstructing the calling for presidential elections. According to Rodríguez, continuity in the meetings paved the way for a resumption of dialogue and negotiations as of February 2020. **According to Caracas, between February and June 2020, there were 19 meetings between the Government and the opposition led by Guaidó, including two meetings in which he participated personally with the leaders of the G4.** Caracas also noted that from September 2019 to June 2020, there had been another 67 meetings between the Government and opposition parties not belonging to the aforementioned G4. Although the opposition led by Guaidó refused to initiate negotiations with the Government for the rest of the year, in early December, a few days before the legislative elections, Maduro again mentioned the possibility of negotiations with the opposition mediated by Norway, which he thanked for its work in recent years, and with the participation of former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, who has facilitated talks in the past. Thus, Maduro said that Jorge Rodríguez had met with the Government of Norway and that the ground was being laid for resuming the talks. In mid-December, after the legislative elections, the foreign minister of Norway (whose Government recognises Guaidó as the country's president) called for free and fair elections and declared that respect for democratic principles is necessary for peace and stability. At the end of the year, Maduro urged the newly elected US President Joe Biden to start dialogue. According to several analysts, Biden intends to take a very different approach from that of his predecessor in office, ultimately aimed at forcing a political transition in the country, and will prioritise easing the sanctions against it in exchange for decisive steps to hold free and competitive elections.

The second negotiating process between the Government and the opposition was led by former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles and opposition leader Stalin González (Un Nuevo Tiempo) and facilitated by the Government of Turkey. Following a visit to the country in mid-August by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in early September Caracas, **Capriles and Turkey separately announced the release of 50 imprisoned opposition figures and the dismissal of legal proceedings against 60 asylum seekers and exiles, many of whom are MPs. Maduro declared that what he called a presidential pardon for these 110 people was aimed at facilitating greater participation in the elections**

**and promoting national reconciliation.** Capriles stated that the negotiations that led to such an agreement had been coordinated with the EU and had begun after a meeting in the Dominican Republic between the Turkish foreign minister and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Capriles said that the current political situation in Venezuela, in which Maduro maintains de facto power and governance of the country and in which the term of the current National Assembly, made up mainly of the opposition, will end in early January 2021, requires solutions and political negotiations. Capriles indicated that his negotiations with the Government sought to improve the conditions in which the legislative elections are held in December to avoid the absolute control of Parliament by the ruling party, and more specifically the postponement of the same to allow for electoral observation by the United Nations and the EU. In early September, Capriles encouraged his candidates to register for the elections (he could not run personally because he had been disqualified) and called for high turnout in them. However, at the end of September, after verifying that both the EU and the United Nations had declined to observe the elections because the necessary conditions were not in place, he reversed his decision to participate in the parliamentary elections. Guaidó criticised the negotiations between the Government and Capriles and González and declared that they were not known to or authorised by the interim Government, the National Assembly or the coalition of 27 opposition parties that had agreed not to participate in the elections.

Finally, **many meetings of the National Dialogue Roundtable were held during the year, a negotiating format that includes several minority opposition parties** (Cambiamos Movimiento Democrático, Soluciones para Venezuela, Avanzada Progresista and that was made public in September 2019 (after the collapse of the negotiations facilitated by Norway in Barbados) with the signing of six agreements on the release of political prisoners, the reinstatement of pro-Government MPs to the National Assembly, the denunciation of the sanctions and, more importantly, the renewal of the National Electoral Council. According to both parties, the negotiations that took place in 2020 were mainly aimed at ensuring fair and credible elections, expanding turnout and achieving greater international participation in their supervision. The main agreements reached throughout 2020 include confirmation of the new National Electoral Council, which was appointed in mid-June by the Supreme Court (with an official majority) after verifying that the National Assembly (which holds the constitutional right to renew the body) had incurred an institutional omission, generating protests from the opposition and various governments.



## 4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- There were 11 negotiating processes in Asia in 2020, accounting for more than a quarter of all international cases.
- The US government and the Taliban signed a peace agreement in February and subsequently began a process of intra-Afghan dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which included four women in the government negotiating delegation.
- In the region of Mindanao in the Philippines, both the institutional development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and the reintegration of some of the 40,000 former MILF fighters progressed satisfactorily.
- The government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government agreed to appoint former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern as a facilitator of negotiations on Bougainville's political status.
- Despite the signing of a ceasefire, both the government and the NDF ended negotiations during Duterte's current term in the Philippines.
- A new peace process began in southern Thailand between the government and the BRN, the main armed group in the south of the country.
- The Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong was revived in Myanmar, which held its fourth session after two years of deadlock, albeit with significant difficulties due to the absence of non-signatory groups to the national ceasefire agreement.

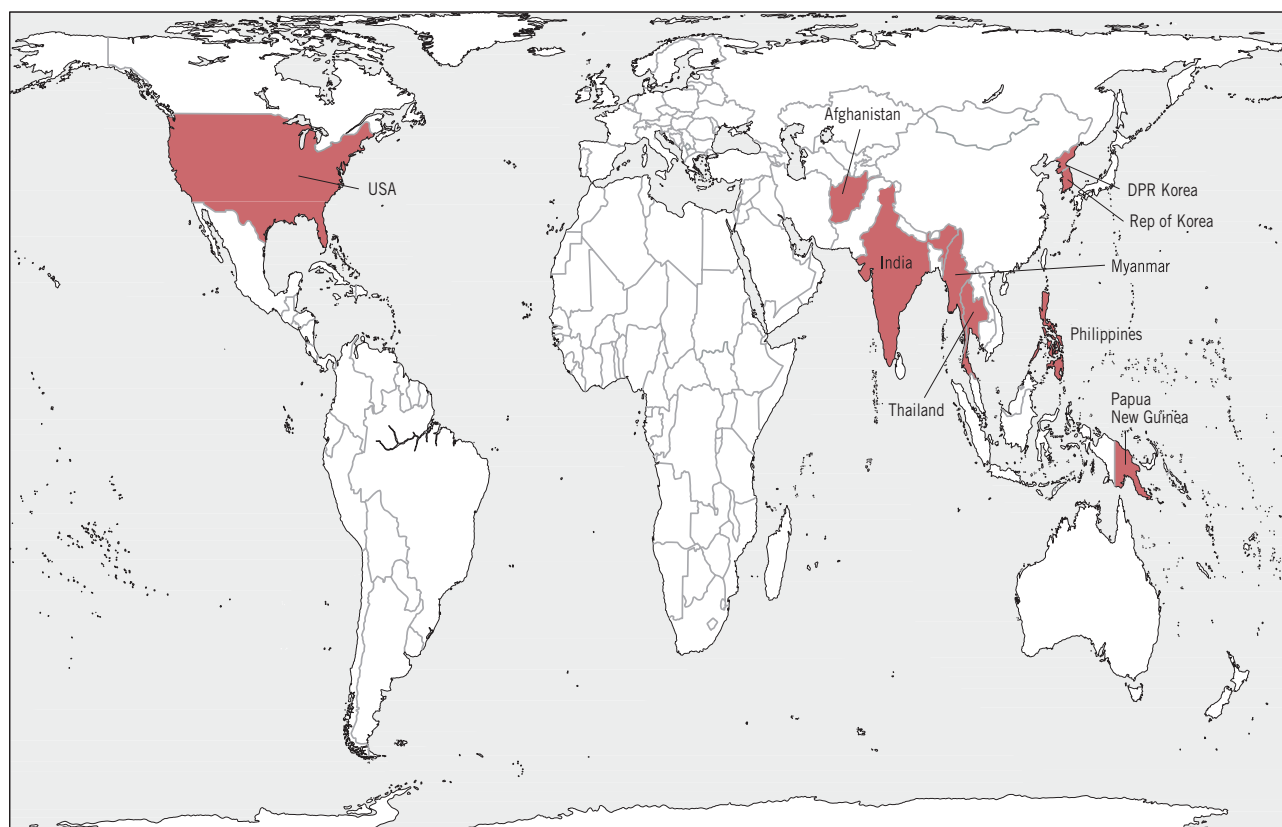
This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2020, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on the continent throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Asia that hosted peace negotiations during 2020.

Table 4.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations       | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Afghanistan</b>                     | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA   | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN                                      |
| <b>DPR Korea – Republic of Korea</b>   | North Korea, South Korea  | --   |
| <b>DPR Korea – USA</b>                 | North Korea, USA  | --   |
| India (Assam)                          | Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD   | --   |
| <b>India (Nagaland)</b>                | Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF   | --   |
| <b>Myanmar</b>                         | Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA | China  |
| <b>Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)</b> | Government, Autonomous Region of Bougainville   | Bertie Ahern   |
| <b>Philippines (MILF)</b>              | Government, MILF  | Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body |
| Philippines (MNLF)                     | Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)   | --   |
| <b>Philippines (NDF)</b>               | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation for different communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)  | Norway   |
| <b>Thailand (south)</b>                | Government, BRN   | Malaysia   |

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.  
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2020

## 4.1 Negotiations in 2020: regional trends

There were **11 negotiating processes** in Asia in 2020, **more than a quarter** of all international cases. Almost half of the negotiations in Asia took place in Southeast Asia, while there were three negotiations in South Asia, two in East Asia and one in the Pacific. There was no peace process in Central Asia. Several of the negotiations in Asia were linked to active armed conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar and Thailand (south), but most were framed in contexts of socio-political tension, like in North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US, India (Assam) and India (Nagaland), or featured armed groups that were no longer actively fighting the government, such as the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines.

Regarding the **nature** of the negotiations, most of them were linked to issues of self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional change or recognition of the identity of various national minorities. Such cases include the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south). Two of the remaining four cases were focused mainly on denuclearisation and political detente on the Korean peninsula and the other two,

***Most of the negotiating processes in Asia were linked to issues of self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional changes or the recognition of the identity of various national minorities***

in Afghanistan and the Philippines (NDF), hinged on structural and systemic political, social, religious and military reforms. The vast majority of the negotiations were internal in nature, but with a very clear international dimension, either due to the participation of foreign third parties in facilitation or mediation tasks, by holding negotiations outside the country in question, or because certain leaders of armed groups in negotiations with the state lived abroad. In Afghanistan, there were also direct negotiations between the Taliban and a foreign government (the United States) in Qatar. In two cases (North Korea and the United States and North Korea and South Korea), the negotiations were interstate.

The vast majority of the **actors participating in the negotiations** included governments and armed groups (or their political representatives), but in a quarter of the cases the dialogue took place between governments, either between states (North Korea and the US and North Korea and South Korea), or between national and regional governments (in the cases of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville or the southern Philippines, in which the main focus of the negotiations was dialogue between the central government of the

Philippines and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). In some cases, the governments in question had an institutional framework specifically designed to deal with negotiating processes and peace policies as a whole, such as in Afghanistan (through the High Council for National Reconciliation), the Philippines (through the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process), Myanmar (through the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, the Peace Commission and the Peace Secretariat) and South Korea and North Korea (through the Ministry of Unification and the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, respectively). Several of the **armed groups** negotiated with the government directly, such as the MNLF in the Philippines, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, the NSCN-IM in India, the RCSS/SSA-South and the SSPP in Myanmar and the BRN in southern Thailand. In some cases, however, they did so through political organisations that represented them, such as in the case of the Philippines, in which Manila negotiates with the National Democratic Front (NDF) on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA, either through coalitions that grouped together and represented various armed groups, like the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) in Nagaland, which brings together seven insurgent organisations, and in Myanmar, where various armed groups are in talks with the Burmese government through umbrella organisations such as the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee or the Brotherhood Alliance.

Several peace processes in Asia followed parallel or complementary **negotiating formats**. In Afghanistan, the Taliban and the US government reached an agreement in early 2020 in Qatar, while in September the intra-Afghan negotiating process formally began in Doha. The national government of India negotiated bilaterally with the NSCN-IM (Nagaland) and also with the insurgent group coordinating body NNPG. In the Philippines, there were direct negotiations between the government's implementation panels and the MILF to address disputes related to implementation of the peace agreement, but also direct negotiations between the central government and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on the division of responsibilities between government levels and the institutional development of the BARMM. There was also contact between the MILF and the MNLF to achieve rapprochement between them and even a possible harmonisation of their two negotiating processes. In the peace process between Manila and the NDF, the Duterte administration maintained official and formal talks with the NDF, while also intensifying the "localised peace talks" with NPA units and regional commanders, which according to some critics are trying to demobilise the NPA fighters and create strategic dissension between the NDF leadership in exile in the Netherlands and the NPA military command on

***Nearly half the negotiations studied in Asia were not facilitated by third parties***

the ground. The Thai government began bilateral and direct negotiations with the BRN at the beginning of 2020, thereby ending the negotiations that it had held with Mara Pattani (a coalition of insurgent groups in the south of the country) in recent years, but kept open the possibility of including other groups in the future, while Mara Pattani claimed that the BRN is still part of the organisation. Finally, the government of Myanmar held direct and bilateral talks with various armed groups (such as the RCSS/SSA-South, the SSPP and the ALP), but also with various insurgent group coalitions, such as the Brotherhood Alliance (whose groups declared a ceasefire during the year) and the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee. The Burmese government also promoted the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong during 2020, which was attended by the 10 armed groups that had signed the nationwide ceasefire. Practically all the insurgent groups that have not signed the agreement were also invited, but they finally declined to attend.

Nearly half the negotiations studies in Asia lacked **third-party** participation, making it the region with the highest percentage of direct and bilateral negotiations between the parties. The cases in which there was some type of third-party facilitation of dialogue were Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south), although the degree of internationalisation and complexity of the intermediation structures was very uneven among them. In some cases, facilitation of the dialogue fell mainly to a single actor, such as Norway in the Philippines (NDF), Malaysia in southern Thailand and Bertie Ahern in Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government, while in others, multiple players were involved in dialogue mediation. There was a high degree of internationalisation of the peace processes in the Philippines (Mindanao) and in Afghanistan. In addition to the official mediation exercised by the government of Malaysia in recent years, the peace process in the Philippines (MILF) enjoys other international support structures, such as the International Monitoring Team (including the EU, together with countries such as Malaysia, Libya, Brunei Darussalam, Japan and Norway), the Third Party Monitoring Team (in charge of supervising implementation of the agreements signed by the MILF and the government), the Independent Decommissioning Body (composed of Turkey, Norway, Brunei and the Philippines, and which oversees the demobilisation of 40,000 former MILF combatants) and finally, the International Contact Group, made up of four states (Japan, United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four international NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources), though it plays a lesser role in implementing the peace agreement. In Afghanistan, the government of Qatar hosted the peace negotiations between the Taliban and the US government and also facilitated talks between the



Taliban and the Afghan government. However, other members of the international community (such as the UN, mainly through the UNAMA, and the governments of Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Germany) participated in the peace process in some way, on some occasions promoting exploratory talks ahead of the start of negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban.

In comparative terms, **intergovernmental organisations** played a smaller role in mediating and facilitating dialogue and in observing and verifying the implementation of agreements and ceasefires. The United Nations exercised some of the aforementioned functions in Afghanistan through the UNAMA, though it also participated in the implementation of the peace agreement in Mindanao (in 2020, for example, it jointly organised the Bangsamoro Friends Forum with the government of Japan to coordinate international support to the region) and provided technical support at the beginning of the negotiating process between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on the political status of Bougainville after the independence referendum held in 2019. The EU participates indirectly in the peace process in the Philippine region of Mindanao through the International Monitoring Team, which oversees the ceasefire between the government and the MILF. Historically, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had mediated in the negotiations that led to the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MNLF, subsequently facilitated the dialogue on the full implementation of the aforementioned agreement and finally sponsored cooperation between the MNLF and the MILF and promoted the harmonisation and convergence of both negotiating processes, but its role has recently become less prominent after the majority factions of the MNLF have de facto accepted the peace agreement between Manila and the MILF and have even been integrated into the structures of the BARMM. States that played notable roles include Norway, which mediated in negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF, participated in the Independent Decommissioning Body and the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao and was involved in in the Host Country Support Group together with Qatar, Germany, Uzbekistan and Indonesia, in a supporting role in the intra-Afghan peace process; Malaysia, which facilitated the peace process between Manila and the MILF and between the Thai government and the insurgency operating in the south of the country and participated in the International Monitoring Group of Mindanao; Qatar, which was very active in facilitating both the negotiations between the Taliban militias and the US government and the intra-Afghan dialogue; and China, which held meetings with the Burmese government throughout the year, the Burmese Armed Forces and various armed groups, especially those operating in areas close to the border between the two countries.

*In comparative terms, intergovernmental organisations played a smaller role in mediating and facilitating dialogue in Asia*

In several cases there was deadlock or even setbacks in the **evolution of the peace processes**. The political situation in the Korean peninsula deteriorated (both in inter-Korean dialogue and in relations between North Korea and the US), the peace process in Nagaland hit an impasse and the negotiations between Manila and the NDF were disrupted, which both parties ended under the current administration of Rodrigo Duterte. However, in other cases some significant progress was made. The case of Afghanistan is especially illustrative, in which a historic peace agreement was signed between the US government and the Taliban and in which direct negotiations began between the Taliban militias and the Afghan government. Signed in Doha in February, the agreement mainly stipulates a gradual withdrawal of US troops and the commitment of the Taliban not to plan or carry out terrorist attacks against US interests. This agreement facilitated the start of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government, which after several delays began in Doha in September and were also facilitated by the government of Qatar. Despite the difficulties that surrounded the beginning of this negotiating process, by the end of the year both parties had reached an agreement regarding the negotiating rules and procedures. In the Philippines, very significant progress was made on implementation of the peace agreement, especially regarding the demobilisation of a significant part of the 40,000 MILF fighters and the institutional development of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, whose provisional government is headed by the historical leader of the MILF. In Myanmar, the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong was revived after two years of deadlock, while the central government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government laid the foundations for the negotiating process on the political status of Bougainville and agreed to the appointment of former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern as a facilitator in this process. Finally, the Thai central government began a new peace process with the BRN, the most active group in the south of the country, after noting the wear and tear of the previous negotiating format between Bangkok and Mara Patani, a coalition of insurgent groups operating in southern Thailand.

Finally, though the promotion of the **gender, peace and security agenda** and the participation of women in peace negotiations in Asia was generally very limited, the Afghan Women Leaders Peace Summit was held, in which several women's organisations demanded 30% female participation in intra-Afghan peace negotiations and the formation of a technical committee on gender for them. The Afghan government had previously included four women in its (21-member) delegation for the intra-Afghan dialogue. In the Philippines, the NDF negotiating panel was led by a woman, Julie de Lima. Also in the Philippines, the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security was presented for the

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which envisages ensuring greater female participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and in the development and consolidation of the new political authority in Mindanao. Along the same lines, in Bougainville the Law of the Bougainville Women's Federation was approved, which according to the island's autonomous government provides for greater female participation in decision-making processes in the political sphere and the private sector, in addition to the promotion of gender equality in the field of human rights, sexual violence, literacy, leadership, governance and community empowerment. In the same region, several women's organisations claimed that they had beat the historical record of women attending the presidential and legislative elections held in August and September. Finally, in Myanmar, the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) met in March with the armed groups that signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to discuss gender equality and the inclusion of women in the peace and political negotiations.

## 4.2. Case study analysis

### East Asia

|                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| DPR Korea – Republic of Korea |                                    |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>     | North Korea, South Korea           |
| <b>Third parties</b>          | --                                 |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>    | Panmunjom Declaration (April 2018) |

#### Summary:

Although the high points of the negotiations between North Korea and South Korea were the presidential summits held in the 21st century (2000, 2007 and 2018), there have been attempts at rapprochement to move forward on the path of reunification and cooperation since the 1970s. Thus, in 1972, both countries signed the North-South Korea Joint Statement, outlining some measures for reunification and reducing the arms race, among other issues. In late 1991, both countries signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation; a few weeks later, they signed the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The former, which was achieved after five rounds of negotiations begun in September 1990 between the prime ministers of both countries, was considered a historic agreement and a turning point in the relationship between both countries by much of the international community, as it included commitments to mutual non-aggression, respect for the political and economic systems of each country, peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and the promotion of measures for the reunification of both countries. However, the measures included in the agreement were not fully implemented, partly because of the tensions generated by the North Korean weapons programme. In 1994, former US President Jimmy Carter exercised his good offices between the leaders of both countries to contain the crisis generated by the progress made in the programme and Pyongyang's decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to abandon the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the 21st century, under

a policy of rapprochement with North Korea (called the Sun Policy) promoted by Kim Dae-jun and continued by his successor, Roh Moon-hyun, in 2000 and 2007 Pyongyang hosted the first two presidential summits since the end of the Korean War, in which both countries again pledged to boost cooperation to move towards greater stability and the eventual reunification of the Korean peninsula.

**Despite the fact that South Korean President Moon Jae-in declared his intention to resume dialogue with North Korea and strengthen relations and cooperation between both countries on several occasions, not only was no progress made on the inter-Korean agenda in 2020, but the tension between the neighbours increased significantly compared to previous years, including the first exchange of fire in years between their armed forces in the Demilitarised Zone.** In January, Moon Jae-in gave a speech calling for the resumption of dialogue between both countries, expressed his desire to meet Kim Jong-un (invited him to Seoul) and negotiate non-stop, showed his willingness to facilitate talks between North Korea and the US, outlined a plan for the reactivation of inter-Korean cooperation projects and presented some concrete proposals in this regard, such as the joint parade at the opening of the Tokyo Olympics and the presentation of a joint candidacy for the 2032 Olympic Games. According to some analysts, Moon Jae-in intends to prioritise the revitalisation of relations with North Korea in the second half of his term and aspires to replicate the political scenario of 2018, in which improvements in inter-Korean relations led to important progress in relations between North Korea and the United States and, by extension, the prospect of the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. Along these lines, in May, Moon Jae-in once again called to strengthen inter-Korean cooperation and proposed starting with collaboration in the control of infectious diseases. However, such a possibility was aborted by the North Korean government's insistence that there were no cases of coronavirus in his country. In this sense, Seoul expressed its fear that the border closure stemming from the expansion of the pandemic could affect North Korea's imports and increase food insecurity there. In fact, Russia acknowledged sending 25,000 tonnes of wheat to North Korea in May.

Although Pyongyang had already ruled out any dialogue with South Korea since the beginning of the year, the possibility vanished for good after Pyongyang cut off all military and political communication with South Korea in June (including the direct line between Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in), described South Korea as an enemy, broke off relations with its authorities and announced the remilitarisation of sections of the common border that had been demilitarised and pacified under the previous bilateral agreements reached since 2018. **Symbolic of the collapse of dialogue between the two countries was North Korea's detonation of the liaison office in the North Korean town of Kaesong in June.** Although the office had been closed since 30 January, the destruction of this four-storey building was seen

by several analysts as an attempt by Pyongyang to challenge the commitment that both countries had expressed in 2018 to achieve a new era of peace on the Korean peninsula.

## Gender, peace and security

In September, the organisation 38 North noted that unlike his predecessors in office, Kim Jong-un appeared to be pursuing a policy of promoting several women to positions of responsibility and political visibility. Some of the examples mentioned by this organisation are Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs Choe Son-hui, a key figure in relations with the US and during the six-party multilateral negotiations on the denuclearisation of Korea; Hyon Song-wol, who sits on the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and is a member of the team that manages relations with South Korea; Kim Song-hye, who heads the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (a counterpart to South Korea's Ministry of Unification); and Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un's sister and, according to various media and analysts, his second-in-command. In fact, during weeks of speculation about Kim Jong-un's health status as a result of his prolonged absence from public events, various media outlets singled out Kim Yo-jong as the de facto leader of the country and successor to her brother.

|                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| DPR Korea – USA            |                                 |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | North Korea, USA                |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | --                              |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Singapore Statement (June 2018) |

### Summary:

The US and other countries of the international community began to express their concern about the North Korean nuclear programme in the early 1980s, but the tensions that it produced were mainly channelled through several bilateral or multilateral agreements: in 1985, Korea North ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; in 1991 the US announced the withdrawal of about 100 South Korean warheads under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START); and in 1992 North Korea and South Korea signed the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, in which both countries pledged not to produce, store, test or deploy nuclear weapons and to allow verification through inspections. Nevertheless, there was a major diplomatic crisis in 1993 due to Pyongyang's decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, though it eventually stayed its hand after the talks it held with the United States and the United Nations. After a trip to the Korean peninsula by former President Jimmy Carter in 1994, in which he met with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung to resolve diplomatic tensions and seek rapprochement, the US and North Korean governments signed an agreement in Geneva (known as the Agreed Framework) in which, among other things, Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for aid and the relaxation of international sanctions. George W. Bush's inauguration

as president of the United States led to a change in policy towards North Korea. Shortly after it was included in the so-called "Axis of Evil", Pyongyang expelled several IAEA inspectors, withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and announced that it already possessed nuclear weapons. In light of this new situation, six-party multilateral talks between North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia began in 2003. Though they led to some important agreements in 2005 and 2008, this negotiating format came to an end in 2009. Despite direct contact between North Korea and the US since then, including an agreement reached in 2012 in which Pyongyang committed to a moratorium on ballistic and nuclear tests, the tension between both countries rose after Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011 and the North Korean weapons programme intensified. In mid-2018, Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump held a historic summit in Singapore where they addressed the normalisation of relations between both countries and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

No new presidential summits were held between the leaders of the United States and North Korea during the year (such as the two that took place in February and June 2019, in Hanoi and on the North Korean side of the so-called Demilitarised Zone, respectively), nor did any technical work meetings take place (like the last one in October 2019, in Stockholm). **On several occasions throughout the year, the US said it was willing to resume the talks and South Korea repeatedly tried to facilitate them, but Pyongyang declared that not only did it not want to hold any other presidential summit, but that resuming them was no longer solely dependent on the conditions it had laid down until late 2019 (the withdrawal or relaxation of sanctions by the US and the end of military manoeuvres in the region), but now required an end to all hostilities, including rhetoric critical of the North Korean regime.** In fact, Pyongyang said that it was very disappointed with Washington's attitude after the Hanoi summit and described the negotiations between both countries since then as a waste of time.

Despite the June 2019 meeting in the Demilitarised Zone between Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump (who became the first serving US president to travel to North Korea), which came on the heels of the Hanoi summit (February 2019), the distance grew between the positions of the US (which demanded certain concrete steps towards complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearisation) and North Korea (which demanded the partial withdrawal of sanctions and the offer of security guarantees). After the deadline for the US to respond to North Korea's demands, Kim Jong-un ended the talks with the US on the occasion of his traditional year-end speech, declaring that his country no longer felt bound to the commitments made during the negotiating process (and specifically on the moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests) and announced the imminent deployment of a new strategic weapon. Thus, in January the US national security advisor said that he had tried to contact the

North Korean government to resume the dialogue, while President Trump sent a congratulatory message to Kim Jong-un for his birthday. Similarly, South Korean President Moon Jae-in pointed out earlier this year that the door for resuming the talks was open if some of Pyongyang's demands were met. However, the North Korean government denied any possibility of progress in the talks if the sanctions were not lifted beforehand and pointed out that although the personal harmony between Trump and Kim Jong-un was good, the bilateral relations between their countries were not built on personal affinities, but on political commitments. It also criticised Seoul's attempts to establish itself as a facilitator of dialogue with the United States and urged it not to meddle in its internal affairs.

