

# Introduction

**Peace Talks in Focus 2021. Report on Trends and Scenarios** is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world in 2021. 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 2021, 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 2021: global overview and main trends

- During 2021, 37 peace processes and negotiations were identified in the world. The largest number of cases was recorded in Africa (12), followed by Asia (10), Europe (seven), the Middle East (five) and the Americas (three).
- Of the 32 active armed conflicts in 2021, 56% (18 cases) were being dealt with via peace processes.
- The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the humanitarian and human rights context in various countries where peace processes were taking place, including through the instrumentalization of response measures.
- There was support from at least one third party in the vast majority (89%) of the peace negotiations, though this was only true of 60% of the cases in Asia.
- Most peace processes in 2021 encountered serious difficulties, with grave backsliding in Afghanistan and Myanmar, while the peace processes in Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, Cyprus, Moldova (Transnistria) and Israel-Palestine remained at an impasse.
- Relative progress was made in some cases, such as Mozambique (Mozambican government-RENAMO), Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and the Philippines (MILF), while dialogue resumed in Venezuela. In Colombia there were indirect contacts with the ELN, although they did not lead to a new formal process.
- Female civil society activists continued to demand inclusive dialogues in 2021, ceasefires and responses to humanitarian emergencies, including in Libya, Syria and Yemen.

During 2021, a total of 37 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 2021

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
<b>AFRICA</b>		
<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, Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN), the Vatican
<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 as any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence a) causes a minimum of 100 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 the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents of former President Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political opposition (such as Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and social groups and armed groups from the eastern part 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
Eritrea – Ethiopia	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/ALAF	Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
<b>Mali</b>	Government, Coordinator 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, 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 WalJama'a, clan and sub-clan leaders, Somaliland	UN, IGAD, AU, 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, a faction led by Paul Malong and Pagan Amum (which includes SSUF/A and Real-SPLM) and a faction headed by Thomas Cirillo (made up of the SSNDA coalition, which includes NAS, SSNMC, NDM/PF and UDRA)	"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, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, IGAD, UNITAMS
<b>Sudan - South Sudan</b>	Government of Sudan and government of South Sudan	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), 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	Catholic Church, United Nations, OAS
<b>Venezuela</b>	Government, political and social opposition	Norway, Russia, the Netherlands, International Contact Group
<b>ASIA</b>		
<b>Afghanistan</b>	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, USA, 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, ULFA-I	--
<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 that have not signed the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA and MNDAA	China, ASEAN

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
<b>ASIA</b>		
<b>Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)</b>	Government, Autonomous Bougainville Government	United Nations, Bertie Ahern
<b>Philippines (MILF)</b>	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body
<b>Philippines (NDF)</b>	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various 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	Russia, OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the USA; the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), Turkey, <sup>3</sup> EU
<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>4</sup>	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia <sup>5</sup>
<b>Moldova (Transnistria)</b>	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria	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>6</sup>	OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia <sup>7</sup> also participate; Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate <sup>8</sup> ), USA
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>		
<b>Iran (nuclear programme)</b>	Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China, plus Germany), US	UN, EU
<b>Israel-Palestine</b>	Israeli government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas	Egypt, Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Munich Group (Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan)
<b>Palestine</b>	Hamas, Fatah	Egypt, Qatar, Algeria
<b>Syria</b>	Government, political and armed opposition groups	UN, Russia, Turkey, Iran and Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (as observers in Astana process)
<b>Yemen</b>	Government, forces of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansar Allah South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia	UN, Oman, Saudi Arabia, USA

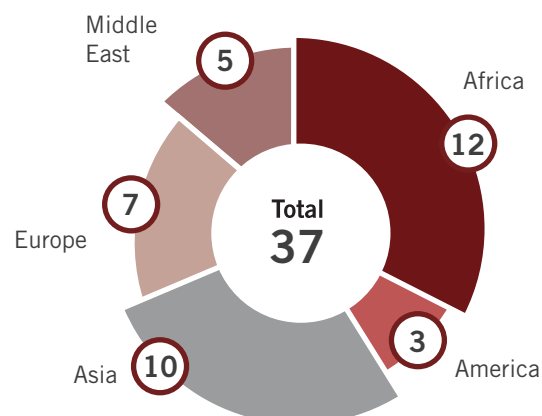
The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.  
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

- 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.
- 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.
- Ibid.
- 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.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.

Most of the peace processes and negotiations studied in 2021 were concentrated in Africa, which hosted 12, equivalent to 32% of the total. Asia was the region with the second-highest number of cases, with a total of 10, representing 27% of the negotiations in 2021. The rest of the negotiations were distributed between Europe, with seven (19%), the Middle East, with five (14%) and the Americas, with three (8%). The Horn of Africa (five peace processes) and Southeast Asia (four) were the subregions that had the most peace negotiations. Compared to the previous year, there was a moderate drop in the number of peace processes and negotiations analysed worldwide, with 37 active processes in 2021, compared to the 40 cases studied in 2020, though the decrease was not as marked as the one that occurred between 2019 and 2020 (50 to 40 cases). Cases in 2020 that are not analysed in this edition include Burundi, where the peace initiatives of recent years were considered as finalised in 2021; the Americas, where the national dialogue begun in Haiti did not continue in 2021; and Asia, where there was no information on initiatives regarding the negotiations between the Philippine government and the MNLF. No new peace process was reported.

