

Peace Talks in Focus 2021. Report on Trends and Scenarios



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Executive summary

Peace negotiations 2021: analysis of trends and scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2021. 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 37 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2021 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 2021.

Peace processes and negotiations in 2021

AFRICA (12)	ASIA (10)	EUROPE (7)
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) CAR DRC Eritrea – Ethiopia Libya Mali Morocco – Western Sahara Mozambique Somalia South Sudan Sudan Sudan – South Sudan	Afghanistan DPR Korea – Republic of Korea DPR Korea – USA India (Assam) India (Nagaland) Myanmar Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) Philippines (MILF) Philippines (NDF) Thailand (south)	Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Cyprus Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) Moldova (Transdniestria) Serbia – Kosovo Spain (Basque Country) Ukraine
	AMERICA (3)	MIDDLE EAST (5)
	Colombia (FARC-EP) Colombia (ELN) Venezuela	Iran (nuclear programme) Israel-Palestine Palestine Syria Yemen

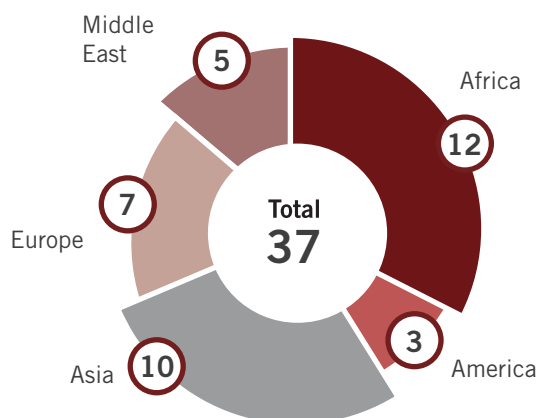
Negotiations in 2021: global overview and main trends

A total of 37 peace processes and negotiations were identified in 2021: 12 in Africa (32% of the total), 10 in Asia (27%), seven in Europe (19%), five in the Middle East (14%) and three in the Americas (8%). 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 2021, 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 included five high-intensity armed conflicts: Ethiopia

Regional distribution of peace negotiations in 2021



(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 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. 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).

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

Armed conflicts and peace processes in 2021

Armed conflicts with peace negotiations (18)
AFRICA (9)
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) -2018-
CAR -2006-
DRC (east) -1998-
Libya -2011-
Mali -2012-
Somalia -1988-
South Sudan -2009-
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-
AMERICA (1)
Colombia -1964-
ASIA (4)
Afghanistan -2001-
Filipinas (NPA) -1969-
Myanmar -1948-
Thailand (south) -2004-
EUROPE (1)
Ukraine (east) -2014-
MIDDLE EAST (3)
Israel-Palestine -2000-
Syria -2011-
Yemen -2004-

Armed conflicts without peace negotiations (14)
AFRICA (6)
Burundi -2015-
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-
Ethiopia (Tigray)-2020-
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-
Mozambique (north) -2019-
Western Sahel Region -2018-
ASIA (5)
India (CPI-M) -1967-
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-
Pakistan -2001-
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-
The Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-
EUROPE (1)
Turkey (southeast) -1984-
MIDDLE EAST (2)
Egypt (Sinai) -2014-
Iraq -2003-

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

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)
AFRICA							
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 ⁱ		x					
Sudan – South Sudan							x
AMERICAS							
Colombia (FARC)		x					
Colombia (ELN)					x		
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
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					
EUROPE							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ⁱⁱ							x
Moldova (Transnistria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo ⁱⁱⁱ							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine (east) ^{iv}							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)
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ^v		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.

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.

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. 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, as was usually the case in Asia, or a combination of armed groups and political and social actors, prevalent in Africa and the Middle East. In fewer cases, the processes involved governments and political and social actors, such as in the Americas and Europe. A significant number of processes involved governments of different countries as part of inter-state disputes. The direct participation and/or projection of foreign actors with interests in various conflicts also resulted 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. In his report on the state of global peace and security released in early 2021, the UN Secretary-General asserted that the world was witnessing the highest levels of geostrategic tension in years and that

Of the 32 active armed conflicts in 2021, 44% were being dealt with via peace processes

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

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. 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). 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). 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. 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%).

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. This was present in most cases in Africa as well as in cases in Asia. For yet another year, the issues on the agendas prominently included the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities. 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. In political-military terms, Russia demanded to include the issue of the security architecture in Europe in the dialogue over Ukraine. 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. 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. Other topics on the agenda during the year included issues related to border demarcation and transport and economic links between different territories.

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 three of the 10 cases in 2021: Afghanistan, the Philippines (NDF) and Myanmar. The

On a positive note, relative progress was made in some cases, particularly in Africa

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; 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; in Sudan, the military coup d'état posed a serious threat to the peace process in the country. 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, Morocco-Western Sahara, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, Cyprus, Moldova (Transnistria) and the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Faced with the difficulties and impasse in the formal processes, civil society actors were active in many contexts to promote avenues for dialogue.

On a positive note, relative progress was made in some cases, particularly in Africa. In Mozambique, 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

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 Bankas 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.

agreement and negotiations were held with groups that had not signed that agreement. In the dispute between Sudan and South Sudan, diplomatic relations were strengthened, making progress in the rapprochement that began in 2019. In other regions, 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, there were indirect contacts. In Europe, in Spain, the multilevel peacebuilding process in the Basque Country witnessed progress, including in the area of co-existence and in transferring ETA prisoners, in the year that marked the 10th anniversary of the definitive cessation of ETA's armed activity.

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. 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.

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 cases such as Mali and the Philippines. The negotiating processes generally continued without substantively or significantly integrating a gender perspective in their design, agenda or agreements. 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.

Regional trends

Africa

- Throughout 2021, 12 peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa, which accounts for 32% of the 37 peace processes worldwide.
- There were various local initiatives by civil society actors, including women's organisations, and by political-military groups to relaunch the dialogue process with the government in Cameroon.
- Amid the impasse in negotiations and increased tension after the ceasefire ended in 2020, the appointment of a new UN envoy for Western Sahara in late 2021 encouraged mild expectations that talks would resume.
- The postponement of the elections scheduled for 24 December exacerbated the climate of uncertainty regarding the political future of Libya.
- Progress was made in Mozambique during the year in implementing the DDR programme provided for in the 2019 peace agreement.
- Political instability and disagreements between the parties in Mali prevented progress in implementing the clauses of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement.
- Sudan suffered a new coup in October 2021 that threatened the transitional process and peacebuilding efforts in the country.
- In South Sudan, progress was made in implementing the peace agreement, as well as peace talks with the armed groups that did not sign the 2018 agreement. However, internal struggles and fragmentation within the SPLA-IO threatened the fragile peace in the country.

America

- Three negotiating processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia and one in Venezuela, accounting for an 8% of the negotiations held in 2021.
- All the negotiating processes in the Americas had third-party support.
- In Venezuela, the government and the opposition resumed negotiations in Mexico, facilitated by Norway.

- The Colombian government announced that it had made indirect contact with the ELN through the Catholic Church and the United Nations, but ruled out resuming direct dialogue with the guerrilla group.
- Five years have passed since the peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC and its implementation remains uneven.
- Despite the difficulties and delays, the implementation of the gender approach included in the peace agreement in Colombia continued, although at a much slower rate than the application of the agreement as a whole.

Asia

- In Asia, 10 negotiating processes were reported in 2021, accounting for approximately one quarter of the total peace processes around the world.
- In comparative terms, Asia was one of the regions in which more direct negotiations took place without the facilitation of third parties.
- In approximately half of the cases analysed in Asia, a certain paralysis and even regression in the negotiations was reported.
- The withdrawal of US troops and the Taliban military advance sank the peace negotiations, causing a change of regime and the fall of the government of Ashraf Ghani.
- In Mindanao (southern Philippines), the period of the transitional government of the new Bangsamoro region (led by the MILF) was extended by three years and the third stage of the reintegration of the 40,000 MILF ex-combatants began with significant delays.
- The Philippine Government declared the NDF a terrorist organisation, which in recent decades has negotiated with Manila on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing (the NPA).
- The Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government formally began the process of negotiating the political status of Bougainville.
- The president of South Korea proposed signing a declaration that would end the Korean War and allow negotiations to move forward on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.
- The military coup in Myanmar shut down the Panglong 21 dialogue with the insurgency.
- On the 10th anniversary of the definitive end of ETA's armed activity, new progress was made in terms of coexistence and prisoners in the Basque Country.
- The negotiations around Ukraine faced serious obstacles, given the delay in implementing the Minsk agreements, the massive deployment of Russian troops along the border and Moscow's demands for a new security architecture in the continent from NATO and the US.
- Under Russian mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan addressed issues related to the opening of transport and economic ties, the delimitation of the border, the exchange of prisoners and demining in an antagonistic atmosphere after the 2020 war.
- Informal contacts in Cyprus during the year failed to resume official negotiations and the parties remained at a standoff.
- Women's civil society organisations from Kosovo, Georgia, Cyprus and other countries demanded effective participation in the negotiating processes, with specific proposals.

Middle East

- The Middle East witnessed five negotiating, dialogue and exploratory processes that accounted for 14% of the total in the world in 2021.
- The cases in the region once again illustrated the importance of regional and international actors and the influence of their interests and antagonism in developing some of the negotiating processes.
- Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme resumed in 2021, but developed unevenly, in part due to Iran's breaches of the points of the 2015 agreement.
- Difficulties persisted in establishing a nationwide ceasefire in Yemen and a negotiated path to address the multidimensional conflict affecting the country.
- Palestinian-Israeli negotiations continued to stall, although some high-level contacts took place after the new Israeli government took office.
- Despite signs of rapprochement in the first quarter, the fracture between Hamas and Fatah persisted, especially after the president of the Palestinian Authority decided to postpone what would have been the first Palestinian elections in 15 years.
- The negotiating process for Syria promoted by the United Nations continued in 2021, but the rounds of meetings between representatives of the government, the opposition and civil society did not yield any significant results.
- Women's organisations and activists in the region continued to claim the need for more inclusive peace processes and women's substantive participation in decision-making.

Europe

- In 2021, seven of the 37 peace processes in the world (19%) took place in Europe.
- All the negotiating processes in Europe involved third parties in supporting roles.

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 conflicts¹ and socio-political crises² 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
AFRICA		
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	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
CAR	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
AFRICA		
DRC	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
Libya	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
Mali	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
Morocco – Western Sahara	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)
Mozambique	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
Somalia	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
South Sudan	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
Sudan	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
Sudan - South Sudan	Government of Sudan and government of South Sudan	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU
AMERICA		
Colombia (ELN)	Government, FARC	UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)
Colombia (FARC)	Government, ELN	Catholic Church, United Nations, OAS
Venezuela	Government, political and social opposition	Norway, Russia, the Netherlands, International Contact Group
ASIA		
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, USA, UN
DPR Korea – Republic of Korea	North Korea, South Korea	--
DPR Korea – USA	North Korea, USA	--
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, ULFA-I	--
India (Nagaland)	Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF	--
Myanmar	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
ASIA		
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	Government, Autonomous Bougainville Government	United Nations, Bertie Ahern
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body
Philippines (NDF)	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway
Thailand (south)	Government, BRN	Malaysia
EUROPE		
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	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, ³ EU
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ⁴	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ⁵
Moldova (Transnistria)	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN, USA
Spain (Basque Country)	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
Ukraine (east)	Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ⁶	OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ⁷ also participate; Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁸), USA
MIDDLE EAST		
Iran (nuclear programme)	Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China, plus Germany), US	UN, EU
Israel-Palestine	Israeli government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas	Egypt, Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Munich Group (Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan)
Palestine	Hamas, Fatah	Egypt, Qatar, Algeria
Syria	Government, political and armed opposition groups	UN, Russia, Turkey, Iran and Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (as observers in Astana process)
Yemen	Government, forces of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/ Ansar Allah South Transitional Council (STC), Saudi Arabia	UN, Oman, Saudi Arabia, USA

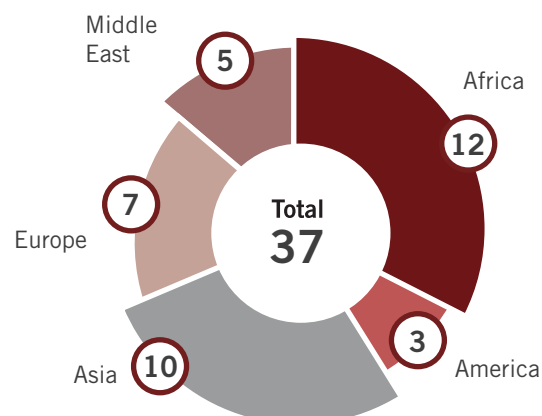
The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

- 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)
AFRICA (9)	AFRICA (6)
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-	ASIA (5)
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	India (CPI-M) -1967-
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-	India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-
AMERICA (1)	Pakistan -2001-
Colombia -1964-	Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-
ASIA (4)	The Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-
Afghanistan -2001-	EUROPE (1)
Filipinas (NPA) -1969-	Turkey (southeast) -1984-
Myanmar -1948-	MIDDLE EAST (2)
Thailand (south) -2004-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014-
EUROPE (1)	Iraq -2003-
Ukraine (east) -2014-	
MIDDLE EAST (3)	
Israel-Palestine -2000-	
Syria -2011-	
Yemen -2004-	