In July, Trump declared that he believed that Pyongyang wanted to hold a bilateral meeting and declared his intention to meet with Kim Jong-un if that would help to resume the talks. However, Pyongyang once again bluntly declared that it had no interest whatsoever in resuming the negotiations. According to some analysts, despite the public statements by both parties, Trump told his inner circle that he did not intend to meet with Kim Jong-un again before the US presidential election in November, while according to these same sources the North Korean government also had no intention of continuing talks with the US government until the aforementioned election.

At the end of the year, the head of the US government's negotiating team with Pyongyang publicly expressed his frustration at the lack of significant progress since the Hanoi summit (where the commitments made in the Singapore statement should have been finalised). He also held the North Korean government responsible for the breakdown in the process and said that the United States did not expect North Korea to fully comply with its disarmament commitments before the United States fulfilled its own in terms regarding the sanctions and security guarantees, but that Pyongyang should have committed to a roadmap that would culminate in its verifiable denuclearisation.

**After Joe Biden's victory in the US presidential election, he pledged to maintain a common position on North Korea with the South Korean president.** According to some analysts, Biden will completely abandon the personal diplomacy that Trump used with Kim Jong-un to bring positions closer and build trust between the two countries. These same analysts point out that the Workers' Party of Korea is designing a new strategy towards the US ahead of the meeting to be held in January 2021.

## South Asia

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Afghanistan                |   |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, Taliban insurgents, USA   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, UN   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Bonn Agreement –Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions – (2001) |

### Summary:

Afghanistan has been in a state of continuous armed conflict since 1979. The different parties have attempted to negotiate in all of the stages of the struggle. During the 1980s the UN worked to facilitate rapprochement between the US and the USSR. After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the United Nations again facilitated the process that led to the Bonn Agreement, which marked the beginning of the country's transition. In recent years the persistence of armed conflict and the inability to stop it using military means has led the Afghan and U.S. Governments to gradually reach out to the Taliban insurgency, a process that has not been without difficulties and has not passed the exploration and confidence building stages. Different international actors such as the UN and the German and Saudi Arabian Governments have played different roles in facilitating and bringing the parties together.

**Great progress was made in the peace process in Afghanistan in 2020, both with regard to the negotiations between the Taliban and the US government and the intra-Afghan dialogue process between Kabul and the Taliban.**<sup>1</sup> In February, Washington and the Taliban reached an agreement in which the US government committed to a gradual military withdrawal from the country in exchange for the Taliban's promise that terrorist attacks against US interests would not be planned or carried out from Afghan soil. The signing of the agreement was preceded by a reduction in violence during the previous seven days, a condition for it to be formally ratified by the parties. The agreement reached established a 14-month timetable for the withdrawal of all US troops and an initial drawdown to 8,600 soldiers in the first 135 days that had already been agreed previously.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in addition to its commitment not to allow the use of Afghan territory for terrorist activities against the United States, thereby preventing the recruitment, training and raising of funds by terrorist groups, the Taliban also assumed the beginning of an intra-Afghan dialogue, though without recognising the legitimacy of the current Afghan government.<sup>3</sup> The initial agreement planned for these intra-Afghan negotiations to begin on 10 March 2020 alongside the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 prisoners held by the Taliban. However, in the

1. For further analysis on the peace process in 2020, see Villellas Arifio, M. Peace negotiations in Afghanistan in a decisive year, *ECP Notes on Conflict and Peace*, no. 8, Escola de Cultura de Pau, November 2020.
2. After the agreement was signed, NATO announced the partial withdrawal of the international troops deployed in the country as part of the Resolute Support mission, decreasing from 16,000 to 12,000 soldiers in Afghanistan. NATO, *Media Backgrounder. NATO-Afghanistan relations*, June 2020.
3. Worden, S., *U.S., Taliban Sign Historic Agreement—Now Comes the Hard Part. Can Afghans and the Taliban come together and forge a political settlement?* USIP, 2 March 2020.

first few months after the agreement was signed, many doubts arose regarding the real possibilities for intra-Afghan dialogue. The start of the process scheduled for March was delayed as violence escalated again, including attacks in the capital, Kabul, and intense armed clashes between Afghan security forces and Taliban insurgents.<sup>4</sup>

The delay in initiating the intra-Afghan process was mainly due to disagreements over implementing the agreement to release the prisoners. However, there were also some episodes of rapprochement, such as the **three-day bilateral ceasefire in May, coinciding with the Eid al-Fitr religious holiday**, during which the government agreed to release 2,000 prisoners after the announcement of the cessation of hostilities by the Taliban, which was reciprocated by the security forces. The issue of the prisoners and the persisting violence blocked and hindered any greater rapprochement between the parties, despite diplomatic pressure from the US. Meanwhile, the government political crisis that originated after the presidential elections in September 2019 also contributed to the climate of stagnation. President Ashraf Ghani's victory was disputed by his main opponent at the polls, Abdullah Abdullah, and was not resolved until May in a power sharing agreement whereby Ghani assumed the presidency of the country and Abdullah would be in charge of leading possible negotiations with the Taliban as chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation. The agreement put an end to the dispute between the two and led to the inauguration of the Afghan president in March, though international support had mainly been for Ghani.

The thawing of the political crisis **allowed the intra-Afghan process to begin, which took place in Doha on 12 September in the presence of the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and prominent representatives of the Afghan government, including Abdullah Abdullah.** Both parties sent their negotiating teams to Doha, made up of 21 members each.<sup>5</sup> The government's efforts in the peace negotiations were led by two bodies. First was the government negotiating team, headed by Masoom Stanekzai, who has held different government positions, has experience in previous negotiations with the Taliban and is seen as close and loyal to President Ghani. This team was composed of people representing different Afghan political factions and warlords, while reflecting ethnic and geographic diversity. Four women are part of the team: Fawzia Kufi, Fatema Gailani, Habiba Sarabi

and Sharifa Zurmati. Alongside the negotiators at the table, the High Council for National Reconciliation supervises the process and guides the negotiating team. Led by Abdullah Abdullah, it was created as a result of the agreement to form the government. However, some analysts suggest that this body was never given enough power as a consequence of the political rivalry between Ghani and Abdullah and that it could be the scene of internal tensions that could weaken the negotiations.<sup>6</sup> The Taliban's negotiating team, led by Abdul Hakim and his right-hand man, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, was composed solely of men and brought together some of the Taliban's main religious, military and legal leaders, who had a higher profile than the members of the government team. The delegation includes the group known as "the Taliban Five", former prisoners at the US base in Guantánamo Bay that participated in the negotiations with the US government that led to the February agreement.

***The women's organisations gathered at the Afghan Women Leaders' Peace Summit demanded 30% female participation and the formation of a technical committee on gender in the intra-Afghan peace negotiations***

To facilitate the development of the dialogue, each negotiating team established a contact group that was to work out a code of conduct for the talks. Some analyses, such as that of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, said that even though the negotiations began in a good atmosphere, some issues immediately emerged that hindered further progress in the process. First was the place that the agreement between the US and the Taliban occupies as a frame of reference for intra-Afghan dialogue. The Taliban see it as an essential starting point for the talks, but the government, which was not part of the negotiations that led to it, does not want this agreement to be the cornerstone on which a new process is built and put different alternatives on the table, including starting the negotiations with a consultative Loya Jirga or basing them on the "national interest of Afghanistan". Another controversial procedural issue was the Taliban's proposal that the negotiations be based on the Hanafi legal interpretation, a Sunni Islamic school to which the Taliban mostly adhere, but which would exclude non-Sunni members of the Afghan population. Although the negotiations initially began without external facilitation due to the Taliban's rejection of foreign participation, after weeks of deadlock the parties agreed that Qatar would assume a facilitating role to thaw the process.

On 2 December, both sides publicly revealed that they had reached an agreement regarding the rules and

4. See the summary on Afghanistan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

5. For a complete listing and biographies of all members of the negotiating teams see: Christine Roehrs, Ali Yawar Adili and Sayed Asadullah Sadat, *Two Parties Too Wary for Peace? Central questions for talks with the Taleban in Doha*, Afghanistan Analysts Network, 11 September 2020; Susannah George, Aziz Tassal and Haq Nawaz Khan, "Shadow politicians, clerics and Soviet-era fighters: The Taliban's team negotiating peace" *The Washington Post*, 30 September 2020.

6. Christine Roehrs, Ali Yawar Adili and Sayed Asadullah Sadat, *Two Parties Too Wary for Peace? Central questions for talks with the Taleban in Doha*, Afghanistan Analysts Network, 11 September 2020.

procedures for the negotiations and that they were initiating a 22-day recess after which negotiations would resume on 5 January. Deborah Lyons, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the UNAMA, said she hoped the parties would take advantage of this interruption to conduct internal and external consultations. President Ghani said that he hoped that negotiations could be resumed in Afghanistan. The Taliban balked, as they still did not formally recognise the legitimacy of the Afghan government.

Regarding civil society initiatives to support the peace process, in October the Afghanistan Mechanism for Inclusive Peace was presented, made up of different organisations and civil society actors to provide a space for participation in the intra-Afghan process.

### Gender, peace and security

Throughout the year, women's organisations continued to demand the participation and recognition of women's rights as part of the peace process and significant progress was made during the year regarding the inclusion of women in the peace process. After the peace agreement was signed between the US and the Taliban in February, the Afghan Women's Network issued a statement demanding female participation in shaping all peace agreements in the country.<sup>7</sup> However, they indicated that they hoped that the signing of the agreement would open up internal dialogue in Afghan society and called for a permanent and general ceasefire. Thus, the appointment of four women as part of the negotiating delegation with the Taliban responded to the growing capacity of Afghan women's organisations to apply pressure, arguments by some actors of the international community against a government dependent on foreign aid and the timid commitment to women's rights as expressed by President Ghani. As the intra-Afghan dialogue process began, the government included four women on the negotiating team. In November, the Afghan Women's Network and the Afghanistan Mechanism for Inclusive Peace convened the Afghan Women Leaders' Peace Summit, bringing together women from different parts of Afghanistan and the diaspora. The participants prepared a declaration with different proposals to strengthen the peace process and demand an end to the violence, as well as the signing of a ceasefire agreement with verification mechanisms and international guarantors of compliance. They also demanded that the negotiating delegations involve the victims of the conflict in the process. They presented several specific demands regarding the integration of gender equality: 1) a co-mediation by a man and a woman; 2) 30% female participation at all levels; 3) the inclusion of a delegation from civil society; 4) the inclusion of women directly at the negotiating table, as observers in technical committees and in consultative

forums alongside the negotiations; and 4) the formation of a technical committee on gender with national and international experts to integrate the gender perspective in the process in a transversal way.

| India (Nagaland)           |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | --   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Framework agreement (2015)   |

#### Summary:

The Indian state of Nagaland has suffered armed conflict and a socio-political crisis since the 1950s as a result of much of the Naga population's unfulfilled aspiration to win independence and create a sovereign state. There have been different attempts at negotiation since the 1960s, but it was not until 1997 that a ceasefire agreement was reached with the NSCN-IM group, one of the main actors in the conflict. Although the agreement has remained in force to date, the negotiations have not made significant progress on the central issues. In 2012, however, the peace process received a boost from greater involvement from the Naga government and state MPs. Alongside the negotiations with the NSCN-IM, in 2001 the government reached another ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K insurgent organisation. However, these negotiations have also failed to make significant progress. In 2015, the Government and the NSCN-IM reached a framework pre-agreement, considered a preamble to the final resolution of the conflict. However, that same year, the ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K was broken, and violent clashes began again.

**The peace process in Nagaland remained at an impasse, though there were several meetings between the armed group NSCN-IM and the government's head negotiator, RN Ravi, as well as meetings between him and representatives of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), which coordinate and group together seven insurgent organisations. Apart from the particular dynamics of the Naga peace process, the situation in Kashmir and the central government's position towards that conflict made it less likely that India would soften its stance with respect to issues such as the recognition of a flag and a constitution for the Naga people, major obstacles to the resolution of the conflict during 2020.** Just like in 2019, the NNPG approved the signing of an agreement at various times of the year but the NSCN-IM refused, as issues that the armed group viewed as essential were excluded, such as the recognition of its own flag and constitution. There were a series of obstacles that prevented substantive progress in the talks and that strained the climate of trust between the parties during the year, with the NSCN-IM calling for the government's head negotiator to step down. In June RN Ravi, who not only leads the government's panel in the peace negotiations, but is also the governor of Nagaland, wrote a letter to the chief minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu

7. Afghan Women Network, *Women's remarks on the US-Taliban agreement*, 1 March 2020.

Rio, stating that “law and order in the state had collapsed” and that “armed gangs” challenged the state government on a daily basis. The use of this adjective caused much unrest in the Naga insurgency. Later, Ravi addressed another letter to members of the government urging them to declare whether there were members of the armed groups among their relatives. The NSCN-IM reportedly refused to meet with Ravi after these letters, which may have led to a significant loss of confidence in him and created an impasse in the negotiations.

The crisis in the negotiations worsened in August and the armed group NSCN-IM publicly revealed the content of the agreement that had been signed in 2015, accusing the government negotiator of having omitted a key word in a version of the agreement circulated to other Naga groups, including the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs). The agreement released by the NSCN-IM included “sharing sovereign power” and “a new lasting and inclusive relationship of peaceful coexistence between the two entities” and the NSCN-IM accused the government of having erased the word “new”, which it argued defined the relationship of peaceful coexistence between two sovereign powers, robustly indicating that this occurred outside the constitutional framework. The NSCN-IM held a meeting in Delhi with government representatives but without Ravi in attendance. The negotiations focused on the question of the flag and the constitution. Alongside the deadlock of the negotiations with the NSCN-IM, the NNPG indicated that they were prepared to reach an agreement with the Indian government, which prompted the leader of the NSCN-IM, Muivah, to label them as traitors. The NNPG and New Delhi had held several meetings in which a draft agreement had been reached. In October, the government indicated that the draft agreement was finalised and that it would consult with the main Naga organisations. Subsequently, a meeting took place between RN Ravi and different Naga civil society organisations and leaders of the different Naga tribes. The NSCN-IM argued that their demand for a Naga flag and constitution of their own should be part of ongoing negotiations and not be negotiated separately, after it was revealed that the government had been conducting consultations in this regard. The NSCN-IM indicated that this was established by the Framework Agreement. In December, in a controversial speech on Nagaland Statehood Day, RN Ravi ruled out any possibility of a flag and constitution for the Naga people.

## Gender, peace and security

The peace negotiations continued to exclude women without giving them any space for formal participation, despite the contributions that women’s organisations have made to building trust among the main actors in the conflict. In October, a delegation made up of seven representatives of different Naga women’s organisations, led by Rosemary Dzuwichu of the Naga

Mothers Association, met in Delhi with government representatives to demand an inclusive peace process with all Naga groups. The women also expressed the need for recognition of a Naga flag and constitution to achieve a peace agreement in the state and voiced their concern about the significant impacts of militarisation in the region. They also noted that the peace agreement should also address issues such as the region’s shortcomings in terms of infrastructure and access to education. The women’s delegation had met with leaders of the NSCN-IM and NNPG in Dimapur prior to the trip to Delhi.

## South-east Asia and Oceania

| Philippines (MILF)         |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, MILF   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third-Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities (1997), Agreement on Peace between the Government and the MILF (2001), Mutual Cessation of Hostilities (2003), Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2012), Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2014), Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (2018) |

### Summary:

Peace negotiations between the Government and the MILF, an MNLF splinter group, started in 1997, just months after Fidel Ramos’s Administration had signed a peace agreement with the MNLF. Since then, the negotiating process has been interrupted three times (in 2000, 2003 and 2008) by outbreaks of high intensity violence. Despite this, in the over 30 rounds of talks that have taken place since the late 1990s some agreements on security and development have been reached, as well as a ceasefire agreement that has been upheld, for the most part. In October 2012 both parties signed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and in March 2014 the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which plans to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with a new public body (called Bangsamoro) with a larger territorial scope and broader self-government competences. Since 2014, the peace process has been focused on the drafting and congressional approval of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which incorporates the main contents of the two aforementioned peace agreements and was approved by Congress in 2018. Following its ratification in a plebiscite in early 2019, the peace process has hinged on the implementation of the peace agreements, the institutional development of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (governed temporarily by the leader of the MILF) and the disarmament of the MILF.

Despite many clashes between the Philippine Armed Forces and various groups operating in Mindanao (mainly Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic

Freedom Fighters), the implementation of the peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF and the institutional deployment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) moved ahead successfully without any significant setbacks. In mid-December, **the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT), in charge of supervising the implementation of the peace agreement, presented its sixth follow-up report (covering March 2019 to October 2020) and highlighted Manila and the MILF's high level of commitment to the peace process and the solid progress made on the agreement implementation process.** The TPMT, which was created in 2013 and will remain operational until an agreement is signed that certifies the full implementation of the peace agreement, stressed the substantial progress made in the political dimension of the agreement, noting that the BARMM has been successfully established as an autonomous political entity with significant levels of self-government. The report indicated that several of the institutions provided for in the agreement have been created, such as the Council of Leaders (in charge of advising the Bangsamoro government), the Philippine Congress-Bangsamoro Parliament Forum (responsible for coordinating the legislative action of both parliaments) and the Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB). This last body, led by the main negotiator of the MILF, current head of the MILF Implementation Panel and BARMM Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal and by Finance Minister Carlos Dominguez, met three times during 2020 to negotiate issues related to relations between the BARMM and the central government. The TPMT report also praised the performance of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), the provisional BARMM government, headed by MILF leader Ebrahim Murad and composed of 80 people (41 designated by the MILF and 39 by Manila). The BTA's responsibilities include approving legislation related to seven priorities identified by both parties: education, administration, revenue, elections, local government, public function and indigenous peoples. So far, the administrative code has been approved (in October) and the education code has been raised for discussion and parliamentary processing. According to several analysts, the two main issues related to the rollout of the BARMM that had not yet been resolved at the end of the year were the extension of the transitional period of the BTA and the inclusion of Cotobato in the BARMM. Regarding the first point, the central government, the BTA, several governors and provincial parliaments (such as those of Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi) had asked the national bicameral Parliament to extend the transitional period of the BTA for three years (from May 2022 to May 2025) so it could complete all the functions assigned by the peace agreement and so it could complete the demobilisation of former MILF combatants. In late November, a meeting was held between the head of the BARMM and historical leader of the MILF, Ebrahim Murad, and President Rodrigo Duterte and six of his ministers. The second issue pending resolution was

whether or not to include Cotobato in the BARMM. The city voted in favour of inclusion in the new political entity (which succeeded the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, which had been based in Cotobato), but the city's mayor, Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi, advocated delaying its incorporation to the BARMM until the end of the transition period.

Made up of five members (four men and one woman) and led by the German Heino Marius (appointed at the end of the year by the Government Implementation Panels and the MILF), the TPMT also stressed the progress made on the peace agreement's Annex on Normalisation, which mainly has to do with the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of 40,000 former MILF combatants. However, the report also highlighted the delays in dissolving the private armed groups in the BARMM and neighbouring areas, in the transformation of the MILF's camps, in the provision of amnesty for its former combatants and in the transitional justice and reconciliation measures. **The second phase of the demobilisation culminated in March, with 12,000 former combatants, or 30% of the total, and the third began, in which 14,000 combatants had to surrender their weapons and begin reintegrating into society.** This process is being supervised by the Independent Decommissioning Body, presided over by the Turkish ambassador to the Philippines (Fatih Ulusoy) and composed of the governments of Norway, Turkey and Brunei and by experts appointed by the MILF and the Philippine government. In February, Camp Abubakar, the MILF's historic base camp, was transferred to the Joint Peace and Security Committee to be used as one of the 11 facilities (built by the government and UNDP) in which the weapons handed over by former MILF combatants are stored. Recently, the government signed a contract with a company to set up a banana plantation near the mentioned camp.

## Gender, peace and security

In late October, the BARMM presented its Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which calls for greater female participation in implementing the peace agreement and in developing and establishing the new political entity in Mindanao. The plan is modelled after the Philippine government's National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 and tries to develop aspects related to women's rights incorporated in the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the law that created the BARMM, which was based on the main commitments of the peace agreement between Manila and the MILF. The plan has four pillars (protection and prevention; empowerment and participation; promotion and mainstreaming; and monitoring and evaluation) and calls for guaranteeing women's rights, gender equality and inclusive peacebuilding policies in close alliance with civil society women's organisations. The plan pays special attention to its implementation at the local level



(with the development of local action plans that have a special impact on gender equality in the communities most affected by the armed conflict) and pays special attention to intersectionality between the women, peace and security agenda and humanitarian action, guaranteeing gender-sensitive humanitarian emergency policies. Some women's organisations such as the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders welcomed the approval of the plan and highlighted that it addresses the main aspects that can guarantee gender equality and sustainable peace in the region, although they also pointed out that it has some omissions, such as disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons (which according to the organisation is absent in 70% of the National Action Plans on UN Resolution 1325 worldwide) or the interrelation between armed conflicts and climate change.

| Philippines (NDF)          |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political wing of the NPA)                        |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Norway  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | The Hague Joint Declaration (1992), Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (1995), Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (1998) |

**Summary:**

Negotiations between the Government and the NDF began in 1986, after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship. Since then, many rounds of negotiations have taken place, but agreement has only been reached on one of the four items listed in the substantive negotiation agenda of The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, namely human rights and international humanitarian law (an agreement was signed in 1998). No agreement has been reached on the other three items: socio-economic reforms; political and constitutional reforms; and cessation of hostilities and disposition of armed forces. Since 2004, the Government of Norway has been acting as a facilitator between the Government and the NDF, the political organisation that represents the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing (the NPA) in the peace talks. In addition to the significant differences that exist between the Government and the NDF with regard to which socio-economic and political model is best for the Philippines, one of the issues that has generated the greatest controversy between the parties in recent years is that of the security and immunity guarantees for the NDF members involved in the peace negotiations.

**Despite the fact that there were some expectations about resuming the peace negotiations at the beginning of the year and that both parties implemented two separate unilateral cessations of hostilities in March and April, the Philippine government and the NDF did not meet directly throughout 2020 and at the end of the year both parties ruled out any possibility of resuming the peace talks before the end of the**

**current term of President Rodrigo Duterte.** At the beginning of January, the founder of the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, praised the truce that both parties achieved between 23 December and 7 January to mark the Christmas holidays, expressed his willingness to resume the peace talks and to meet personally with Duterte in Hanoi (Vietnam) and even announced that an informal meeting could be held in the second or third week of January to prepare the resumption of the formal peace negotiations in Oslo, with the facilitation of the Norwegian government. Similarly, at the beginning of the year Duterte also said that his government was willing to resume talks with the NDF, in full harmony with the reconstitution of the government's negotiating panel (dissolved in March 2019) and with the discreet conversations that the NDF held with the government's former chief negotiator, Silvestre Bello, in December 2019. However, in the weeks following these statements by Duterte and Sison, the meeting between the two panels not only failed to take place, but both sides began to publicly express positions far removed from the conditions in which the negotiations were supposed to resume. First, Manila insisted that the meeting between Duterte and Sison should take place in the Philippines, with the government guaranteeing the security of the founder of the NPA. Meanwhile, the NDF insisted that this meeting should be held in a country close to the Philippines and not only for security reasons, but because the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), signed in 1997, required the talks to take place in a neutral country.

However, the disagreements between the two negotiating parties ran deeper than the one over where the negotiations should take place. In February, the spokesman for the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Wilben Mayor, declared that any resumption of negotiations should take place under the protection of the Constitution, the rule of law and the democratic process, making it clear that neither the government, nor the NDF, nor any agreement between the two can amend the Constitution, and that any such amendment can only occur as part of a Constitutional Convention or a Constituent Assembly. Mayor not only criticised the fact that the NDF does not recognise or accept the Philippine Constitution, but also said that the NDF's proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Economic and Social Reforms (the item on the substantive agenda that was being discussed when the official negotiations formally ended in November 2017) was riddled with unconstitutional proposals. The OPAPP further stated that talks with the NDF require a new negotiating framework and a thorough review of the agreements reached so far. As such, the government said that the 1992 Hague Declaration could not be the document on which the entire negotiation process is built, because it calls into question the existence of a single Constitution, a

single sovereignty and a single Armed Forces. Mayor also criticised the main agreements reached so far, such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law of 1998 (since it is based on the idea that only states can violate human rights) and the JASIG of 1997, since the NDF has instrumentalised it at its convenience. According to the government, most of the many NDF consultants who have been released to participate in negotiations by five different governments have gone underground, without any concessions or confidence-building measures from the NDF.

Despite the fact that both Manila and the NDF unilaterally suspended all offensive actions in March and April (the government between 19 March and 15 April, and the NDF between March and 30 April), the tension between both parties had increased notably since late April after both sides traded blame for repeated violations of the respective ceasefires. At the end of April, Duterte said that there would be no next round of negotiations with the NDF, lamenting its lack of respect for the commitments made and criticising attacks against the military carrying out humanitarian tasks in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along the same lines, in mid-September the NDF ruled out any possibility of resuming negotiations during Duterte's current term of office and opened up the possibility of consulting with various opposition parties and with Vice President Leni Robredo, the leader of the Liberal Party, on how to resume dialogue with the government in a post-Duterte scenario. In December, shortly after the Philippine Armed Forces suggested to Duterte, as Commander-in-Chief, that he should not decree a ceasefire for the Christmas season, the president reiterated that there would be no other ceasefire or any negotiations under his government. Shortly afterwards, National Security Advisor Hermogenes Esperon declared that he would forward to the Electoral Commission his recommendation to prohibit the participation in the next elections of parties that support the Communist movement.

### Gender, peace and security

As in previous years, several women's organisations participated in various demonstrations to demand the resumption of the peace talks between the government and the NDF, as well as to denounce and make visible the impacts of the conflict on the civilian population and on women in particular. Following the death of Fidel Agcaoili, the head of the NDF negotiating panel, in July, Julie de Lima was temporarily appointed to replace him. Julie de Lima is the oldest person on the NDF negotiating panel and the partner of Jose Maria Sison. In one of her first public statements, Julie de Lima invited Vice President Leni Robredo to discuss the conditions under which peace negotiations could resume once Duterte, in her words, is expelled from power or ends his term of office.

| Myanmar                    |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | China   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (October 2015)   |

#### Summary:

Since the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of Myanmar and ethnic-based insurgent groups began in 1948, several negotiations have take place in an attempt to end the violence. Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have reached ceasefire agreements with the Burmese Government. Although definitive peace agreements were never reached, violence did decrease significantly as a result of these pacts. In 2011 there was a change in the Administration as a result of the 2010 elections and the new Government made several overtures to the armed insurgency that brought about the start of peace negotiations and the signing of agreements with most of the armed groups operating in different parts of the country. By mid-2012 the Government had signed a ceasefire agreement with 12 insurgent organizations. In 2013, talks began with different insurgent groups aimed at reaching a nationwide ceasefire agreement and promoting political talks. In 2015, the government and eight armed opposition groups signed a ceasefire agreement (NCA), taking the first steps towards political dialogue. In 2016, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which brought the government together with the armed opposition groups, beginning a new phase in the peace process. The conference has been convened several times in subsequent years.