Of the 32 active armed conflicts in 2021, 44% (14 cases) were not dealt with via a peace processes. These

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations



**Most of the negotiations in 2021 took place in Africa (32%), followed by Asia (27%), Europe (19%), the Middle East (14%) and the Americas (8%)**

included five high-intensity armed conflicts: Ethiopia (Tigray), the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region (although Mali continued to be the scene of negotiations between the government and northern armed groups due to the application of the clauses of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement), Mozambique (north) and the DRC (east-ADF) (in contrast, the conflict in DRC with other armed groups in the eastern DRC was addressed as part of negotiations with some groups alongside the political dialogue in the country as a whole). Over half (56%) the armed conflicts

Table 1.2. Armed conflicts and peace processes in 2021

Armed conflicts with peace negotiations (18)	Armed conflicts without peace negotiations (14)
<b>AFRICA (9)</b>	<b>AFRICA (6)</b>
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) -2018-	Burundi -2015-
CAR -2006-	DRC (east – ADF) -2014-
DRC (east) -1998-	Ethiopia (Tigray)-2020-
Libya -2011-	Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-
Mali -2012-	Mozambique (north) -2019-
Somalia -1988-	Western Sahel Region -2018-
South Sudan -2009-	<b>ASIA (5)</b>
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	India (CPI-M) -1967-
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-	India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-
<b>AMERICA (1)</b>	Pakistan -2001-
Colombia -1964-	Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-
<b>ASIA (4)</b>	The Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-
Afghanistan -2001-	<b>EUROPE (1)</b>
Filipinas (NPA) -1969-	Turkey (southeast) -1984-
Myanmar -1948-	<b>MIDDLE EAST (2)</b>
Thailand (south) -2004-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014-
<b>EUROPE (1)</b>	Iraq -2003-
Ukraine (east) -2014-	
<b>MIDDLE EAST (3)</b>	
Israel-Palestine -2000-	
Syria -2011-	
Yemen -2004-	

\*Between hyphens is the date on which the conflict started.

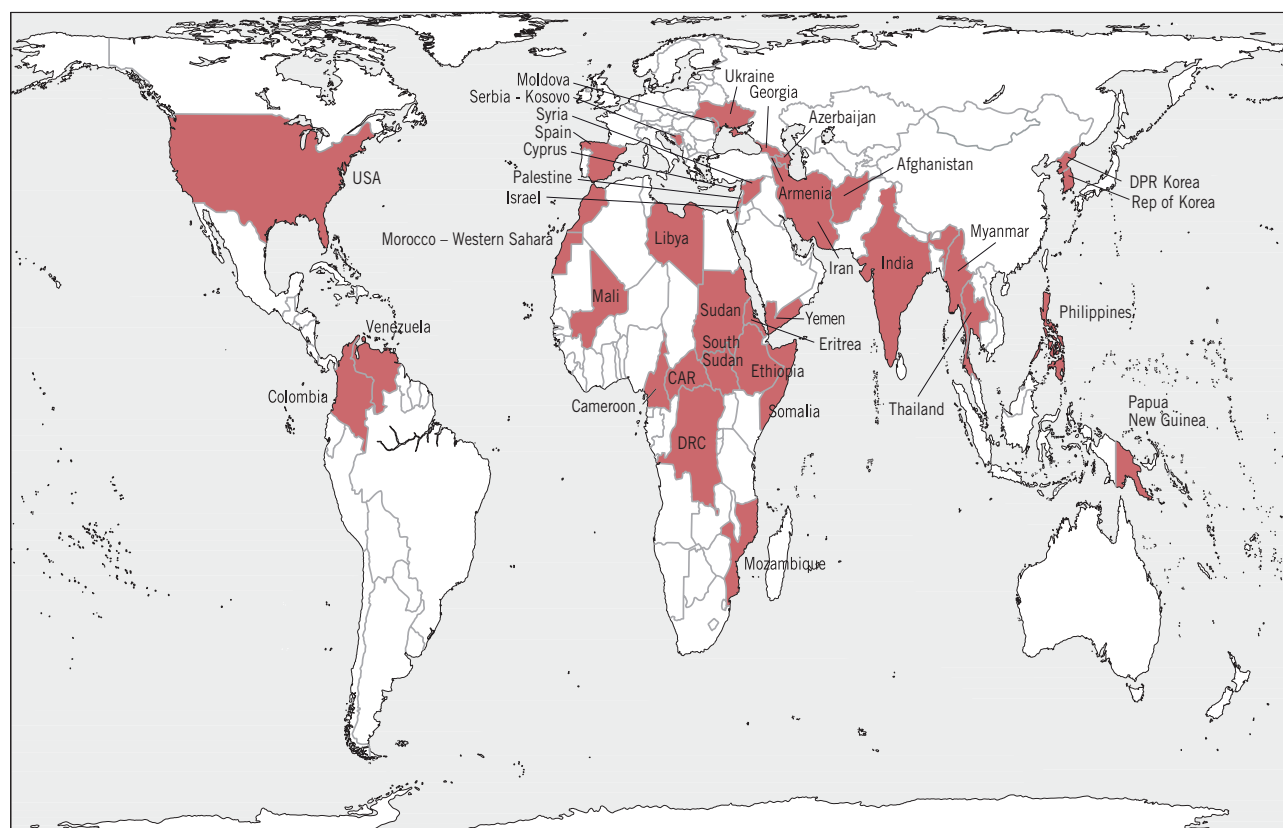
were addressed in negotiating processes, though in some cases they only involved some of the active armed actors and dynamics. Along with the 18 armed conflicts addressed in the peace processes, to varying degrees, peace negotiations in 2021 also dealt with socio-political crises of varying intensity. Thus, four peace processes in Africa dealt with socio-political crises (Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan). In Asia, almost half of the peace processes (four cases) were related to socio-political crises (North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, the Assam and Nagaland regions of India). In the Americas, the crisis in Venezuela was also addressed in a negotiating process. Five of the seven peace processes in Europe were related to socio-political crises of varying intensity (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova and Serbia-Kosovo). And two of the five processes in the Middle East dealt with socio-political crises of various kinds and intensity (the international tension around Iran's nuclear programme and the intra-Palestinian dispute between Hamas and Fatah).