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

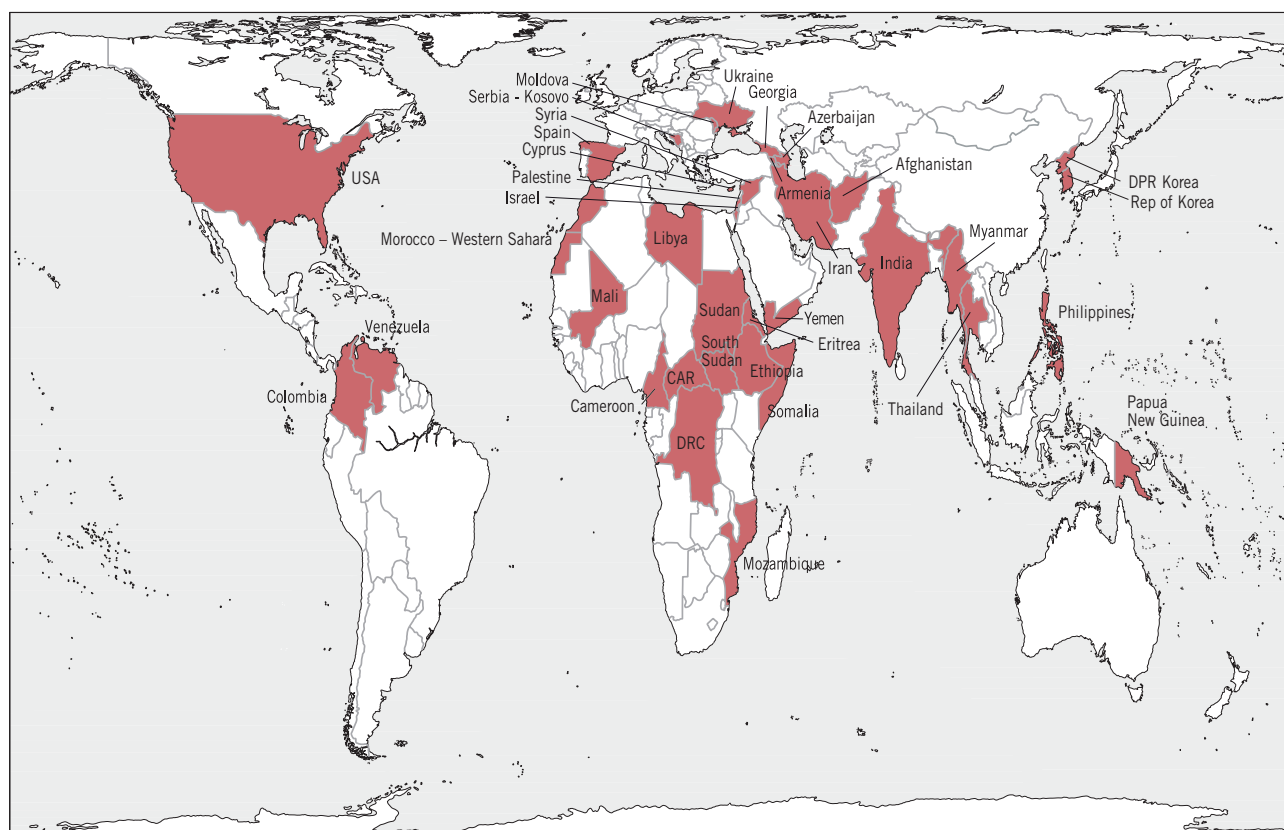
were addressed in negotiating processes, though in some cases they only involved some of the active armed actors and dynamics. Along with the 18 armed conflicts addressed in the peace processes, to varying degrees, peace negotiations in 2021 also dealt with socio-political crises of varying intensity. 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.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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)
AFRICA							
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 ⁱ		x					
Sudan – South Sudan							x
AMERICAS							
Colombia (FARC)		x					
Colombia (ELN)					x		
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
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					
EUROPE							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ⁱⁱ							x
Moldova (Transnistria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo ⁱⁱⁱ							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine (east) ^{iv}							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)
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ^v		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

ASIA	
Philippines (MILF)	The EU forms part of the International Monitoring Team and has lent support to the Third Party Monitoring Team
EUROPE	
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 (Transdnistria)	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
MIDDLE EAST	
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
AU (9)	
AFRICA	
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)
OSCE (4)	
EUROPE	
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 (Transdnistria)	Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Transdnistrian 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
IGAD (4)	
AFRICA	
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
SADC (2)	
AFRICA	
DRC	SADC representation in the DRC
Mozambique	The SADC is a guarantor of the peace agreement

ECOWAS (1)	
AFRICA	
Mali	ECOWAS in Mali
OIC (1)	
AFRICA	
CAR	OIC delegation in the CAR
ASEAN (1)	
ASIA	
Myanmar	ASEAN envoy
CEEAC (1)	
AFRICA	
CAR	CEEAC delegation in the CAR
OIF (1)	
AFRICA	
RDC	OIF delegation in the DRC
OAS (1)	
AMERICA	
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 (Transdniestria), 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 (Transdniestria) 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.¹¹ 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.

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Throughout 2021, 12 peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa, which accounts for 32% of the 37 peace processes worldwide.
- There were various local initiatives by civil society actors, including women's organisations, and by political-military groups to relaunch the dialogue process with the government in Cameroon.
- Amid the impasse in negotiations and increased tension after the ceasefire ended in 2020, the appointment of a new UN envoy for Western Sahara in late 2021 encouraged mild expectations that talks would resume.
- The postponement of the elections scheduled for 24 December exacerbated the climate of uncertainty regarding the political future of Libya.
- Progress was made in Mozambique during the year in implementing the DDR programme provided for in the 2019 peace agreement.
- Political instability and disagreements between the parties in Mali prevented progress in implementing the clauses of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement.
- Sudan suffered a new coup in October 2021 that threatened the transitional process and peacebuilding efforts in the country.
- In South Sudan, progress was made in implementing the peace agreement, as well as peace talks with the armed groups that did not sign the 2018 agreement. However, internal struggles and fragmentation within the SPLA-IO threatened the fragile peace in the country.

This chapter analyses the peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2021. 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 2021.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2021

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	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
CAR	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
DRC	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
Libya	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
Mali	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
Morocco – Western Sahara	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

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Mozambique	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
Somalia	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, AU, Turkey, among others
South Sudan	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
Sudan	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
Sudan – South Sudan	Government of Sudan and government of South Sudan	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU

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

2.1 Negotiations in 2021: regional trends

Throughout 2021, there were **12 peace processes and negotiations in Africa**, accounting for 32% of the 37 peace processes identified worldwide. This figure is lower than that of previous years: 13 peace processes in 2020, 19 in 2019 and 22 in 2018. Five negotiations took place in the Horn of Africa (Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, Eritrea-Ethiopia and Somalia), three in Central Africa (Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), the CAR and the DRC), another three in North Africa and West Africa (Libya, Mali and Morocco-Western Sahara) and the rest in the Southern Africa (Mozambique). The decrease in 2021 compared to 2020 is because recent peace initiatives were considered completed in Burundi.

Eight of these 12 peace negotiations were linked to armed conflicts in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Libya, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The remaining four processes were related to socio-political crises that in some cases in the past had also suffered episodes of war: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique and Sudan-South Sudan. Some of the peace processes corresponded to conflicts that began in the last decade, such as Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest, 2018), Libya (2011) and Mali (2012), while others date back to the previous decade, like the CAR (2006), Sudan (2003), South Sudan

(2009) and Sudan-South Sudan. Still other conflicts and crisis situations date back to the 1990s, such as the cases of the DRC and Somalia, so the initiatives and peace negotiations linked to these conflicts have evolved profoundly since their origin in terms of the actors involved and the causes of the disputes. The

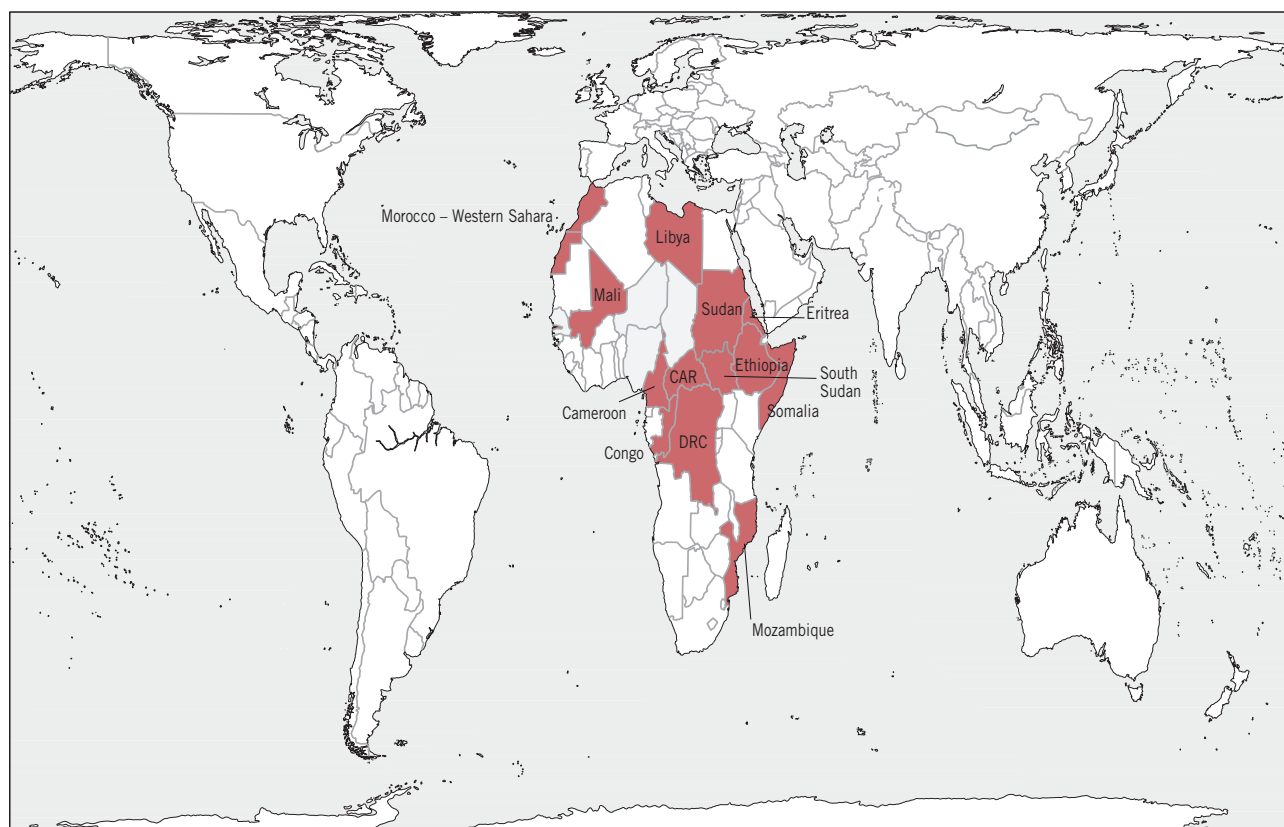
longest-running peace process studied in Africa, which suffers from structural paralysis, is the one between Morocco and Western Sahara, which began after the 1991 ceasefire agreement. The last cycle of violence in Mozambique began in 2013, though it dates back to the limited application of the 1992 peace agreement that put an end to the conflict between RENAMO and FRELIMO that began in 1974. In this sense, the United Nations recently pointed out in a report¹ that, among the different causes and factors of instability and violence in Africa, which are of a complex and multidimensional nature, one of the issues to consider was the **lack of clarity and inclusiveness in the peace agreements and their inadequate implementation, the divisions of the signatory parties and the unfinished**

transformation of the economies linked to the conflicts tended to perpetuate and reactivate them. It added that the participation of youth and women was essential for the implementation of the peace agreements, especially through the agendas on youth, peace and security and women and peace and security.

The United Nations highlighted that the lack of clarity and inclusiveness in the peace agreements in Africa and their inadequate application, the divisions of the signatory parties and the unfinished transformation of the economies linked to the conflicts tended to perpetuate and reactivate them

1. UN Secretary-General, *Promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa*, A/75/917-S/2021/562, 11 June 2021.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2021



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2021

The armed conflicts and socio-political crises² had serious consequences for the civilian population and the work of peacekeeping missions and the humanitarian response continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to various analysts. Although Africa was not as affected by the pandemic as initially feared, it had very serious economic, political and social consequences. The pandemic also broke out in a previous international context of fragility and instability linked, among other factors, to armed conflicts and socio-political crises in Africa that have worsened in recent years. **The security situation in many of these scenarios has deteriorated in recent years, made worse in various cases by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (the establishment of states of emergency and exception that in many cases led to violations human rights and the use of these states of emergency by some governments for the purpose of clinging to power) and the previous governance challenges and shortcomings,³ all of which have affected the development of the different negotiations and peace initiatives under way.** According to the African Union's (AU) Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), more than 10 million cases were reported on the continent by the end of 2021, of which more than 235,000 people have died. Africa CDC also estimated that less than 10% of the African population would have received the full

dosage of the vaccine by late 2021, almost two years after the start of the pandemic.⁴

In relation to the actors participating in the negotiations, in 2021 **only two cases exclusively involved the governments of the respective countries and armed groups or political-military movements in the negotiations.** These two cases were in Mozambique between the government and the opposition group RENAMO and in the CAR between the government and the different groups making up the former Séléka coalition and the anti-balaka militias. **Seven of the 12 peace processes were characterised by a more complex map of actors, with governments, armed groups and the political and social opposition involved.** This was seen in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), where meetings have involved political actors linked to insurgencies; Mali, where the negotiating process has involved national authorities and many political and armed actors from the Azawad region in recent years; Libya, between political and military actors that control different parts of the country; Somalia, between the Federal Government, the leaders of the federated states and other domestic political and military actors; Sudan, between the government, the political opposition and insurgent groups from various regions of the country; South Sudan, between the government, the armed

2. Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

3. Josep Maria Royo, *Conflicto, África y COVID-19, Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau*, no. 14, November 2021.

4. Data updated on 10 January 2022. Africa CDC COVID-19 Dashboard [online]. Last viewed on 10 January 22.

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 the government and different armed groups from the eastern part of the country on the other. **Other negotiating processes were conducted by the governments of neighbouring countries as part of interstate disputes.** Examples of this were the dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan and the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Morocco-Western Sahara negotiating process, which has been at a standstill in recent years, involves the Moroccan government and the POLISARIO Front, which proclaimed the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976. It is considered an international dispute because it is territory considered pending decolonisation by the UN.