**The peace process in Myanmar made some progress with the resumption of the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong, which held its fourth session in August, following two years of impasse, although significant difficulties were encountered due to the lack of participation by groups that had not signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), serious armed clashes with the insurgent group AA and the impacts of the pandemic, which also led to a drop in violence in some periods with ceasefires announced by both the Burmese Armed Forces and some ethnic armed groups.** The year began with State Councillor Aung San Suu Kyi asking all groups that had signed the NCA to assume greater responsibility and commitment to the agreement. Her appeal came as part of a Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting that took place in early January, considered the prelude to the formal resumption of the peace process. At the meeting, the parties agreed to establish more robust ceasefire and implementation agreements and to convene the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong during the first quarter of the year. In February, the first meeting was held between Myanmar's military and political leaders and the leaders of the RCSS/SSA-South at the armed group's headquarters. Described as positive, this meeting took place after the leader of the insurgent

group, General Yawd Serk, had met for the first time with the Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese Armed Forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, in Naypyidaw in January. The latter was reportedly in favour of the idea of a federal union as well as a gradual reform of the Constitution and may have asked Yawd Serk for help in bringing the rest of the country's armed groups into the NCA. The armed group SSPP was in favour of signing the NCA, though it indicated that it should discuss it with the rest of the armed groups of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee coalition. Furthermore, in February the armed group ALP asked the government to hold a national dialogue in Rakhine State. This is a mechanism provided for the armed groups that have signed the NCA to consult and contribute to a future federal union in the country.

Following the spread of the pandemic, the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong was cancelled and different initiatives were launched to try to end the armed violence. Eighteen diplomatic missions in the country called for an end to the conflicts, expressing concern about the dire situation in Rakhine and Chin States, which was subsequently joined by 21 humanitarian organisations. In May, the Burmese Armed Forces agreed to declare a unilateral ceasefire until 31 August 31, echoing the UN Secretary-General's call for a worldwide ceasefire due to the pandemic, although they excluded the Rakhine State and their fighting with the AA. The Committee to Coordinate and Collaborate with Ethnic Armed Organisations to Prevent, Control and Treat COVID-19 had previously been formed, considered an important initiative for building trust, since contact was established with armed organisations that had signed the NCA and others that had not. Some armed organisations, such as the members of the Brotherhood Alliance (TNLA, AA, MNDAA) also declared a ceasefire, and called on the government not to exclude them from its own ceasefire at the same time. The government subsequently extended the ceasefire for a month.

The fourth session of the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong was finally held in August, after not having met since October 2018. This time it was attended by 230 people, less than on previous occasions due to the pandemic. The conference concluded with an agreement of 20 principles between the Burmese government, the Burmese Armed Forces, the armed groups and the participating political parties to resolve the misunderstandings around the NCA and its implementation, as well as to establish the guiding principles for achieving a process of building a federal-democratic union. In addition, the participants agreed to continue the dialogue with the new government that was due to leave the polls in November. The 10 armed groups adhering to the NCA participated in the

conference, but the groups that have not signed it did not attend, despite the fact that they had all been invited with the exception of the AA. This absence was considered an important setback to the peace process, since one of the objectives set was to strengthen the ceasefire agreement. The absence of non-signatory organisations was motivated by the exclusion of the AA and its qualification as a terrorist group, as well as by restrictions as a consequence of the pandemic.

## Gender, peace and security

Women's organisations continued to demand female participation in the peace process and were active in different forms of advocacy. The Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) met in March with the armed groups that had signed the NCA to discuss gender equality and the inclusion of women in the peace process and political talks. It also held several meetings in different states with local authorities and female civil society activists. On the International Day against Gender-Based Violence, the Women's League of Burma, a platform that brings together women's organisations with diverse religious and ethnic profiles, called for an end to the armed conflict and for the persecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence as part of the armed conflict in civil courts, as well as a guaranteed end to impunity for sexual and gender violence. It also demanded revision and changes to the draft law for the prevention of violence against women, which had been criticised significantly for its many shortcomings. After its victory in the elections in December, the NLD party appointed three representatives to hold talks with the ethnic parties, including Nang Khin Htwe Myint, the chief minister of Kachin State and one of the few women with a senior government position in Myanmar.

***The peace process in Myanmar resumed with the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong, but the lack of participation of groups that had not signed the national ceasefire agreement blocked substantive progress***

| Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>       | Government of Papua New Guinea, government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville  |
| <b>Third parties</b>            | Bertie Ahern   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>      | Bougainville Peace Agreement (2001)  |
| <b>Summary:</b>                 | The armed conflict between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (1988-1998), which some sources consider to have been the deadliest in Oceania since the Second World War, ended with a cessation of hostilities in 1998 and the signing of a peace agreement in 2001 in Arawa (the largest city in Bougainville). Among other matters, the agreement provided for the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARB), the disarmament and demobilisation of |

combatants and the holding of a non-binding independence referendum within a maximum period of 15 years after the election of the first ARB government, which finally took place in 2005. After several years of negotiations between the national and regional governments, in 2018 the Agreement's Joint Supervisory Body created the Post-Referendum Planning Working Group and former Irish President Bertie Ahern was elected chair of the Bougainville Referendum Commission, making him responsible for preparing the census and other logistical preparations for the referendum. After several delays, the referendum was finally held between 23 November and 7 December 2019, with a binary question in which voters could choose between greater autonomy or independence for the region.

**During the year, the foundations were laid for the negotiating process between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to draw up a joint proposal on the political status of Bougainville, which will eventually be voted on in the Parliament of Papua New Guinea, but the progress was slowed by the impact of the pandemic, the holding of elections in Bougainville and the change of government in the region, and the complex political situation facing the Papua New Guinea government at the end of the year.** Earlier in the year, the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville repeated that they respected the results of the self-determination referendum held in Bougainville in November and December 2019 (in which almost 98% supported the region's independence, with over 87% turnout) and said they were willing to enter into negotiations to address the political status of the Bougainville region, in line with the provisions of the 2001 peace agreement. In late January, the Autonomous Bougainville Government organised the Bougainville Consultation Forum in the city of Buka, which formed a team of 56 representatives from various civil society organisations to promote the demands of civil society and to help the Autonomous Bougainville Government to design its negotiating strategy with Port Moresby. One of the main aspects that may shape the future of the negotiations on the status of Bougainville was the election of Ishmael Toroama as the new president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, a former commander of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. Although the previous president, John Momis, tried to amend the Constitution to be elected for a third term, the Supreme Court rejected the possibility. The legislative and presidential elections (the fifth since autonomous authority was granted to Bougainville) were held between 12 August and 1 September, in which 40 representatives of Parliament were elected (out of a total of more than 400 candidates) and in which Toroama defeated the other 24 candidates running by a wide margin. After his time as a combatant, Toroama also worked in the peace and disarmament process and showed his willingness to enter into sincere negotiations with the Papua New Guinea authorities.

Though several technical meetings were held between both sides during the year, a meeting took place between

Toroama and Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape in Port Moresby in early November to prepare for the first meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body by the end of the month. At that meeting, **it was agreed to appoint Bertie Ahern, the former prime minister of Ireland and chairman of the Bougainville Referendum Commission**, as the facilitator of the dialogue process, and to begin formal JSB negotiations in Kopoko on 30 November. The substantive agenda for the late November meeting included economic, financial and electoral issues, the transfer of powers and the invitation for other countries such as Japan, the US, China, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands to establish delegations in Bougainville, but it mainly addressed the definition of the framework and structures for the negotiations (formally called the Post-Referendum Consultation Process). Although the technical teams of both parties did meet, in the end the formal JSB meeting between both negotiating delegations did not take place. Toroama criticised the situation and lamented that the political situation of the Papua New Guinea government affected the negotiating process, as several ministers resigned and the opposition declared its intention to file a motion of censure against Marape.

### Gender, peace and security

In mid-June, the Bougainville Women's Federation Bill was passed, which according to the Bougainville Autonomous Government guarantees women's participation in political and private sector decision-making processes. The law also provides adequate funding for the Bougainville Women's Federation as the main organisation representing and working for women's rights. According to its spokesperson, the BWF will promote programmes focused on human rights, sexual violence, literacy, leadership, governance and community empowerment. Several women's organisations also noted that the historical record had been beaten for women running in the presidential and legislative elections in August and September. According to the Bougainville Constitution, three of the 40 seats are reserved for women. One woman was triumphant in the aforementioned elections, so the current Bougainville Parliament will have four women. Several analysts pointed out that Papua New Guinea is one of the countries in the world with the lowest levels of female political participation and representation. Finally, the BWF was active as an observer in the legislative and presidential elections and stated its intention to work to achieve more transparent and inclusive elections in the future.

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Thailand (south)           |                 |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, BRN |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Malaysia        |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | --              |

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**Summary:**

Since 2004, the year when the armed conflict in the south of Thailand reignited, several discreet and exploratory informal conversations have taken place between the Thai government and the insurgent group. Some of these dialogue initiatives have been led by non-government organizations, by the Indonesian government or by former senior officials of the Thai State. After around one year of exploratory contacts between the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and some insurgent groups, at the start of 2013, formal and public conversations started between the Government and the armed group BRN, facilitated by the Government of Malaysia. These negotiations were interrupted by the coup d'état in March 2014, but the military government in power since then resumed its contacts with several insurgent groups towards the second half of the year. In 2015 negotiations between the Government and MARA Patani –an organization grouping the main insurgent groups in the south of the country– were made public. Although the insurgency wanted to discuss measures that might resolve the central points of the conflict (such as recognizing the distinct identity of the Patani people or granting some level of self-government to the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat), the main point discussed during the initial stages of the process was the establishment of several security areas to reduce the level of violence and thus determine the level of representativeness of MARA Patani and the commitment of insurgent groups (especially the BRN) with the process of dialogue.

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As part of the new peace process between the government and the BRN, the most active and influential armed group in the south of the country, two rounds of negotiations were held in January and March, but they were interrupted after the truce decreed by the BRN in April and did not resume all year. **After many exploratory talks between the Thai government and the BRN, including a meeting in Berlin in December 2019, the government and BRN delegations met for the first time in Kuala Lumpur on 20 January 2020, facilitated by Abdul Rahim Noor in representation of the government of Malaysia.** The government delegation was led by General Wanlop Rugsanaoh and consisted of seven people, including the minister of justice, the commander of the southern military region of the country and a member of the intelligence services. The BRN delegation was led by Anas Abdulrahman (aka Hipni Mareh), a former teacher at an Islamic school in Yala. None of the BRN members who were also part of MARA Pattani participated in these negotiations, although some MARA Pattani members said that there was coordination with the BRN. MARA Pattani is an umbrella organisation representing the main armed groups in southern Thailand, which led the negotiations with the government between 2015 and late 2019. In the same vein, Wanlop Rugsanaoh said that **the government wanted to enter into direct negotiations with the main armed group in the south and that other groups could join the negotiations later.** Anas Abdulrahman said that both the framework

and the terms of reference for the negotiations had been discussed in this first round of negotiations. In addition, the government accepted the participation and observation of foreign peace process experts for the first time, albeit on an individual basis and not on behalf of any organisation or government. Historically, the government had opposed the insurgency's demand that negotiations be mediated or facilitated by international actors. A second round of negotiations was held in early March in which the government panel said that technical and administrative issues were discussed, as well as some issues on the substantive agenda, such as the reduction of violence in the south to foster a better climate of trust between the parties. However, the government said that reaching agreements on the substantive agenda of the negotiations would require time and perseverance from both sides.

On 3 April, the same day that UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a new appeal for all parties in the world to declare a ceasefire, **the BRN declared the cessation of all its offensive armed activity for humanitarian reasons and emphasised the need to prioritise containing the COVID-19 pandemic.**

According to some media outlets, some civil society organisations such as The Patani or the Islamic Medical Association were key to the BRN's decision to declare a cessation of hostilities on humanitarian grounds. Although the Thai Armed Forces did not respond to the gesture and announced their intention to continue their actions to preserve law and stability in the south, in April there were substantially less hostilities between the parties. The BRN's humanitarian truce expired in early May, just days after a military operation killed three suspected insurgents accused of plotting attacks during Ramadan. Two days later, two soldiers were killed in the Nong Chik district (Pattani province). Although the government stated that the lower death rate during the ceasefire period could also be due to other factors unrelated to the BRN truce, Wanlop Rugsanaoh disagreed and cited Bangkok's willingness to resume peace talks in July or August. However, although the government said that it was in constant contact with the BRN, formal negotiations did not resume for the rest of the year. Wanlop Rugsanaoh claimed that the pandemic made continuing the talks impossible, but some analysts believe that the main reason why the negotiations broke down was the increase in political and social crises in Thailand as a whole and the escalation of protests in several parts of the country. In September, Wanlop Rugsanaoh met with several Muslim leaders in Pattani, who according to some media reportedly made several requests of him, such as to make Friday (an Islamic holy day in Islam) a holiday and to declare Malay an official language in the southern part of the country.

## 5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2020, seven of the 40 peace processes in the world (17.5%) took place in Europe.
- For the most part, peace processes in Europe continued to lack institutionalised mechanisms for the participation of women and other sectors of civil society.
- The resumption of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh ended with a Russian-mediated agreement that divided the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and guaranteed Baku's control of the adjacent districts, while leaving the political status of the area unresolved.
- In Ukraine, the parties to the conflict agreed on measures to strengthen the ceasefire, which helped significantly to reduce the violence.
- The EU-facilitated negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo, which has been at an impasse since late 2018, resumed, but disagreements continued on important issues, such as the creation of the association of Serbian municipalities of Kosovo.
- There were calls for the resumption of the 5+2 negotiating format in Moldova regarding the conflict around Transdniestria.
- The peace process in Cyprus remained deadlocked during the year, while the conflict worsened, with increased militarised tension in the eastern Mediterranean.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2020. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the dialogue processes in the region are presented, followed by the analysis on the evolution of each specific context during the year, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Europe that hosted peace negotiations during 2020.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations               | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)</b> | Armenia, Azerbaijan   | OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), <sup>1</sup> Russia, Turkey <sup>2</sup>     |
| <b>Cyprus</b>                                  | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus   | UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)  |
| <b>Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)</b>       | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia <sup>3</sup>   | OSCE, EU, UN, USA, Russia <sup>4</sup>   |
| <b>Moldova (Transdniestria)</b>                | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria   | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU  |
| <b>Serbia – Kosovo</b>                         | Serbia, Kosovo  | EU, UN, USA  |
| <b>Spain (Basque Country)</b>                  | ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK) | Permanent Social Forum, Bakea Bidea  |
| <b>Ukraine (east)</b>                          | Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia <sup>5</sup>  | OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia <sup>6</sup> also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate <sup>7</sup> ) |

1. In the run-up to the outbreak of war in 2020, the OSCE Minsk Group was the main mediating actor in the peace process. The November 2020 agreement, mediated by Russia and ending hostilities, made no reference to the negotiating format to be followed thereafter, although the OSCE Minsk Group expressed its willingness to continue to be involved in the search for solutions to the conflict.

2. Turkey's status as a third party may be subject to dispute. It is included in this table due to the establishment by Russia and Turkey of a peacekeeping centre for monitoring the ceasefire. The creation of the centre was ratified in a Memorandum between Russia and Turkey.

3. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

4. Ibid.

5. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

## 5.1. Negotiations in 2020: regional trends

Seven peace processes were identified in Europe in 2020, the same number as in 2019. They accounted for 17.5% of the 40 total peace processes worldwide in 2020. Two of these seven negotiating processes referred to active armed conflicts. One was the armed conflict in Ukraine, which started in 2014. The other was the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which flared up again between September and November 2020. The other active armed conflict in Europe, which has pitted the Turkish Government against the Kurdish armed group PKK since 1984, continued without negotiations since the last such process ended unsuccessfully in 2015. In the course of 2020, the worsening violence in northern Iraq linked to the conflict between Turkey and the PKK highlighted the need for dialogue initiatives. The rest of the active processes dealt with past armed conflicts or socio-political crises and, with the exception of Spain (the Basque Country), all were still taking place in a context of tension, including in Georgia in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in Moldova in relation to the Transdnistria region and in Cyprus.

**Actors** representing self-proclaimed entities such as states stood out as negotiating parties, despite enjoying little or no international recognition (Transdnistria,

Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Northern Turkish Republic of Cyprus, the People's Republic of Donetsk and the People's Republic of Luhansk). An exception was Kosovo, which is recognized by more than one hundred countries. All of them participated in the negotiating tables in their various bilateral or multilateral formats, and mostly under the decisive influence of countries that exercised political, economic and military influence over them. Regarding the self-proclaimed republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, in the new scenario produced by the war and the November ceasefire agreement, Armenia and Azerbaijan remained the negotiating parties, without a direct role for the self-proclaimed authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. Before the war, they were consulted parties, but without a formal role at the negotiating table.

Moreover, Europe continued to stand out for having third parties in the negotiations taking place there. All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks. Most of the mediators and facilitators were intergovernmental organisations. The OSCE was a mediator or co-mediator in four of the seven peace processes in Europe: Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdnistria) and Ukraine (east). However, the resumption of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan revealed the limits and difficulties of the negotiating process mediated by the organisation thus far and raised questions about the negotiating

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2020.

format in the new scenario and about how important the OSCE would be as a third party in subsequent phases. Meanwhile, Russia and Turkey strengthened their roles, with Russia as mediator of the November ceasefire agreement that ended the war and Turkey as a key player in support of Azerbaijan and taking on a role in monitoring the ceasefire. Even so, after the end of the war, the OSCE Minsk Group expressed its willingness to remain involved with the parties in promoting the resolution of the conflict. According to the OSCE, the parties to the dispute also expressed their expectations of getting involved with the co-mediators of the Minsk Group. On the other hand, the EU was the main facilitator of the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, a co-mediator in Georgia, an observer in Moldova and an “interested party” in the Cyprus peace process. The UN was the mediator of the long-running process in Cyprus and a co-mediator of the Georgian peace process. Through various functions, it also supported the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, facilitated by the EU.

Moreover, some countries’ governments maintained a prominent role as third parties, such as Russia, which became more important as a mediator for the Nagorno-Karabakh situation. Russia also continued to participate in the Normandy format on the peace process in Ukraine, in which France and Germany also participate, as well as in the Geneva International Talks (GIT) on the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In both peace processes (in Ukraine and Georgia), its status continued to be subject to different interpretations, with Russia self-defined by itself as a third party and interpreted as a party to the conflict by Georgia. Likewise, the United States raised its profile in the negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo during the year. Thus, in 2020 Washington facilitated economic agreements between the parties, while the EU continued to lead facilitation efforts in the political part of the process.

The issues on the **negotiating agendas** were diverse and the details on the various elements and status of discussions of each round were not always public. With the restart of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in September, issues related to **security and the achievement of ceasefires** stood out in Europe in 2020. After several unsuccessful attempts at a truce and with Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh losing ground militarily, Baku and Yerevan reached a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreement in November that included monitoring of the ceasefire by Russian peacekeeping troops. Despite being a bilateral and mediated agreement, it was interpreted as a military victory for Azerbaijan over Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, with the risks that this poses for a sustainable solution in the future. The ceasefire was also a major issue in Ukraine, where the parties agreed on a package of measures to strengthen

***Peace processes in Europe in 2020 accounted for 17.5% of the cases worldwide***

***All negotiating processes in Europe were supported by external third parties***

it in July, which led to a very significant drop in violence. Regarding security, the Georgia negotiating process reactivated the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for South Ossetia (IPRM), which had been paralysed since 2019, although the Abkhazian one remained blocked. In various cases, issues related to the **withdrawal of military forces** were addressed, such as between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The November agreement ratified Azerbaijan’s control of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia’s withdrawal of those still in its possession upon signing the agreement. In Ukraine, discussions continued regarding the designation of new disengagement areas, though they encountered difficulties and yielded no concrete results. In Moldova, the newly elected president demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transdniestria.

Moreover, the issue of the **status of the various disputed territories**, the root cause of many conflicts in Europe, continued to be ignored or blocked in the negotiating processes and was fraught with confrontation in political speeches and fait accompli policies. As part of the rekindled war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, Baku seized part of the region militarily, splitting it de facto and creating a new status quo. The November agreement between both sides ratified Baku’s control of those parts of Nagorno-Karabakh, but left the status of the region unresolved. Although the negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo was resumed, confrontation and impasse continued over the creation of the association of municipalities of north Kosovo, which was to provide certain powers to the Serbian areas of Kosovo. In Cyprus, the promotion of a two-state solution by the newly elected Turkish Cypriot president and his ally Ankara threw uncertainty into an already blocked process structured around a bicomunal and bizonal federation solution. **Humanitarian issues** were also on the agenda of the negotiations. The November agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan included the return of the displaced population to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts under the supervision of UNHCR, as well as the exchange of prisoners of war, other detainees and the remains of deceased persons. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and in view of the closure of crossing points in areas of conflict and tension such as Ukraine and Georgia, which had a serious impact on the population on both sides of the border crossings, civil society groups demanded action to provide access to healthcare, medicine, food and other goods and services.

Regarding the **trends**, 2020 was a year of deterioration for the process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, given the escalation of violence already in July and the restart of the war in September. The November agreement



ended the hostilities and forcibly imposed a solution to the issue of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, but left substantive issues unresolved, such as the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory that was divided after the war. The new scenario around Nagorno-Karabakh, with the deployment of Russian troops, also raised uncertainty throughout the Caucasus, with parts of Georgian civil society warning of possible impact on the future of the processes in Georgia. Furthermore, the processes in Moldova (Transnistria) and Cyprus remained deadlocked in their high-level political formats, despite calls by the OSCE for them to resume in Moldova and despite the good offices provided by the UN to explore possibilities for resuming the talks in Cyprus. In both cases, the impact that the newly elected presidents could have on the negotiating processes in 2020 remains to be seen. Of these, the new Turkish Cypriot leader's promotion of a two-state solution in Cyprus, an option also supported by Turkey, added uncertainty to a conflict already aggravated by escalating tension in the eastern Mediterranean around the control of petrol and disputes over the delimitation of the maritime borders between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus, which were intertwined with other tensions such as international rivalries projected onto the armed conflict in Libya. While active, the peace process in Georgia continued to face serious difficulties. In contrast, despite difficulties on substantive issues in Ukraine, progress was made on security issues, with action to strengthen the ceasefire. This led to a significant decrease in violence, although at the end of the year there were alerts of ceasefire violations.

Regarding the **gender perspective**, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mainly by low levels of female participation in the negotiating teams, as well as by the lack of mechanisms or gender architecture. In 2020 there was still only one case that had a gender mechanism in the formal negotiating process: the Cyprus process and its technical committee on gender equality, with a limited impact on the whole process. During 2020, the committee's discussions focused mainly on gender violence on the island, which got seriously worse during the pandemic, as in other parts of the world. Women's organisations in Cyprus also continued to complain of the difficulties in integrating a gender perspective in the peace process in 2020. None of the peace processes had mechanisms for the direct participation of female civil society activists in formal negotiations. Only one case, in Georgia, were there institutionalised mechanisms for indirect female participation in the peace process. Thus, the Government of Georgia upheld its practice of organising several consultations a year between Georgian Government representatives in the negotiations and representatives of civil society and the population affected by the conflict,

***In 2020, the peace processes in Europe faced serious difficulties, such as the reactivation of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the uncertainty in Cyprus due to the tension in the eastern Mediterranean and the demands for a two-state solution of two states***

including women with the support of UN Women, that initially promoted this practice. In 2020, women's groups in Georgia demanded solutions to the impacts of the pandemic and the closure of the crossing points between Georgia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in these meetings. In Kosovo, the Security and Gender Group, which brings together civil society organisations and international political actors and agencies, called for effective female participation in the Kosovo delegation as part of the negotiating process with Serbia. Furthermore, local, regional and international female civil society activists denounced the restart of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and called for an end to violence and the resumption of negotiations. In 2020, the Network of Women Mediators of the Mediterranean increased its presence in some of the contexts in Europe. As such, the antenna created in Cyprus in 2019 began its activity. The network also established a new antenna, in Kosovo.

## 5.2. Case study analysis

### Eastern Europe

| Moldova (Transnistria)     |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova (1992), Memorandum on the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997) |

#### Summary:

Transnistria is a 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> enclave with half a million inhabitants that are mostly Russian-speaking. Legally under Moldovan sovereignty, but with de facto independence, since the 1990s it has been the stage for an unresolved dispute regarding its status. The conflict surfaced during the final stages of the breakup of the USSR, when fears increased in Transnistria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transnistria rejected Moldovan sovereignty and declared itself independent. This sparked an escalation in the number of incidents, which eventually became an armed conflict in 1992. A ceasefire agreement that same year brought the war to an end and gave way to a peace process under international mediation. One of the main issues is the status of the territory. Moldova defends its territorial integrity, but is willing to accept a special status for the entity, while Transnistria has fluctuated between proposals for a confederalist model that would give the area broad powers and demands full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in

Transnistria. Since the beginning of the dispute there have been several proposals, partial agreements, commitments and confidence-building measures in the framework of the peace process, as well as important obstacles and periods of stagnation. Geostrategic international disputes also hover over this unresolved conflict, which has deteriorated due to the war in Ukraine.