***Of the 32 active armed conflicts in 2021, 44% were not linked to any peace processes, including five high-intensity conflicts: Ethiopia (Tigray), Mozambique (north), the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region and the DRC (east-ADF)***

In its second year, the **COVID-19 pandemic** continued to have an impact on the peace processes around the world in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the intertwined dynamics of the pandemic and armed conflict exacerbated crises and humanitarian needs and

worsened the security situation for civilians in many contexts, highlighting the urgent need to intensify efforts for nonviolent and negotiated solutions to conflicts. The pandemic continued to affect the course of peace negotiations, as well as the effective application of some peace agreements already reached, and efforts to manage the pandemic showed up in some negotiating agendas. In 2021, among the policy responses to the pandemic, some of them continued to deteriorate the security, human rights and humanitarian situation. This was the case in various African countries, which imposed states of emergency and exception that they instrumentalized to remain in power, and which, added to previous governance challenges and shortcomings, affected the development of different peace negotiations and initiatives. This happened in Mali and Sudan, which suffered coups carried out by the military branch of the transitional authorities in charge of implementing the signed peace agreements, putting them at risk. In Asia, the pandemic (not necessarily its management by governments) impacted processes in Thailand and Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), in both cases delaying face-to-face negotiations. In Cyprus, despite the deadlock of the negotiating process as a whole and the growing gap between the parties, there was cooperation in managing

**Map 1.1. Peace negotiations in 2021**



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in 2021



the pandemic as part of the technical committee on health matters. In contrast, in Ukraine, the prolongation of the closure of crossing points by the armed groups in the east of the country since the start of the pandemic (with only two crossings open and with obstacles) aggravated the humanitarian situation of civilians in the conflict area. Local and international actors demanded that the opening of crossing points in a year of increased alerts due to the escalation of militarisation, the impasse in the negotiating process and the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. The database *Ceasefires in a Time of COVID-19* revealed that the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire due to the pandemic in March 2020 did not mark a turning point in the conflicts worldwide. Despite the initial establishment of ceasefires in response to the UN Secretary-General's call, their number fell and there were gradually fewer references to the pandemic.<sup>9</sup>

As in previous years, **the negotiating actors** involved in the peace processes and negotiations were characterised by their heterogeneity, as they included governments, non-state armed actors and the political and social opposition, according to the case. In any case, in all the processes analysed, national governments were one of the parties involved in direct or indirect negotiations. In some contexts, sub-state governments also participated as negotiating parties. This was the case of the regional governments of Bougainville (in dialogue with the government of Papua New Guinea) and of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (in the process of negotiating with the government of the Philippines), as well as the governments of the Indian states of Assam and Nagaland (both with a prominent role in the negotiations over Nagaland).

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. These included armed groups or their political representatives and political-military movements. In relation to this casuistry, while only two of the 12 peace processes in Africa exclusively involved armed groups or political-military movements in dialogue with governments (Mozambique and the CAR), more than half the negotiations in Asia were carried out by armed groups (or their political representatives), sometimes grouped in coalitions, and governments. This was the

***The governments of the respective states maintained direct or indirect dialogue with various kinds of actors, including armed groups or their political representatives, political-military movements, political and social actors and governments of other countries***