All the peace processes and negotiations in Africa studied had third-party support, whether taking the form of international organisations, regional organisations, states and religious organisations or organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation. Although there are many cases where the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment are publicly known, in other contexts this work is carried out discreetly and away from the public eye. All cases had more than one actor involved in mediation and facilitation, with the UN playing the predominant role, as it participated in nine of the 12 processes in Africa (Libya, Mali, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan). Another prominent actor was the AU, which was involved in nine processes (Libya, Mali, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan).

African regional intergovernmental organisations 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 DRC negotiating processes; the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) in the CAR; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Mozambique; and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan. In addition to African intergovernmental organisations, other intergovernmental organisations participated as third parties in Africa, such as the EU (in Libya, Mali, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and between Sudan and South Sudan) and the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) (in the CAR).

States also continued to play a leading role as third parties in peace processes and negotiations in Africa.

All the peace processes and negotiations studied had third-party support, whether taking the form of international organisations, regional organisations, states and religious organisations or organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation

All the peace processes studied had states leading or supporting initiatives of dialogue and negotiation

All the peace processes studied had states leading or supporting initiatives of dialogue and negotiation. Local and international religious actors also played roles as third parties, especially the Community of Sant'Egidio (Vatican) in Mozambique, the CAR and South Sudan; the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the CAR; local religious institutions in Mozambique, the DRC and South Sudan; ecumenical formats such as the Anglophone General Conference (AGC), made up of Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders in Cameroon; and the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). Organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation also played roles, especially the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Cameroon, Libya, Mali and the CAR the Carter Center in Mali and the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN) in Cameroon.

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) and 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; the Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU) in the case of Libya; the states of the Troika (the USA, United Kingdom and Norway); African Union High Level on Sudan (AUHIP) in the case of Sudan; 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). 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, or the case of the CAR with the intervention of Russia alongside multilateral initiatives promoted by the AU and the CEEAC.

Most of the negotiating processes studied tackled the subject of **security sector reform**, especially disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes for former combatants and the reform or creation of new security forces following peace agreements. This was true in Mozambique, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Libya. The new security forces came in many different types with just as many names, whether mixed units, joint forces or unified

national armies. **Governance** issues were also discussed in the ongoing negotiations in various contexts, such as Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Libya. Issues related to the **degree of self-government and the degree of administrative decentralisation, including independence** for territories, were discussed in Cameroon, Mali, South Sudan and Morocco-Western Sahara. Unfinished border demarcations, as in the disputes between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Sudan and South Sudan, were also discussed in negotiations in Africa.

With regard to the **gender, peace and security agenda, women were practically absent from the ongoing negotiating processes in Africa**. Nevertheless, in most contexts, various women's movements and organisations demanded to actively participate in peace processes and many local peacebuilding initiatives were led by civil society, especially by women's organisations. In **Mali**, progress was reported in the integration of women in the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) and its subcommittees. The Carter Center report noted that since November 2020, nine women have joined the CSA, in what was considered an important step in implementing the commitment to mediation and building a more inclusive process. At the CSA meeting held in Kidal in February, the parties repeated their commitment to fully include women in their deliberations, as well as to add three more women to the CSA, along with another 12 to be included in the subcommittees. In **Libya**, throughout 2021 the challenges for Libyan women's more substantive involvement in decision-making and discrimination in spheres of power remained clear. Women's groups, activists and United Nations agencies denounced the breach of commitments by failing to include women in the new unity government and demanded more women in negotiations on economic issues and security issues, including in the mechanisms monitoring the ceasefire.

In **Cameroon**, what is considered the main initiative to date was held between civil society, political-military movements and independence organisations. Between 29 October and 1 November, civil society representatives, traditional authorities, religious leaders, women's and youth groups and separatist political-military movements met in Toronto (Canada) to find common ground and iron out differences between them to prepare for possible talks with the government. In addition, the National Women's Convention for Peace was held for the first time between 28 and 31 July, gathering a thousand women from all over the country to reflect on violence and ways to build peace in the country. In the **CAR**, women were scarcely involved in decision-making and in political negotiations and processes, though three of the 29 members of the national dialogue's organising committee were women. In **Somalia**, as part of the electoral process under way, the country's women's organisations continued to demand compliance with the minimum quota of 30%

adopted in the agreements of 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021. In **Sudan**, UNITAMS reported on the work carried out with women belonging to the SPLN-N al-Hilu faction to express their demands and opinions on the political process of the peace talks with the government. In **South Sudan**, the Women Leadership Forum was launched, organised under the auspices of South Sudanese Vice President Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, with the support of UNMISS. The Women Leadership Forum brought together a diverse group of women from the security sector, faith-based organisations, civil society, academia, politics and the private sector with the aim of strengthening women's representation in politics and creating a portfolio of qualified women at the national and sub-national levels.

Regarding the evolution of the peace negotiations, during 2021 no new peace agreements were confirmed in any of the contexts analysed. One notable development is the electoral agreement adopted in Somalia on 27 May, which set in motion indirect parliamentary and presidential elections in the second part of the year. **Despite concrete headway in some contexts, there was no progress in most and the processes were beset by many problems, deadlock and crisis.** There continued to be some **good news out of Mozambique, between South Sudan and South Sudan and**

Sudan, as in recent years. In **Mozambique**, despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic had a notable impact on the implementation of the clauses of the 2019 Maputo peace agreement between the Mozambican government and RENAMO, in 2021 progress was made in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants and in dismantling former guerrilla military bases. Contacts and negotiations were also held with the RENAMO Military Junta, a dissident faction opposed to the peace agreement. In **South Sudan**, the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) continued to make slow progress in implementing some of the clauses established in the 2018 South Sudan Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS), while peace negotiations were held in Rome with groups that did not sign the peace agreement, amid an intensification of violence in several states. The dynamics of rapprochement between the governments of **Sudan and South Sudan** were maintained during the year, deepening and strengthening their diplomatic relations. Although contacts between the government of **Cameroon** and political-military groups to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict in the two western regions of the country continued to stall and the serious climate of violence persisted, many local initiatives were undertaken by civil society actors and political-military groups to resume the negotiating process with the government. **At the end of the year, it emerged that the Swiss organization HD and the Swiss government were trying to relaunch the mediation initiatives** promoted in 2019. Although the breakdown of the peace process in December 2020 and the resumption of hostilities triggered a serious deterioration of the situation in the

Women were persistently absent from negotiating processes in Africa

CAR, there was some progress in the **national dialogue process** proposed by President Touadéra in March to reverse the situation, making it possible to glimpse their implementation with a view to 2022.

In **most of the processes, little progress was made. On the contrary, there were many obstacles and difficulties.** In **Mali**, there was very little headway in implementing the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement during the year, although **some agreements were reached in the central part of the country** that still failed to stop the violence. In **Somalia**, the Federal Government's delays in holding the elections before February 2021 pushed the election date beyond the current government's constitutional limit, which created a serious climate of tension between groups within the government and the federated states and opposition groups. This led to new negotiations between the different key actors, which came together in the signing of an **agreement on 27 May to relaunch the electoral process**, although the delays were constant and the year ended with a new dispute between President Farmajo and Prime Minister Roble which culminated in Roble's removal, opening a new crisis. In **DRC**, in addition to the difficulties surrounding the formation of the new national government and its subsequent implementation, in the military sphere, **the stagnation of the implementation of the DDR process** stemmed from the 2020 agreement between the government and the armed group FRPI. In **Sudan**, the slow progress in implementing the October 2020 peace agreement was compounded by **the October 2021 coup d'état**, producing a new climate of instability and affecting ongoing peacebuilding processes. Finally, in **Libya**, after the ceasefire agreement signed in October 2020 between the main rival military coalitions (the forces of the internationally recognised government (GAN), based in Tripoli and the forces affiliated with former general Khalifa Haftar (LAN or ALAF), dominant in the east of the country), **it was upheld during the year and fatalities due to clashes fell significantly** compared to previous years. However, some key aspects of the agreement were not implemented and at the end of the year the country's political future was in question, amid a climate of growing tension that was exacerbated by the impossibility of holding the planned elections.

There were also processes that were completely stalled during the year, such as the negotiations between Eritrea-Ethiopia and Morocco-Western Sahara. Three years after signing the historic peace agreement between **Eritrea and Ethiopia**, the process to implement the agreement remained at a deadlock due to the escalating tension and the beginning of the armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and the regional state of Tigray, in which Eritrea supported the Ethiopian federal government. The conflict around **Western Sahara** continued to be characterised by chronic impasse and paralysis of diplomatic channels to address and resolve the dispute, which worsened because of the escalating tension and conflict in 2020. The UN Secretary-General's appointment of a new personal envoy in late

2021 encouraged mild expectations of resuming the dialogue in the future.

2.2. Case study analysis

Great Lakes and Central Africa

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

Summary:

Since gaining independence in 1960, the situation in the Central African Republic has been characterized by ongoing political instability, leading to numerous coups d'état and military dictatorships. After the 2005 elections won by François Bozizé, which consolidated the coup d'état perpetrated previously by the latter, several insurgency groups emerged in the north of the country, which historically has been marginalized and is of Muslim majority. In December 2012 these groups forced negotiations to take place. In January 2013, in Libreville, François Bozizé's Government and the coalition of armed groups, called Séléka, agreed to a transition Government, but Séléka decided to break the agreement and took power, overthrowing Bozizé. Nevertheless, self-defence groups ("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 year 2021 was shaped by the events that occurred as of December 2020, with the breakdown of the peace process and the resumption of hostilities by some of the parties that signed the 2019 peace agreement. In December 2020, the representatives of six of the

most powerful armed groups in the country, including the main signatories of the 2019 peace agreement, including the anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, 3R, a FPRC faction, the MPC and the UPC, had signed a joint statement denouncing the 2019 Political Agreement and criticising the government's shortcomings in moving the peace process forward. On 17 December 2020, they announced the formation of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). Some of these groups supported the candidacy of François Bozizé for the presidential election. Bozizé was accused of orchestrating an attempted coup. From then on, the CPC began a military offensive against Bangui that was repulsed in January and February 2021 by MINUSCA, the national security forces, with support from Rwanda and Russia. Faced with this situation, Angola tried to promote talks between the government and the rebel coalition, which the government rejected. The presidential and legislative elections were held on 27 December 2020, in a climate of insecurity and violence that caused the closure of many electoral districts, which had to postpone the vote. President Touadéra was declared re-elected. On 18 January 2021, he addressed the nation and expressed his willingness to engage in dialogue and cooperate with all parties to the peace process, except the armed groups linked to the CPC. The Constitutional Court proclaimed the results of the legislative elections on 1 February, stating that 22 of the 140 deputies were elected in the first round, while 61 seats required a second round and elections had to be held for the remaining 57 seats in districts where the elections had not taken place due to security conditions. The main opposition coalition, the Democratic Opposition Coalition (COD-2020), rejected the results and announced it was withdrawing from the elections, highlighting the many irregularities and the prevailing climate of violence. Legislative elections were held on 23 May in constituencies where the elections had not been held. The Constitutional Court announced the final results on 30 August: 18 of the seats went to women, 12 more than in the previous legislature. The ruling United Hearts Movement (MCU) party won a relative majority (41 seats), followed by independents (35), many of them allied with MCU. The Kwa Na Kwa party won 10 seats, with 22 other parties winning 54.

On 30 March, President Touadéra was sworn into office and repeated his adherence to the 2019 Political Agreement, although little progress was made in implementing it, according to the UN Secretary-General's report on the situation in the country dated 12 October. Touadéra appointed Finance Minister Henri-Marie Dondra to be the new prime minister, replacing Firmin Ngrébada, who had been the main architect of the alliance with Russia and the Russian paramilitary contract company Wagner Group. On 23 June, Dondra formed a new government, which created some momentum in the process aimed at organising a "republican dialogue". On 18 March, President Touadéra announced the implementation of a national dialogue process to redirect the situation

The year 2021 was shaped by the events that occurred as of December 2020, with the breakdown of the peace process and the resumption of hostilities in the CAR

with the opposition parties and civil society, although the start of the process was delayed several times. It was rejected by the opposition, mainly the opposition coalition COD-2020, which called for an inclusive process involving armed groups, especially the CPC, and for shielding the process from government attempts to exploit it for its own benefit.

It was not until early September that the Organising Committee of the Republican Dialogue was formed, in charge of launching the political dialogue. The Community of Sant'Egidio used its good offices to facilitate a meeting that would lay the foundations for an agreement to end hostilities and initiate national reconciliation. After the meeting, which was attended by the Secretary General of the Community of Sant'Egidio, Paolo Impagliazzo, the participants signed a joint statement entitled "Towards the Republican Dialogue – for peace and the future of CAR" that urged all key actors to prepare the path of dialogue adopted on 16 September, including a roadmap for peace in the country, calling for inclusive dialogue and for the government to accept a ceasefire with the CPC and revitalise the 2019 peace agreement, which would enable its participation in the dialogue. In compliance with the recommendations of the international community and with the desire to promote the dialogue, on 15 October President Touadéra declared a unilateral ceasefire regarding the armed groups. The CPC agreed to respect the ceasefire if the government committed to doing so. However, in the following two weeks, government security forces supported by the Wagner Group and the armed groups repeatedly violated the ceasefire.

The negotiating process continued to be affected by a fragile situation, as evidenced by the fact that the opposition coalition COD-2020 withdrew from the process on 31 October, accusing President Touadéra of violating parliamentary immunity. This happened after the government lifted immunity from three MPs accused of collaborating with the December 2020 military offensive led by former President François Bozizé, including presidential candidate and former Prime Minister Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, who had been Touadéra's main rival in the 2015-2016 presidential elections. On 11 November, the main opposition parties said that they would only participate in the process if the proceedings against the three MPs were scrapped. Finally, on 2 July the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission was launched with the appointment of the 11 commissioners. This space for reconciliation was part of the recommendations of the 2015 Bangui Forum and the 2019 Khartoum peace agreement.