**The negotiating process continued to face difficulties and there were calls to resume the 5+2 format**, which brings together the parties to the conflict, as well as the mediators (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine) and observers (USA, EU). The last meeting in 5+2 format had taken place in October 2019 in Bratislava, without the parties being able to approve a protocol of new measures. In July 2020, Moldovan President Igor Dodon and the leader of Transnistria, Vadim Krasnoselky, met and announced that they were ready for new rounds of negotiations. In October, the Transnistrian authorities indicated their willingness to resume the 5+2 format without preconditions to solve the problems associated with implementation of the package of measures known as Berlin Plus. This was expressed by the foreign minister of the de facto independent region, Vitaly Ignatyev, after a meeting with the head of the OSCE mission in Moldova, Claus Neukirch. Ignatyev admitted that the process was going through a complicated stage. After her election as the new president of Moldova in the November elections, Maia Sandu, a pro-EU candidate who campaigned on an anti-corruption platform and the first female president of Moldova, affirmed that she supported a political solution to the conflict through the 5+2 format and upheld principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity in any solution to the conflict. She also expressed her willingness to enter dialogue with Russia. Sandu placed the conflict at the level of the elites and not of populations and described it as complicated, but solvable. **Sandu also stressed the need for the withdrawal of Russian military forces** that remain in Transnistria guarding weapons from the Soviet period, as well as the removal of Russian weapons. She also indicated the need for their replacement by a civilian mission under the OSCE. Russia rejected the proposal, arguing that it would lead to destabilisation. In December, the OSCE Ministerial Council called on the parties to restart the 5+2 format as part of the annual ministerial conference. In late December, the leader of Transnistria affirmed the region's willingness to resume talks in both the 5+2 and 1+1 formats (between the leaders of Moldova and Transnistria). The general political atmosphere in Moldova remained tense. The president-elect urged the government of Prime Minister Ion Chicu to resign and to call early elections and accused Parliament of trying to obstruct her anti-corruption programme by transferring some presidential powers to Parliament. Several thousand people (20,000 according to some

media outlets) demonstrated in front of Parliament in the capital in December to demand the resignation of the government and new elections. Ion Chicu resigned in late December and Sandu appointed Foreign Minister Aurel Ciocoi as interim prime minister days later. Likewise, the Constitutional Court had to rule on a motion presented by MPs from Sandu's party to allow the dissolution of Parliament and call early elections.

## Gender, peace and security

The peace process continued to lack specific mechanisms for female participation. However, Moldovan women continued to be involved in peacebuilding efforts, such as the defence of women's human rights. Feminist women from Moldova participated with female activists from other Eastern European and Caucasian countries in a series of online meetings on the situation of women's rights and the implementation of the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years later. At the October meeting, they addressed issues related to the growing attacks on women's rights and gender equality in the region and the challenges associated with the pandemic. The meetings were organised by activists from the region and enjoyed the support of UN Women and the Women Engage for a Common Future network.

| Ukraine (east)             |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia <sup>8</sup>  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia <sup>9</sup> also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate <sup>10</sup> )   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group (Minsk Agreement) (2014), Memorandum on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Protocol on the Outcome of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan (Minsk Memorandum) (2014), Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (Minsk II Agreements) (2015) |

### Summary:

The armed conflict active in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 pits state forces against pro-Russian separatist militias backed by Russia over the status of those areas and is fuelled by many other contextual factors. It is the subject of international negotiations involving the Trilateral Contact

8. Russia's status in the Ukrainian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

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Group (OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) and pro-Russian militias, as well as the diplomatic initiatives of some foreign ministries. Since the Trilateral Contact Group was created in May 2014, various agreements have been attempted, including a peace plan, a brief, non-renewed truce and a pact (Minsk Protocol) including a bilateral ceasefire supervised by the OSCE, the decentralisation of power in areas under militia control; as well as a memorandum that same year for a demilitarised zone, which completed the Minsk Protocol. New escalation of violence led to Minsk II agreement in 2015, but violence continued and disagreements between the sides hindered the implementation of the peace deal. The obstacles to resolving the conflict include its internationalisation, mainly owing to Russian support for the militias and the background of confrontation between Russia and the West projected onto the Ukrainian crisis. The armed conflict was preceded by a serious general crisis in Ukraine (mass anti-government protests, the departure of President Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia), when there were also some attempts at negotiation between the government and the opposition.

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**An agreement was reached to strengthen the ceasefire in Ukraine that allowed a drop in violence in the humanitarian context aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, although the underlying issues continued to generate division,** such as control of the Russian border, the status of the eastern areas and the elections in those areas. In addition, the pandemic situation forced the parties to hold virtual negotiations. The seven-point agreement reached on 23 July as part of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) to strengthen the ceasefire bans offensive, reconnaissance and sabotage operations, the operation any type of aerial vehicle, gunfire, including by snipers, and the deployment of heavy weapons in or near settlements and especially civilian infrastructure, including schools, nurseries, hospitals and public places. It also provides for the use of disciplinary action for violations of the ceasefire and the creation of and participation in a coordination mechanism to respond to violations of the ceasefire facilitated by the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC).<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the agreement specifies the limited circumstances in which gunfire is allowed in response to an offensive operation, as well as the prohibition of non-compliance under any order. Some analysts pointed out that the agreement implies a greater recognition of status and position for the eastern forces. The levels of violence and death count fell significantly after the agreement and remained at low levels in the second half of the year, although in December the special representative of the OSCE in Ukraine, Heidi Grau, warned of a worrying increase in ceasefire violations. Another notable event during the year was the prisoner exchange agreement in April, prior to Orthodox Easter. Twenty people imprisoned by

*The parties to the conflict in Ukraine reached an agreement within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) to strengthen the ceasefire*

the eastern forces were handed over to the Ukrainian Government, which in turn handed over 14 fighters from the self-proclaimed people's republics, while three chose to remain in territory under the control of the Ukrainian Government.

The parties remained at odds over key issues such as control of the Ukraine-Russia border. The Ukrainian Government continued to demand restored control of the border prior to holding elections and constitutionally granting special status to the eastern areas. On 15 July, the Ukrainian Parliament voted a resolution (No. 795-IX) disallowing elections from being held in the rebel areas of the east and in Crimea until they were "de-occupied". Russia denounced the breach of the Minsk agreements. The meeting of the Normandy format advisors (Ukraine, Russia, Germany, France) in September did not reach agreement in this area and **in October local elections were held only in land under Ukrainian control**. The disagreements here had repercussions on other areas, such as the discussions about new areas for withdrawing forces. In early September, the OSCE announced that an agreement had been reached on mines and demining, as well as on new areas for withdrawing forces and weapons, but there were no final decisions yet due to discussions on the parliamentary resolution for the elections, which also hindered progress on humanitarian and political issues. Furthermore, in December the Ukrainian Parliament approved extending the law on the special status of self-government of the Donetsk and Luhansk areas (initially enacted in 2014 and renewed several times), thereby facilitating the continuation of negotiations between the parties to the conflict.

In relation to the format of the negotiating process, in March Ukraine and Russia agreed to create a new body, an advisory council made up of 10 representatives from Ukraine and another 10 from areas under rebel control, as well as one representative each from the OSCE, Russia, Germany and France, with the ability to issue non-binding recommendations on the implementation of the Minsk agreements. However, the agreement for this body, which was to be integrated into the Trilateral Contact Group, sparked protests in Ukraine and was rejected by some parts of the ruling party. In April, Russia denounced that Ukraine was not implementing the agreement. In the field of international law, in December the International Criminal Court asked to open an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, determining that there was a reasonable basis to consider that crimes of this nature had been committed by the different parties to the conflict in three situations: in the course of hostilities, in the context of arrests and in Crimea.

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11. Monitoring mechanism for the ceasefire that was active between 2014 and 2017 and that included military personnel from Ukraine and Russia and the rebel regions until Russia abandoned it in 2017.

## Gender, peace and security

Women remained absent from the peace process, while local civil society actors and international agencies continued to demand participation and mobilise in other spheres of peacebuilding. UN Women in Ukraine launched the “Women are Key to Peace” campaign on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in order to raise awareness about women’s contributions to peacebuilding in the country. The campaign included various videos on local television with women from various fields, including activists, women from mutual support groups, from the health or education sectors and others. Furthermore, the Government approved the second National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 for the period 2021-2025.

With regard to the impacts of the conflict and the political processes under way, in February, women’s and civil society organisations in Ukraine presented a report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its review on Ukraine that called attention to the impact of the austerity measures and the conflict on economic, social and cultural rights, including the gender impact of cuts to services and social assistance, obstacles in the internally displaced population’s access to the right to work and gender violence and gender discrimination in various fields. Organisations that signed the report included the Ukraine section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the Women’s Network for Dialogue and Inclusive Peace, the Women’s Perspectives Centre and others.

## Russia and the Caucasus

| Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>               | Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan  |
| <b>Third parties</b>                    | OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), Russia, Turkey |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>              | Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994)  |

### Summary:

The armed conflict going from 1992 to 1994 between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – an enclave of Armenian majority belonging to Azerbaijan that declared independence in 1992 – ended with a cease-fire agreement in 1994, after causing more than 20,000 dead and one million displaced people as well as the military occupation by Armenia of several districts around Nagorno-Karabakh. Since then negotiations have been in place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with several failed attempts to reach peace plans during the first years and a renewed impulse through the Prague Process, which

started in 2004 and since 2005 has focused on negotiating some basic principles to base the discussions on a future agreement (withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, granting provisional status to Nagorno-Karabakh, the right for displaced persons to return, an eventual decision on the final status of the territory through a binding expression of will, international security safeguards). The deadlock of negotiations since 2010 and the fragile cease-fire increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race and a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions. War broke out again in September 2020 and in November the parties reached an agreement that entailed a complete change of the status quo (control by Azerbaijan of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and a part of Nagorno-Karabakh, along with the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces), but left the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh unresolved.

A ceasefire agreement ended the 44-day war over Nagorno-Karabakh that restarted in late September between Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>12</sup> and gave rise to a radical change in the status quo in the region and uncertainty about its future, since the negotiating format followed until then proved ineffective. The resumption of the war between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces triggered international calls for a ceasefire from the UN, Russia, the OSCE, the EU and others. In a significant exception, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed his support for Azerbaijan and declared his readiness to provide such support by any means. **There were several failed ceasefires.** These included a ceasefire reached on 10 October after talks between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow on 9 October, facilitated by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, which also included an exchange of prisoners, the return of the bodies of the deceased and the resumption of substantive peace talks in their previous format, mediated by the OSCE Minsk group. However, the continuing violence scrapped the agreement. At that time, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev warned that it was Armenia’s last chance to resolve the conflict peacefully, stating that in three decades of the process, no progress had been made on the return of the “occupied territories”, referring to the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, under Armenian control since the war of the 1990s, which displaced its Azerbaijani population. The parties to the conflict announced a new ceasefire on 17 October, which was also unsuccessful. Another ceasefire agreement followed on 26 October, this time promoted by the US, which was also not honoured.

Alongside the failure of the successive ceasefires, the hostilities continued as the Azerbaijani military forces advanced. One day after the fall of Shusha/Shushi, a strategic location for capturing the entire enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, **the parties reached a full ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreement on 9 November. Mediated by Russia, it was signed by the Azerbaijani president, the Armenian prime minister and the Russian president** and entered into force on 10 November. It

12. See the summary on Nagorno Karabakh in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

was a nine-point agreement. In addition to the ceasefire, the nine points **yielded to Azerbaijan the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh seized militarily by Baku during the war, including Shusha, de facto dividing the region. It also included the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh that were still under its control when the agreement was reached (Agdam, Kelbajar and Lachin).** By default, the agreement ratified the military takeover of the rest of the adjacent districts by Azerbaijan. It also included **the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces (renewable for five years)** along the new line of contact and the Lachin corridor (which connects Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia) and with the dual function of supervising the implementation of the agreement and the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. The agreement also provides for the return of the displaced population to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the supervision of UNHCR. It also provides for the exchange of prisoners of war, other detained persons and the remains of the deceased, as well as the unblocking of all transport and economic connections in the region, including transport routes between Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave in Armenia. The agreement includes the creation of a peacekeeping centre to monitor the ceasefire, which gave implicit scope for a role for Turkey in the agreement. After it was signed, Russia and Turkey signed a memorandum for the creation of the monitoring centre. According to Russia, Turkish forces will be restricted to Azerbaijani soil, without entering Nagorno-Karabakh.

Despite the inclusion of various dimensions in the agreement, **it did not include any reference to Nagorno-Karabakh's political status, leaving it unresolved.** It also failed to allude to the negotiating format maintained until the war under the mediation of the OSCE Minsk group and did not indicate any negotiating process going forward. Still, the OSCE Minsk group issued a statement in December praising the cessation of hostilities on the basis of the 9 November agreement, outlining the action taken by Russia and urging the conflicting parties to take advantage of the ceasefire to undertake substantive negotiations on outstanding issues to achieve a lasting and sustainable peace agreement. In mid-December, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group travelled to Baku and Yerevan, where they met respectively with the Azerbaijani president and foreign minister and with the Armenian prime minister and foreign minister. The November agreement marked a significant change in the status quo in the region, with profound consequences for Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the entire southern Caucasus region. The countries' respective political classes and populations evaluated the agreement in terms of victory and defeat, which together with the high degree of militarisation in both societies raised questions about

the future of the region. In Armenia, the agreement sparked political and social protests and demands for the resignation of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who became leader after Armenia's Velvet Revolution in 2018, the establishment of an interim government and early elections. Regarding the implementation of the agreement, in subsequent weeks the ceasefire was mostly sustained, despite some incidents and several fatalities. The handover of the Kelbajar district was delayed until 25 November, while that of Agdam and Lachin occurred on the dates specified in the agreement, 20 November and 1 December. In mid-December, the parties began implementing the prisoner exchange.

## Gender, peace and security

**Faced with the outbreak of war, local activists and women's organisations in the region and abroad called for an end to the violence and for the resumption of the peace negotiations.** In the first few days, Women in Black from Armenia denounced what they called Azerbaijan's unprecedented large-scale attack and urged the international community to get involved to stop the violence from spreading. The global Women

in Black network expressed its opposition to the war and all forms of violence, urging a ceasefire and the restart of negotiations, without supporting either of the warring parties, and also recognised women who worked for peace in Azerbaijan. The Women Engage for a Common Future network and various state sections of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) also called for peace and human rights in Nagorno-Karabakh and for the participation of local civil society in the process to follow after the 10 November agreements, urged the deployment of OSCE observers and demanded an investigation into war crimes. They also demanded an

end to the export of arms to the parties to the conflict and to other actors involved in providing arms-related materiel, and urged the inclusion of criteria of peace and sustainable development in future cooperation with the region. Some analyses of the situation warned of the threats of militarisation to the achievement of gender equality objectives following the outbreak of the war. In contrast to her involvement in the previous two years in support of a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict, Armenian journalist Anna Hakobyan, who is the wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, announced that she was starting military training together with other Armenian women in September, and that a collaboration programme was beginning with the ministry of defence to provide military training to women between 18 and 27 years of age. In October, she said she would move to the military front. She also urged Armenian men to join the military front to protect their homeland, wives, children and relatives.

***The Nagorno-Karabakh war concluded with an agreement ratifying the division of control of the enclave and transferring the adjacent areas to Baku, but left its status unresolved and did not include references to negotiating formats***

| Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>         | Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia <sup>13</sup>  |
| <b>Third parties</b>              | OSCE, EU, UN, USA and Russia <sup>14</sup>  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>        | Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian–Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement) (1992), Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (1994) [agreement dealing with conflict on Abkhazia], Protocol of agreement (2008), Implementation of the Plan of 12 August 2008 (2008) |

#### Summary:

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, which began in South Ossetia and spread to Abkhazia and territory not disputed by Georgia, ended in a six-point peace agreement mediated by the EU. The peace plan included the start of international talks on security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two small territories in the northwest and north-central Georgia bordering Russia that are internationally recognised as regions of Georgia, though de facto independent since the end of the wars between Abkhaz and Georgian forces (1992-1994) and between Ossetian and Georgian forces (1991-1992) regarding their status. The 2008 agreement gave way to the start of talks known as the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which bring together representatives of Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia under international mediation (the OSCE, EU and UN, with the US as an observer). According to the agreement, the talks were supposed to focus on provisions to guarantee security and stability in the region, the issue of the refugees and displaced populations and any other issue agreed by the parties, so the disputed status of the territories was not explicitly addressed. Thus, after the 2008 war, Russia formally recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and established agreements and a permanent military presence there despite Georgian opposition. The post-2008 phase involved the dismantling of previous dialogue and observation mechanisms, including the OSCE and the UN missions, and replaced the previous separate talks with a single format covering both disputed regions. An EU observation mission was also authorised, though it was given no access to the disputed territories. The GID have two working groups (on security and humanitarian issues) and under its aegis one Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism was created for each region in 2009, facilitated by the EU and OSCE. Amidst a context of geopolitical rivalry between Russia and Western political, economic and military players (the US, EU and NATO) and chronic antagonism between the disputed regions and Georgia, the negotiating process faces many obstacles.

**The negotiating process continued to face obstacles in a context aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.** At its highest level, the Geneva International Discussions (GID) slowed down. The 51st round, scheduled for late March and early April, was postponed due to the pandemic. The 51st round was cancelled again in October, although in that case Georgia blamed Russia for its refusal to participate, which according to Tbilisi put the entire peace process at risk. Russia noted that its decision not to participate

had been taken together with the Abkhazian and South Ossetian authorities and was motivated by pandemic-related restrictions, stating that they had proposed a video conference instead, but the co-mediators of the peace process rejected the idea. However, throughout the year the GID co-mediators made various trips to and held meetings in Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia. Despite the structural difficulties of the process, **one breakthrough during the year was the reactivation in July of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) for South Ossetia**, facilitated by the EU mission in Georgia and by the special representative of the rotating OSCE Chairperson-in-Office after weeks of intensive contacts. The South Ossetian IPRM had been inactive since August 2019. The Abkhazian IPRM remained suspended. The OSCE Group of Friends of Georgia called for its resumption. At the end of the year, the head of the Security Council of Abkhazia and former foreign minister of the region, Sergei Shamba, expressed Abkhazia's readiness for dialogue, noting that there were issues that could be addressed bilaterally, such as the opening of transport communications, the management of the Enguri hydroelectric plant and tackling crime. He also pointed out that the dialogue between civil society organisations could be reinvigorated.

Throughout the year, issues such as the installation of border elements by the forces of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia came up both in Georgia's political rhetoric and in meetings of the parties to the conflict with international mediators. Georgia continued to complain about what it considers "borderization", referring to the expansive displacement of the barriers that delimit the areas under control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Georgia also reported arrests of Georgian citizens, while Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia reported what they consider to be illegal border crossings. In the context of the pandemic, Georgia criticised the impact of closing the border crossings between the two regions and stated on several occasions that it had provided humanitarian assistance to Abkhazia during the pandemic, despite the restrictions. Civil society groups in Georgia also urged the Georgian authorities to boost humanitarian and medical assistance to Abkhazia. Instead, Georgia claimed that the South Ossetian authorities continued to refuse to cooperate with Georgia in the context of the pandemic. The process took place in the context of political tension in Georgia linked to the parliamentary elections in late October and the second round in November. The opposition did not recognise the results, which gave the victory to the governing party, Georgian Dream, and sparked protests in the streets.

## Gender, peace and security

**As in previous years, various meetings were held between representatives of the Georgian Government participating**

13. Russia's status in the Georgian peace process is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

14. Ibid.

**in the negotiating process and representatives of civil society organisations, including women's organisations,** though the pandemic led to them being held online. Organised by the Government and with the support of UN Women and the involvement of other actors such as the EU at the head-of-mission level, in July the head of Georgia's delegation to the Geneva International Discussions (GID) shared updated information on the negotiating process and the challenges associated with the pandemic. The participants highlighted the impacts of the conflict aggravated by the context of COVID-19, with difficulties such as problems of access to services, including health care, education, food and other goods for the population on both sides of the administrative border as part of the closure of crossing points and containment measures. In a new meeting in October, focused on the situation of the IPRM, the representatives of participating women's organisations repeated their views on the impact of the closure of the crossing points and the challenges in accessing medicines and health care during the pandemic, as well as needs to acquire skills and tools for online learning. They also pointed out how the restriction of movement had affected access to pensions and social benefits for the Georgian population in the Gali region (Abkhazia). Furthermore, women from Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia participated in online meetings organised by UN Women and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) on issues that affected women on both sides of the administrative border line. They addressed issues such as coping mechanisms, stress due to the pandemic and others.

## South-east Europe

| Cyprus                     |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)         |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | 13 February agreement (2004)  |

### Summary:

Inhabited by a Greek majority, a Turkish population and other minorities, the island of Cyprus faces a situation of long-lasting unresolved conflict. Preceded by the violence of the 1950s, followed by independence in 1960, Cyprus was affected by a crisis in which the Turkish Cypriot population was displaced from power, calling into question the distribution of power stipulated in the Constitution and triggering new violent incidents, which led to the deployment of the UNFICYP peacekeeping mission in 1964. There was an underlying confrontation between the aspirations of enosis (union with Greece) of the Greek Cypriot population and taksim (partition) by Turkish Cypriot population. A coup in 1974 with the aim of promoting unification with Greece triggered a military invasion of the island by Turkey. The crisis led to population displacement and the division of the island between the northern third under Turkish Cypriot control and

two-thirds in the south under Greek Cypriot control, separated by a demilitarised zone known as the buffer zone or "Green Line", supervised by the UN. Since the division of the island there have been efforts to find a solution, such as high-level dialogues in the 70s and initiatives in the following decades promoted by successive UN Secretaries-General. The Annan Plan for a bizonal bicomunal federation was approved in referendum in 2004 by the Turkish Cypriots and rejected by the Greek Cypriots. After the failure of the Christofias-Talat dialogue (2008-2012), a new phase of negotiations began in 2014, which has generated high expectations at various moments, while it has also faced stagnation.

**The peace process remained largely deadlocked,** with the mediators and actors supporting the dialogue focusing their efforts on exploring and promoting its possible resumption, while the context of the conflict worsened, in part due to the serious increase in regional tension over hydrocarbon exploration and the delimitation of maritime borders that pitted Turkey against Greece and Cyprus in a dispute that also involves international players such as France, Italy, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in support of Greece and Cyprus, and which was also projected onto the armed conflict in Libya.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the process throughout the year, restricting confidence-building activities for civil society and the work of the joint technical committees for the negotiating process. In his mid-year report on his good offices mission, UN Secretary-General António Guterres found that three years after the international talks in Crans-Montana (Switzerland), which brought together the parties to the conflict, the guarantor countries and the UN, **resuming the negotiations was more difficult.** At the same time, Guterres reaffirmed in his commitment made in November 2019 to study an informal meeting with the parties, the guarantor powers and the UN, but cautioning that it should be different. He also said that dialogue at the technical committee level could not replace a broad negotiating process and called on the parties to agree to the terms of reference for the negotiations and to strengthen the political will to achieve a solution to the conflict.

During the year there was no resumption of the dialogue at the formal high level, although in early November there was an informal meeting between Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, the new president of the Turkish Cypriot authority elected in the postponed October elections, which were sponsored by the UN. Furthermore, at the end of the year it became evident that difficulties and challenges were increasing. **The position of the new Turkish Cypriot leader against a federation and in favour of exploring other types of solutions, such as a confederation and a two-state solution, threw uncertainty into the negotiating process,** which has relied on the parties' support for negotiating a bizonal and bi-communal federation solution with political equality. During his

15. See the summary on Turkey, Greece and Cyprus in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

time in office as prime minister (from May 2019 to October 2020), he revealed that he is against the bizonal federation. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also called for discussing and negotiating a two-state solution, stating that in Cyprus there were currently two separate peoples, two democratic orders and two separate states. He made his remarks during a controversial visit to Varosha, a coastal city whose Greek Cypriot population fled after the invasion of Turkey in 1974. Abandoned and closed since then, it was partially reopened shortly before the elections, though this drew heavy criticism from the Greek Cypriot Government.

***The new Turkish Cypriot leader was opposed to a solution for Cyprus based on a federation and defended exploring other options, such as a confederation or a two-state solution***

impacts on specific groups of women, such as migrant women and domestic workers. At a Hands Across the Divide meeting in June, in which the UN mission UNFICYP participated, its members pointed out that the political sphere continued to be dominated by men and that there were still problems in integrating a gender perspective into the peace process and political processes, as well as in questioning patriarchal structures in the respective communities. The Cypriot antenna of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network also started its activity in 2020.

The year was influenced by the **COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the establishment of restrictions on movement and face-to-face meetings, which made the work of the technical committees difficult. Still, in his mid-year report, the UN Secretary-General highlighted that there were signs of revitalisation and increased involvement of the committees.** The work carried out included joint statements from various committees. In the context of the pandemic, the members of the technical health committee maintained daily contact. Other levels and spaces of the peace process remained active online, such as the meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political representatives supported by the Slovak Embassy and the Religious Track, led by leaders of the two main religious communities on the island, which issued several joint statements during the year.

## Gender, peace and security

**As part of the formal peace negotiating process, the technical committee on gender equality remained active, although the scope of the gender dimension throughout the process continued to be limited.** The committee held two meetings throughout the year, in online format due to the pandemic, and focused its discussions mainly on gender violence, which has worsened during the expansion of COVID-19. Civil society organisations warned at different times of the increase in violence against women. For example, the local organisation Hands Across the Divide, which has brought together Greek Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot women since 2001, expressed concern about the serious increase in reports of domestic violence against women, noting that the cases reported are only a fraction of the total. The technical gender committee of the negotiating process gave figures from local civil society that indicated a 58% increase in complaints of domestic violence against women and girls in the Greek Cypriot community between mid-March and mid-April and of a 10% increase in that period among the Turkish Cypriot population. Female peacebuilders also cited other impacts of the pandemic among women, such as an increase in invisible care work and disproportionate

| Serbia – Kosovo            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Serbia, Kosovo   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | EU, UN, USA  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force (KFOR) and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia (1999), First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between the republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia (Brussels Agreement) (2013) |

### Summary:

Since the end of the 1998-1999 war between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanian armed group KLA, with the participation of NATO, the status of Kosovo has remained in dispute. This Albanian-majority land has historically been part of the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and more recently the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia (as an autonomous region and autonomous province, successively). Following an interim international administration for Kosovo with a mandate from the UN Security Council (Resolution 1244, of 1999), a process to discuss its status began in 2006 under the aegis of the United Nations. Kosovo supported the proposal made by the UN Secretary-General's special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, entailing internationally supervised independence for Kosovo and decentralisation for its Serbian minority, though Serbia rejected it. This was followed by fresh attempts at dialogue facilitated by a troika (USA, EU, Russia) that also failed. In 2008 Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence and pledged to implement the Ahtisaari plan. The start of a new process of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo in 2011 under facilitation of the EU (Brussels Process) opened the doors to rapprochement on technical and political issues. Since its inception there has been significant progress, including the agreement to dismantle parallel political, judicial and security structures of the Serb-inhabited areas of Kosovo; as well as to create an association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. However, there are still outstanding pending challenges, especially in the field of implementation of the agreements, reconciliation and the final resolution of the political status.