***In the vast majority of the cases analysed in 2021 (89%), a third party participated in the peace negotiations, though only 60 % of the peace processes in Asia had third party support***

case in India (Nagaland), the Philippines (NDF) and Thailand (south). Another, more widespread type of process included governments in negotiations with a combination of armed groups and political and social actors, predominantly in Africa. This was the case of Cameroon (Ambazonia/ Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and the DRC. In fewer cases, the processes involved governments and political and social actors, such as in the Americas and Europe (Venezuela and the Basque Country). Moreover, the direct participation and/or projection of foreign actors with interests in various conflicts was relevant in a high number of negotiating processes with a complex map of actors that included governments of third countries together with local governmental and non-governmental actors (military, political-military and, in some cases, political and social actors). This was the case in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan and Ukraine, among others. This trend increased in 2021, as evidenced in Ukraine, with Russia's strong geostrategic hand raised against the US, NATO and the EU regarding Ukrainian sovereignty and other issues. In his report on the state of global peace and security released in January 2021, the UN Secretary-General asserted that the world was witnessing the highest levels of geostrategic tension in years.<sup>10</sup> The report noted the increase in the number of countries militarily involved in intra-state conflicts, not only in support of local actors but also as parties to the conflict themselves. It also stated that managing the shifting challenges of global peace and security, including intra-state conflicts that are both subnational and transnational, required reviewing and updating mechanisms and approaches and alluded to the UN's stronger mediation capacities in recent years.

A significant number of processes involved governments of different countries as part of inter-state disputes, such as Eritrea-Ethiopia, Sudan-South Sudan, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, Armenia-Azerbaijan and the process surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. There were also unique cases such as the deadlocked process over Western Sahara, a territory that the UN considers pending decolonisation whose possession by Morocco is not recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution, and the stalled dialogue over Palestine, a territory under Israeli occupation, without status as an independent state after decades of unsuccessful negotiations and recognised as an "observer member" of the UN since 2012. The status of

9. Allison, John et al., "An interactive tracker for ceasefires in the time of COVID-19". *The Lancet*, Vol. 21, no. 6, pp. 764-765, June 2021.

10. UN Secretary-General, *The state of global peace and security in line with the central mandates contained in the charter of the United Nations. Report of the Secretary General*. United Nations, 2020.



Table 1.3. Internal and international peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2021

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERNATIONAL	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (22)	National dialogues without third parties (1)	National dialogues with third parties (0)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (9)
<b>AFRICA</b>							
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					
Sudan <sup>i</sup>		x					
Sudan – South Sudan							x
<b>AMERICAS</b>							
Colombia (FARC)		x					
Colombia (ELN)					x		
Venezuela		x					
<b>ASIA</b>							
Afghanistan		x					
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Korea, DPR – Korea, Republic of						x	
Korea, DPR – USA						x	
Myanmar		x					
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)		x					
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					
<b>EUROPE</b>							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) <sup>ii</sup>							x
Moldova (Transdniestria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo <sup>iii</sup>							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine (east) <sup>iv</sup>							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.

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERNATIONAL	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (22)	National dialogues without third parties (1)	National dialogues with third parties (0)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (2)	Negotiations with third parties (9)
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria <sup>v</sup>		x					
Yemen		x					

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.

Kosovo, declared independent in 2008, is recognised by nearly one hundred UN member states, while Serbia and around another 50% of UN members does not recognise it as a state. In a non-binding verdict in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled that its declaration of independence did not violate international law and did not contravene UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

For one more year, there was a high level of **third-party involvement in peace and negotiating processes**. At least one third party participated in 33 of the 37 peace processes analysed (89%), in line with previous years (82.5% in 2020, 80% in 2019). In any case, although it is often possible to clearly identify the third-party actors involved in mediation, facilitation and support, at other times these efforts are made discreetly or not publicly. The predominance of third-party support was found both in internal and international peace processes. In regional terms, while all the peace processes in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East had third-party support, negotiations with third parties accounted for 60% of the cases in Asia (55% in 2020). This was the case in Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south). Another case without third parties was the national dialogue in Mali, although this process did coexist with another parallel negotiating format of negotiations that did have mediating and facilitating actors.

For yet another year, the multi-stakeholder character of mediation efforts was clear. In 31 of the 33 cases with third parties, there was more than one actor carrying out mediation or facilitation work. In contrast, in the cases of the Philippines (NDF) and Thailand (south) a single third party was observed (Norway and Malaysia, respectively). Prominent types of actors involved as third parties included intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, IGAD, OIC, SADC, EAC, CEEAC and OIF, state governments, religious organisations and civil society actors, including specialised centres. Intergovernmental organisations played a predominant

role in all regions, except in Asia, where comparatively they were hardly involved in mediation and facilitation efforts.

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 19 of the 37 peace processes during the year and in 19 of the 33 that involved at least one third party (57.5%).

The UN played a predominant in the peace processes in Africa, as it was involved in nine of the 12 cases there: Libya, Mali, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

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 15 contexts, including in six peace processes in Africa (Libya, Mali, Mozambique, CAR, DRC and South Sudan). In 2021, it raised its profile in cases such as the Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) process, in which it facilitated an agreement to establish a direct communication mechanism between the defence ministries of both countries. The AU was a third party in nine African negotiating processes (the same as the EU, but also in Somalia, Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan), the OSCE in four peace processes (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), although it became less important in the process over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2021, compared to the greater predominance of Russia. The IGAD was a third party in four processes (Somalia, Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and South Sudan). Other organisations such as ECOWAS, ASEAN, OIC, SADC, EAC, CEEAC, OIF and OAS had a reduced role. In comparative terms, regional intergovernmental organisations in the Middle East did not play a prominent role in negotiation processes.