Gender, peace and security

Women were scarce in decision-making roles and in political negotiations and processes. Only three of

the 29 members of the national dialogue's organising committee were women. There were seven female ministers in the new government, which represented 21.9%, a proportion of women higher than the 14.7% of the previous government, although still below the 35% quota established by the gender parity law. Six ministers came from armed groups that had signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and had renounced violence, two came from civil society and two were former presidential candidates. It should be noted, however, that the composition of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission included 45% women, and a woman was appointed as president of the Commission. Joint UN efforts to support women's participation at all stages of elections, as voters and candidates, helped to increase women's representation in the new Parliament, with 18 women (12.8%) of the 140 seats, 12 more than in the previous legislature. However, as reported by the UN, the electoral process confirmed that there were still socio-cultural barriers that hindered the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political life, as well as gender bias, a lack of political will and the deterioration of the security situation

DRC	
Negotiating actors	Government led by the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents from former president Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political and social opposition groups (such as the Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and armed groups from the east of the country.
Third parties	Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), Church of Christ in the Congo, Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC led by the AU, SADC, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU, EU, UN, OIF and USA
Relevant agreements	Sun City Agreement, Pretoria Agreement and Luanda Agreement (2002); Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC (2002); Comprehensive, Inclusive Peace Accord in the DRC (2016)

Summary:

The demands for democratization in the nineties led to a succession of rebellions that culminated with the so-called "African first world war" (1998-2003). The signing of several peace agreements from 2002 to 2003 led to the withdrawal of foreign troops and the shaping of a National Transition Government (NTG) integrating the previous Government, the political opposition and the main insurgent actors, in an agreement to share political power. Since 2003, the NTG was led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents, two of whom from the former insurgency. 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 DRC, a difficult political dialogue process continued within the coalition government that emerged from the controversial 2018 elections. Led by Félix Tshisekedi, this government was affected by many sources of tension and obstacles that caused it to break up at the end of 2020. A new government coalition was then formed that tried to improve the difficult political climate during 2021. In December 2020, Tshisekedi had announced the dissolution of the coalition between the Cap pour le Changement (CACH) and the Front Commun pour le Congo (FCC), stating that he wanted to build a new majority or call new elections if that was not possible. The Constitutional Court allowed MPs to leave their old political groups and join new alliances. This decision gave the deputies the opportunity to change their political alliance without the risk of being fired by their original parties and consequently losing their seats. Thus, Tshisekedi convinced many MPs from Kabila's coalition, the FCC, to join the new majority, the Union Sacrée (Sacred Union), along with opposition leaders Moïse Katumbi and Jean-Pierre Bemba. Tshisekedi then secured a string of additional victories over Kabila, shifting the balance of power in his favour.

Between December 2020 and January 2021, the MPs of the new government majority used successive motions to oust the presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as Prime Minister Ilunga and his government. On 15 February, after negotiations between different factions of the Union, Tshisekedi appointed Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde as the new prime minister. Originally from Grand Katanga and the former CEO of the country's largest mining company, Gécamines, Lukonde belonged to a small political party without a single seat in the National Assembly, called Avenir du Congo. Lukonde had no real political influence or ambitions for the 2023 elections, making him an ally during the last two years

of Tshisekedi's presidency, according to analysts. Upon his appointment, Lukonde pledged to build a strong government team to address the country's problems. After two months of wrangling over ministerial posts within the new majority, the 57-member government was barely downsized from its predecessor. However, 80% of his ministers were new faces, unlike the previous government, where some ministers had already served under Kabila, under his father and his predecessor Laurent, and even during the dictatorship of Joseph Mobutu. Controlling the various forces within his new coalition became Tshisekedi's most immediate challenge. The difficult negotiations to form the government of the Sacred Union revealed the precariousness of a majority that came together to displace Kabila but lacked a shared political agenda. Cracks began to appear in the coalition almost as soon as the government was proclaimed on 12 April. Nearly 200 of the MPs who had defected from Kabila's FCC formed a "coalition of revolutionary MPs" to protest the imbalance in the new government. Some provinces had several ministries; others had none. They accused Lukonde of failing to reward his "change of allegiance" with a government post. This group threatened to block the inauguration of the Lukonde government. On 26 April, after the prime minister and Tshisekedi met with MPs, the National Assembly expressed confidence in the new government and approved its programme with a decisive majority. Despite the changes and meagre political progress in improving governance and respect for human rights, violence and insecurity persisted in the east.

Furthermore, MONUSCO-supported attempts by the political and military authorities to put an end to the armed groups' activities continued, either through military pressure or through dialogue and negotiations. These initiatives include the political process begun in 2018 that led to a peace agreement between the government and the armed group Patriotic Resistance Force of Ituri (FRPI) in February 2020. Around two years after the peace agreement between the government and the FRPI was signed, and despite the initial optimism, the disarmament, demobilisation, reinsertion and reintegration process remained deadlocked. The FRPI continued to demand compliance with the terms of the agreement, regarding amnesty, the integration of fighters into the Congolese Armed Forces and the payment of benefits.

Gender, peace and security

MONUSCO continued to promote the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda through targeted collaboration with national, provincial and local authorities, while also advocating for greater female representation and participation, especially in decision-making processes related to COVID-19. At a UN Security

Despite the changes and meagre political progress in improving governance and respect for human rights, violence and insecurity persisted in the eastern DRC

Council meeting to discuss the country's situation in December, Marie-Madeleine Kalala, a women's rights activist and member of the African Women Leaders Network, said that the appointment of the Independent National Electoral Commission was a cause for concern, due to its incompleteness and the lack of consensus with the opposition. She stated that it was essential that all parties agree on the process so that it can be truly consensual, transparent and peaceful. At the meeting, Kalala said that insecurity continued to prevail in this part of the country, along with the looting of natural resources, complicity with multinational companies, massacres of populations and the rape of women. Women's rights continue to be violated, she said, noting that the UN Secretary-General's 2021 report said that such violations had increased by 131%. The number of displaced people in the country has exceeded 5.7 million, of which 51% are women. Regarding the discussions surrounding the withdrawal of MONUSCO, Congolese women became involved in the transition plan through the African Women Leaders Network, pointing out that this process must consider the serious security situation and the persistence of violence against women.

South Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others) and SSOMA, including the faction led by Paul Malong and Pagan Amum (which includes SSUF/A and Real-SPLM) and the faction headed by Thomas Cirillo (made up of the SSNDA coalition, which includes NAS, SSNMC, NDM/PF and UDRA).
Third parties	IGAD Plus: IGAD (Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda); AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches, Community of Sant'Egidio
Relevant agreements	Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018)

Summary:

After years of armed conflict between the Central Government of Sudan and the south of the country, led by the SPLM/A guerrilla, South Sudan became an independent State in 2011, after holding the referendum that was planned in the 2005 peace agreement (Comprehensive Peace Agreement –CPA–) facilitated by the mediation of the IGAD. The Peace between Sudan and South Sudan and achieving independence was not achieved, however, were not enough to end the conflict and violence. South Sudan has remained immersed in a series of internal conflicts promoted by disputes to control the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neo-patrimonial practices and corruption in the Government,

all of which has impeded stability and the consolidation of peace. As part of the peace negotiations promoted in April 2013, the President offered an amnesty for six commanders of the rebel groups, but this was not successful initially. At a later date, in December 2013, tensions broke out among the factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to the former Vice-President Riek Machar, leader of the 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.

The Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) continued to make slow progress in implementing some of the clauses established in the 2018 South Sudan Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS), while peace negotiations were held in Rome with groups that had not signed the peace agreement, amid an intensification of violence in several states.

After the formation of the RTGoNU in February 2020, the new South Sudanese government continued to make headway in implementing the clauses provided for in the peace agreement amid an increase in domestic criticism and demonstrations during the year that demanded political leaders' resignations due to their failure to implement the peace agreement, the increase in violence and the political stalemate. Early in the year, the UN warned of an escalation of violence, mainly in the states of Central Equatoria, Warrap and Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area, warning that it posed a serious risk of a return to war.⁵

Minimal progress was made during the year to implement the transitional security arrangements, as the objective to create a unified South Sudanese Army failed again. The supervisory body for unifying the armed groups denounced the little progress made in the formation of the unified South Sudanese Army and warned that the poor conditions of the stationing locations and training due to the lack of food and medicine was causing the former combatants to desert. The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) for

the peace agreement also warned on 23 September that the lack of progress in the unification of the South Sudanese Army was aggravating insecurity throughout the country and asked the government to make progress on the matter. In August, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok, acting as the IGAD chairman, failed to negotiate an agreement between President Salva Kiir and SPLA-IO leader Riek Machar on the participation of the signatory groups in the unified South Sudanese Army, due to disagreements in the distribution of cash between the parties. Kiir's party proposed a 60-40% split, while Machar's party insisted on a 50-50% deal.

In **terms of governance**, after more than one year of delays regarding the reconstitution of Parliament (originally scheduled for January 2020), on 10 May President Kiir signed the decree for the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA), which includes members of the groups that signed the peace agreement. The new assembly will have 650 legislators, compared to the previous 450. Similarly, on 25 May, work began to draft a new Constitution in a ceremony attended by all the parties that had signed the 2018 peace agreement, along with representatives of the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations. Although the inauguration of the new Legislative Assembly was scheduled for 9 July, it was finally delayed until 2 August. A total of 588 MPs were sworn in during a ceremony presided over by the chief justice of the Supreme Court and not attended by President Kiir. In fact, 62 MPs were absent due to disputes with the government over the power-sharing agreement. On 14 April, the government announced that the general elections scheduled for 2022 would be postponed until June 2023 due to delays in the implementation of the transition agenda, which provoked criticism from the opposition and civil society.

The greatest progress made during the year was linked to the **political and administrative division of the country**. In January 2021, agreement was reached on the distribution of power in the administrative areas of Abyei, Gran Pibor and Ruweng and the process to appoint the 10 deputy state governors that had begun in December was finally concluded. In February and March, the 10 state governments were formed and the ministers of state, county commissioners, state commission chairs and other civil servants were also appointed. On 4 July, the government issued decrees appointing the new members of the Council of States, which will be made up of 92 people, 25 of which are women. In November, it issued decrees for the reconstitution of state legislatures in nine of 10 states, pending that of the state of Western Bahr El Ghazal.

In other aspects related to implementation of the peace agreement, on 22 January the establishment

Internal disputes and fragmentation within the SPLA-IO threatened the fragile peace in South Sudan

5. See the summary on South Sudan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

of the **Hybrid War Crimes Tribunal** was approved, and on 30 June the consultative process began for the establishment of the **Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission**, in accordance with Chapter 5 of the R-ARCSS 2018.

Peace talks were held with groups that had not signed the R-ARCSS during the year, facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and mediated by the IGAD in Rome. The talks took place separately with each of the two factions of the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA): the one led by Paul Malong and Pagan Amum (comprising SSUF/A and Real-SPLM) and the one headed by Thomas Cirillo (made up of the SSNDA coalition, which includes NAS, SSNMC, NDM/PF and UDRA). After three rounds held in 2020, it was not until July that the fourth round began in Rome, as the government cancelled the planned talks in February due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, on 11 March, the government and the SSOMA faction led by Malong and Amum signed the Declaration of Principles after four days of negotiations in Naivasha (Kenya), on which the basis of the political dialogue in Rome was built. In the talks with the faction led by Thomas Cirillo, on 6 May the NAS withdrew from the round of talks scheduled for 8 and 12 May, accusing the government of involvement in the alleged assassination of General Abraham Wana Yoane (leader of the SSNMC/A and ally of the NAS) in Kampala (Uganda), on 20 April. The round of negotiations scheduled for 28 July in Rome was then cancelled, with Cirillo saying that talks could only resume on the condition of receiving security guarantees for his delegates. However, a new round of talks took place in Rome with the faction led by Malong and Amum between 15 and 18 July, where the commitment was renewed to join the Ceasefire and Temporary Security Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism. A roadmap for the three rounds of talks from September to November was also agreed upon. Attempts to restart talks with the faction led by Cirillo remained stalled. Later, due to attacks on the Juba-Numule road on 17 August, the government suspended the peace talks until hostilities ceased.

In August, there was also fragmentation within the SPLA-IO movement led by Riek Machar, triggering a new crisis in the country. SPLA-IO members announced Machar's dismissal as the leader of the movement and appointed Simon Gatwech Dual as the interim leader in his place, which opened a period of fighting and armed clashes in the state of Upper Nile between forces loyal to Machar and the dissidents commanded by Dual, the self-styled "Kitgwang" faction. The IGAD asked the SPLM-IO to cease their internal hostilities and open a political dialogue. President Kiir began talks with the "Kitgwang" faction in Khartoum, Sudan, on 2 October, which increased tensions within the Transitional Government due to Riek Machar's disagreement. The dissidents, led by Simon Gatwech Dual and General Johnson Olony,

demanding all the government seats currently assigned to Machar's party and tried to negotiate their integration into the South Sudanese Army. Machar rejected these demands, accusing Kiir of fomenting division within the ranks of the SPLM/A-IO. The military coup in Sudan in late October halted the talks in Khartoum and the "Kitgwang" faction refused to continue them in Juba. The coup also weakened the IGAD's ability to guarantee the South Sudan peace deal, as the regional body was chaired by Sudan at the time.

Gender, peace and security

The UN Secretary-General's report on the situation in South Sudan reported the launch of the **South Sudan Women Leadership Forum**, organised under the auspices of South Sudanese Vice President Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior with the support of UNMISS. The forum brought together a diverse group of women from the security sector, faith-based organisations, civil society, academia, politics and the private sector, with the aim of strengthening women's representation in politics and creating a portfolio of qualified women at the national and sub-national levels.⁶

Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions.
Third parties	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, IGAD, UNITAMS
Relevant agreements	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,

6. UN Secretary-General, *The situation in South Sudan*, S/2021/784, 9 September 2021.

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, achieving the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020. However, several armed groups, including the SPLM-N al-Hilu (Two Areas) and the SLM/A-AW (Darfur), refused to sign the peace agreement, holding the talks separately.