**The EU-facilitated negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo was resumed after being stalled since the end of 2018, although disagreements continued on**



**important issues such as the creation of the association of Serbian municipalities of Kosovo.** All this took place in a complex context, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Kosovar political crisis, which included the prosecution of the president of Kosovo for war crimes in the conflict in the 1990s. The Serbian president and the Kosovar prime minister restarted the EU-facilitated dialogue on 12 July, preceded by an online summit that same month that was sponsored by France and Germany and did not achieve great results. The dialogue resumed under the EU umbrella included rounds at the high political level and meetings at the technical level. The restart was facilitated by Kosovo's lifting of 100% tariffs on Serbian products, which had led to the cancellation of the talks in November 2018 after they were imposed. However, the resumption of the dialogue faced difficulties, including **disagreement over the establishment of an association of Serbian municipalities in Kosovo**, which was included in an agreement in 2013 and again in 2015, but was still pending implementation. Kosovar Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti warned in October that the association would only be established if a final agreement was reached to resolve the conflict with Serbia and include mutual recognition. He also said that such a structure would not have executive powers. The 2015 agreement provided that the association would control economic development, education, health care, urban and rural planning, and that Serbia would contribute financially to the budget of the association of municipalities. **Some progress was made in the process, such as the achievement of an agreement in September on cooperation in relation to missing persons and internally displaced persons.** Other topics of the dialogue included integrated border control and the related agreement reached in previous years was implemented in October. The parties also discussed property and financial claims issues in Brussels in October.

The **United States increased its role in the process** during the year. After an unsuccessful attempt to convene the parties in the US in June, in early September (and prior to the restart of the dialogue facilitated by the EU), the Serbian president and the Kosovar prime minister met in Washington with US President Donald Trump. The parties signed **separate agreements with the US to normalise economic relations between Serbia and Kosovo**, which included a provision to strengthen diplomatic relations with Israel and establish embassies in Jerusalem, which was criticised by the EU. The economic normalisation agreements were preceded by US-facilitated agreements in January and February to reopen commercial flights and to restore rail and road transport. Some analysts pointed out that the strengthened role of the US, especially since the appointment of the US envoy Richard Grenell in October 2019, represented a division

of areas between US facilitation, focused on economic issues, and the EU's politics of dialogue.

The dialogue took place in a convulsive context on various levels. Kosovo remained embroiled in an **internal political crisis** stemming from the early legislative elections of October 2019 after the resignation of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj in July 2019. The new coalition government led by Vetevendosje and with LDK as partners, which assumed power in February, collapsed in late March due to a motion of no confidence promoted by the LDK due to disagreements over the approach to the pandemic and the powers of President Hashim Thaçi in managing it, among other aspects. It was succeeded in June by a new government led by the LDK, with Avdullah Hoti as prime minister, thought it was criticised by Vetevendosje, which called for new elections and staged protests. The new government announced its willingness to restart the dialogue facilitated by the EU, although once it was resumed, it started setting limits, such as the principle that nothing would be decided until everything was decided, a fact that added uncertainty to the agreements reached previously in the process. Furthermore, **Kosovar President Thaçi resigned in November after the charges filed against him by the Special Court for Kosovo**, based in The Hague, for war crimes, including the murder of at least 100 civilians while he was commander of the KLA in the war between Serbia and Kosovo in the late 1990s.

***Serbia and Kosovo restarted their EU-facilitated dialogue, but maintained their disagreements on important issues such as the implementation of the agreement to create an association of municipalities with a Serb majority in northern Kosovo***

### **Gender, peace and security**

The Security and Gender Group called for the effective participation of women in the Kosovo delegation to the negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo and its working groups during the year. It did so in a letter presented in June, signed by members of the group, including local organisations such as the Kosovo Women's Network (which includes 151 organisations) and international actors, including various embassies of EU countries, international UN agencies (UN Women, UNHCR, UNDP and others) and EU actors (EULEX mission, special representatives). The Security and Gender Group urged Kosovo's institutions to increase their efforts to implement the Law on Gender Equality, which enforces female inclusion in decision-making spaces in the executive, legislative and judicial spheres, and the Gender Equality Programme of 2020-2021, which calls for female participation in peace and reconciliation processes. The members of the Security and Gender Group denounced the under-representation of women in the negotiating process and in consultations with the population and pointed to the lack of a gender perspective in the process. They called for participation through transparent and open processes based on

participatory consultations. Furthermore, the Network of Women Mediators of the Mediterranean established an antenna in Kosovo in November.

## Western Europe

| Spain (Basque Country)     |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | ETA (dissolved), government of Spain, government of the Basque Country, government of Navarre, government of France, <i>Communauté d'Agglomération du Pays Basque</i> (Basque Municipal Community), political and social actors of the Basque Country, Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPK) |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Permanent Social Forum, Bake Bidea  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | --  |

### Summary:

Since the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, there have been several attempts to resolve the conflict involving the armed organisation ETA, created in 1959 to meet demands for self-determination of the territories considered Euskal Herria and for the creation of a socialist state. Throughout decades of conflict, multiple forms of violence were denounced, including deaths caused by ETA's violence (837 deaths), by security forces action (94) and paramilitary groups (73), as well as other human rights violations, including torture by security forces and ETA's economic extortion. Negotiations in 1981 and 1982 led to the dissolution of ETA political-military at the Seventh Assembly in 1982. The Conversations of Algiers in the late 1980s under the social-democratic PSOE-led government failed. The conservative PP-led government's approaches to ETA in the late 1990s, accompanied by truces, were also unsuccessful. During these decades the conflict continued in multiple expressions, including the violent activity of ETA and the GAL police organisation, protected by parts of the central government. The socio-political and military tension continued in the 2000s, with new attacks by ETA and the banning of the Batasuna party (2003), as well as the arrest and prosecution of other political and social actors alongside secret rapprochement between Basque socialist leaders and the Abertzale left, public calls for dialogue, new political proposals and a transformation in the Abertzale left in support of peaceful means. Exploratory meetings led to the formalisation of a new process in 2005, which included two parallel negotiations: one between political parties and the other between the government and ETA, which was backed by a new truce. The process failed amidst multiple hurdles and a new attack in late 2006. The following decade began with new initiatives and declarations, such as the Abertzale left's Alasua Proposal (2009) and Zutik Euskal Herria (Euskal Herria on Its Feet) (2010), which included the Mitchell principles of negotiation, and the Brussels Declaration (2010), signed by international figures. International facilitators called for ETA to observe a permanent, unilateral and verifiable ceasefire and civil society organisations called for a new push for peace, with international cooperation. Following the Aiete International Peace Conference, ETA announced the definitive end of its armed activity in 2011 and took new steps towards unilateral disarmament in subsequent years, with the involvement of civil society, and ETA's final dissolution in 2018. Stakeholders such as the International Contact Group and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Switzerland) were involved as third parties in the negotiating process.

**Nine years have passed since the definitive end of ETA's armed activity and two years since the final dissolution of its structures, while steps continued to be taken and challenges remained in areas such as the transfer of inmates to prisons closer to home, memory and reparations.** The Basque Government asserted that the dismantling of ETA in a short period of time was great news and that the model followed for ending the violence was a benchmark for other parts of the world, while pointing out that issues such as the clarification of the past violence and reparations for the victims remained unresolved. Progress continued with initiatives promoting co-existence in various areas. However, disagreement continued over public tributes to imprisoned ETA members. In September, several associations asked some Basque city councils to block public tributes or messages idealising ETA in public, citing them in many towns in the Basque Country and demanding that co-existence be built on a basis where perpetrators are not considered heroes. The Victims of Terrorism Group (COVITE) identified over 100 acts of support for ETA between January and June, counting 158% more than in the previous year. Moreover, the Permanent Social Forum presented a report on society's pending challenges regarding ETA victims after a meeting in September with victims of the armed organisation. The Social Forum also denounced attacks in the media and social networks against victims at various times and called on political parties, victims' associations and social actors to protect the victims and demand an end to the attacks and re-victimisation.

Many political and social figures in the Basque Country continued to call for inmates to be transferred to prisons in the autonomous community. These calls increased in the context of the coronavirus pandemic so that relatives and friends could travel to visit. The Basque Government filed a request with the central government in this regard in May. Various approaches were made during the year. In November, the central Government indicated that the pace of relocation had increased and that in the previous five months, 64 transfers of the 103 approved since 2018 had been authorised, of which 21 were sent to prisons in the Basque Country and two in Navarre. In December, the Permanent Social Forum pointed out that although steps were being taken in the right direction, many prisoners were still incarcerated too far from home. The Permanent Social Forum repeated figures from the Behatokia Observatory to point out that from September 2018 (the date of the first prisoner transfer movement) until November 2020, there had been 69 effective transfers, while another 15 were still pending. Of the total, 192 prisoners belonged to the majority group of EPPK prisoners, another six to ATA (considered dissidents of the *abertzale* left), three to Vía Nanclares and another four had no affiliation. However, only 14 of those 69 were transferred to Basque prisons, while 26 were transferred within a radius of 260 km, 16 within a radius of 385 km and the other even further away, including one case 1,100 km away. The Permanent

Social Forum also claimed that the government's figures included movements of the same people. In December, various political parties (EAJ-PNV, EH Bildu, Elkarrekin-Podemos/IU) and unions (ELA, LAB, CCOO, UGT, STEILAS, ESK, Hiru, Etxalde, EHNE, CGT and CNT) presented a public statement **demanding a plan to move inmates to prisons in the Basque Country and demanded the application of ordinary legislation for the prisoners.** The statement was the result of joint work done at the initiative of Etxerat, a prisoners' relatives association.

### **Gender, peace and security**

Women from the Basque Country continued to contribute useful lessons for the Basque context. In November,

the Basque women's initiative Ahotsak presented a report prepared by researchers from the Autonomous University of Barcelona's Escola de Cultura de Pau that analyses Ahotsak's experience as an initiative of women through dialogue, its background, contributions and obstacles to peacebuilding in the Basque Country.<sup>16</sup> In the presentation of the report, members of Ahotsak highlighted the validity of consensus building, as employed by Ahotsak throughout its history, to move forward on pending issues in the Basque Country, such as higher thresholds of co-existence. Ahotsak presented the document during a conference organised with the Permanent Social Forum called "Women in peace processes", which featured female speakers from various countries and territories, including Guatemala, Colombia, Western Sahara and Turkey.

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16. Vilellas, Ana, Vilellas, María and Urrutia, Pamela, *La experiencia de AHOTSAK: Mujeres por el diálogo en el conflicto vasco*. Quaderns de Construcció de Pau no. 28, Escola de Cultura de Pau, February 2020.

## 6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of five cases of negotiation that accounted for 12.5% of all processes in the world in 2020.
- Problems in keeping the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme afloat persisted throughout the year amidst high tension between Washington and Tehran.
- In Yemen, there were mediation and facilitation initiatives to try to achieve a cessation of hostilities and attempts to implement prior agreements between the parties alongside constant escalations of violence.
- The chronic impasse in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations persisted, with no prospects for dialogue after Netanyahu's plan to formalise the annexation of occupied territories and Trump's initiative for the region.
- The rejection of plans proposed by Israel and the US in 2020 led to rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas and an agreement to hold presidential and legislative elections, although the differences between the parties were once again evident by the end of the year.
- The complexity of the armed conflict in Syria had its correlation in the ceasefire and diplomatic initiatives, with a high role for regional and international actors in the negotiation schemes put in place.
- Women's groups in the region continued to demand greater participation in formal negotiations. In Syria and Yemen, they demanded ceasefires to reduce violence and face the COVID-19 pandemic.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East during 2020. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the negotiation processes in the region are presented. Secondly, the evolution of each different context during the year is analysed, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the start of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in the Middle East that were the scenario of negotiations during 2020.

Table 6.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2020

| Peace processes and negotiations | Negotiating actors  | Third parties  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Iran (nuclear programme)         | Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China, plus Germany), EU                                   | UN   |
| Israel-Palestine                 | Israeli government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, Islamic Jihad                                      | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Egypt, France |
| Palestine                        | Hamas, Fatah  | Egypt, Qatar   |
| Syria                            | Government, political and armed opposition groups   | UN, EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran                                |
| Yemen                            | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia | UN, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia                                   |

### 6.1. Peace negotiations in 2020: Regional trends

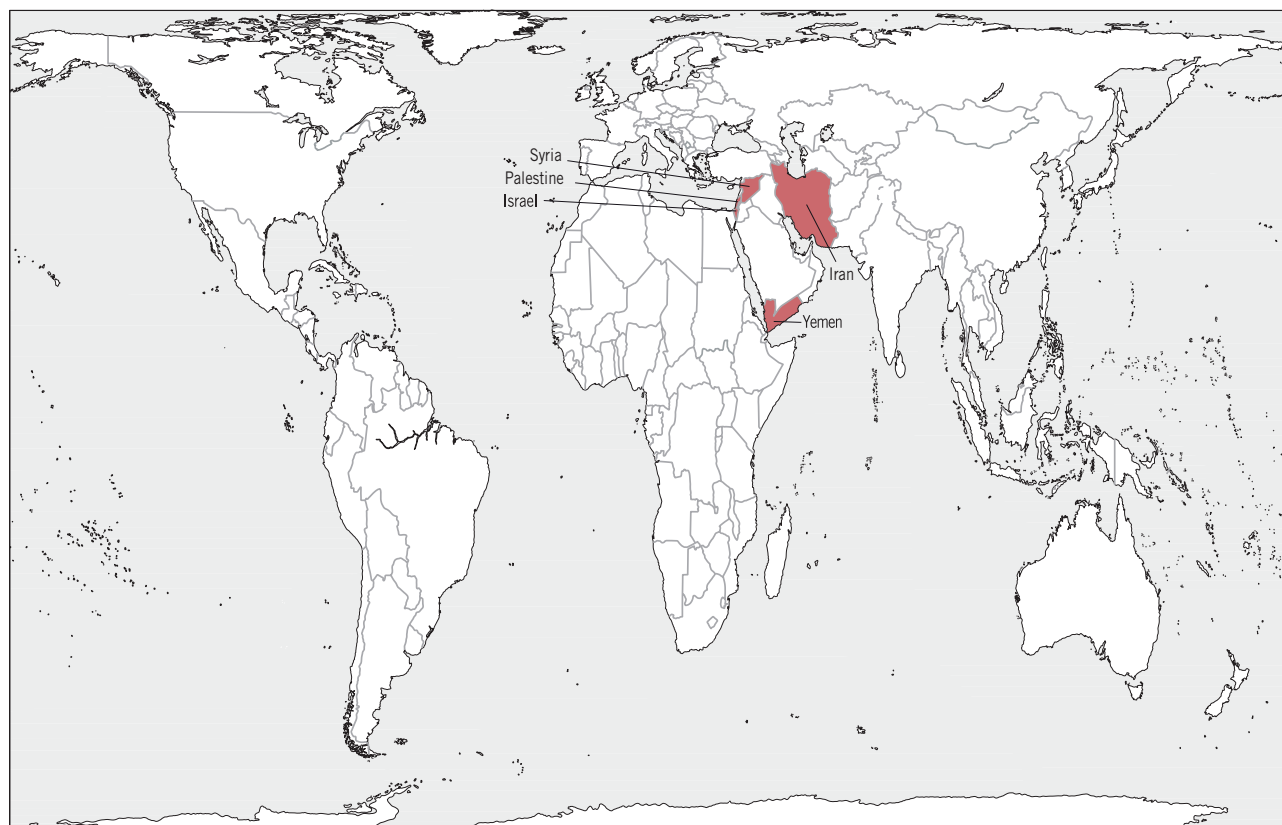
This chapter analyses five cases of negotiation that took place during 2020 in the Middle East (two cases less than the previous year), accounting for 12.5% of the total peace processes identified around the world. Three of these negotiations were linked to armed conflicts: Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. The other three processes were related to socio-political crises. One refers to the conflict between the Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah and the second deals with the tension linked to the Iranian nuclear programme. Except for the intra-Palestinian dispute, which is internal in nature, the

rest of the cases were linked to internationalised internal contexts (the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen) or international contexts (the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the tension over the Iranian nuclear programme).<sup>1</sup> Three of the processes analysed referred to cases located in the Mashreq (Israel-Palestine, Palestine and Syria) and another two took place in the Gulf subregion (Yemen and Iran).

Regarding the nature of the actors involved in the various negotiation processes, **all cases in the region**

1. See the summaries of these cases in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

## Map 6.1. Peace negotiations in the Middle East in 2020



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2020

involved the respective governments, more or less actively, depending on the case, and through various direct and indirect formats. The governments' dialogue took place with various types of actors, including armed groups, political opposition organisations and governments of other states. Thus, for example, the internationally recognised government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi in Yemen continued to be involved in the process sponsored by the UN to try to resolve the dispute with the Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah), an armed group that controls an important part of Yemeni territory. At the same time, during 2020 the Hadi government remained in contact with pro-independence sectors of the south grouped together under the Southern Transitional Council (STC) as part of a process facilitated by Saudi Arabia to resolve the divisions within the anti-Houthi camp. These last meetings led to the establishment of a new unity government at the end of the year that in practice should involve representatives of the STC in the process with the Houthis led by the UN.

In line with what happened the previous year, Iran maintained contact with the countries that continued to adhere to the agreement on the nuclear programme signed in 2015 (France, the United Kingdom, China,

Russia and Germany, known such as the “P4+1” group), after the Trump administration abandoned the deal in 2018. Although the negotiations in Israel-Palestine remained chronically stagnated, the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) maintained coordination in certain areas, such as security, as part of implementation of the Oslo accords. There was also occasional indirect contact between Israel and Palestinian actors to establish ceasefires after periods of escalation of violence. As for the intra-Palestinian dispute, the meetings involved the PA and Hamas, which controls and governs the Gaza Strip. Finally, in Syria, the government of Bashar Assad continued to favour a militarised approach, but remained linked to the Astana process, led by Russia, Turkey and Iran, and the UN-backed Geneva process, while maintaining some contact with Kurdish actors at the behest of Moscow.

For yet another year, Syria illustrated the prominent role that regional and international actors play in the evaluation and dynamics of some negotiating processes due to their influence over some of the parties to the conflict and the interests involved in supporting one side or the other. This was seen in the armed conflict in Syria, but also in other internationalised internal contexts, such as in Libya,<sup>2</sup> with the participation of a

***Peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2020 accounted for 12.5% of the cases worldwide and were linked to three armed conflicts and two scenarios of socio-political crisis***

2. See the summary on Libya in chapter 2, (Peace negotiations in Africa).

great number of local, regional and international actors. In 2020, for example, Russia and Turkey once again played a key role in negotiating ceasefires in Syria. Regional and international influences on the dynamics of peace processes and negotiations were also seen in Yemen. In this case, the tensions between Iran, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and the United States, on the other, weighed on Washington's decision to consider declaring the Houthis a terrorist group. Both, Riyadh and Washington, view the Houthis as proxies of Tehran. Another significant example was that of Israel-Palestine, and in particular the role of the United States, which during the Trump administration was openly and explicitly aligned with the interests and positions of the Israeli right. The presentation of Trump's plan for the region in January in the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was another signal of this alignment. Described by the US administration as the "definitive peace plan" for the region, the Trump's plan served as a precedent and cover for Netanyahu and his controversial initiative to formally annex a third of the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank, denounced by the PA and by multiple international actors. Although Netanyahu's plan was put on hold, in the second half of the year Washington's action was decisive for announcing the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Israel and four Arab countries (the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco).

***The influence of regional and international actors in the dynamics and evolution of negotiating processes was especially evident in Syria, Yemen, and Israel-Palestine.***

**Third parties were present in all the cases analysed in the Middle East.** The United Nations maintained its involvement in all cases in the region, except for the internal Palestinian dispute, through different mechanisms and formats. These included the role of the "special envoys" in Syria, Yemen and Israel-Palestine. In addition to its UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), the United Nations is also part of the so-called Quartet for the Middle East (also consisting of the EU, Russia and the US), a mechanism established in 2003 to coordinate international support for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. The UN is also involved in following up on the commitments made following the adoption of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme in 2015. At the same time, some countries in the region served as third parties. This was the case of Egypt, for example, both in the intra-Palestinian dispute, in which Cairo facilitated talks between Hamas and Fatah during 2020, and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which Egyptian authorities promoted truces at times of escalating violence and backed an international conference in 2021 to revive the negotiations. It was also the case of Oman, which has been playing a third-party role in Yemen. In 2020, Oman facilitated an agreement between the Houthis, Saudi Arabia, and the United States for a prisoner exchange.

The **agendas of the negotiations** in the Middle East varied in different contexts and addressed a wide variety of topics. However, and following the trend of recent years, **one of the main (and recurring) themes in several of the cases analysed was the search for ceasefire agreements.**

This took on special importance and notoriety in 2020 after the outbreak of COVID-19 and the call for a global ceasefire by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. He interpellated the different actors in armed conflicts to curb the violence and focus efforts on responding to the pandemic. The response to Guterres' appeal, made public on 26 March, was very limited in the region. Although some actors expressed their willingness to cease hostilities, acts of violence and violations of previously committed truces continued to be reported in practice. In Yemen, for example, Saudi Arabia, the leader of the international military coalition supporting Hadi's government, announced a unilateral truce in April. However, the move was criticised by the Houthis, who demanded that the cessation of hostilities be part of a broader agreement including other measures such as an end to the land, sea and air blockade in the Yemeni territory controlled by the armed group. From this perspective, the group presented an alternative proposal to the UN special envoy. Throughout the year, he tried unsuccessfully to get the parties to commit to a joint declaration that included a commitment to a ceasefire throughout the country, in addition to other confidence-building measures and the launch of political talks.

In Syria, the ceasefire agreement reached in early March between Russia and Turkey for the Idlib region was mainly determined by their interests in the conflict, as it came before the UN Secretary-General's pandemic-related appeal. Although it was formally maintained during 2020, there were increasing periodic violations of the agreement as of mid-year. Only the SDF led by the Kurdish YPG/YPJ forces openly heeded the Secretary-General's call and decreed a suspension of military activities. Even so, sporadic clashes between the SDF and Turkish-backed groups continued, as well as incidents with ISIS. Egypt's mediation in Israel-Palestine favoured an informal truce between Israel and Palestinian groups in Gaza in February and the spread of the pandemic aided some cooperation between Israel and the PA, but the following months were characterised by an escalation of tension and new sporadic acts of violence in the face of plans to formalise the annexation of occupied Palestinian territories by Netanyahu's government. Other relevant issues on the negotiating agenda in the region were attempts to generate unity governments (an issue in the negotiations in Yemen), the discussions around the holding of elections (as illustrated by the case of Palestine), debates about preparation of new constitutional texts (in Syria) and more specific issues, such as nuclear proliferation

and the sanctions system, in countries involved in the agreement on Iran's atomic programme.

**Regarding the development of the peace negotiations, the general balance for 2020 continued in line with previous periods and was not encouraging regarding the dynamics of dialogue and the possibilities of a substantive peace.**

As in previous years, dynamics of chronic deadlock in the negotiations prevailed (such as in Israel-Palestine), distancing the parties with respect to commitments they had made in previous agreements in contexts of increased tension (as illustrated by the problems with implementation in the Iranian nuclear programme). There were also successive rounds of contacts or meetings between parties without results or with very limited results and with logistical difficulties aggravated by COVID-19 (as in the case of the intra-Syrian negotiations sponsored by the UN), and announcements or ceasefire agreements that led to limited pauses in hostilities that were frequently violated. Even in some contexts in which some dynamics that could be described as progress were identified they demonstrated their fragility. Thus, for example, although Fatah and Hamas announced an agreement to hold presidential and legislative elections in 2021, which would be the first in 15 years, by late 2020 the problems and mistrust between the parties were once again evident due to the lack of agreement on the election schedule and the PA's decision to resume its security cooperation with Israel, which Hamas criticised. In Yemen, the agreement between Hadi's forces and southern separatists united under the STC to form a unity government announced at the end of 2020, after a year of mutual accusations and periodic clashes between both sides, was marred by criticism of its lack of inclusiveness (the new cabinet is made up only of men) and by a bomb attack at the Aden airport just as the new ministers landed in the city, revealing the persistent and serious security challenges in the country. In a parallel development, and **even though the hostilities remained active in Yemen, the Houthis and the Hadi government made headway in implementing one of the points of the Stockholm Agreement (2018) on prisoner exchanges:** in October, more than a thousand people were released in an event that was celebrated as the largest exchange of detainees since the violence escalated in the country in 2015.

**Regarding the gender dimension, some of the peace processes and negotiations analysed in the Middle East continued to illustrate efforts to address the exclusion of women from formal negotiations.** This phenomenon persists despite international frameworks that promote their participation in these areas and the initiatives promoted by women's organisations that denounce the marginalisation of women and demand a greater female presence in these spaces. In Yemen, women's groups praised the formation of a consensus government as

part of negotiations sponsored by Saudi Arabia but denounced the marginalisation and discrimination of women despite their legitimate right to political participation. Yemeni women's groups stressed the precedent of the National Dialogue Conference of 2014, whose recommendations included the need to guarantee a 30% minimum level of female participation in all political decision-making spaces. They also recalled that the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325 approved in 2020 by the Hadi government guarantees a 30% minimum level of female representation in the peace negotiations. In Syria, the constitutional committee established in 2019 as part of the UN-backed Geneva process was considered progress because it had a larger share of women (28% of the delegates), but this body demonstrated a limited capacity for action throughout 2020 amidst a blockade aggravated by the pandemic and the difficulties in reaching a consensus on positions. As reported by the UN, contacts between the special envoy for Syria and the Syrian Women's Advisory Council continued throughout the year, which among other issues would have emphasised the need to address economic and humanitarian emergencies.

Along these lines, a common thread in the demands made by women from Syria and Yemen (both contexts affected by high-intensity armed conflicts, with thousands of deaths per year) was the insistence on an urgent ceasefire. This call, which they have been making recurrently in recent years, was linked in 2020 to the need to prioritise the humanitarian response and face the serious challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in both cases, characterised by the serious deterioration of health infrastructure and very serious civilian suffering as a result of years of violence. The Syrian and Yemeni women's demands also focused on the release of detainees and an end to the supply of weapons to the parties in conflict that fuels the cycle of violence. Syrian, Yemeni and also Palestinian women stressed the need to take the gender impacts of COVID-19 into account and to include women in making decisions and responding to the pandemic.

Finally, the development of national action plans to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 continued to be a mechanism to attempt to apply the commitments to the international agenda on women, peace and security and, specifically, those related to conflict prevention, transformation and resolution, at the local level. As such, the National Action Plan approved in Yemen, the first plan of its kind in the country, should be highlighted. Yemeni women's organisations welcomed its adoption, but criticised some aspects of its origin and content, stressing that although consultations did take place with civil society organisations during the drafting process, some of their main recommendations were not taken into account. There were also concerns about the lack of a budget and of mechanisms to guarantee implementation, the non-inclusion of some

key issues such as child marriage, the situation of female human rights activists and the elimination of discriminatory laws and practices. In Palestine, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the approval of UN Resolution 1325, the second National Action Plan was presented, which covers the period 2020-2023 and aims to promote the participation of Palestinian women in decision-making and peacebuilding processes, including intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

***Netanyahu's plan to formalise the annexation of one third of the occupied territories, validated by Trump's proposal for the region, increased tension, sparked protests in Palestine and prompted international criticism***

after continuous announcements and postponements during his term, Trump finally unveiled his plan to address the conflict, proclaimed as the “definitive peace plan” for the region, thereby formalising his support for the positions of the Israeli extreme right. Staging that support, the 180-page document was presented by the US president and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House. Trump's plan envisaged the recognition of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, rejected the right of return for the Palestinian refugee population and offered a form of Palestinian statehood with

a capital on the outskirts of Jerusalem in addition to economic investment and other measures. The plan was rejected by the Palestinian leadership and population and sparked protests.