***In 31 of the 33 cases with third parties, there was more than one actor carrying out mediation or facilitation work***

Table 1.4. Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2021

UN (19)	
AFRICA	
CAR	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the CAR UN is member of the International Support Group for CAR
DRC	UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the DRC
Libya	UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) 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 United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
Morocco – Western Sahara	UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara 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 United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
Sudan	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)
Sudan-South Sudan	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)
AMERICA	
Colombia	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia
ASIA	
Afghanistan	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
EUROPE	
Cyprus	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus Mission of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus 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)
MIDDLE EAST	
Iran	International Atomic Energy Agency 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 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 United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeida Agreement (UNMHA)
EU (15)	
AFRICA	
CAR	EU is a member of the International Support Group for the CAR
DRC	EU delegation in the DRC 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
AMERICA	
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 President of the Council of the EU
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 EU Observation Mission in Georgia (EUMM)
Moldova (Transdniestria)	EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) 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 EU Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) 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 High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 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 (9)</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 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
Somalia	AU High Representative for Somalia AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
South Sudan	Integrated into IGAD Plus, represented by Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria
Sudan	AU High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP)
Sudan – South Sudan	African Union Border Programme (AUBP)
<b>OSCE (4)</b>	
<b>EUROPE</b>	
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Minsk Group Special Representative of the 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 Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the South Caucasus
Moldova (Transdniestria)	Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process OSCE Mission in Moldova
Ukraine	Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group OSCE Special Observation Mission in Ukraine (SMM) OSCE Special Observation Mission at the Gukovo and Donetsk Checkpoints (ended in 2021) Coordinator of OSCE projects in Ukraine
<b>IGAD (4)</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	IGAD delegation
Sudan – South Sudan	IGAD delegation
<b>SADC (2)</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
DRC	SADC representation in the DRC
Mozambique	The SADC is a guarantor of the peace agreement

<b>ECOWAS (1)</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
Mali	ECOWAS in Mali
<b>OIC (1)</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
CAR	OIC delegation in the CAR
<b>ASEAN (1)</b>	
<b>ASIA</b>	
Myanmar	ASEAN envoy
<b>CEEAC (1)</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
CAR	CEEAC delegation in the CAR
<b>OIF (1)</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
RDC	OIF delegation in the DRC
<b>OAS (1)</b>	
<b>AMERICA</b>	
Colombia	OAS

Along with intergovernmental organisations, various **states** also were involved in negotiating processes. Among them, Oman played a role in managing the Yemeni conflict. Despite its tradition of discreet mediation and facilitation, it took on an unusually explicit and public role in 2021. As in previous years, Egypt also continued to play a role in establishing ceasefires between Israel and Hamas, as well as in the mediation between Fatah and Hamas in their intra-Palestinian dispute. Moreover, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq participated as observers in the Astana process in the Syrian conflict. In Africa, states continued to play a prominent role as third parties. This was true of Cameroon, given the involvement of Switzerland; Mali, with the participation of countries such as Algeria, France and Mauritania; and the CAR, where various countries even competed in mediation. In Asia, Norway was involved in the conflict in the Philippines (NDF) as a third party, while Qatar was involved in Afghanistan and Malaysia was involved in the Philippines (MILF) and Thailand (south). In the Americas, Norway participated in the dialogue between the government of Venezuela and the opposition. In 2021, some states continued to play a controversial role in that they were contending parties to the disputes (or gave support to contending actors), while also participating as mediating or facilitating actors. This was true of Russia in Syria, Libya, the CAR, Ukraine and Georgia; Turkey in Syria and Libya; the US in Afghanistan; and Saudi Arabia in Yemen, among others.

Non-governmental actors were also involved as third parties, including local or international religious actors, and **organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation**. **Religious actors' efforts** to promote dialogue were more common in Africa, with cases such as the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique, the CAR and South Sudan; the OIC in the CAR; local religious institutions in Mozambique, the DRC and South Sudan; and ecumenical formats in Cameroon and South Sudan.

Examples in other continents include the Religious Track in Cyprus, with concerted action to promote dialogue led by religious leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, with Sweden's support; and the Colombian government's request for support from the Apostolic Nuncio in 2021, among other actors, to resume dialogue with the ELN.

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. Issues related to the **security sector** stood out in 2021, and especially processes of **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants** and the reform or creation of new security forces following the signing of peace agreements, of various types and names. This was present in most cases in Africa, such as Mozambique, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Libya; as well as in Asia, regarding the delayed start in 2021 of the third phase of the DDR process for around 40,000 MILF combatants as part of the negotiating process for the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF. For yet another year, the issues on the agendas prominently included the search for **truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities**. In Yemen, attempts to establish a nationwide truce failed and the ceasefire in force in the port of Al Hudaydah was called into question due to shifts in the balance of forces in the area and successive clashes. After the worst escalation of violence since 2014 in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, a new ceasefire was declared in 2021 between Israel and Hamas in May, although a fragile atmosphere prevailed. In Syria, the truce in Idlib was formally maintained despite multiple incidents, while Moscow intervened to try to re-establish previous agreements of cessation of hostilities between the regime and armed groups in the northwest and

southeast. In Europe, a ceasefire was reached in Ukraine at the end of the year, in which the parties recommitted to the 2020 ceasefire, although violations continued to occur amid high levels of militarisation, given the massive deployment of Russian troops and weapons near the border with Ukraine. In political-military terms, Russia demanded to include the issue of the **security architecture** in Europe in the dialogue over Ukraine. Another prominent military issue in the agendas was **denuclearisation**, present in the negotiations around Iran's nuclear programme and in the negotiations between North Korea and the US.