During the year, slow progress was made in implementing some of the clauses provided for in the October 2020 Peace Agreement, and peace talks and dialogue initiatives were held in various parts of the country, although the coup d'état of October 2021 once again produced a climate of instability that affected the peacebuilding processes. The UN Secretary-General's report on the situation in Sudan, released in December 2021,⁷ clearly expressed concern about the slow progress in relation to the application of the clauses provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement, as well as the negotiations between the government and the SPLM-N led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu. The report also warned of the challenges for establishing peace posed by the coup d'état of 25 October, stressing that the actions of the coup plotters (the military part of the Transitional Government) undermined the trust of the armed groups that had not signed the agreement, with whom peace talks were being held, increasing the risk of a return to armed violence.

During the year, the implementation of the **provisions related to security provided for in the 2020 Peace Agreement** yielded moderate progress, such as the establishment of the Joint Higher Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. However, the formation of the nationwide Monitoring and Evaluation Commission of the Peace Agreement was still pending, as was the creation of the new unified Sudanese Armed Forces. In June, tensions rose between the civilian and military wings of the transitional Government due to the refusal of the Sudanese Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support

Forces (RSF) to integrate the RSF into the regular forces. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok warned that failure to reform the security sector could lead to a new civil war, imploring the parties to respect the agreement. The armed groups that signed the peace agreement also expressed their frustration at the lack of progress in incorporating their forces into the Sudanese Army.

In terms of governance, at the start of the year the government cabinet was reshuffled, as provided for in the Peace Agreement, which included the integration of the former rebel leaders in the Sovereign Council (three positions), the ministerial cabinet (five portfolios, equivalent to 25% of the Council of Ministers) and the Transitional Legislative Council (25%, equivalent to 75 of the 300 seats). The Sovereign Council of Sudan brought in three members of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel coalition on 4 February. On 8 February, Hamdok announced a new cabinet incorporating seven former SRF rebel chiefs as ministers, including Jibril Ibrahim, leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Darfur, who was appointed Minister of Finance. The establishment of the Transitional Parliament scheduled for 25 February 2021 did not take place as planned and remained pending. Later, in May, the leader of the SLM, Mini Minawi, was appointed governor of Darfur and a month later Hamdok appointed three new governors from the rebel groups for the states of North and West Darfur and Blue Nile, among them Nimir Mohamed Abdel Rahman (vice president of the SLM) in North Darfur, Khamis Abdallah Abkar (leader of an SLM faction) in West Darfur and Ahmed Alumba (former chief of staff of the SPLA-N Agar) in Blue Nile.

On the regional level, mediation initiatives continued to be maintained in **Darfur** during the year to resolve inter-community tensions in the region. Progress was also made in implementing the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians through the deployment of a joint force to maintain security and the provisions included in the Peace Agreement. UNITAMS also reported during the year that it had used its good offices to facilitate inter-community dialogue in the region and with the transitional authorities with a view to building trust and reducing fighting.⁸ In the region of **South Kordofan**, early in the year, the North Sudanese People's Liberation Movement led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu (SPLM-N al-Hilu), which had refused to sign the 2020 Peace Agreement, extended the unilateral cessation of hostilities by five months to continue holding peace negotiations with the Transitional Government, stalled by disagreements between the parties regarding the separation between religion and the state. After months of talks, on 28 March the negotiations between the parties culminated in the signing of the **Declaration of Principles between the Transitional Government of Sudan and the SPLM-N**

7. UN Secretary-General, *Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan*, S/2021/1008, 3 December 2021.

8. See the summary on Sudan (Darfur) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

al-Hilu in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. The text was signed by the head of the Sovereign Transitional Council, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, and the leader of the SPLM-N, Abdelaziz al-Hilu. It describes the establishment of a federal, civil and democratic state in Sudan, in which freedom of religion, belief and religious practices 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. General al-Burhan, Prime Minister Hamdok and SPLM-N leader al-Hilu attended the resumed talks in Juba, mediated by South Sudanese President Salva Kiir. During these talks, the mediation team presented a draft framework agreement to the parties, announcing that the negotiations would resume on 31 May to discuss the document. The talks were suspended in mid-June due to disagreements on aspects relating to the delegation of powers between the central government and the regions and the integration of the country's armed groups into the Sudanese Army.

In the **eastern track of the Peace Agreement**, initiatives continued to be promoted to facilitate an inclusive dialogue to reach a consensus on the pending political issues due to the disaffection of the Beja minority in the Kassala and Red Sea states with the October 2020 Peace Agreement, since the agreement reached with the armed organisations of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile marginalised their communities. Tensions in the region led to the blockade of ports and different key oil pipelines in Port Sudan, the main seaport on the Red Sea, in an attempt to pressure the government to renegotiate the terms of the peace agreement with the region, which called for greater representation.

Finally, the coup d'état on **25 October** revealed and increased tensions between the civil and military wings of the government due to disagreements over reforming the security sector and the unification and integration of all armed groups into the Sudanese Armed Forces. The military coup led to the arrest of the prime minister and several ministers, civil servants and political leaders, as well as the decree of a state of emergency by the president of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. It also prompted the effective dissolution of the Sovereign Council, the Council of Ministers and the Transitional Legislative Council (which had not yet been formed), as well as the dismissal of state governors and the restoration of a Transitional Military Council. The coup plotters declared their adherence to the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace

Agreement. The coup was blasted by the international community, which pressed for a return to constitutional order. Two of the groups that had not signed the Peace Agreement, the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid and the SPLM-N al-Hilu, also condemned the coup. During the following weeks, a dialogue was launched between the Military Junta, the ousted civilian part of the government and other political actors to seek a peaceful and negotiated solution to the crisis. On 11 November, Al-Burhan announced the formation of a reconstituted Sovereign Council in which he would serve as president and Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, commander of the RSF, would serve as vice president. In addition, the same representatives of the military and the RSF participating in the dissolved Council remained, although the civilian members were replaced. The coup triggered a significant fragmentation of the civilian wing of the Transitional Government, the coalition of the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), which signed a new political statement of unity, joined by the National Umma Party and some members of the RSF (the Sudan Liberation Army-Transitional Council, the Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance and the SPLM-N

Malik Agar faction). However, another parallel faction of the FFC emerged, made up of eight signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement, including the JEM and the SLA-Minni Minawi faction. In eastern Sudan, the High Council of Beja Nazirs supported the coup plotters and requested the repeal of the eastern track of the Peace Agreement. As a result, on 16 December the government announced the suspension of the eastern track for two weeks, opening a period of consultations and negotiations to reach a new agreement with the interested parties in eastern Sudan, which was welcomed by the Beja Nazir community, which rejected the eastern track.⁹ Finally, on 21 November, a political agreement was achieved in the country that **reinstated the ousted civilian Prime Minister Hamdok, although military control was consolidated over the government**. However, various Sudanese political parties, armed organisations and civil society, including the FFC, condemned the attempt to legitimise the coup and demanded that the coup plotters leave the government. Moreover, 12 FFC ministers resigned and a civil disobedience campaign was launched in the country.²

Gender, peace and security

Although the Joint Higher Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee were established during the year, **the UN Secretary-General's report on the situation in Sudan** noted that efforts were still needed to ensure the

9. The eastern track of the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement was negotiated with members of the opposition Beja Congress and the United Popular Front for Liberation and Justice, who also signed the Peace Agreement. However, the High Council of Beja Naziris did not participate.

10. See the summary on Sudan in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

inclusion of programmes with a gender perspective and the meaningful participation of women at all levels, while work with women's groups had to continue. UNITAMS reported on the work carried out with women belonging to the SPLM-N al-Hilu faction, aimed at incorporating their demands and opinions on the political process of the peace talks with the government. Those consultations led to the planning of a workshop on Resolution 1325 and women's leadership organised jointly by UNITAMS, UN-Women and UNDP. The workshop, which was to be held in Juba on 30 and 31 October, had to be postponed due to the coup.¹¹

Sudan and South Sudan agreed to temporarily reopen the border crossings on 1 October 2021, which had been closed since the south seceded 11 years before

reopen the border crossings on 1 October 2021, as they had been closed for 11 years, establish free trade zones on the border and reopen river transport. Later, the **Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM)**, the body used by Sudan and South Sudan to discuss security issues of mutual interest, met again in Juba on 8 and 9 September. Co-chaired by the Sudanese and South Sudanese defence ministers, it was the first meeting held by the JPSM since October 2020, when it called on South Sudan to urgently address restrictions on the freedom of movement of staff of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, enforced by local communities in North Aweil county. The parties were also urged to resume the meetings of the Abyei Joint Monitoring Committee, which had not met since late 2017.¹² The JPSM convened again on 21 October to make progress on mutual security issues.

The political process on the **definitive status of Abyei** was relaunched during the year, though no substantive progress was made. On 11 May, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the **Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)** until November, and later pushed it back again to 11 May 2022. It also extended UNISFA's support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). The Security Council also told UN Secretary-General António Guterres of the need to establish a viable exit strategy and ordered that Abyei remain demilitarised and free of any force, including armed local community groups. During the year, the Sudanese government repeatedly asked the UN to replace the Ethiopian contingent of UNISFA, whose 3,158 soldiers and seven police officers account for the majority of the mission's 4,190 troops, due to the rise in tension on the Al-Fashaga border area between Sudan and Ethiopia, which gave rise to sporadic fighting.¹³ Finally, a meeting held on 23 August between the Sudanese minister of foreign relations and the UN special envoy for the Horn of Africa led to agreement on withdrawing the Ethiopian contingent within three months and replacing it with forces from other countries. In this regard, the Security Council proposed to reconfigure UNISFA in the near future, shrinking the maximum authorised number of troops from 3,500 to 3,250 until 15 May 2022 and maintaining the maximum authorised police limit at 640 units.

Prominent events during the year included the **mediating role played by the Southern Sudanese authorities in the ongoing peace negotiations in Sudan** that the

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

Summary:

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

The dynamics of rapprochement between Sudan and South Sudan that began in 2019 were maintained, deepening and strengthening their diplomatic relations during the year. From 19 to 21 August, a summit was held between Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit, where both parties agreed to temporarily

11. UN Secretary-General, *Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan*, S/2021/1008, 3 December 2021.

12. UN Secretary-General, *La situación en Abyei*, S/2021/881, 15 October 2021.

13. See the summary on Sudan-Ethiopia in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

Sudanese government held with the armed movement SPLM-N's al-Hilu faction in the South Sudanese capital, Juba. The South Sudanese government had already facilitated the mediation and the venue on its soil for the historic signing of the October 2020 peace agreement between the Sudanese transitional government and the Sudanese armed groups Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minawi (SLA-MM). Similarly, **the Sudanese government offered to host and mediate the negotiations planned between Salva Kiir's government and the "Kitwang" faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO)** that had parted ways with Riek Machar's leadership. However, the coup in Sudan in late October halted the start of the talks.¹⁴

In relation to the security situation on the border areas, there were some armed inter-community incidents concentrated mainly around Abyei during the year, although in general the area remained stable. May saw the worst incident of the year in Abyei, when an inter-community clash in Dunguob left 12 civilians dead. These episodes are part of the historical tensions between members of the Ngok Dinka communities of South Sudan and Sudanese Misseriya nomadic herders who cross into the area in search of pasture. UNISFA has been promoting peace talks between the two groups for some time, although the incidents continue. The May attack prompted the South Sudanese government to set up a committee to start a dialogue with Sudan on the final status of the disputed Abyei region. The South Sudanese committee is headed by Presidential Security Advisor Tut Gatluak and East African Affairs Minister Deng Alor. A peace conference of representatives of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities had been held in Aweil previously, in February, but failed to reach an agreement. UNISFA helped to organise separate talks with members of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities in October, with the aim of resuming dialogue between the two communities. On 11 August, demonstrators gathered and stormed the headquarters of Sector 1 in Gok Machar, demanding the withdrawal of UNISFA troops. Two days later, similar protests took place outside the War Abar team site, forcing UNISFA to relocate.

Gender, peace and security

UNISFA reported progress during the year in promoting the rights of women to participate equally in decision-making processes, carrying out awareness-raising activities on gender equality and participation with the local administrations of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. UNISFA also worked to strengthen collaboration with women's civil society groups and their networks, as well as with local non-governmental organisations working for women's rights.

Horn of Africa

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

Summary:

The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. Since 1991, more than 15 peace processes with different types of proposals were attempted to establish a central authority. Of note were the Addis Ababa (1993), Arta (2000) and Mbagathi (2002-2004) processes. The centrality of the Somali state had led to a high degree of authoritarianism during Barre's rule, and the different proposals intended to establish a State that did not hold all of the power, a formula widely rejected by Somali society. However, some clans and warlords rejected the federal or decentralized model because it represented a threat to their power. The resolution of the conflict has been complicated by several issues: the power of some warlords who have turned conflict into a way of life; the issue of representation and the balance of power used to establish the future government between the different stakeholders and clans that make up the Somali social structure in conflict for years during Siad Barre's dictatorship; interference by Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the erratic stance of the international community. The rise of political Islam as a possible governing option through the Islamic courts, and the internationalization of the conflict with the arrival of foreign fighters in the armed wing of the courts, al-Shabaab, as well 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, although the end of the presidential mandate in February 2021 without the elections having been held opened up a serious crisis between the Government, the federated states and opposition sectors.

The armed group al-Shabaab remained active throughout the year, as did AMISOM, and no contacts were reported between the Federal Government and al-Shabaab.¹⁵

14. See the summary on South Sudan.

15. See the summary on Somalia in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

The main source of tension centred on the end of the president's term of office in February 2021, without having held new elections, sparking a serious crisis.

The Federal Government's delays in implementing the electoral calendar to hold the parliamentary and presidential elections between December 2020 and February 2021 pushed the date beyond the constitutional limits of the current government, causing serious tension to flare among groups within the government and the federated states and opposition groups. The preparation of the postponed elections and the crisis generated involved many negotiations among the different key actors.