In the meantime, efforts continued to try to implement an informal truce around the Gaza Strip during the first quarter. As on other occasions, Egypt's mediation favoured an informal ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian groups from the Gaza Strip in February. In this context, the expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic in March promoted some cooperation between the PA and the Israeli government. Various people warned of the potential impact of the virus in the Gaza Strip, due to the fragility of its health infrastructure due to the attacks and the blockade imposed by Israel in recent years. Representatives of Hamas and the PA raised the need to release Palestinian prisoners to avoid their exposure to the virus and warned of Israel's responsibilities for the impact of the disease on the Palestinian population.

The informal truce in force since before the outbreak of the pandemic and the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire was called into question by a new escalation of tension encouraged by the plans of the new Israeli government led again by Netanyahu and formed in May following a coalition agreement between Likud and Benny Gantz's Blue and White party. **Netanyahu was determined to fulfil his electoral promise to formally annex one third of the occupied territories of the West Bank, including 235 settlements and most of the strategic and fertile Jordan Valley, bordering Jordan.** The prospect that the plan could begin to be implemented as of 1 July, as announced by Netanyahu, prompted new protests and acts of violence and received criticism from the Palestinian authorities. After denouncing the Israeli plan, validated by Trump's proposal for the region, the PA suspended cooperation agreements with Israel in May, while Hamas warned that it considered it a “declaration of war”.

**At the international level, various people stressed that the move implied violating the basic principles of international law and undermined the prospects for a two-state solution** (considered moribund or already completely impractical by many actors), warning that

## 6.2 Case study analysis

### Mashreq

| Israel-Palestine           |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, Islamic Jihad  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Egypt, France  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Israel – PLO Mutual Recognition (1993), Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo I Accords), Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Cairo Agreement) (1994), Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) (1995), Wye River Memorandum (1998), Sharm el Sheikh Memorandum (1999), Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2003), Annapolis Conference Joint Understanding on Negotiations (2007) |

#### Summary:

The Palestinian-Israeli peace process launched in the 1990s has not resulted in an agreement between the parties on the most complex issues borders, Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian refugees and security or the creation of a Palestinian state. Since the timetable established by the Oslo Accords broke down a series of rounds of negotiation have been conducted and various proposals have been made, but they have all been unsuccessful. The peace process has developed amidst periodic outbursts of violence and alongside the fait accompli policies of Israel, including about its persisting occupation. These dynamics have created growing doubts about the viability of a two-state solution. Meanwhile, after periods of escalating violence, truce and cessation of hostilities agreements have been reached between the Israeli government and Palestinian armed actors.

In line with what has been observed in recent years, **the chronic impasse in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations persisted throughout 2020. The prospects for resumption were directly conditioned by the positioning of the Trump administration** in the United States, which was openly favourable to the interests of the Israeli government, while Israel continued with its policies of settlement expansion and de facto annexation of the occupied territories throughout the year. In January,



it could aggravate the sufferings of the Palestinian population and further destabilise the region. The UN Secretary-General, the special envoy for peace in the Middle East and 50 UN human rights experts also spoke along these lines.<sup>3</sup> Amid rumours about the schedule and about a possible gradual implementation of the plan, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, warned that any annexation of the occupied territories would be illegal. More than 1,000 European MPs from 25 countries signed a declaration demanding an EU response to the plan and several European countries that are members of the UN Security Council (France, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Norway) jointly warned that they would not recognise the annexation. Several analysts argued for the need to put the policy announced by Netanyahu in context and consider it one that only makes a de facto apartheid situation more explicit.<sup>4</sup> Jordan suggested that it could withdraw or downgrade the peace accord it signed with Israel in 1994 and some diplomats warned that this could affect Israel's rapprochement with Arab countries in recent years, the result of their common front against Iran as a regional adversary. As for the reactions in Palestinian territory, given the increase in acts of violence, fresh intervention by Egypt and the UN special envoy for the Middle East re-established the informal truce between Hamas and Israel in August.

In this context marked by international criticism, added to the internal divisions within the Israeli government over implementation of the plan, **Netanyahu's initiative was temporarily suspended and gave way to Washington-backed agreements to normalise Israel's relations with four Arab-majority countries during the second quarter.** A deal with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was announced in late August, followed by one in September with Bahrain and another in October with Sudan. In December, Morocco joined the list. In return, Washington proclaimed that it recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.<sup>5</sup> The US and Israel insisted on presenting these agreements as a step towards peace in the region, even though in practice, they formalised existing relations between Israel and these states, which were not involved in direct hostilities with Israel in the past, with the exception of Sudan. Although the agreements were defended by these countries as a way to stop Netanyahu's annexation plan, the Israeli prime minister asserted that his proposal was still on the table. Palestinian protests against these agreements did not achieve strong political support in the Arab League, which in September failed to pass a condemnatory resolution. Amid rumours of a similar move by Saudi Arabia, Riyadh defended the Arab Peace Initiative as the basis for a solution.

In this context, during the last quarter the PA resumed security cooperation with Israel that had been suspended since May, which once again strained its relations with Hamas. The PA also underlined its willingness to resume peace talks after the inauguration of a new government in the United States and insisted on the importance of promoting an international peace conference. **The Palestinian president appealed to the UN Secretary-General to convene an international meeting during the first few months of 2021 for the purpose of launching a "genuine" peace process between Israelis and Palestinians.** Mahmoud Abbas asked António Guterres to work with the Quartet on the Middle East (the USA, Russia, the EU and the UN) and the UN Security Council to convene all concerned parties to the meeting. He also argued that peace and stability in the region would not be possible if the key issues of the conflict remained unresolved and in a context of persistent occupation. Abbas underlined the commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, which offered to normalise relations with Israel in exchange for an agreement for a Palestinian state and total withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967. At the end of the year, the PA redoubled its diplomatic efforts. In December, Abbas travelled to Qatar and obtained explicit support for the Palestinian cause and also met with Vladimir Putin, who discussed Russia's willingness to mediate between Israelis and Palestinians as part of the Quartet. Likewise, the configuration of a joint committee to promote the international conference in 2021 was announced, made up of the PA, Jordan and Egypt. At the same time, the Israeli government continued its policies of building settlements, demolishing, and confiscating Palestinian homes, practices denounced by human rights groups and United Nations organisations. Meanwhile, the internal crisis in the Israeli government led to its dissolution in December and a new call for elections (the fourth in less than two years) scheduled for March 2021. Finally, the UN Special Coordinator for In the Middle East Peace Process, the Bulgarian national Nickolay Mladenov, ended his term of office in December, which he had held since 2015, and was succeeded by the Norwegian diplomat Tor Wennesland.

## Gender, peace and security

At the urging of Palestinian and Israeli women, **a group of 40 international female leaders issued a statement condemning the Israeli government's intentions to formally annex one third of the Palestinian territories.** Referring to UN Resolution 1325 and the international Women, Peace and Security agenda, these leaders warned of the impact of Netanyahu's plan and Trump's

3. Associated Press, "UN chief urges Israel to back away from West Bank annexation", *The Guardian*, 24 June 2020; UN News, "UN Middle East peace envoy warns against unilateral action on all sides, as Israel threatens West Bank annexation", UN News, 20 May 2020; UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, *Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law – UN experts call on the international community to ensure accountability*, 16 June 2020.

4. For further information, see "A decisive moment? The importance of curbing the arms trade with Israel", Escola de Cultura de Pau, Centre Delàs, IDHC, July 2020.

5. See the summary on Morocco-Western Sahara in chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa).

proposals for the region. The declaration was signed by figures such as Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Maguire and Jody Williams, as well as political figures such as Helen Clark, Mary Robinson, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Graça Machel, Navi Pillay and Margot Wallström.<sup>6</sup>

Also during 2020, Palestine presented the second edition of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. The Palestinian government unveiled the new plan, which covers the period 2020-2013 and was developed with support from Norway, to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the approval of the emblematic resolution which gave way to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. One of its purposes is to promote the participation of Palestinian women in decision-making and in peacebuilding roles. Palestinian representatives from various organisations stressed the need for substantive implementation of the plan, associated with a system of monitoring and annual evaluations. In the meantime, Palestinian human rights organisations led by women continued to report and denounce the specific and disproportionate impacts of the policies of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian women. They also warned of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian women and demanded a greater role for women in the response to the crisis.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Palestine                  |  |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Hamas, Fatah   |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | Egypt, Qatar   |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Mecca Agreement (2007), Cairo agreement (2011), Doha agreement (2012), Beach Refugee Camp agreement (2014) |

**Summary:**

Since the start of the confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, which materialized as of 2007 with a de facto separation between Gaza and the West Bank, several mediation initiatives have been launched in an attempt to reduce tensions and promote an approximation between these two Palestinian formations. It was not until May 2011 that the confluence of several factors –including the deadlock in negotiations between the PA and Israel, changes in the region as a result of the Arab revolts and the pressure exerted by the Palestinian public opinion– facilitated the signing of a reconciliation agreement between the parties. The diverging opinions between Hamas and Fatah on key issues have hampered the implementation of this agreement, which aims at establishing a unity government, the celebration of legislative and presidential elections, and reforming the security forces. Successive agreements have been announced between both parties since, but they have not been implemented.

**Even though the rejection to Israeli and US announcements and policies prompted rapprochement between Palestinian groups during 2020, by the end of the year obstacles to reconciliation between the parties**

**prevailed again.** The plan to formally annex one third of the occupied territories announced by Netanyahu’s government as part of the Israeli electoral campaign and reaffirmed after the formation of a new government in April, validated in turn by the “definitive peace plan” presented by the US at the beginning of the year, favoured rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah, which took place especially from the second half of the year.

Netanyahu’s plan, which according to the Israeli prime minister was to be launched on 1 July, led to a joint conference of representatives of various Palestinian groups in Gaza, including Hamas and Fatah in late June in which they reaffirmed their unity to challenge the formal annexation of territories announced by Israel and to reject the Trump administration’s plan. Days later, in early July in Ramallah, the Secretary-General of Fatah, Jibril Rajoub, and the deputy head of Hamas’ political office, Saleh al-Arouri, held a new joint press conference emphasising common action against the plans of Israel and the US. Between 22 and 24 September, the two main Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fatah, held reconciliation talks in Turkey. **After the meeting in Istanbul, an agreement was announced to hold legislative elections for the Central Council of the PLO and for the presidency of the PA,** although the groups remained divided on whether to hold them simultaneously, as preferred by Hamas, or separately, as advocated by Fatah, which wants the legislative elections to take place first. The meeting in Turkey also considered a comprehensive national dialogue in collaboration with all Palestinian groups.

New meetings took place in Cairo, Egypt, between 16 and 18 November. However, the PA’s decision to re-establish security cooperation with Israel, which had been suspended since May in retaliation for the annexation plan announced by Netanyahu and in protest of the US initiative, again exposed the differences between the Palestinian groups. Hamas condemned the move, announced on 17 December, while the talks in Egypt were taking place, and asserted that the PA was ignoring national principles and values, in addition to the results of the conference of leaders of the different Palestinian factions. It also blasted the decision as a heavy blow to efforts to formulate a joint response to the annexation plans and to Trump’s so-called “deal of the century” and stressed that it served to validate and justify the agreements to normalise relations with Israel announced since late August. Finally, the Islamist group warned that the PA’s decision called into question and undermined the legitimacy of institutions such as the Palestinian National Council and its decision to halt cooperation with Israel.

Meanwhile, Fatah representatives, blamed the difficulties and failure of the talks with Hamas in Egypt on the Islamist group’s insistence on holding the PLO legislative, presidential and council elections

6. MIFTAH, *Global call by women leaders against annexation and for peace*, 2 July 2020.

simultaneously. At the end of November, the Secretary-General of the Fatah Central Committee, Jibril Rajoub, argued that the resumption of security cooperation with Israel was an emergency measure that should not affect reconciliation efforts and ruled out interference or external pressure in the intra-Palestinian process. In December, Abbas travelled to Qatar in what was interpreted as an attempt to get the Qatari authorities to use their influence and pressure Hamas to reach an agreement on the elections. Meanwhile, an Egyptian delegation was deployed to Gaza to discuss the reconciliation process with Hamas and the informal truce with Israel. Media reports indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis had increased contact between mediators, Hamas and Israel. Finally, the results of a study by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research showed that only 11% of the Palestinians who responded were confident that the two Palestinian groups would reconcile in the short term.

## Gender, peace and security

During 2020, the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs presented the second National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which covers the period 2020-2023 and aims to achieve greater female participation of women in all decision-making roles, including reconciliation efforts, as well as other issues. At the same time, civil society organisations continued promoting initiatives to favour a more substantive and equitable presence of women and young people in decision-making and in negotiations for intra-Palestinian reconciliation. They also warned of the specific impacts on women of the political division since 2007 and complained that despite constituting half of the population, women have been absent from formal spaces for national dialogue.

| Syria                      |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition  |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | UN, EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Geneva Communiqué from the Action Group for Syria (2012); UNSC Resolution 2254 in support of the International Syria Support Group Roadmap for a Peace Process (Vienna Statements (2015)) <sup>7</sup> |

### Summary:

Given the serious consequences of the armed conflict in Syria and amidst concern about the regional repercussions of the crisis, various regional and international actors have tried to facilitate a negotiated solution and commit the parties to a cessation of hostilities. However, regional actors' and international powers' different approaches to the conflict, together with an inability to reach consensus in the UN Security Council, have hindered the possibilities

of opening the way to a political solution. After a brief and failed attempt by the Arab League, the UN took the lead in the mediation efforts, led by special envoys Kofi Annan (2012), Lakhdar Brahimi (2012-2014), Staffan de Mistura (2014-2018) and Geir Pedersen (since 2018). Other initiatives have come from the EU, United States, Russia and leaders of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). In 2015, the ISSG peace talks in Vienna -led by Washington and Moscow and in which twenty countries and international organizations participated- resulted in a peace plan for Syria that was endorsed by Security Council resolution 2254 the ONU. As of 2017, in parallel to the UN-led Geneva process - which has included intra-Syrian talks promoted by De Mistura- a new channel began: the Russian-backed Astana process, which also involve Turkey and Iran. The various rounds of negotiations held since the beginning of the armed conflict have shown the deep differences between the parties and have not been able to halt the high levels of violence in the country.

As in recent years, **the complexity of the armed conflict in Syria correlated with the ceasefire and diplomatic initiatives, with a prominent role for regional and international actors in the negotiating schemes put in place.** In the first few months of the year, attention was focused on the hostilities in northwestern Syria, following the decision of Bashar Assad's regime and Russia to intensify the armed campaign against the opposition stronghold of Idlib starting in late 2019. The violence in the area had severe impacts on the civilian population, with many fatalities and massive forced displacements—between December and March, almost one million people left their homes due to the conflict in this area. Previous agreements as part of the so-called “Astana process” had defined this area as a “demilitarised zone”, which is why Turkey accused Moscow of non-compliance with its commitments. Some humanitarian pauses in the fighting were negotiated during this period and in mid-January Russia and Turkey announced a ceasefire that was not observed, since ground clashes and air strikes in Damascus resumed after a few days. A rise in incidents involving Syrian forces and Turkish troops, with casualties from both sides, raised fears of an even greater escalation of violence in February. **In early March, however, Moscow and Ankara reached a new agreement, which resulted in an additional protocol to the Memorandum on Stabilisation of the “demilitarised zone” in Idlib.** Signed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin after a meeting in Moscow, the deal stipulated an interruption of military activities along the line of contact in the demilitarised zone from 6 March and a start to the deployment of joint Russian-Turkish patrols. As of this date, the air strikes in Idlib ceased, though they continued sporadically in other parts of the country. Though periodically violated, the truce was generally upheld, allowing some of population to return in March and the launch of joint Russian-Turkish patrols. The air strikes resumed in June, however, and at the end of the year the ceasefire was formally maintained, albeit amid periodic and increasing violations.

7. Both the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2254 are benchmark documents for the negotiations, but have not been signed by the parties to the conflict.

Some analysts argued that the ceasefire agreement confirmed that decisions on ceasefires in Syria are taken bilaterally in practice, between Ankara and Moscow, rather than under the Astana format, which also includes Iran (the agreements on Idlib made in Sochi in September 2018 and on northeastern Syria in October 2019 were also negotiated mainly between Turkey and Russia).<sup>8</sup> In April 2020, the foreign ministers of Russia, Turkey and Iran held a virtual meeting but did not issue a joint statement and the reports they presented after the meeting showed differences in priorities and interests among the parties. Thus, for example, Moscow underlined the need to lift sanctions against the Syrian regime and, in an implicit allusion to Ankara, to intensify efforts to separate opposition groups from jihadist militants such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib. Turkey, meanwhile, insisted that UN Resolution 2254 on Syria should be the benchmark for the political process in Syria, while Russia referred to it to vindicate Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>9</sup> In July, a virtual meeting on Syria took place between the presidents of Iran, Turkey and Russia. The first such meeting since September 2019, it did not produce any major developments. However, Moscow took the opportunity to denounce the sanctions imposed by the US against the Syrian regime, following the entry into force in mid-June of the Caesar Act, which punishes individuals, entities and countries that negotiate with the government of Bashar Assad.

Regarding UN-backed initiatives, the UN special envoy for Syria insisted in March on the need to implement the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the country in response to the pandemic. In late March, Geir Pedersen demanded a complete and immediate ceasefire for all of Syria, a massive release of prisoners and abducted people and full, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout the country. None of these requests were met in practice and only the SDF, led by the Kurdish YPG/YPJ forces, answered the call and decreed a suspension of military activities in March. Still, sporadic clashes involving the SDF and Turkish-backed groups were reported throughout the year, in addition to incidents with ISIS.

Regarding the UN-backed negotiating process, in 2020 the difficulties of the so-called "intra-Syrian talks" continued to become evident. The constitutional committee created in September 2019, which held two consecutive rounds that same year, only managed to meet

*The complexity of the armed conflict in Syria correlated with the ceasefire and diplomatic initiatives, with a prominent role for regional and international actors in the negotiating schemes put in place*

twice in 2020. The meetings were postponed several times due to the pandemic, but also owing to problems in reaching a consensus on the agenda. It was not until late August that the third round took place, in Geneva, with a limited group consisting of the constitutional committee in charge of drafting the proposal (made up of 45 people, 15 government representatives, 15 members of the opposition and 15 civil society activists). However, no progress was made on substantive issues due to the differences between the parties, nor was it possible to agree on topics for a future meeting. After facilitating an agreement between the two co-chairs of the committee (Ahmad Kuzbari, appointed by the Syrian government and Hadi al-Bahra, designated by the Syrian opposition's negotiating committee), Pedersen convened a fourth session in Geneva on 30 November, at which national foundations and principles would be discussed, as well as constitutional principles. The debate on these issues was expected to continue in a new, fifth session in January 2021. By the end of the year, no further details had been revealed about the outcome of the meeting in the Swiss capital. In the weeks leading up to the fourth round in Geneva, Pedersen took a series of trips, including to Ankara, Tehran and Moscow, to try to secure international support for the process and a conducive climate during the negotiations.

Meetings between the political wing of the SDF and the Syrian government also continued in 2020. A delegation of the Syrian Democratic Council met in Damascus with representatives of the regime to discuss the establishment of autonomous local administrations in the Kurdish-majority areas in the northeastern part of the country as part of a process mediated by Russia. However, in an interview with the International Crisis Group at the end of the year, the head of the SDF, Mazloum Kobani, publicly acknowledged the pessimism surrounding the possibilities of an agreement with the Syrian government due to the difficulties of obtaining commitments and guarantees.<sup>10</sup> According to some analysts, a key point of dissent between the parties focuses on which military forces would ensure physical control of the northeastern area of Syria. In this context, Kobani was in favour of negotiating the region's status as part of a broader agreement including the entire country, with international guarantors. Regarding Turkey, the SDF leader implicitly recognised the persistence of hostilities in areas controlled by Syrian groups supported by Ankara and expressed his readiness for a total and unilateral truce if the US or

8. Charles Thépaut, "The Astana Process: A Flexible but Fragile Showcase for Russia", *Policy Watch* 3308, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 28 April 2020.  
9. Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 89, 22 April 2020, *Press Release Regarding the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Astana Process; Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's video conference with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif and Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu*, 22 April 2020.  
10. International Crisis Group, *The SDF Seeks a Path Toward Durable Stability in North East Syria*, Commentary/ Middle East and North Africa, 25 November 2020.

Russia could get Turkish to commit to address violations against the civilian population in Afrin and to allow the return of the displaced Kurdish population. Starting with recognition of the strategic relations between the US and Turkey, Kobani showed his willingness to reach agreements with Ankara in which Washington acts as mediator and guarantor. Analysts highlighted that the prospects here are conditioned by the perception of weakness of the SDF after the announcement of the US withdrawal and by the policies that the new US government decides to implement in the region.

At the same time, there were reports of talks between Kurdish groups during the year, and specifically between the YPG and the Kurdish National Council (KNC), which brings together various Kurdish opposition groups, aimed at promoting more inclusive governance in areas controlled by the SDF, in a process reportedly supported by the US and France. In October, the SDF issued an amnesty that benefited more than 600 Syrian ISIS prisoners not involved in blood crimes who had shown regret for joining the group.

## Gender, peace and security

Syrian women continued to have very limited participation in formal negotiation spaces, despite their extensive work and multiple initiatives in peacebuilding and the search for truth and justice. The **constitutional committee established in late 2019 represented an increase in the levels of representation, reaching 28% female, including in the smallest body in charge of writing the proposal. However, the capacity to influence was constrained by its blockage during 2020** due to the pandemic and the difficulties in reaching a consensus on positions. The UN reported that the special envoy for Syria continued his contacts with the Syrian's Women Advisory Board (WAB) in 2020. Pedersen held consultations outside the constitutional committee meeting in Geneva in August, at which time the council reportedly emphasised the need for the political process to develop alongside improvement in the living conditions of the Syrian population. Along these lines, they expressed their concern about the health and security situation and the economic and humanitarian emergencies. The UN Secretary-General has praised these types of consultations, but emphasised that they cannot replace direct participation.

As part of the Brussels conference on Syria, some stressed the need to put Syrian women and their needs and rights at the centre of the response to the conflict, especially with the added crisis stemming from the coronavirus pandemic than has increased the risks

for women in other latitudes. Since the beginning of the pandemic, organisations led by women inside and outside Syria have emphasised the **extreme vulnerability of the population to COVID-19 due to the extensive destruction of health infrastructure after nine years of conflict and the lack of equipment and medical staff**. They also expressed concern about the repercussions on women's sexual and reproductive health and about the difficulties in adopting the minimum measures to prevent the spread of the virus among the displaced population living in overcrowded conditions, with hygiene problems and access to drinking water. In this context, **their demands focused on a permanent and nationwide ceasefire; the release of prisoners and abducted persons or, at least, access to medical assistance to detention centres; the suspension of the provision of arms to all sides; a gender-sensitive health and humanitarian response; and the immediate reopening of closed border crossings to facilitate access of aid, especially to areas especially affected by the humanitarian crisis, such as Idlib.**<sup>11</sup>

***Faced with the extreme vulnerability of the Syrian population to COVID-19 after nine years of war, Syrian women insisted on a permanent ceasefire, the release of prisoners and an end to the provision of weapons to all sides***

## The Gulf

| Iran (nuclear programme)   |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU                        |
| <b>Third parties</b>       | UN  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b> | Joint Plan of Action (provisional agreement, 2013), Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) |

### Summary:

Under scrutiny by the international community since 2002, the Iranian nuclear programme has become one of the main sources of tension between Iran and the West, particularly affecting Iran's relationship with the United States and Israel. After more than a decade of negotiations, and despite the fact that various proposals were made to resolve the conflict, the parties failed to reach an agreement and remained almost unchanged in their positions. The US, Israel and several European countries remained distrustful of Tehran and convinced of the military objectives of its atomic programme, whilst Iran continued to insist that its nuclear activities were strictly for civilian purposes and in conformance with international regulations. In this context, the Iranian atomic programme continued to develop whilst the UN Security Council, US and EU imposed sanctions on Iran and threats of military action were made, mainly by Israel. Iran's change of government in 2013 favoured substantive talks on nuclear issues, facilitated new rounds of negotiations and led to the signing of agreements aimed at halting the Iranian atomic programme in exchange for lifting the sanctions. Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme have been met with resistance by Israel, certain countries such as Saudi Arabia and groups in the United States in a context marked by historical distrust, questions of sovereignty and national pride, disparate geopolitical and strategic interests, regional struggles and more.

11. WILPF, *Centering Women, Peace and Security in Ceasefires*, WILPF-Women, Peace and Security Programme, mayo de 2020.

In line with the trend observed the previous year, **problems persisted in keeping the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme**, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), afloat during 2020, in a context marked by various factors. These included the abandonment of the deal by the United States in 2018 and its preference for a strategy of coercion and maximum pressure on Iran, the gradual distancing of the Islamic Republic from the commitments made under the agreement since 2019, a series of incidents that affected high-level Iranian infrastructure and scientists in 2020 and various acts of violence involving Iranian, US and Israeli forces in different parts of the Middle East that raised alarms about the potential for escalation between the parties.

Regarding the latter, it is worth noting the destabilising impact of the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in a US attack in Iraq in January that led to retaliatory actions by Iran. Other acts of violence and skirmishes took place throughout 2020, mainly in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, which exposed the tension between the parties. In addition, a series of attacks and acts of sabotage were reported in July against infrastructure linked to the Iranian atomic programme, including the Natanz and Isfahan plants. In November, the assassination of the person in charge of the Iranian nuclear programme caused a special stir, an action in which Israeli forces may have participated, according to Tehran. At the same time, the Trump administration strengthened its policy of sanctions against Iran and approved a series of related measures throughout the year against people, companies, scientists, banks, transport and metal companies, fuel and electricity suppliers and others. According to the International Crisis Group, in a period of two and a half years (until December 2020) Washington had approved almost 1,500 unilateral sanctions against Iran, which had dramatic consequences for its economy. These sanctions were not only maintained, but intensified during 2020, even though Tehran asked the UN to promote lifting these restrictive measures to facilitate its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the country. In fact, an estimated one million people had contracted the virus in Iran, with nearly 50,000 fatalities reported by the end of November.