Issues related to **governance** (elections, constitutional reform, political transitions, the distribution of political power, as well as political, economic and social transformations) were also found in various peace processes, such as in Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, Colombia (FARC), Venezuela, Syria and Palestine, amid many obstacles, including disagreements between the parties and contexts of insecurity and violence. On the fifth anniversary of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC, the negotiations regarding implementation of the points of the peace agreement and the functioning of the institutions established therein were conducted in a context of great insecurity, with threats made against former FARC combatants, social leaders and human rights defenders. New coups in Mali in May 2021 and in Sudan in October 2021 threatened the transitional processes in the countries. In Libya, the cancellation of the elections scheduled for December 2021 exacerbated the strained atmosphere. Moreover, issues related to **administrative decentralisation, self-government** (including some demands for independence) and recognition of identity were present in many processes, even if they were not the predominant focus of the negotiations in all cases. This was the case in Cameroon, Mali, South Sudan, the Philippines ( MILF), India (Assam), India (Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), Thailand (south), Cyprus, Ukraine (east), Moldova (Transdnistria), Serbia-Kosovo and others. In some cases, such as Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) and Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), the question of the status of the disputed territories was set aside. Other topics on the agenda during the year included issues related to **border demarcation and transport and economic links** between different territories. This was the case of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Sudan-South Sudan and others.

In terms of **evolution of the peace and negotiating processes**, most of them in 2021 faced many problems, including serious regression in some cases, and a significant number remained mostly deadlocked. Overall, little significant progress was made, and where limited progress was made, it occurred in broader contexts of fragility, insecurity and obstacles. Asia witnessed serious backsliding in several of the negotiations (in three of the

10 cases) in 2021. This was true of Afghanistan, where the seizure of power by the Taliban led to the abrupt end of the dialogue process; the Philippines, where the designation of the NDF as a terrorist organisation eliminated the possibility of resuming negotiations under the current president; and Myanmar, where the military coup shut down the dialogue process known as the 21st Century Panglong Conference, suspended the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and put an end to negotiations with the armed groups that had signed the agreement. The vast majority of the peace processes in the Middle East experienced serious difficulties, such as obstacles to re-establishing political dialogue in Yemen and Palestine. In Syria, contacts and meetings continued without yielding positive results against a background of serious, high-intensity violence and the projection of foreign interests in the dispute.

Substantive obstacles were faced in Africa. For instance, in Somalia tensions rose between parts of the Federal Government, the federated states and opposition groups due to the delay in holding elections beyond the constitutional limit. Despite an agreement to relaunch the electoral process, a new crisis broke out due to disputes between the president and the prime minister, which ended with the prime minister's removal. In Libya, the cancellation of the elections scheduled for late 2021 increased uncertainty about the negotiating process and the political future of the country. Disagreements and instability in Mali prevented significant progress in the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, although there were some agreements in the central region of the country between various community militias (see table 1.4.). In Sudan, the military coup d'état posed a serious threat to the peace process in the country. Previously, the transitional government and the SPLM-N al-Hilu, from South Kordofan, had signed a Declaration of Principles, after which talks had resumed in May to integrate the rebel group into the Sudanese transitional government. In Europe, there were serious difficulties linked to the antagonism between Russia and Georgia and Russia and Ukraine and the projection of the geostrategic conflict between Russia, the US, NATO and the EU over these processes, aggravated in 2021 in Ukraine. The historical antagonism between Armenia and Azerbaijan, aggravated by the 2020 war and its consequences, and between Serbia and Kosovo, continued to result in serious obstacles in both processes.

Peace processes that were mostly stalled in 2021 included Eritrea-Ethiopia (Eritrea is collaborating with Ethiopia in the conflict in the Ethiopian region of Tigray, but it has put the peace process between both countries on hold), Morocco-Western Sahara, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, Cyprus (which is at an impasse, with widening gulf between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot positions), Moldova (Transdnistria) and the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, with their chronic deadlock. On the 30th anniversary of the

***Most peace processes  
in 2021 faced  
serious difficulties,  
with grave regression  
in Afghanistan and  
Myanmar***