In February, the mandate of President Mohamed "Farmajo" Abdullahi expired, which triggered a constitutional crisis by failing to comply with the agreement reached on 17 September 2020 between the Federal Government and the federated states. The opposition group Council of the Union of Presidential Candidates, which brought together 15 presidential candidates and civil society organisations, demanded the formation of a National Transitional Council that would lead to elections, while the president and the government argued that the Federal Government should remain in power until the elections. The different rounds of negotiations between Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and the opposition bloc, held in February and March to tackle the situation, failed due to the refusal to include the opposition bloc in the National Consultative Council's (NCC) talks on the elections, in which the Federal Government and the federated states are involved. This led to an escalation of violence in February and March and clashes between the security forces and people opposed to Farmajo and his government remaining in power. Clashes even broke out between factions of the federal security forces, with fighting in April between forces loyal to Farmajo and others backing the opposition that killed dozens. In late April, the UN Security Council urged all parties to reject violence and resume political dialogue. UNSOM and other international partners condemned the violence and warned that the fragmentation of the security forces in line with clan divisions could divert them from their main objective, the fight against al-Shabaab. Finally, the international community rejected the proposed two-year extension of the presidential mandate, forcing Farmajo to ask Parliament to annul the extension of the presidential mandate on 28 April and reopen the dialogue with the federal member states to set a new electoral calendar, which was unanimously accepted by Parliament. This eased tension (with the stationing of pro-opposition federal troops) and facilitated the resumption of talks in the NCC on 22 May. An agreement was

The Somali government's delays in implementing the electoral calendar pushed the election date beyond the constitutional limits of the current government, causing serious tension and violence to flare

reached on 27 May, according to which the indirect parliamentary elections would begin within 60 days.

The AU appointed former Ghanaian President John Mahama as its High Representative for Somalia to mediate the electoral crisis, although he resigned days later, after Mogadishu expressed its reservations due to his ties to Kenya, a country with which Somalia has various disagreements. On 29 June, the Federal Government and the federated states agreed on an electoral calendar in which the elections for the Upper House would take place from 25 July and for the Lower House between 10 August and 10 September, after which both chambers would name the new president on 10 October. From then on, the disputes and delays were transferred to the composition of the federal electoral committees and those of the federated states, with multiple delays. On 18 July, the opposition bloc of the 15 presidential candidates expressed concern at the few guarantees of a transparent process and the slowness of the process. In this sense, progress in the application of the agreement of 27 May 2021 on the elections was slow. Elections to the Upper House began on 29 July in all federal member states and 52 of the 54 seats were elected, 14 of which went to women. At 26%, this level of female representation is lower than the minimum quota of 30% women. The National

Consultative Council, composed of the prime minister, leaders of the federated member states, the mayor of Mogadishu and the governor of the Banaadir Regional Administration, continued its regular activities and met in Mogadishu on 21-22 August. Following the meeting, a seven-point statement was issued clarifying procedures for financial administration, the selection of electoral delegates, electoral security and other issues. On 23 August, the opposition group Council of the Union of Presidential Candidates went on record regarding its concern about the role of the federated member states in identifying the elders in charge of selecting the electoral delegates. Finally, the elections to the Lower House began on 1 November. However, some preparations for Lower House elections in some states remained blocked.¹⁶ These elections were supposed to be held on 24 December, but one of the newly elected MPs pointed out on 27 December that only 24 of the 275 MPs had been selected, so the indirect election of the new president of the country was also postponed.

In September, a new dispute arose between President Farmajo and Prime Minister Roble over the failure to deliver a report on the disappearance of one of the agents of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), Ikran Farah Tahlil. On 6 September, Roble fired the director of NISA in response. On 16 September, the

16. UN Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, S/2021/944, 11 November 2021.

president announced the suspension of Roble's powers, specifically with regard to hiring and firing officials. Senior Somali officials mediated, while international partners, including the UN Secretary-General's special representative, contacted all parties to urge them to de-escalate and resolve the dispute. Although the crisis between President Farmajo and Prime Minister Roble seemed to be resolved in October, tensions between them resurged in late December, when the president fired the prime minister on charges of corruption. Roble responded by saying that his firing was unconstitutional and intended to affect the elections under way. The US appealed to both leaders to remain calm and take action to avoid a new escalation of tension and violence between their supporters. Washington also described Roble's dismissal as "alarming" and supported the efforts to hold credible elections.

Gender, peace and security

As part of the electoral process, women's organisations in the country continued to demand compliance with the minimum quota of 30% adopted in the agreements of 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021. Twenty-four per cent of the 329 MPs of the bicameral Somali Parliament were women. Meanwhile, women's safety in guaranteeing their participation in the process, the persistence of sexual violence and the issue of the disappearance of cybersecurity expert Ikran Farah Tahlil, which caused a government crisis, were other reasons for concern.¹⁷ UNSOM, together with UNDP, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund, remained actively involved in supporting efforts to achieve the minimum quota of 30% female parliamentary representation in the 2021 elections, since no specific mechanism has been implemented yet to ensure that this quota is met. Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed visited Somalia on 12 September, and on 28 September she appeared before the Security Council to report on the situation in the country regarding the women, peace and security agenda, discussing women's participation and fulfilment of the 30% quota, women's safety in the elections and the need to finalise the action plan on women, peace and security.¹⁸ In addition to meeting with female leaders, Amina J. Mohammed met with Somali leaders and clan elders, stressing the urgency of strengthening women's representation and participation in politics. In August and September, goodwill ambassadors established to advocate for the application of the 30% quota carried out six missions to the federated member states and spoke with their leaders, clan elders, civil society, aspiring female politicians and electoral management committees to introduce a mechanism to apply the quota in accordance with the agreements.

Maghreb – North Africa

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

Summary:

After the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, Libya has experienced a transition process characterized by multiple political, economic, social, institutional and security challenges and by the presence of numerous armed groups. Since 2014, the North African country has been the scene of increasing violence and political instability, which led to the formation of two major poles of power and authority. Given the developments in the country, mediation efforts led by the UN have tried to find a solution to the crisis. Negotiations have confronted several obstacles due to disputes of legitimacy, the diversity of actors involved, multiple interests at stake and the persistent climate of violence in the country, among other factors. In late 2015, the Libyan Political Agreement or the Skhirat Agreement was signed under the auspices of the UN amidst a climate of persistent divisions and scepticism due to the foreseeable problems in implementing it. In October 2017, the United Nations submitted a new plan to start the political transition and facilitate implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. As part of the Berlin Process (which began in 2019 with the participation of a dozen countries, in addition to the UN, the Arab League, the EU and the AU), intra-Libyan negotiations were launched around three components in 2020: security issues (the responsibility of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission), political affairs (managed by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, or LPDF) and economic aspects. An International Monitoring Committee was also activated. In late 2020, a permanent ceasefire agreement was made official, and a roadmap was announced that provided for elections to be held in December 2021.

Throughout 2021, negotiations continued as part of the peace process promoted by the United Nations, with the support of various external actors to address the increasingly internationalised armed conflict in Libya, where violence escalated significantly in 2019 and 2020. **The ceasefire agreement signed in October 2020 between the main rival military coalitions (the forces of the internationally recognised government (GAN), based in Tripoli, and the forces affiliated with former General Khalifa Haftar (LAN or ALAF), dominant in the eastern part of the country) was honoured throughout 2021 and the number of people killed in clashes fell significantly compared to previous years, although many other forms of violence persisted in the country.**¹⁹ At the

17. UN Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, S/2021/944, 11 November 2021.

18. Security Council Report, "Somalia: Briefing by the Deputy Secretary-General on Women's Political Participation", 28 September 2021.

19. For more information, see the summary on Libya in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

same time, intra-Libyan negotiations continued in three areas: security, politics and the economy, which faced various obstacles and deadlock. In the second quarter, tensions and divisions in the country began to intensify, as well as uncertainties related to the presidential election scheduled for 24 December, which was finally postponed. Along with the intra-Libyan negotiations, facilitated by the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the International Monitoring Committee remained active throughout the year, also as part of the UN-sponsored process, in which the members of the Libyan Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU and EU) participated together with more than a dozen countries. The committee organised its action into four working groups: security, economics, politics and human rights and international humanitarian law.²⁰ After taking up his post as UN special envoy in February, former Slovak Foreign Minister Jan Kubis also held numerous meetings with all Libyan and international actors with an interest in the conflict.

Regarding the evolution of the negotiations and implementation of the security agreements reached in October 2020, despite the general compliance with the ceasefire and the limited progress beset by obstacles, such as the reopening of a strategic coastal road, other key **aspects of the ceasefire agreement were not put into practice. One of the most important was the departure of mercenaries and foreign forces from the North African country.** According to the agreement, these forces had to leave Libyan air space, land and sea within three months after it was signed, meaning January 2021. However, this withdrawal did not take place despite repeated appeals from the United Nations, which asserted that the departure of foreign troops from the country was an essential step for peace and security in Libya. Along these lines, the breach of the arms embargo imposed since 2011, considered “totally ineffective” by a UN expert report published in March, was also questioned. It was not until October 2021 that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which is responsible for intra-Libyan negotiations on security matters, with GAN and ALAF representatives participating, agreed on an “action plan” for the withdrawal of the foreign forces “in balanced and synchronised stages”. However, details of the timetable of the deal were not made public and the proposal was pending consideration by the international actors involved in Libya.²¹ By the end of the year, thousands of foreign fighters remained in Libya, including Turkish troops and mercenaries coming mainly from Russia, Syria, Chad and Sudan. In April, the UN approved the deployment of a team of 60 observers to monitor the ceasefire,

The postponement of the elections planned for 24 December exacerbated the climate of uncertainty about Libya's political future

especially in Sirte, with the first arriving in Libya in October. During the year, this team insisted on the need to prioritise a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process for combatants, reform of the security sector (SSR) and unification of the military forces in Libya. In this vein, as part of the measures aimed at national reconciliation in Libya, hundreds of prisoners (combatants and political detainees) were also released in March, May and September 2021 in different locations around the country.

Despite the difficulties observed in the political negotiations in the previous months, **in early 2021 the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) managed to agree on a mechanism to choose the new national unity government, in charge of leading the country until the national elections on 24 December 2021,**

according to the roadmap defined by the LPDF in late 2020. In February, the LPDF designated Mohamed Younes Menfi to be president of the Presidential Council and Abdul Hamid Mohamed Dbeibah to serve as prime minister. The new unity government (the first in seven years, after the co-existence of two different administrations in the eastern and western parts of the country) was inaugurated in March, after

being approved by the House of Representatives. The cabinet of 35 ministers included five women (17%), despite Dbeibah's promises that women would account for 30%. Starting in the second quarter, however, tensions between various actors began to become apparent, especially regarding the roadmap for the elections. The deliberations within the LPDF revealed deep differences over whether the president should be elected via direct vote or indirectly through the newly elected Parliament; whether a referendum should be held on the draft Constitution before or after the elections; whether the presidential election should be held first and then the legislative elections or vice versa; what the eligibility criteria for candidates should be, especially candidates for president; and other issues. In this context, the second edition of the Berlin Conference on Libya was held on 23 June (the first having taken place in January 2020), with the new Libyan government attending. At the conference, the international actors involved in the process repeated the importance of holding presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2021, as planned in the roadmap. Despite holding meetings in June (Switzerland) and August, the LPDF was unable to agree on a regulatory framework for the elections. **Negotiations on economic issues remained at an impasse for much of the year, especially regarding the unification of the two branches of the Central Bank and the budget.** One of the main issues that blocked the debates was the financing of the forces affiliated with Haftar.

20. The security working group is led by France, Italy, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the AU; the economic one by Egypt, USA and the EU; the political one by Algeria, Germany and the Arab League; and the one on human rights and IHL by the Netherlands and Switzerland.

21. UNSMIL, *United Nations welcomes the JMC's signing of Action Plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces*, 8 October 2021.

Starting in September, tensions intensified. The differences between the unity government and the House of Representatives led to a motion of censure against the Libyan executive branch due to problems arising from budget management. In September and October, the House of Representatives (based in the eastern city of Tobruk) unilaterally approved regulations to regulate the presidential and legislative elections. This framework, which was ratified by House leader Aghila Saleh, an ally of Haftar, without consulting rival forces, was immediately questioned by the authorities and political forces based in the western city of Tripoli, particularly the High Presidential Council. Some criticised the move on the grounds that it violated the schedule set out in the roadmap by establishing that the presidential election would be held before the legislative ones. During the last quarter of the year, tensions and fractures were evident in the unity government, particularly between Prime Minister Dbeibah and ministers from the eastern part of the country, who accused him of marginalising them. In November, the registration of candidates for the presidency added new elements of tension and controversy, including the registration of divisive figures such as Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, one of the sons of Muammar Gaddafi, recently released from prison; former General Haftar, who publicly declared a year ago that Libya was not ready for democracy; and Prime Minister Dbeibah himself, despite his previous promises not to run in the election. Due to the filing of judicial appeals against the various candidates amid mutual accusations of intimidation and bribery, the final list of candidates was still not known one week before the elections. Meanwhile, various actors, including mayors, MPs and members of the military coalition opposed to Haftar, made allegations against the electoral regulations approved by the House of Representatives. Observers and analysts put forth disparate interpretations about whether it was advisable to hold the elections. Some stressed that the vote could have destabilising effects and return the country to war, considering that the internal divisions were too deep for its results to be accepted. Other analysts argued that postponing the elections also carried risks, since a de facto extension of the mandate of the unity government led by Dbeidah could encourage the formation of a new administration in the eastern part of the country.