**At the same time, Iran continued to violate the agreement.**

At the beginning of the year the three European states involved in the agreement (France, Germany and the United Kingdom, known as the E3 group) activated the provided dispute resolution mechanism in the face of detected breaches. Nevertheless, during a visit by the EU foreign policy representative to Tehran in February, the Iranian president insisted that his country was in compliance with the agreement and would continue to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In June, an IAEA report found that Iran had continued to enrich and accumulate uranium above the limits allowed by the JCPOA and warned of Tehran's

lack of cooperation to access two sites where suspicious activities had been identified. The E3 countries urged Iran to cooperate with the IAEA, and in July the timeline for the conflict resolution mechanism was extended. In November, new information from the IAEA confirmed that Iran continued to maintain uranium reserves above the agreed thresholds and that the country had to provide explanations regarding sites where traces of nuclear activity had been identified.

In August, Washington tried unsuccessfully to reactivate the United Nations sanctions against Iran that had been in force before the 2015 nuclear programme agreement, a right reserved for the signatories of the agreement that the United States abandoned. The action generated debate within the UN Security Council and evidenced the disparity of positions between the US and the countries that signed the agreement, a situation that Tehran celebrated as a victory. In view of this reality and coinciding with the expiration of the UN arms embargo against Iran, the Trump administration approved new unilateral sanctions against the Islamic republic. At the end of the year, press reports generated some alarm by pointing out that Trump had considered military actions against Iran's main atomic facility, warning that the president's initiatives against the country could not be ruled out in the final days of his term. In this sense, in February the US Senate approved a regulation to prevent the president from launching any military action against Iran without authorisation from Congress.

In this context, at the end of the year, expectations rested on the changes that could take place after the new US government came to power. In remarks prior to his election as president, Joe Biden was in favour of resigning the JCPOA. In December, at their first meeting in a year, the foreign ministers of the countries that signed the agreement (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and Iran) were in favour of not establishing preconditions and welcomed a possible US return to the agreement. At the same time, in response to the assassination of a prominent Iranian nuclear scientist in an attack attributed to Israel in November, Iran's Parliament passed a law in December urging the government to enrich uranium to 20% (according to the JCPOA it should be kept below 4%) and to block the IAEA's access to the country if the sanctions against Iran were not lifted during the first few months of 2021.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Yemen  |   |
| <b>Negotiating actors</b>  | Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah, Southern Transitional Council, Saudi Arabia |
| <b>Third parties</b>   | UN, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman  |
| <b>Relevant agreements</b>   | Stockholm Agreement (2018), Riyadh Agreement (2019)   |
| <b>Summary:</b>  |   |
| The source of several conflicts in recent decades, Yemen began a difficult transition in 2011 after the revolts that |   |

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forced Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down as president after more than 30 years in office. The eventful aftermath led to a rebellion by Houthi forces and former President Saleh against the transitional government presided over by Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who was forced to flee in early 2015. In March 2015, an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia decided to intervene militarily in the country in support of the deposed government. Since then, levels of violence in the conflict have escalated. Given this turn of events, the United Nations, which has been involved in the country since the beginning of the transition, has tried to promote a political solution to the conflict, joined by some regional and international actors. Despite these initiatives, the meetings were unsuccessful, and the talks have been at an impasse since mid-2016. It was not until late 2018 that meetings between the parties resumed and led to the signature of the Stockholm Agreement at the end of that year, arousing cautious expectations about the possibilities of a political solution to the conflict. The hostilities have significantly worsened the security and humanitarian situation in the country.

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The difficulties in redirecting the Yemeni armed conflict and its multiple dynamics of violence towards a political and negotiated path became apparent again in 2020. **Throughout the year, mediation and facilitation initiatives to achieve a cessation of hostilities and attempts to implement previous agreements between the parties competed with persistent escalations of violence, which aggravated the already dramatic situation of the Yemeni population and exacerbated their vulnerabilities amidst the pandemic.**<sup>12</sup> An analysis of the evolution of the negotiations requires consideration of the two main (but not the only) lines of confrontation affecting the country. First is the struggle between the Houthi forces and the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, backed by the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition, in which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also prominently participates, and other Yemeni actors that make up the anti-Houthi camp. Second is the dispute within the anti-Houthi camp, designated as a war within a war, which pits Hadi's forces against southern separatist sectors united under the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and supported by the UAE.

Regarding the first and main line, difficulties in achieving a wide-ranging ceasefire and in launching political talks persisted in 2020. Although some expectations were raised at the end of 2019 due to the relative reduction in violence and informal contacts between the Houthi forces and Riyadh, hostilities intensified in the first few months of 2020. Nevertheless, meetings to explore the implementation of confidence-building measures continued, including a meeting in February between representatives of the Hadi government and the Houthis and another meeting with Riyadh, in Jordan, in which

the terms of the prisoner exchange were discussed. These talks were blocked by the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and by the upsurge in violence. The UN special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said that all parties urgently need to accept the global ceasefire achieved by the UN Secretary-General to respond to the pandemic and to resume contact to find a political solution to the conflict. Although the Houthis, the Hadi government and Saudi Arabia were all in favour of a truce, in practice the clashes did not stop. **In April, Riyadh declared a unilateral truce potentially across the entire country, but the Houthis declined, arguing that a ceasefire should be part of a broader agreement** that would also end the maritime, land and air blockade in the parts of the country controlled by the armed group. Along these lines, the Houthis presented an alternative proposal to that of the UN special envoy, without curbing their offensives, which reached into southern Saudi territory. In practice, therefore, the violence persisted and although Riyadh formally renewed the unilateral truce, it also engaged in further attacks in Yemen.

During the year, the UN special envoy presented several proposals that were not accepted by the parties. In fact, Griffiths was publicly questioned and accused of bias on both sides. Throughout 2020, tensions also reached the port of Al Hudaydah, a key part of the Stockholm Agreement signed in December 2018 at the behest of the UN. The city was the scene of incidents in the first quarter of the year and of armed clashes between the Houthis and UAE-backed forces in September. In this context, Griffiths resubmitted a joint declaration proposal to the parties that included a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic confidence-building measures and political talks. As the hostilities raged, the Houthis and Hadi agreed to an exchange of prisoners, another one of the issues laid out in the Stockholm Agreement, which resulted in the release of 1,081 people in October. The event was hailed as the largest exchange of prisoners since violence escalated in the country in 2015. Meanwhile, as part of an agreement between the Houthis, Saudi Arabia and the United States facilitated by Oman, 240 people were able to return to Sana'a from Muscat, the capital of Oman, in exchange for the release of two Americans captured by the Houthis. At the end of the year, the prospects for the UN-backed process were influenced by statements that the US government could declare the Houthis a terrorist organisation and by the evolution of the negotiations between the Hadi government and the STC to overcome their dispute and form a unity government.

Regarding this internal struggle, a reflection of the fragmentation of the anti-Houthi camp, at the

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<sup>12</sup> See the summary on Yemen in the chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

beginning of the year Saudi Arabia stepped up pressure on the Hadi government and the STC to implement the Riyadh Agreement, signed in November 2019 to curb the escalation of violence between the parties. As anticipated by the limited schedule of the agreement and the difficulties in reaching a consensus, the implementation of the agreement was not fulfilled in the initial 90 days stipulated, giving way to a new plan or “phase two”. Although there were some limited prisoner exchanges, differences persisted over withdrawal zones and appointments of senior security officials. At the same time, hostilities continued. In this context, the STC raised the need for greater UN involvement to implement the agreement. One of the most critical episodes took place in April, when amid speculation about a possible offensive by Hadi’s forces on Aden and after torrential rains that seriously affected the area, the STC decided to declare an autonomous administration in southern Yemen. Even though this called the Riyadh Agreement into question and new clashes broke out in Abyan and the island of Socotra in the Gulf of Aden, contact was maintained at Saudi Arabia’s request. **In July, Saudi Arabia presented a new proposal to implement the Riyadh Agreement that urged the STC to rescind its declaration of autonomy.**

Although the STC made new threats to withdraw from the deal, **in December the parties finally managed to reach a consensus on a unity government.** The Riyadh Agreement provided for the formation of a joint government and the consequent inclusion of STC delegates in the UN-mediated process. Along these lines, diplomatic sources anticipated that the UN special envoy intended to make the most of the announcement about the new government to pressure for direct talks with the Houthis and to close the terms of a joint declaration on a ceasefire, economic and humanitarian measures and the resumption of the peace process. The new Yemeni cabinet was formed with no women for the first time in two decades, prompting criticism from Yemeni women’s organisations. The formation of the new government and the news about some positive steps taken in withdrawing forces from Aden and from combat areas in Abyan governorate were overshadowed at the end of the year by the bomb and rocket attack on the Aden airport on 30 December, when the new cabinet was landing in the city. The attack revealed the extreme fragility of the situation in the country.

***The attack on the Aden airport when the new Yemeni cabinet was landing revealed the extreme fragility of the situation in the country***

***Yemeni women welcomed the National Action Plan for UN Resolution 1325, but criticised their marginalization from decision-making roles, including the new unity government between Hadi’s forces and the STC, which did not include any women***

## **Gender, peace and security**

Yemeni women’s groups such as the Yemeni Women Movement welcomed the formation of a consensus government as part of the Riyadh Agreement, but **firmly denounced the marginalisation and discrimination of women in their legitimate right to political participation.**

The UN special envoy for Yemen also stressed that more efforts should be made to incorporate women into the cabinet and in decision-making positions, especially considering the precedent of the National Dialogue Conference, almost one third of whose participants were Yemeni women, which concluded its work in 2014 with a series of recommendations that included guaranteeing a 30% minimum level of female participation in political decision-making positions. In May 2020, the Hadi government, which controls part of Yemeni territory, formally launched the first Yemen National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, whose objectives include boosting female participation in all decision-making areas. However, as mentioned previously, the new Yemeni cabinet was formed with no women. Regarding the National Action Plan, Yemeni women’s organisations such as the Peace Track Initiative presented critical analyses of its origin and content, underlining that although consultations were held with civil society organisations during the drafting process, some of their main recommendations were not taken into account. In positive terms, the commitment to include a 30% minimum of women in peace negotiations is hopeful, but there is concern over the lack of a budget and mechanisms to guarantee implementation, as well as the non-inclusion of key issues such as child marriage, the situation of women human rights activists and the elimination of discriminatory laws and practices.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, **during 2020, Yemeni women’s groups continued to insist on the urgency of a ceasefire.** The so-called “Group of Nine” (organisations that make up the network for the implementation of Resolution 1325) demanded an end to the war in the country, saying that efforts must focus on the response to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>14</sup> The group asked the warring sides to commit to a ceasefire, to ending the armed conflict and to a comprehensive peace agreement resulting from an inclusive peace process. Some organisations such as the Peace Track Initiative also provided a critical assessment of the ceasefire proposals based on a comparative analysis

13. For further information, see “National Action Plan and demands for inclusion in Yemen” in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Gender and Peace* January - June 2020.

14. The “Group of Nine” consists of the Yemeni Women’s Pact for Peace and Security/Tawafuq, Yemeni Women’s Summit, Women’s Peace Voices, Coalition of Peace Partners, Southern Women for Peace, Women’s Solidarity Network, Women for Yemen Network, Young Leadership Development Foundation, Ma’rib Girls Foundation - Southern Women for Peace.



of the initiative presented by the Houthis in April and the draft joint statement written by Griffiths. After the draft was leaked, there were complaints that the UN proposal defended the participation of women and young people in a generic way and that emphasis in practice was placed only on their inclusion in the institutions resulting from a framework agreement between the parties. In this sense, the need was raised for greater dialogue with civil society in preparing these types of documents.

Activists like Rasha Jarhum also asserted that the marginal participation of women in the Stockholm process prevented women from realising their potential, despite the creation of a women's technical advisory council that has continued to work with

the office of the UN special envoy. No women were appointed to the agreement's follow-up committees, ignoring the work of organisations such as Mothers of Abductees, which had achieved the release of 940 arbitrarily detained people by early 2020 and could have played a key role in the prisoner exchange agreements. Jarhum also revealed that some women had decided not to wait for any more invitations and to take the initiative, prompting a group of them to appear in Riyadh at the end of 2019 to convey their priorities and demands. Finally, the Women Solidarity Network, made up of more than 250 Yemeni women inside and outside the country of different political affiliations, was active in promoting the protection of women from violence and in defending rights and gender equality in Yemen.

# Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2020<sup>1</sup>

| Conflict <sup>2</sup><br>-beginning-                   | Type <sup>3</sup>                     | Main parties <sup>4</sup>  | Intensity <sup>5</sup> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
|  |                                       |  | Trend <sup>6</sup>     |
| <b>AFRICA</b>  |                                       |  |                        |
| Burundi -2015-   | Internationalised internal            | Government, Imbonerakure Youth branch, political party CNDD-FDD, political party CNL, armed groups RED-TABARA, FPB (previously FOREBU), FNL  | 1                      |
|  | Government                            |  | =                      |
| Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West and South West) -2018- | Internationalised internal            | Government, political-military secessionist movement including the opposition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako, to which belong the armed groups Lebialem Red Dragons and SOCADEF) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku, whose armed wing is the Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF)   | 3                      |
|  | Self-government, Identity             |  | =                      |
| CAR -2006-   | Internationalised internal            | Government of CAR, rebel groups of the former coalition Séléka (FPRC, RPRC, MPC, UPC, MLCJ), anti-balaka militias, 3R militia, LRA armed Ugandan group, other local and foreign armed groups, Government of France, MINUSCA, EUFOR   | 2                      |
|  | Government, Resources                 |  | ↑                      |
| DRC (east) -1998-                                      | Internationalised internal            | Government of DRC, FDLR, factions of the FDLR, Mai-Mai militias, Nyatura, APCLS, NDC-R, Ituri armed groups, Burundian armed opposition group FNL, Government of Rwanda, MONUSCO  | 3                      |
|  | Government, Identity, Resources       |  | =                      |
| DRC (east – ADF) -2014-                                | Internationalised internal            | Government of DRC, Government of Uganda, Mai-Mai militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO   | 3                      |
|  | System, Resources                     |  | ↑                      |
| Ethiopia (Tigray)-2020-                                | Internationalised internal            | Government of Ethiopia, Government of Eritrea, Tigray State Regional Government, security forces and militias of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)   | 3                      |
|  | Government, Self-government, Identity |  | ↑                      |
| Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-                  | Internationalised internal            | Government of Nigeria, Civilian Joint Task Force pro-government militia, Boko Haram factions (ISWAP, JAS-Abubakar Shekau, Ansaru, Bakura), civilian militias, Multinational Joint Task Force MNJTF (Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger)   | 3                      |
|  | System                                |  | =                      |
| Libya -2011-   | Internationalised internal            | Government of National Accord with headquarters in Tripoli, government with headquarters in Tobruk/Bayda, numerous armed groups including the Libyan National Army (LNA, also called Arab Libyan Armed Forces, ALAF), militias from Misrata, Petroleum Facilities Guard, Bengasi Defence Brigades (BDB), ISIS, AQIM, mercenaries; USA, France, UK, Egypt, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Russia, among other countries | 3                      |
|  | Government, Resources, System         |  | =                      |

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2020.
2. This column includes the states in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one armed conflict in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
3. This report classifies and analyses armed conflicts using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following main causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or the struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). In respect of the second type, the armed conflicts may be of an internal, Internationalised internal or international nature. An internal armed conflict is defined as a conflict involving armed actors from the same state who operate exclusively within the territory of this state. Secondly, an internationalised internal armed conflict is defined as that in which at least one of the parties involved is foreign and/or in which the tension spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Another factor taken into account in order to consider an armed conflict as internationalised internal is the existence of military bases of armed groups in neighbouring countries (in connivance with these countries) from which attacks are launched. Finally, an international conflict is one in which state and non-state parties from two or more countries confront each other. It should also be taken into account that most current armed conflicts have a significant regional or international dimension and influence due, among other factors, to flows of refugees, the arms trade, economic or political interests (such as legal or illegal exploitation of resources) that the neighbouring countries have in the conflict, the participation of foreign combatants or the logistical and military support provided by other states.
4. This column shows the actors that intervene directly in the hostilities. The main actors who participate directly in the conflicts are made up of a mixture of regular or irregular armed parties. The conflicts usually involve the government, or its armed forces, fighting against one or several armed opposition groups, but can also involve other irregular groups such as clans, guerrillas, warlords, armed groups in opposition to each other or militias from ethnic or religious communities. Although they most frequently use conventional weapons, and more specifically small arms (which cause most deaths in conflicts), in many cases other methods are employed, such as suicide attacks, bombings and sexual violence and even hunger as a weapon of war. There are also other actors who do not directly participate in the armed activities but who nevertheless have a significant influence on the conflict.
5. The intensity of an armed conflict (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation of violence, reduction of violence, unchanged) are evaluated mainly on the basis of how deadly it is (number of fatalities) and according to its impact on the population and the territory. Moreover, there are other aspects worthy of consideration, such as the systematisation and frequency of the violence or the complexity of the military struggle (complexity is normally related to the number and fragmentation of the actors involved, to the level of institutionalisation and capacity of the state, and to the degree of internationalisation of the conflict, as well as to the flexibility of objectives and to the political will of the parties to reach agreements). As such, high-intensity armed conflicts are usually defined as those that cause over 1,000 fatalities per year, as well as affecting a significant proportion of the territory and population, and involving several actors (who forge alliances, confront each other or establish a tactical coexistence). Medium and low intensity conflicts, with over 100 fatalities per year, have the aforementioned characteristics but with a more limited presence and scope. An armed conflict is considered ended when a significant and sustained reduction in armed hostilities occurs, whether due to a military victory, an agreement between the actors in conflict, demobilisation by one of the parties, or because one of the parties abandons or significantly scales down the armed struggle as a strategy to achieve certain objectives. None of these options necessarily mean that the underlying causes of the armed conflict have been overcome. Nor do they exclude the possibility of new outbreaks of violence. The temporary cessation of hostilities, whether formal or tacit, does not necessarily imply the end of the armed conflict.
6. This column compares the trend of the events of 2020 with those that of 2019. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2020 has been more serious than in the previous year; the reduction of violence symbol (↓) indicates an improvement in the situation; and the unchanged (=) symbol indicates that no significant changes have taken place.ict.

| Conflict<br>-beginning-                     | Type                                 | Main parties  | Intensity |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
|   |                                      |   | Trend     |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                               |                                      |   |           |
| Mali -2012-                                 | Internationalised internal           | Government, CMA (MNLA, MAA faction, CPA, HCUA), Platform (GATIA, CMPFPR, MAA faction), MSA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, MRRA, al-Mourabitoun, JNIM/GSIM, Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP) –also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)-, Katiba Macina, MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Holland, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom)   | 3         |
|   | System, Self-government, Identity    |   | ↑         |
| Mozambique (North) -2019-                   | Internationalised internal           | Government, Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) -formerly Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ)-, al-Qaeda, South African private security company DAG (Dyck Advisory Group)   | 3         |
|   | System, Identity                     |   | ↑         |
| Somalia -1988-                              | Internationalised internal           | Federal Government of Somalia, pro-government regional forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan militias and warlords, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, al-Shabaab   | 3         |
|   | Government, System                   |   | =         |
| South Sudan -2009-                          | Internationalised internal           | Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), dissident factions of the SPLA-IO led by Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, SPLM-FD, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, NAS, SSUF (Paul Malong), SSDA, communal militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwelek), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS   | 3         |
|   | Government, Resources, Identity      |   | ↑         |
| Sudan (Darfur) -2003-                       | Internationalised internal           | Government, PDF pro-government militias, RSF paramilitary unit, pro-government militias <i>janjaweed</i> , Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, other groups, UNAMID  | 2         |
|   | Self-government, Resources, Identity |   | ↑         |
| Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011- | Internationalised internal           | Government, armed group SPLM-N, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) armed coalition, PDF pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, South Sudan   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Resources, Identity |   | ↓         |
| Western Sahel Region -2018-                 | International                        | Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), Joint Task Force for the Liptako-Gourma Region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom), Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM), Islamic State in the Province of West Africa (ISWAP) - also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)-, Macina Liberation Front (FML), Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups and community militias | 3         |
|   | System, Resources, Identity          |   | ↑         |
| <b>AMERICA</b>                              |                                      |   |           |
| Colombia -1964-                             | Internationalised internal           | Government, ELN, FARC (dissidents), EPL, paramilitary groups  | 1         |
|   | System                               |   | ↑         |
| <b>ASIA</b>                                 |                                      |   |           |
| Afghanistan -2001-                          | Internationalised internal           | Government, international coalition (led by USA), NATO, Taliban militias, warlords, ISIS (ISIS-KP)  | 3         |
|   | System                               |   | ↓         |
| India (CPI-M) -1967-                        | Internal                             | Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)   | 1         |
|   | System                               |   | ↓         |
| India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-            | Internationalised internal           | Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, United Jihad Council, All Parties Hurriyat Conference  | 2         |
|   | Self-government, Identity            |   | =         |
| Myanmar -1948-                              | Internationalised internal           | Government, armed groups (Ceasefire signatories: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; Non-signatories: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP)   | 2         |
|   | Self-government, Identity            |   | ↑         |
| Pakistan -2001-                             | Internationalised internal           | Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias, international militias, USA  | 2         |
|   | System                               |   | ↓         |
| Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-               | Internal                             | Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, civil society, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura)   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, Resources |   | ↓         |

| Conflict<br>-beginning-                             | Type  | Main parties   | Intensity |
|---|---|--|-----------|
|   |   |  | Trend     |
| <b>ASIA</b>   |   |  |           |
| Philippines<br>(Mindanao) -1991-                    | Internationalised internal                    | Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/ Dawlay Islamiyah/ Maute Group, Ansarul Khilafah Mindanao, Toraife group, factions of MILF and MNLF   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, System, Identity             |  | ↓         |
| Philippines (NPA)<br>-1969--                        | Internal                                      | Government, NPA  | 1         |
|   | System  |  | =         |
| Thailand (south)<br>-2004-                          | Internal                                      | Government, BRN and other separatist armed opposition groups   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity                     |  | ↓         |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                                       |   |  |           |
| Armenia –Azerbaijan<br>(Nagorno-Karabakh)<br>-2020- | Internationalised                             | Armenia, Azerbaijan, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh  | 3         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, Territory          |  | ↑         |
| Turkey (southeast)<br>-1984-                        | Internationalised internal                    | Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS   | 2         |
|   | Self-government, Identity                     |  | ↓         |
| Ukraine (east)<br>-2014-                            | Internationalised internal                    | Government, armed groups in the eastern provinces, Russia  | 1         |
|   | Government, Identity, Self-government         |  | ↓         |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>                                  |   |  |           |
| Egypt (Sinai)<br>-2014-                             | Internationalised internal                    | Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (branch of ISIS), other armed groups (Ajnad Misr, Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis, Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya, Popular Resistance Movement, Liwaa al-Thawra, Hassam), Israel   | 2         |
|   | System  |  | ↓         |
| Iraq<br>-2003-                                      | Internationalised internal                    | Government, Iraqi and Kurdish (peshmerga) military and security forces, Shia militias (Popular Mobilization Units, PMU), Sunni armed groups, Islamic State (ISIS), international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, USA, Iran, Turkey, Israel   | 3         |
|   | System, Government, Identity, Resources       |  | =         |
| Israel-Palestine<br>-2000-                          | International                                 | Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLF, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, Territory          |  | ↓         |
| Syria -2011-  | Internationalised internal                    | Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Ahrar al-Sham, Syrian Democratic Forces (coalition that includes the YPG/YPJ militias of the PYD), Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, Turkey, Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, among other armed parties                                  | 3         |
|   | System, Government, Self-government, Identity |  | =         |
| Yemen (AQAP)<br>- 2011-                             | Internationalised internal                    | Government, AL Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP/Ansar Sharia), ISIS, USA, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, UAE, tribal militias, Houthi militias/Ansar Allah   | 1         |
|   | System  |  | =         |
| Yemen (Houthis)<br>-2004-                           | Internationalised internal                    | Armed forces loyal to Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi's Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabaab al-Mumen/Ansar Allah), armed factions loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias, armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran | 3         |
|   | System, Government, Identity                  |  | ↑         |

1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity;

↑: escalation of violence; ↓: decrease of violence; = : unchanged; End: no longer considered an armed conflict



## Annex 2. Summary of socio-political crises in 2020<sup>1</sup>

| Conflict <sup>2</sup><br>-beginning- | Type <sup>3</sup>                          | Main parties   | Intensity <sup>4</sup> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|
|                                      |  |  | Trend <sup>5</sup>     |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                        |  |  |                        |
| Algeria                              | Internal                                   | Government, military, social and political opposition, Hirak movement  | 1                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | ↓                      |
| Algeria (AQIM)                       | Internationalised internal                 | Government, armed groups AQIM (formerly GSPC), MUJAO, al-Mourabitoun, Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), governments of North Africa and the Sahel  | 2                      |
|                                      | System                                     |  | =                      |
| Benin                                | Internal                                   | Government, political and social opposition  | 1                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | ↑                      |
| Central Africa (LRA)                 | International                              | AU regional force (RTF, composed of the Ugandan, Congolese and South Sudanese Armed Forces), Operation Observant Compass (USA), self-defence militias from DRC and South Sudan, the LRA, the former Central African armed coalition Séléka           | 1                      |
|                                      | Resources                                  |  | =                      |
| Chad                                 | Internal                                   | Government, armed groups (UFR, UFDD), political and social opposition, communitary militias  | 3                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | ↑                      |
| Côte d'Ivoire                        | Internationalised internal                 | Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI  | 2                      |
|                                      | Government, Identity, Resources            |  | ↑                      |
| DRC                                  | Internal                                   | Government led by Cap pour le Changement (coalition led by Félix Tshisekedi), in coalition with Front Commun pour le Congo (coalition led by Joseph Kabila, successor to the Alliance of the Presidential Majority), political and social opposition | 2                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | ↑                      |
| DRC – Rwanda                         | International                              | Governments of DRC, Rwanda, armed groups FDLR and M23 (former CNDP)  | 1                      |
|                                      | Identity, Government, Resources            |  | =                      |
| DRC – Uganda                         | International                              | Governments of DRC and Rwanda, ADF, M23 (former CNDP), LRA, armed groups operating in Ituri  | 1                      |
|                                      | Identity, Government, Resources, Territory |  | =                      |
| Equatorial Guinea                    | Internal                                   | Government, political opposition in exile  | 1                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | =                      |
| Eritrea                              | Internationalised internal                 | Government, internal political and social opposition, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups  | 2                      |
|                                      | Government, Self-government, Identity      |  | =                      |
| Eritrea – Ethiopia                   | International                              | Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia  | 1                      |
|                                      | Territory                                  |  | ↓                      |
| Ethiopia                             | Internal                                   | Government (EPRDF coalition, led by the party TPLF), political and social opposition, various armed groups   | 3                      |
|                                      | Government                                 |  | ↑                      |