Table 1.5. Main agreements of 2021

Peace processes	Agreements
Mali	Ceasefire agreements and reduction of violence between different communities in the central region. On 15 March, Donso community militias linked to the armed organisation Katiba Macina and Bambara militias affiliated with JNIM reached a ceasefire agreement in Ségou. On 6 August, after several peace initiatives supported by MINUSMA, representatives of the Fulani and Dogon communities agreed to establish local mechanisms to resolve conflicts amicably. In October, Ogosagu Peulh and Ogosagu Dogon communities (where two major attacks in 2019 and 2020 killed 192 civilians) and 10 other Peulh and Dogon communities in the towns of Banks and Dimbal signed a local reconciliation agreement.
South Sudan	Declaration of Principles. On 11 March, after four days of negotiations in Naivasha (Kenya), the government and the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA) faction led by Paul Malong and Pagan Amum (which includes SSUF/A and Real-SPLM) signed the declaration on which the basis of the political dialogue in Rome was built, which is being mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and regional organisations.
Sudan	Declaration of Principles between the Transitional Government of Sudan and the SPLM-N al-Hilu (South Kordofan). The text was signed in Juba, South Sudan, on 28 March by the head of the Transitional Sovereign Council of Sudan, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, and the leader of the SPLM-N, Abdelaziz al-Hilu. It establishes a federal, civil and democratic state in Sudan, in which freedom of religion, belief, religious practice and worship will be guaranteed to all Sudanese people by separating the identities of culture, region, ethnicity and state religion, principles that will be enshrined in the Constitution. After the Declaration was signed, talks between the parties resumed on 26 May with a view to integrating the rebel group into the Transitional Government.

Madrid-Oslo process regarding Palestine, many analysts underlined how its negotiating scheme had helped to further entrench the Israeli occupation and accelerate Palestinian dispossession and fragmentation.

Faced with the difficulties and impasse in the formal processes, civil society actors were active in many contexts to promote avenues for dialogue. Cases such as Cameroon stood out, where there were many initiatives to relaunch the dialogue process, including by women's organisations. As part of these initiatives, Cameroonian actors including women's groups, religious leaders, youth, other civil society representatives, traditional authorities and independence organisations, met with political-military movements in Canada to advance preparations for possible talks with the Cameroonian government. In the Western Sahel region, civil society organisations from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger continued to demand that their governments explore avenues for dialogue with armed actors and provide greater opportunities for participation by social organisations. Dozens of civil society organisations from Kosovo and Serbia called on the leaders of both territories to resume dialogue and refrain from incendiary rhetoric against their respective minorities. In Colombia, despite the difficulties and serious insecurity, civil society organisations actively continued their work in support of implementing the agreement between Bogotá and the FARC.

On a positive note, relative progress was made in some cases in Africa. In Mozambique, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected implementation of the 2019 peace agreement between the Mozambican government and RENAMO, progress was made in the DDR programme and in dismantling the military bases of the former guerrilla group. In South Sudan, headway continued to be made in the implementation of some

clauses of the 2018 peace agreement, albeit slowly, and negotiations were held with groups that had not signed that agreement, despite the intensifying atmosphere of violence in several states. In March, the government and the SSOMA faction signed the declaration on which the political dialogue in Rome had been built. In the dispute between Sudan and South Sudan, diplomatic relations were strengthened, making progress in the rapprochement that began in 2019. In Asia, progress

was made on the negotiations between the autonomous government of Bougainville and the government of Papua New Guinea over the island's status and in the Philippines, progress was made in the institutional consolidation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, arising from the 2014 peace agreement, while the third phase of the DDR process got under way. In the Americas, the dialogue on the socio-political crisis in Venezuela was resumed between Caracas and the opposition, with talks in Mexico mediated by Norway and supported by Russia and the Netherlands. Although the peace process with the ELN in Colombia did not officially resume, the Colombian government revealed that

contacts had been made with the armed group in Cuba through the United Nations, the Catholic Church and the OAS. The ELN also acknowledged that indirect contacts were being held, showing attempts to overcome the impasse in the process since it was suspended in 2019. However, at the end of the year the parties to the conflict contradicted each other regarding the continuity of the dialogue and the government denied that any contacts are still active. In Europe, in Spain, in the year that marked the 10th anniversary of the definitive cessation of ETA's armed activity, the multilevel peacebuilding process in the Basque Country witnessed progress, including in the area of co-existence and in transferring ETA prisoners to prisons in the Basque Country and Navarre and to the autonomous communities closest to them, despite other pending challenges.

***A significant number of negotiating processes remained largely at an impasse, with varying degrees of deadlock, such as Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US, Cyprus, Moldova (Transnistria) and Israel-Palestine***

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 negotiation. The year 2021 was also one of serious gender regression due to the seizure of power by the Taliban, which brought about an abrupt end to the negotiating process and was a serious setback for the human rights of civilians and specifically of women and girls, posing a serious security risk to women politicians and women activists and human rights defenders. Many of them had to go into hiding or try to leave the country due to the high risks and threats. Before the peace process was dismantled, four women were part of the Afghan government's negotiating delegation in talks with the Taliban in Qatar, defending women's rights. The 2021 military coups in Sudan and Myanmar led to threats and the scrapping of the dialogue processes in both countries and warnings of gender regression. In Myanmar, women's organisations played a leading role in protests against the military coup d'état, which shut down the 21st Century Panglong Conference with the insurgents and involved serious violations of women's human rights, including sexual violence against women detained in the protests.