In this context of uncertainty about the Libyan process, the divisions between the international actors involved also became more apparent. In November, France promoted a new meeting on Libya, where some countries, such as the United Kingdom and Italy, stressed the need to have a consensual normative framework for the elections; while others, such as France and Egypt, were satisfied with the framework in place following the regulations approved by the House of Representatives. Fractures were also seen among United Nations diplomatic staff. The UN Secretary-General urged Libyan representatives to define consensus legislation for the elections and,

just one month before the crucial Libyan vote, accepted the resignation of UN Special Envoy Jan Kubis, who had been criticised for validating the electoral laws ratified by the Libyan Parliament. Moscow then vetoed the appointment of Stephanie Williams as the new UN special envoy, but the US diplomat was appointed by António Guterres as his special advisor. Difficulties also emerged in renewing the UNSMIL mandate, especially due to Russia's reticence about the language used in the resolution to refer to the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. **Finally, just two days before the elections, the Libyan authorities postponed them amid growing political uncertainty and tension in the country** aggravated by the deployment of vehicles and armed men belonging to different forces in Tripoli. The body in charge of organising the vote, the High National Electoral Commission, failed to publish the final list of candidates amid the various disputes and recommended that the House of Representatives postpone the vote for a month. By the end of the year, however, no agreement had been reached on how to resolve the crisis resulting from postponing the elections, nor on the new election date. Another controversial issue was the continuity of the mandate of the unity government, which expired on 24 December, coinciding with the elections. In this context, Stephanie Williams reached out to many different Libyan actors in search of consensus to outline a roadmap that could help to put the situation back on track.

Gender, peace and security

After making their demands for greater participation in the negotiations on the future of Libya in 2020,²² the challenges facing Libyan women's more substantive involvement in decision-making and discrimination against them in arenas of power remained visible throughout 2021. Thus, for example, although a minimum quota of 30% female representation had been required for the new government, the national unity government appointed in March only had five women in the 35-minister cabinet (14%). Political negotiations as part of the LPDF continued to have 23% women. In public statements, the female members of this organisation reminded the government of its unfulfilled commitments. Given the concern expressed by Libyan women's groups, female involvement in the economic aspect of the negotiations was increased (though still limited) from four to seven representatives out of a total of 34 members. In a meeting with the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security in April, the UN special envoy for Libya underlined the need to include women in security-related negotiations as part of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which continued to be made up exclusively of men. The special envoy also insisted on the need for significant female participation in the ceasefire monitoring mechanisms. In the preparations for the elections, the electoral commission received applications from 98 candidates

22. See the summary on Libya in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace talks in focus 2020: report on trends and scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

for the presidency, including two women, although the final list of candidates was not known. Calls were made to the UN Security Council to promote the participation of women and young people in politics, to take action to avoid retaliation, intimidation and coercion against voters and candidates in the elections and to introduce the gender perspective in security sector reform. It was also reported in 2021 that both UNSMIL and UN Women continued to support the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the development of a national action plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Libya.

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

Summary:

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

Negotiations to address the conflict in Western Sahara remained at an impasse during the year amid growing tension after the ceasefire ended in late 2020 and the intensification of hostilities in 2021. Despite the deterioration of the situation, which included acts of violence that caused the death of around 30 people in 2021, an increase in Moroccan repression in the occupied Sahara and bilateral escalation between Morocco and Algeria, among other dynamics,²³ the UN Secretary-General's appointment of a new personal envoy at the end of the year raised some mild expectations about the possibility of reactivating

the political dialogue, paralysed since May 2019 after the resignation of the previous personal envoy for Western Sahara.

After remaining vacant for nearly two and a half years, and after Morocco and the POLISARIO Front rejected 13 candidates, the position of the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy for Western Sahara was filled by the Italian-Swedish veteran Staffan de Mistura, with his 40 years of background and experience in contexts such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The POLISARIO Front gave its approval for De Mistura in May, but Rabat did not do the same until September. Morocco's initial reticence regarding De Mistura was widely attributed to the diplomat's experience in high-intensity wars, as Rabat has tried to lower the profile of the escalation of hostilities in relation to Western Sahara. Others suggested that Rabat was only seeking to delay the nomination. The new personal envoy took on the task of displaying his good offices and working with all relevant interlocutors, including the parties to the conflict, neighbouring countries and other actors. In late October the UN Security Council also approved a one-year renewal of the mandate of the UN mission for Western Sahara (MINURSO), expressing its concern over the violation of the ceasefire and urging a resumption of UN-sponsored negotiations. UN Resolution 2602, approved with Russia and Tunisia abstaining, called on the parties to resume dialogue “without preconditions and in good faith” and asserted the need to reach a “realistic, practicable, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution”.²⁴

The text called for restoring the “round table” format used by previous UN Personal Envoy Horst Köhler, who managed to hold two meetings with this approach in December 2018 and March 2019. Algeria and Mauritania participated in these meetings as observers, in addition to Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. However, the format of possible future negotiations was anticipated as a point of disagreement. According to reports, parts of the POLISARIO Front preferred a return to bilateral negotiations to underline the fact that it is a national liberation struggle.²⁵ **Amid intense tension between Morocco and Algeria, which took shape in various episodes throughout 2021 and led to severing their diplomatic relations in August, Algiers also took a position against restoring Köhler's format. In mid-October, Algeria publicly declared its “formal and irreversible” rejection of the round table format.**²⁶ Meanwhile, Rabat sought to maintain this format to bolster the idea that the POLISARIO Front's position requires Algerian validation. Another point of disagreement was related to the role of the African Union (AU) in the mediation efforts. Some

23. See the summary on Morocco – Western Sahara in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

24. UN Security Council, *Resolution 2602*, S/RES/2602 (2021), 29 October 2021.

25. International Crisis Group, *Relaunching Negotiations over Western Sahara*, Middle East and North Africa Report no.227, ICG, 14 October 2021.

26. Security Council Report, “Western Sahara: MINURSO Mandate Renewal”, 29 October 2021.

within the POLISARIO Front would like a greater role for the regional organisation, while Morocco rejects its intermediation because it thinks it is favourable to the Sahrawi cause and has refused to meet with the AU high representative for Western Sahara.²⁷ In this regard, after agreeing in 2018 that it would limit its activity to supporting UN initiatives, in late 2020 the AU decided to revitalise its role in negotiating the Saharawi issue. In March 2021, the AU Peace and Security Council decided to take specific action, including reopening the AU office in Laayoune, organising a field visit and requesting a legal opinion from the UN on opening various consulates representing African countries in the Moroccan-occupied Sahara. However, opinion was divided on the issue of Western Sahara within the AU. In fact, several African countries (Senegal, Sierra Leone and Malawi) opened diplomatic delegations in Moroccan-controlled Saharawi territory during the year as part of Rabat's policy to consolidate its claim on the area.

Negotiations to address the Western Sahara conflict remained at an impasse amid growing tension after the ceasefire ended in late 2020

Regarding the position of other external actors, particularly the United States, after the Trump administration recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in December 2020 in exchange for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, the new Biden administration maintained an ambiguous position. Although at first a series of changes in US foreign policy were anticipated that would include the Saharawi issue, in practice Washington did not reverse Trump's decision and focused its diplomatic activity on the appointment of the UN Secretary-General's new personal envoy. Apparently, Washington played a decisive role in Rabat's acceptance of De Mistura. The EU maintained its position to support UN actions, without launching its own initiatives. **Throughout 2021, however, the effects of the conflict on relations between Europe and Morocco became clear. Rabat was involved in diplomatic tensions with Germany due to Berlin's decision to promote a meeting on the Sahrawi issue in the UN Security Council in late 2020, as well as with Spain, following the hospitalisation of POLISARIO Front leader Brahim Ghali to be treated for COVID-19.** In retaliation for the Sahrawi leader's entry into Spain, Morocco used immigration as a tool of pressure, allowing more than 9,000 migrants and refugees in Ceuta to enter Spain in May. The crisis prompted the European Parliament to pass a motion against Rabat's policy. Later, in September, the European Court of Justice again rejected (for the fifth time) the EU's agricultural and fisheries agreement with Morocco for including Western Saharan territory.

Despite the decision, top European and Moroccan diplomats were quick to point out that they would continue to seek formulas to strengthen bilateral cooperation. Given these developments, some analysts argued that the EU has subordinated its policy on the issue of Western Sahara to its desire to maintain good relations with Morocco for its role in controlling migratory flows, rooting out terrorism and providing gas from North Africa. However, the European Court of Justice's ruling was interpreted as an endorsement of Sahrawi demands, especially after the Trump administration's statement on Moroccan sovereignty in Western Sahara.²⁸

In this context, various analysts identified challenges and recommendations for the UN mediation efforts to be led by De Mistura. The challenges identified included Morocco's more defiant attitude after receiving support from the Trump administration and the disillusionment of broad swathes of Sahrawi society regarding the diplomatic track after decades of deadlock and their interest in armed struggle as an alternative to challenge the status quo. Thus, for example, sources from the POLISARIO Front ruled out any new ceasefire as a precondition for negotiations.²⁹ In his annual report on Western Sahara, published in October, the UN Secretary-General also warned of a crisis of confidence between the parties, exacerbated by unilateral and symbolic actions.³⁰ Suggestions to address the dispute included the need to promote de-escalation, implement confidence-building measures aimed at restarting the peace talks and consider action to prevent tensions between Morocco and Algeria from affecting any possible dialogue. **Various analysts agreed on the risks of ignoring the conflict and its potential destabilising effects and on the importance of external actors committing and supporting the United Nations' mediation efforts.** Some in the EU and the UN argued that a new approach would require countries such as France and the US to give up their diplomatic cover for Morocco.³¹

Gender, peace and security

In general terms, the UN upheld its rhetorical commitment to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in its declarations on Western Sahara. In 2021, the MINURSO mission had 196 troops, of which 43 were women. This represented 24% and was an increase compared to the 5% of women in MINURSO five years ago.

27. ICG (2021), op. cit.

28. Hugh Lovatt, *Western Sahara, Morocco, and the EU: How good law make good politics*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 30 September 2021.

29. ICG (2021), op. cit.

30. UN Secretary-General, *Report of the secretary-general – Situation concerning Western Sahara*, S/2021/843, 1 October 2021.

31. Hugh Lovatt and Jacob Mundy, *Free to choose: A new plan for peace in Western Sahara*, 26 May 2021.

Southern Africa

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

Summary:

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

After a year marked by the health restrictions provoked by COVID-19, which had a significant impact on the implementation of the clauses of the 2019 Maputo peace agreement between the Mozambican government and RENAMO, progress was made in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme (DDR) for combatants and in dismantling former guerrilla military bases in 2021. Meetings and negotiations were also held with the RENAMO Military Junta, a dissident group that had opposed the peace agreement. While the DDR process provided for in the peace agreement began in July 2019, with plans to demobilise 5,221 former RENAMO guerrilla fighters and close the 17 military bases in the centre of the country, the impact of the pandemic and the lack of funds delayed its goals. In 2020, only around 10%

During the year, significant progress was made in implementing the 2019 peace agreement in the central region of Mozambique

of former combatants had been demobilised and only one military base had been closed. The impossibility of pursuing the activities planned in the DDR due to the restrictions imposed during the pandemic not only extended the planned timetable, but it also increased the logistical costs of the programme, since the former RENAMO combatants had to spend more time on their bases. This led Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi to announce in the first half of 2021 that the demobilisation and reintegration process would not conclude in August, as planned, due to the lack of funds. In June, RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade reported that demobilised former RENAMO combatants in the provinces of Sofala, Manica and Inhambane had not received the subsidies provided for in the agreement for three months. Even with all these drawbacks, in mid-August the UN special envoy for Mozambique and president of the Contact Group for the peace talks in Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni, reported significant progress during 2021. He said that 2,708 former combatants (156 women, 2,552 men) of the 5,221 planned (52%) had been demobilised and that 10 of the 17 former insurgents' bases had been closed. In early December, Manzoni said that the demobilisation process would continue in the Murrupula district, in northern Nampula province, hoping that approximately 63% of the ex-combatants would be demobilised by the end of the year.

Furthermore, as part of the development measures provided for in the Peace Agreement, the **Programme for the consolidation of local development for peace (DELPAP)** was launched in July. It has a budget of 26 million euros and will run for four years. DELPAZ aims to improve economic opportunities in communities affected by the conflict in the central provinces of Sofala, Manica and Tete, with a special focus on women, youth and other disadvantaged groups, including ex-combatants and their families.

During the first half of the year, RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade announced that he had not been in contact with the **RENAMO Military Junta (JMR)** led by Mariano Nhongo, a RENAMO dissent splinter group that refused to recognise the peace agreement of August 2019, and so was unable to bring them to the negotiating table. Although Nhongo had announced a unilateral ceasefire by the JMR on 23 December 2020 to facilitate negotiations with the Mozambican government, in January the truce was broken when a JMR faction attacked a truck convoy in Sofala province. The government continued to offer amnesty to JMR members who demobilised. However, Mariano Nhongo ruled out amnesty as a first step towards negotiations with the government and threatened to make governance impossible in the northern and central provinces if the authorities continued to ignore the JMR's demands. Meanwhile, prominent members of the JMR deserted at different times of the year and demobilised, highlighting the existing tensions within

the RENAMO dissident faction. On 11 October, Nhongo was killed in fighting between the Mozambican Army and the JMR in the district of Cheringoma, in the eastern province of Sofala. The death of the JMR leader prompted RENAMO to once again invite all dissident members to lay down their arms and return to the party, opening new horizons for demobilising the JMR members. At the end of the year, Mirko Manzoni announced that more than 85 members of the JMR had deserted during the year, joining the DDR process provided for in the 2019 Maputo Agreement and describing it as a significant step towards peacebuilding in the central region.

Finally, in relation to the armed conflict affecting the country in the northern **province of Cabo Delgado**, although there are no known negotiations between the government and the rebels, **President Nyusi offered amnesty to the jihadist insurgents at various times of the year, promising that there would be no reprisals taken against those who laid down their arms.**

Gender, peace and security

From 24 to 26 May, the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, officially visited Mozambique to promote women's leadership in the women, peace and security agenda. During her visit, Mlambo-Ngcuka met with the Mozambican Minister of Gender, Children and Social Actions, Nyelete Mondlane Brooke, as well as with different actors and civil society organisations, to analyse the challenges that women face in implementing the women, peace and security agenda in the country and their participation in the ongoing peace process in the central region and in the response to the humanitarian crisis in the north. Mlambo-Ngcuka also participated in a high-level dialogue on the 1325 agenda and humanitarian action in Mozambique, demanding greater political leadership for women. She also called for action to guarantee the security and rights of women and girls at high risk in the province of Cabo Delgado.