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.
2. This column includes the states in which socio-political crises are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one socio-political crisis in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
3. This report classifies and analyses socio-political crises using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). Regarding the second type, the socio-political crises may be of an internal, internationalised internal or international nature. As such, an internal socio-political crisis involves actors from the state itself who operate exclusively within its territory. Secondly, internationalised internal socio-political crises are defined as those in which at least one of the main actors is foreign and/or the crisis spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Thirdly, international socio-political crises are defined as those that involve conflict between state or non-state actors of two or more countries.
4. The intensity of a socio-political crisis (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation, decrease, no changes) is mainly evaluated on the basis of the level of violence reported and the degree of socio-political mobilisation.
5. This column compares the trend of the events of 2020 with 2019, using the (↑) symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2019 is more serious than in the previous one, the (↓) symbol to indicate an improvement in the situation and the (=) symbol to indicate that no significant changes have taken place.

| Socio-political crisis        | Type   | Main parties   | Intensity |
|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------|
|                               |  |  | Trend     |
| <b>AFRICA</b>                 |  |  |           |
| Ethiopia (Oromia)             | Internal   | Central government, regional government, political opposition (OFDM, OPC parties) and social opposition, armed opposition (OLF, IFLO)  | 3         |
|                               | Self-government, Identity                                |  | ↑         |
| Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan      | International  | Government of Ethiopia, Government of Egypt and Government of Sudan  | 2         |
|                               | Resources  |  | ↑         |
| Gambia                        | Internal   | Government, factions of the Armed Forces, political opposition   | 1         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Guinea                        | Internal   | Government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, trade unions  | 2         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Guinea-Bissau                 | Internationalised internal                               | Transitional government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, international drug trafficking networks   | 2         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Kenya                         | Internationalised internal                               | Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties and civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups that support al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS | 3         |
|                               | Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government |  | ↑         |
| Malawi                        | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition  | 1         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Mali                          | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition  | 3         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Madagascar                    | Internal   | High Transitional Authority, opposition leaders, state security forces, dahalos (cattle rustlers), self-defence militias, private security companies   | 1         |
|                               | Government, Resources                                    |  | =         |
| Morocco – Western Sahara      | International <sup>6</sup>                               | Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front  | 3         |
|                               | Self-government, Identity, Territory                     |  | ↑         |
| Mozambique                    | Internal   | Government, RENAMO   | 1         |
|                               | Government, System                                       |  | ↓         |
| Nigeria                       | Internal   | Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias, criminal gangs, IMN, IPOB, MASSOB   | 3         |
|                               | Identity, Resources, Government                          |  | ↑         |
| Nigeria (Niger Delta)         | Internal   | Government, armed groups MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from the Ijaw, Itsereki, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups  | 1         |
|                               | Identity, Resources                                      |  | =         |
| Rwanda                        | Internationalised internal                               | Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the governing party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West   | 2         |
|                               | Government, Identity                                     |  | =         |
| Rwanda - Burundi              | International  | Government of Rwanda, Government of Burundi, armed groups  | 2         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↑         |
| Rwanda - Uganda               | International  | Government of Rwanda, Government of Uganda   | 2         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↓         |
| Senegal (Casamance)           | Internal   | Government, factions of the armed group MFDC   | 1         |
|                               | Self-government  |  | =         |
| Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland) | Internal   | Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State   | 2         |
|                               | Territory  |  | =         |
| Sudan                         | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition  | 2         |
|                               | Government   |  | ↓         |

6. Although Western Sahara is not an internationally recognised state, the socio-political crisis between Morocco and Western Sahara is considered “international” and not “internal” since it is a territory that has yet to be decolonised and Morocco’s claims to the territory are not recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution.

| Socio-political crisis | Type                              | Main parties  | Intensity |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|
|                        |                                   |   | Trend     |
| <b>AFRICA</b>          |                                   |   |           |
| Sudan – South Sudan    | International                     | Sudan, South Sudan  | 1         |
|                        | Resources, Identity               |   | ↓         |
| Tanzania               | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 2         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↑         |
| Togo                   | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↑         |
| Tunisia                | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS | 1         |
|                        | Government, System                |   | ↑         |
| Uganda                 | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 2         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↑         |
| Zimbabwe               | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | =         |
| <b>AMERICA</b>         |                                   |   |           |
| Bolivia                | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| Chile                  | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| El Salvador            | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, gangs   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| Guatemala              | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition, gangs  | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↑         |
| Haiti                  | Internationalised internal        | Government, political and social opposition, BINUH, gangs   | 2         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| Honduras               | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, gangs   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| Mexico                 | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition, cartels, armed opposition groups   | 3         |
|                        | Government, Resources             |   | =         |
| Nicaragua              | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| Peru                   | Internal                          | Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations)   | 2         |
|                        | Government, Resources             |   | ↑         |
| Venezuela              | Internal                          | Government, political and social opposition   | 3         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| <b>ASIA</b>            |                                   |   |           |
| Bangladesh             | Internal                          | Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal, armed groups (Ansar-al-Islami, JMB)                       | 1         |
|                        | Government                        |   | ↓         |
| China (Xinjiang)       | Internationalised internal        | Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition  | 1         |
|                        | Self-government, Identity, System |   | =         |
| China (Tibet)          | Internationalised internal        | Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile, political and social opposition in Tibet and in neighbouring provinces and countries                                      | 1         |
|                        | Self-government, Identity, System |   | =         |



| Socio-political crisis                              | Type   | Main parties  | Intensity |
|---|--|---|-----------|
|   |  |   | Trend     |
| <b>ASIA</b>   |  |   |           |
| China (Hong Kong)                                   | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, System                  |   | ↓         |
| China – Japan                                       | International                                      | China, Japan  | 1         |
|   | Territory, Resources                               |   | =         |
| China – Taiwan                                      | International                                      | China, Taiwan   | 1         |
|   | Territory, Resources                               |   | =         |
| India   | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition   | 2         |
|   | System, Government                                 |   | ↑         |
| India (Assam)                                       | Internationalised internal                         | Government, armed groups ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(ICS), KPLT, NSLA, UPLA and KPLT  | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity                          |   | ↓         |
| India (Manipur)                                     | Internal   | Government, armed groups PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA  | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity                          |   | ↓         |
| India (Nagaland)                                    | Internal   | Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF  | 1         |
|   | Identity, Self-government                          |   | ↓         |
| India – China                                       | International                                      | India, China  | 3         |
|   | Territory  |   | ↑         |
| India – Pakistan                                    | International                                      | India, Pakistan   | 3         |
|   | Identity, Territory                                |   | ↑         |
| Indonesia (Sulawesi)                                | Internal   | Government, armed group MIT   | 1         |
|   | System, Identity                                   |   | ↑         |
| Indonesia (West Papua)                              | Internal   | Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition, indigenous Papuan groups, Freeport mining company                           | 2         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, Resources               |   | ↓         |
| Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea                          | International                                      | DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea  | 1         |
|   | System   |   | ↓         |
| Kazakhstan  | Internationalised internal                         | Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups  | 1         |
|   | System, Government                                 |   | ↑         |
| Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea                          | International                                      | DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea  | 2         |
|   | System   |   | ↑         |
| Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea <sup>7</sup> | International                                      | DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia   | 2         |
|   | Government   |   | ↑         |
| Kyrgyzstan  | Internationalised internal                         | Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan  | 1         |
|   | System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory |   | ↑         |
| Lao, PDR  | Internationalised internal                         | Government, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin   | 1         |
|   | System, Identity                                   |   | =         |
| Pakistan  | Internal   | Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias), Armed Forces, secret services | 2         |
|   | Government, System                                 |   | =         |
| South China Sea                                     | International                                      | China Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam  | 1         |
|   | Territory, Resources                               |   | ↑         |

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

| Socio-political crisis          | Type  | Main parties  | Intensity |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------|
|                                 |   |   | Trend     |
| <b>ASIA</b>                     |   |   |           |
| Sri Lanka                       | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition, Tamil political and social organizations   | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity                       |   | ↓         |
| Tajikistan                      | Internationalised internal                      | Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan   | 1         |
|                                 | Government, System, Resources, Territory        |   | ↓         |
| Thailand                        | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                                 | Government                                      |   | ↑         |
| Uzbekistan                      | Internationalised internal                      | Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan  | 1         |
|                                 | Government, System                              |   | =         |
| <b>EUROPE</b>                   |   |   |           |
| Belarus                         | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition   | 2         |
|                                 | Government                                      |   | ↑         |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina          | Internationalised internal                      | Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, high representative of the international community     | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity, Government           |   | =         |
| Georgia (Abkhazia)              | Internationalised internal                      | Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia   | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity, Government           |   | ↑         |
| Georgia (South Ossetia)         | Internationalised internal                      | Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia  | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity                       |   | ↑         |
| Moldova, Rep. of (Transnistria) | Internationalised internal                      | Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria, Russia   | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity                       |   | =         |
| Russia (North Caucasus)         | Internal  | Russian federal government, governments of the republic of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups (Caucasian Emirate and ISIS) | 2         |
|                                 | System, Identity, Government                    |   | ↑         |
| Serbia – Kosovo                 | International <sup>8</sup>                      | Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX   | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity, Government           |   | ↓         |
| Spain (Catalonia)               | Internationalised internal                      | Government of Spain, Government of Catalonia, political, social and judicial actors of Catalonia and Spain, Head of State   | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity                       |   | ↓         |
| Turkey                          | Internationalised internal                      | Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, Fetullah Gülen organization  | 2         |
|                                 | Government, System                              |   | =         |
| Turkey – Greece, Cyprus         | International                                   | Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, EU, Egypt, Italy, United Arab Emirates, France, Libya Government of National Accord    | 1         |
|                                 | Territory, Resources, Self-government, Identity |   | ↑         |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>              |   |   |           |
| Bahrain                         | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                                 | Government, Identity                            |   | =         |
| Egypt                           | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition   | 3         |
|                                 | Government                                      |   | =         |
| Iran                            | Internal  | Government, political and social opposition   | 1         |
|                                 | Government                                      |   | ↓         |
| Iran (northwest)                | Internationalised internal                      | Government, armed group PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)  | 1         |
|                                 | Self-government, Identity                       |   | =         |

8. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered “international” because even though its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries.

| Socio-political crisis  | Type  | Main parties   | Intensity |
|---|---|--|-----------|
|   |   |  | Trend     |
| <b>MIDDLE EAST</b>  |   |  |           |
| Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)   | Internationalised internal                      | Government, armed groups Jundullah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan                             | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity                       |  | =         |
| Iran – USA, Israel <sup>9</sup>   | International                                   | Iran, USA, Israel  | 3         |
|   | System, Government                              |  | ↑         |
| Iraq  | Internationalised internal                      | Government, social and political opposition, Iran, USA   | 3         |
|   | Government                                      |  | =         |
| Iraq (Kurdistan)  | Internationalised internal                      | Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran, PKK   | 1         |
|   | Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory |  | =         |
| Israel – Syria – Lebanon  | International                                   | Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia)  | 3         |
|   | System, Resources, Territory                    |  | =         |
| Lebanon   | Internationalised internal                      | Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed groups ISIS and Jabhat al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham | 2         |
|   | Government, System                              |  | =         |
| Palestine   | Internal  | PNA, Fatah, armed group al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, Salafist groups                                       | 1         |
|   | Government                                      |  | =         |
| Saudi Arabia  | Internationalised internal                      | Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including AQAP and branches of ISIS (Hijaz Province, Najd Province)                                 | 1         |
|   | Government, Identity                            |  | =         |
| 1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity.<br>↑: escalation of tension; ↓: decrease of tension; =: no changes. |   |  |           |

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

# Glossary

- AA:** Arakan Army  
**ABSDF:** All Burma Students' Democratic Front  
**ABM:** Ansar Beit al-Maqdis  
**ACCORD:** African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes  
**ADF:** Allied Democratic Forces  
**AKP:** Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)  
**ALP:** Arakan Liberation Party  
**AMISOM:** African Union Mission in Somalia  
**APCLS:** Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo  
**AQIM:** Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb  
**AQAP:** Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula  
**ARSA:** Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army  
**ASEAN:** Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
**ASWJ:** Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a  
**AU:** African Union  
**AUBP:** African Union Border Program  
**BDB:** Benghazi Defense Brigades  
**BIFF:** Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters  
**BINUH:** United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti  
**BLA:** Baluch Liberation Army  
**BLF:** Baluch Liberation Front  
**BLT:** Baluch Liberation Tigers  
**BOL:** Bangsamoro Organic Law  
**BRA:** Balochistan Republican Army  
**BRN:** Barisan Revolusi Nasional  
**BRP:** Baluch Republican Party  
**CAR:** Central African Republic  
**CENCO:** Congolese Episcopal Conference  
**CENTCOM:** United States Central Command  
**CMA:** Coordination of Movements of Azawad  
**CMFPR:** Coordination of Movements and Patriotic Front of Resistance  
**CNARED:** National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law  
**CNDD-FDD:** National Congress for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy  
**CNDP:** National Congress for the Defense of the People  
**CNF:** Chin National Front  
**CNL:** National Congress for Freedom  
**CNR:** National Council of the Republicans  
**CPA:** Comprehensive Peace Agreement  
**CPE:** Center for Peace Education  
**CPI-M:** Communist Party of India-Maoist  
**DDR:** Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration  
**DFLP:** Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine  
**DKBA:** Democratic Karen Buddhist Army  
**DMLEK:** Democratic Movement for the Liberation of the Eritrean Kunama  
**DPA:** Darfur Peace Agreement  
**DRC:** Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**EAC:** East African Community  
**ECCAS:** Economic Community of Central African States  
**ECOWAS:** Economic Community of West African States  
**EDA:** Eritrean Democratic Alliance  
**EEZ:** Exclusive Economic Zone  
**EFDM:** Eritrean Federal Democratic Movement  
**EH Bildu:** Euskal Herria Bildu  
**EIC:** Eritrean Islamic Congress  
**EIPJD:** Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development  
**ELF:** Eritrean Liberation Front  
**ELN:** National Liberation Army  
**ENSF:** Eritrean National Salvation Front  
**EPC:** Eritrean People's Congress  
**EPL:** Popular Liberation Army  
**EPDF:** Eritrean People's Democratic Front  
**EPPK:** Collective of Basque Political Prisoners  
**EPRDF:** Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front  
**ETA:** Basque Country and Freedom  
**ETIM:** East Turkestan Islamic Movement  
**ETLO:** East Turkestan Liberation Organization  
**EU:** European Union  
**EUFOR:** European Union Force  
**EULEX:** European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo  
**EUNAVFOR Somalia:** European Union Naval Force - Somalia, Operation Atalanta  
**FARC-EP:** Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army  
**FDLR:** Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda  
**FGN:** Federal Government of Nagaland  
**FLEC-FAC:** Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda  
**FLM:** Macina Liberation Front  
**FNL:** National Liberation Forces  
**FPB:** Popular Forces of Burundi  
**FPR:** Popular Front for Recovery  
**FPRC:** Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic  
**GATIA:** Imghad Tuareg Self-Defense Group and Allies  
**GID:** Geneva International Discussions  
**GNA:** Government of National Accord  
**GNWP:** Global Network of Women Peacebuilders  
**GPRN/NSCN:** Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland / National Socialist Council of Nagaland  
**GSIM:** Support Group for Islam and Muslims  
**GSPC:** Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat  
**HCUA:** High Council for the Unity of Azawad  
**HTS:** Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham  
**IAEA:** International Atomic Energy Agency  
**ICC:** International Criminal Court  
**ICG:** International Crisis Group  
**ICGLR:** International Conference on the Great Lakes Region  
**IFLO:** Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia  
**IGAD:** Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
**IHL:** International Humanitarian Law

**INSTEX:** Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges  
**IOM:** International Organization for Migration  
**IPRM:** Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism  
**IRGC:** Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps  
**ISGS:** Islamic State in the Greater Sahara  
**ISIS:** Islamic State  
**ISWAP:** Islamic State in the Province of West Africa  
**IU:** United Left  
**IWF:** Iduwini Volunteers Force  
**JCPOA:** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
**JEM:** Justice and Equality Movement  
**JKLF:** Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front  
**JMB:** Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (Mujahideen Assembly)  
**JNIM:** Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Support Group for Islam and Muslims)  
**KANU:** Kenya African National Union  
**KCP:** Kangleipak Communist Party  
**KDP:** Kurdistan Democratic Party  
**KDPI:** Kurdistan Democratic Party - Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan  
**KFOR:** Kosovo Force  
**KIA:** Kachin Independence Army  
**KLA:** Kosovo Liberation Army  
**KNA:** Kuki Liberation Army  
**KNF:** Kuki National Front  
**KNLAPC:** Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council  
**KNPP:** Karenni National Progressive Party  
**KNU:** Kayin National Union  
**KNU/KNLA:** Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army  
**KPLT:** Karbi People's Liberation Tigers  
**KRG:** Kurdistan Regional Government  
**KWN:** Kosovo Women's Network  
**KYKL:** Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (Organization for the Salvation of the Revolutionary Movement in Manipur)  
**LDU:** Lahu Democratic Union  
**LeJ:** Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Jhangvi Army)  
**LeT:** Lashkar-e-Toiba (Jhangvi Army)  
**LGBTI:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex  
**LNA:** Libyan National Army  
**LRA:** Lord's Resistance Army  
**M23:** March 23 Movement  
**MAA:** Arab Movement of Azawad  
**MASSOB:** Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra  
**MEND:** Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta  
**MFDC:** Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance  
**MILF:** Moro Islamic Liberation Front  
**MINUSCA:** United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic  
**MINUSMA:** United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali  
**MINUSTAH:** United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti  
**MLCJ:** Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice  
**MNDAA:** Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army  
**MNJTF:** Multinational Joint Task Force  
**MNLA:** National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad  
**MNLF:** Moro National Liberation Front  
**MONUSCO:** United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**MOSOP:** Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People  
**MPC:** Patriotic Movement for Central Africa  
**MRC:** Mombasa Republican Council  
**MUD:** Democratic Unity Roundtable  
**MUYAO:** United Movement for Jihad in West Africa  
**MWMN:** Mediterranean Women Mediators' Network  
**NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
**NCA:** Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement  
**NCP:** National Congress Party  
**NDA:** Niger Delta Avengers  
**NDAA:** National Democratic Alliance Army  
**NDF:** National Democratic Front  
**NDFB:** National Democratic Front of Boroland  
**NDFB-P:** National Democratic Front of Boroland - Progressive  
**NDFB-RD:** Ranjan Daimary faction of The National Democratic Front of Boroland  
**NDGJM:** Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate  
**NDPVF:** Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force  
**NDV:** Niger Delta Vigilante  
**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization  
**NIDCA:** Niger Delta Consultative Assembly  
**NMSP:** New Mon State Party  
**NNC:** Naga National Council  
**NNC/GDRN/NA:** Naga National Council/ Government Democratic Republic of Nagaland/ Non-Accord  
**NNPG:** National Naga Political Groups  
**NOREF:** Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution  
**NPA:** New People's Army  
**NPGN:** National People's Government of Nagaland  
**NPT:** Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
**NSCN (K-K):** National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Kole-Kitovi)  
**NSCN-IM:** National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muivah  
**NSCN-K:** National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang  
**NSCN-R:** National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation  
**NSLA:** National Santhal Liberation Army  
**NTJ:** National Towheed Jamaat  
**OAS:** Organization of American States  
**OCHA:** United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
**OFDM:** Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement  
**OIC:** Organization for Islamic Cooperation  
**OIF:** International Organization of La Francophonie  
**OLF:** Oromo Liberation Front  
**ONLF:** Ogaden National Liberation Front  
**OPC:** Oromo People's Congress  
**OPM:** Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Organization of Free Papua)  
**OSCE:** Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
**PA:** Palestinian Authority  
**PANDEF:** Pan-Niger Delta Forum  
**PDKI:** Kurdish Democratic Party  
**PFLP:** Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine  
**PJAK:** Party for the Free Life in Kurdistan

**PKK:** Kurdistan Workers' Party  
**PNA:** Palestinian National Authority  
**PNDPC:** Pan Niger Delta Peoples' Congress  
**PNLO:** Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization  
**PNV:** Basque Nationalist Party  
**POLISARIO:** Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro  
**PP:** Spain's Popular Party  
**PREPAK:** People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak  
**PREPAK (Pro):** People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak / Progressive  
**PS:** Province of Sinai  
**PSE-EE:** Socialist Party of the Basque Country-Euskadiko Ezkerra  
**PSOE:** Spanish Socialist Worker's Party)  
**PYD:** Democratic Union Party of Kurds in Syria  
**R-ARCSS:** Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan  
**RABMM:** Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
**RAMM:** Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao  
**RCSS/SSA- South:** Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army – South  
**RECOM:** Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia  
**RED-Tabara:** Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi  
**RENAMO:** Mozambican National Resistance  
**REWL:** Red Egbesu Water Lions  
**RPF:** Rwandan Patriotic Front  
**RPF:** Revolutionary People's Front  
**RSADO:** Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization  
**RSF:** Rapid Support Forces  
**SADC:** Southern Africa Development Community  
**SADR:** Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic  
**SCACUF:** Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front  
**SDC:** Syrian Democratic Council  
**SCDF:** Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces  
**SDF:** Social Democratic Front of Cameroon  
**SDF:** Syrian Democratic Forces  
**SIGI:** Social Institutions and Gender Index  
**SLA:** Sudan Liberation Army  
**SLA-AW:** Sudan Liberation Army - Abdul Wahid  
**SLA-MM:** Sudan Liberation Army - Minni Minnawi  
**SLDF:** Sabaot Land Defence Forces  
**SLM-MM:** Sudan Liberation Movement - Minni Minnawi  
**SOCADEF:** Southern Cameroons Defence Forces  
**SPLA:** Sudan People's Liberation Army  
**SPLA-IO:** SPLA in Opposition  
**SPLM:** Sudan People's Liberation Movement  
**SPLM-IO:** Sudan People's Liberation Movement – in Opposition  
**SPLM-N:** Sudan People's Liberation Army - North  
**SRF:** Sudan Revolutionary Forces  
**SSA:** Shan State Army  
**SSA-N:** Shan State Army - North  
**SSDM/A:** South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army  
**SSLA:** South Sudan Liberation Army  
**SSOMA:** South Sudan Opposition Movement Alliance  
**SSPP:** Shan State Progress Party  
**SSPP/SSA-N:** Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army – North  
**SSUF:** South Sudan United Front  
**START:** Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty  
**STC:** Southern Transitional Council  
**TAK:** The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons  
**TCG:** Trilateral Contact Group  
**TFG:** Transitional Federal Government  
**TMC:** Transitional Military Council  
**TNLA:** Ta-ang National Liberation Army  
**TPLF:** Tigrayan People's Liberation Front  
**TTP:** Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan  
**UAE:** United Arab Emirates  
**UDPS:** Union for Democracy and Social Progress  
**UFDD:** Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development)  
**UFR:** Union of Resistance Forces  
**ULFA:** United Liberation Front of Assam  
**ULFA-I:** United Liberation Front of Assam - Independent  
**ULFA-PTF:** Pro-Talks faction of United Liberation Front of Asom  
**UN:** United Nations  
**UNAMA:** United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan  
**UNAMI:** United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq  
**UNAMID:** United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur  
**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme  
**UNFICYP:** United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus  
**UNISFA:** United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei  
**UNLAF:** United National Liberation Front  
**UNMIK:** United Nations Mission in Kosovo  
**UNMHA:** United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement  
**UNMISS:** United Nations Mission in South Sudan  
**UNOCA:** United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa  
**UNOCI:** United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire  
**UNRWA:** United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East  
**UNSMIL:** United Nations Support Mission in Libya  
**UPC:** Union for Peace in Central Africa  
**UPLA:** United People's Liberation Army  
**UPR:** Universal Periodic Review  
**UPyD:** Union for Progress and Democracy  
**USSR:** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
**USA:** United States of America  
**UWSA:** United Wa State Army  
**UWSP:** United Wa State Party  
**WILPF:** Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
**YPG:** People's Protection Unit  
**YPJ:** Women's Protection Units  
**YWPL:** Young Women for Peace and Leadership  
**ZUF:** Zeliangrong United Front



# About the School for a Culture of Peace

The Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace, hereinafter ECP) is an academic peace research institution located at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The School for a Culture of Peace was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, Track II diplomacy, training and awareness generating activities.

The main fields of action of the Escola de Cultura de Pau are:

- Research. Its main areas of research include armed conflicts and socio-political crises, peace processes, human rights and transitional justice, the gender dimension in conflict and peacebuilding, and peace education.
- Teaching and training. ECP staff gives lectures in postgraduate and graduate courses in several universities, including its own Graduate Diploma on Culture of Peace at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It also provides training sessions on specific issues, including conflict sensitivity and peace education.
- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II initiatives, including facilitation tasks with different actors and on various themes.
- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.

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**Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios** is a yearbook that analyses peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2020. 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. *Peace Talks in Focus 2020. Report on Trends and Scenarios* also analyses the evolution of peace processes from a gender perspective. 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.

*Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* is an indispensable tool of information to understand trends and issues in peace negotiations. It provides much needed clear cut facts and statistics with uncluttered analysis with great infographics. It's a must go to resource for the Mediation Support Team of the European External Action Service for action on peace process support or policy development and I use it also regularly for my research for teaching and publication.

**Dr. Antje Herrberg,**  
**Senior Mediation Advisor**  
**Directorate Integrated Approach, Security and Peace ISP/2**  
**Conflict Prevention and Mediation European External**  
**Action Service (EEAS) Guest Professor, College of Europe**

One of the valuable aspects of *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* is the attention given to monitoring and assessing developments on the women, peace and security agenda in the various peace processes covered. The overall trend, as summarized in the overview, is of little progress in integrating gender perspectives or increasing women's participation in peace negotiations. Yet the sections on women, peace and security in the regional overviews as well as in the case studies of specific peace talks provide many useful examples of mechanisms or formats for increased participation, or parallel or indirect spaces for women's involvement. They also describe roles of key women's organizations and coalitions in some of the difficult peace dynamics. Such information rarely found

gathered as in this review make it a good resource for women who aim to build visibility, capacity and connectivity as peacemakers.

**Karen N. Tanada**  
**Executive Director of the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute**  
**(The Philippines)**

*Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* yearbook series has become one of the best one-stop resources available to those who wish to monitor and understand the many efforts being made globally to advance peaceful solutions to entrenched violent conflicts. The ability to learn from the experiences of others when designing or implementing peace processes and to access a narrative that offers a specific gender analysis of such processes globally are just two of the issues covered in this very valuable resource. The impact that the current global pandemic has had on the capacity of peace actors to access conflict parties in the field, as well as accurate and reliable information, makes the work of the Escola Cultura de Pau even more relevant for all who are interested in current conflict-resolution and peacemaking dynamics. Practitioners, mediators, policymakers and parties to conflicts can find a complete overview of this plurality of negotiations and peace processes that will help them to make sense of the various options, trends and solutions being advanced to further the cause of peace.

**Dag Nylander**  
**Director, NOREF Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution**

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