**Women civil society activists** from different contexts continued to demand an end to the hostilities, the promotion of inclusive dialogue, responses to humanitarian emergencies and the defence of the rights of civilians, including the human rights of women. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated gender inequalities, posed additional obstacles for the work of women human rights defenders, including through the instrumentalization of emergency measures, and created difficulties in holding meetings and building trust. Nevertheless, women's movements and organisations were key to civil society's persistent demands for peacebuilding. For instance, women were active in Cameroon, where more than one thousand women from all regions, divisions and subdivisions of the country participated in the first National Convention of Women for Peace in July. In their final document, they called for an immediate and permanent end to the hostilities, an inclusive dialogue, with guarantees for the participation of female mediators and negotiators at all levels, reinforced psychosocial support in the country and the promotion of DDR, among other demands. In Libya, women's groups and United Nations agencies criticised the new unity government's non-compliance with the commitments to women's participation and demanded that they participate in the ceasefire monitoring mechanisms. Somali women's organisations also demanded compliance with the 30% minimum quota in the elections, included in the 2020 and 2021

***Women civil society activists continued to demand inclusive dialogues in 2021, the cessation of hostilities and responses to humanitarian emergencies, including in Libya, Syria and Yemen***

agreements. Groups of women from Kosovo demanded that their government involve women in the dialogue process with Serbia, including in the negotiating team and in consultation formats. In high-intensity wars such as Syria and Yemen, women's organisations and activists continued to demand that the impacts of conflicts on the population be addressed from a gender perspective, including the serious humanitarian situation, as well as the problem of detained and missing people. In Yemen, they called for a ceasefire and the eradication of military camps and weapons depots in the cities, and in Syria they demanded the addition of international tools for the elimination of discrimination against women in the discussions on a new constitutional framework.

Overall, women's participation in peace processes continued to be very limited. According to UN data released in 2021, women accounted for only 23% of the members of the delegations of the parties to the conflict in negotiating processes mediated or co-mediated by the UN in 2020. Nevertheless, some limited progress was made at formal levels in 2021. In Mali, progress was reported in women's participation in the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) and its subcommittees. In the Philippines, in 2021, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region MP Laisa Alamia was appointed co-chair of the Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities (TFDCC), a body responsible for socio-economic programmes and development of former MILF combatants and their communities. Moreover, consultative mechanisms with women continued in some negotiating processes. This was the case of the Syrian Woman's Advisory Board in the UN-backed Geneva process for the conflict in Syria and the Technical Advisory Group in the UN-sponsored peace process in Yemen. However, some critics said that these mechanisms were insufficient to guarantee women's substantive participation. In Georgia, consultations continued between Georgian government representatives participating in the two levels of the peace process (the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and the two Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM), of which only the one dealing with South Ossetia was active in 2021) and women's organisations, including displaced women, who raised demands in various fields (humanitarian, socioeconomic, linguistic and others) and called for greater participation in the process. Beyond women's limited participation in bodies and institutions of the peace processes or in consultation mechanisms, the negotiating processes generally continued without substantively or significantly integrating a gender perspective in their design, agenda or agreements. The negotiating parties' lack of commitment to this area was made clear for yet another year. A notable exception was Colombia, where the implementation of the gender

approach included in the Colombian peace agreement continued, although at a much slower rate than the application of the agreement as a whole.

The performance of the actors involved in mediation and facilitation efforts was mixed in terms of respecting the principles of mediation with a gender perspective and the international commitments framed within the international women, peace and security agenda. Different UN actors exerted notable efforts to promote women's participation and the integration of the gender perspective in various contexts in which it acted as a mediating actor or in support of peacebuilding. According to the UN, 57% of the chiefs and deputy chiefs of UN special political missions were women (up from 14% in 2015), according to data from February 2021, and 40% of UN mediation support team staff members were women.<sup>11</sup> Among the initiatives during the year, the UN Secretary-General called on the parties to the conflict in Cyprus to guarantee a minimum of 30% women in their delegations. On the other hand, the rotating presidency of the OSCE, occupied by Sweden in 2021, increased the organisation's efforts for greater

***Women's participation in peace processes continued to be very limited, with women accounting for only 23% of the members of the negotiating delegations in processes with UN mediation or co-mediation, according to its own data***

female participation in the dialogue processes of the OSCE area, alongside greater attention to this subject by the new general secretariat of the organisation, which took the form of statements, consultations and training, among other aspects, despite the limited results. In turn, the OSCE launched an informal platform in 2021 to connect female mediators and peacebuilders from the OSCE area and strengthen their ability to influence processes. After approving its third gender action plan (Gender Action Plan III) in 2020, which integrated the women, peace and security agenda for the first time, introduced as one of the possible six thematic areas of intervention, the EU continued to be characterised by its fragmented approach to the agenda, with varying degrees of commitment from the actors. The EU was also affected by problems of policy consistency (weapons and military spending, migration and asylum, among others). In addition, specific commitments of the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024 were still pending application in 2021. Nevertheless, some progress was made in terms of providing more options for women's organisations to participate and interact in peacebuilding.

11. UN Secretary-General, *Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Security Council, 2/2021/827, 27 September 2021.