West Africa

Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	
Negotiating actors	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)
Third parties	Catholic Church, civil society organisations, Switzerland, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Relevant agreements	Buea Declaration (1993, AAC1), ACC2 Declaration (1994), National Dialogue (30th September-4th October, 2019)

Summary:

After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern British Cameroon (20% of the country's population) to feel politically and economically marginalised by state institutions, which are controlled by the French-speaking majority. These movements demand a return to the federal model that existed between 1961 and 1972. In 1972, a referendum was held in which a new Constitution was adopted that replaced the federal state with a unitary one and granted more powers to the president, so the southern part of British Cameroon (known as Southern Cameroons) lost its autonomy and was transformed into the two current provinces of North West and South West. In 1993, representatives of the English-speaking groups held the All Anglophone Conference (AAC1) in Buea, which resulted in the Buea Declaration (which demanded constitutional amendments to restore the federation of 1961). The AAC2 was held in Bamenda in 1994, which concluded that if the federal state were not restored, Southern Cameroons would declare independence. Begun over sectoral issues in 2016, the conflict worsened in late 2017, with 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. None of the initiatives to date (the Anglophone AAC3 general conference to be held since 2018, the Swiss track with HD facilitation started in 2019 and the National Dialogue promoted by Paul Biya's government in 2019) has made substantive progress.

Although contacts between the government and political-military groups to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict in the country's two western regions remained deadlocked,³² many civil society initiatives were launched by civil society actors and political-military groups to relaunch the talks with the government. Organisations like the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN), the Southwest/Northwest Women's Task Force, the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM), the Cameroonian Catholic Church and the Justice and Peace Service (JPS), to name a few examples, were very active in promoting local peacebuilding initiatives, despite the risks of being arrested and detained by the security forces or kidnapped and tortured by separatists. According to various analyses, the international efforts led by Switzerland and the Swiss think tank HD were hampered by deep divisions within the separatist movement and by the government's denial, as it argues that the conflict is an internal matter. This has made it

32. Bone, R. Maxwell, "Cameroon's elusive peace: Rivals, rifts, and secret talks", *The New Humanitarian*, 29 March 2021.

difficult for external mediators to intervene, so it has not been possible to give continuity to the dialogue channels opened in 2020.³³ In this sense, in early January the Vatican sent Secretary of State and Cardinal Pietro Parolin to the Anglophone regions in the first visit by a foreign authority since the beginning of the crisis in 2016, according to the host, Archbishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya in the Bamenda Cathedral (northwestern region), from where he launched a call for dialogue between the warring parties to put an end to the conflict.³⁴

In January, the US Senate agreed on a resolution demanding that the parties end the violence, respect human rights, establish sanctions and seek political dialogue. Washington was also supposed to raise the issue to the UN, but did not do so until late 2021. In addition to this resolution, in March a Canadian parliamentary committee urged its government to promote multilateral initiatives to achieve a cessation of hostilities, while announcing that it would provide funding to the Swiss government's initiative with the support of HD, stalled since 2020.³⁵

As he took office, new US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken voiced his concern about the violence in Cameroon. In May, during the G7 summit in London, Blinken met with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian to discuss the issue. On 7 June, Blinken announced the restriction of visas on the individuals responsible for undermining a peaceful solution to the conflict. Previously, in April, the UN Secretary General said that sexual violence had been used as a weapon on war in the conflict, citing the case of 24 women raped during a military operation in February 2020. However, although France expressed discomfort with the situation in the country, it did not take any official steps and the AU remained silent on the issue, giving the leading role to CEMAC, a regional organisation that includes other members like the CAR, Equatorial Guinea, Chad and the Republic of the Congo, which have militarily tackled their own internal problems.

In what is considered the main event held to date between civil society and independence organisations, between 29 October and 1 November, representatives of civil society, traditional authorities, religious leaders, women's and youth groups and political-military separatist movements met in Toronto (Canada)³⁶ to find common ground and iron out the differences between them so they can prepare for potential talks with the

government. The parties agreed to collaborate within a context of respect for human rights, free access to education and humanitarian aid. The discussion took place according to the rules of Chatham House, so it was not publicly revealed who attended or what the different actors present said. The leaders attending the meeting, which was organised by the CDN,³⁷ repeated their firm determination to fulfil the aspirations of the population of the English-speaking regions through dialogue and negotiations with international mediators to address

the root causes of the crisis there. Also attending the event were leading peace and conflict resolution practitioners from renowned institutions in Ireland, Canadian and US universities. Months earlier, in March, in an interview with *Jeune Afrique*, the imprisoned Sisiku leader Julius Ayuk Tabe, of the IG Sisiku faction, explained the conditions for relaunching the peace process, which should include the quartering of troops, amnesty for members of separatist movements and talks with international mediators held in a neutral location.

Meanwhile, on 21 September, the International Day of Peace, thousands of people demonstrated in the main cities of the English-speaking provinces and in other parts of the country, such as the capital, Yaoundé, demanding peace and the establishment of a ceasefire between the government and the armed groups.³⁸ The demonstration in Yaoundé was organised by Esther Njomo Omam, the director of the NGO Reach Out Cameroon, which in turn is part of the international network Women Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), Therese Abena Ondo, who made a call for peace, and civil society activist Rose Mary Etakah. Finally, in November it was made public that the Swiss organisation HD and the Swiss government were trying to relaunch the mediation initiatives promoted in 2020.³⁹

Gender, peace and security

Faced with the stagnation of the peace talks between the government and the armed groups and the persistence of violence, many local peacebuilding initiatives were launched, not only in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon, but also in other areas of the country, led by civil society, local human rights organisations and the Church. Most of these initiatives were led by women. An example of this was the Women's National Convention for

There were local civil society initiatives, including from women's organisations and from political-military groups to relaunch the negotiating process with the government of Cameroon

33. Craig, Jess, "Caught in the middle: Peace activists in Cameroon try to end a brutal war", *The New Humanitarian*, 1 June 2021.

34. Vatican News, "Cardinal Parolin in Cameroon: 'Faith is greater than intimidation'", *Vatican News*, 2 February 2021.

35. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2020: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

36. Esono Nwenfor, Boris, "Cameroon: Southern Cameroonians Want Swiss-Led Mediation Process To Be Multilateral After Toronto Retreat", *Panafrican Visions*, November 2021

37. The *Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation* (CDN) is an international non-governmental organisation that aims to facilitating dialogue and negotiations to end the war in the Anglophone south of Cameroon. The CDN is made up of more than 20 partner organisations around the world that advocate for an end to the war.

38. Kindzeka, Moki Edwin, "Cameroonians Call for Cease-Fire in Conflict Zones on Peace Day", *VOA*, 21 September 2021.

39. Africa Intelligence, "CAMEROON : Swiss mediators relaunch stalled peace talks with anglophone separatists", *Africa Intelligence*, 8 November 2021.

Peace that took place at the Yaoundé Conference Centre between 28 and 31 July.⁴⁰ For three days, a thousand women from all over the country met for the first time to reflect on the violence suffered in the country and the ways to build peace. A committee of 38 Cameroonian civil society organisations working for peace and human rights in Cameroon was responsible for the convention. Backing the convention were organisations such as the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM), active in all 10 regions in the country and chaired by Yvonne Muma. International experts such as Rosa Emilia Salamanca (CIASE), from Colombia, and high-ranking politicians such as the Minister of Women and Family, Marie Abena Ondo, also participated in the convention. A result of the convention was the *Women's Call for Peace*,⁴¹ which demanded that key actors end hostilities in line with the AU Silencing the Guns initiative, promote dialogue and ensure equal female participation in the peace process in compliance with Resolution 1325.

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

Summary:

The armed conflict affecting Mali since early 2012 resulted in an institutional crisis –which materialized in a military coup– and Tuareg and jihadist groups progressively taking control of the northern part of the country. Since the conflict started, several international actors, including ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, have promoted initiatives leading to re-establishing the constitutional order and recovering Mali's territorial integrity. In parallel with the militarist approaches to face the crisis, exploratory contacts were held with some armed groups (MNLA and Ansar Dine) to find a negotiated way out of the crisis. Despite the announcement of a commitment to the cessation of hostilities from these insurgent groups, at the start of 2013 an offensive by Ansar Dine precipitated an international military intervention led by France. In May 2014 a new negotiation process was started, led by Algeria, where the Mali Government negotiated on both sides with the two coalitions created by the armed groups: the Coordination of Azawad Movements (groups favourable to a federalist/secessionist formula), and the Platform (groups supporting the Government). In July 2015 the signing of a peace agreement was made possible between the Government, the CMA and the Platform, in

Algiers. The jihadist groups were left aside in the negotiation table, which kept alive the hostilities from these groups in the new context of implementing the clauses present in the peace agreement.

During the year, very little headway was made in the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement. Though some agreements were reached in the central region of the country, they failed to stop the violence. With regard to the **2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali**, the Carter Center, which acts as an independent observer of the implementation of the agreement, released its first follow-up report of the year, covering the period between January and July 2021 and indicating that six years after it was signed, the efforts of the signatory parties to relaunch it in the first half of 2021 had produced few tangible results.⁴² Along the same lines, the UN Secretary-General released his report on the situation in Mali in 2021.⁴³ The events that shaped implementation of the agreement during the year included the assassination of Sidi Brahimi Ould Sidat, president of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and a key figure in the peace process since 2015 on 13 April; and the coup d'état on 24 May that ousted the first transitional government presided over by Bah N'Daw and led by Prime Minister Moctar Ouane. The coup was led by Colonel Assimi Goïta, who until then had served as transitional vice president and had led a coup d'état in August 2020. Goïta proclaimed himself the new president of the country and appointed Choguel Kokalla Maïga as prime minister. Added to the uncertainty of these events were the disagreements between the parties on key notable issues, such as the reorganisation of the reconstituted security and defence forces, including the quotas and ranks of the movements' ex-combatants to be integrated into the national forces; the next steps to take in the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process; the form that decentralisation will take and greater representation for the northern population in national institutions; and the implementation of the first development projects (specific peace dividends of the agreement) in the north and other regions of Mali.

Although the disagreements and the climate of instability shaped how the peace agreement was implemented, there was also **some progress during the year**. The parties made progress on several interim measures, including the appointment of interim authorities at the communal level in the Taoudeni and Menaka regions. The planned phase of the DDR programme was also completed with the integration of 422 ex-combatants, for a total of almost 1,750, which means that the goal of integrating 1,800 former combatants, established in

40. ICAN Peace Network, "Cameroon's First Women's National Peace Convention: "We Build Peace, Piece by Piece", *ICAN Peace Network*, 12 August 2021.

41. Esuwono Nenfor, Boris, "Cameroon: Women Want Greater Role in the Peace Process", *Panafrican Visions*, August 2021.

42. 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*, August 2021.

43. UN Secretary-General, *The situation in Mali*, S/2021/844, 1 October 2021; UN Secretary-General, *The situation in Mali*, S/2021/1117, 4 January 2022.

November 2018, has practically been met. Likewise, in June the Reconstituted Armed Forces Battalion (BATFAR) was formally created in Kidal. BATFAR has already begun to operate in the regions of Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Ménaka. The parties also made headway in implementing the Special Development Strategy for the Northern Regions of Mali (SSD-RN), which will be financed through the Sustainable Development Fund (FDD). In April, the FDD steering committee met for the second time since its creation in 2018, approving 16 development projects with a budget of around 69 million dollars. Nine of these projects will be developed in the northern regions, four in the centre and three in the south. On 21 October, the Minister of Economy and Finance presided over a signing ceremony for its implementation, which heralded an important step forward in the application of Chapter Four of the agreement, related to socioeconomic and cultural development. Other aspects to highlight during the year were the reactivation of the Agreement Supervision Committee (CSA), which had been inoperative since 2015, and the creation in June of a working group for the agreement, called “G-5”, which brings together the four ministers of the armed movements that signed the agreement under the auspices of the Minister of National Reconciliation, Peace and Social Cohesion.

In the central region of the country, different measures were put in place to try to mitigate the violence, such as inter-community ceasefire agreements in Mopti and Ségou, **and to create spaces for dialogue.** In March, Minister of National Reconciliation Ismaël Wagué met with Youssouf Toloba, the leader of the Dogon self-defence group Dana Ambassagou, in hopes of easing inter-community tensions and reducing clashes. 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, which was broken on 3 July. In mid-June, MINUSMA reported the implementation of a UN plan in the central region, which included good offices initiatives, the rehabilitation of infrastructure, reconciliation between communities and the promotion of trust in state institutions to help to stabilise the region. 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, the communities of Ogosagu Peulh and Ogosagu Dogon, where two major attacks in 2019 and 2020 killed 192 civilians, and 10 other Peulh and Dogon communities in the municipalities of Bankas and Dimbal, signed a local

reconciliation agreement. However, even though the various efforts managed to reduce violence at some times and in some contexts, they were insufficient and violence continued in the central region throughout the year.

The peace process faced major challenges, including increased instability in the central region; the coup d'état in May; the predictable sanctions after the violation of the transition, as both ECOWAS and the AU suspended Mali from their organisations and threatened sanctions; uncertainty about the continuation of anti-terrorist operations after France announced the end of Operation Barkhane and suspended joint military operations with Malian forces after the coup d'état; and the arrival of Russian soldiers, allegedly paramilitaries of the Wagner Group, although the Malian government denied this.⁴⁴

Gender, peace and security

In terms of gender, peace and security, progress was reported in the inclusion of women in the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) and its subcommittees. The Carter Center's report noted that since November 2020, nine women have joined the CSA, in what was considered an important step towards implementing mediation and building a more inclusive process. At the CSA meeting held in February in Kidal, the parties repeated their commitment to fully include women

in their deliberations, as well as to add three more women to the CFS, along with another 12 to be included in the subcommittees. However, the Security Council report on the situation in Mali indicated that these 15 new nominations had not yet been made due to disputes between the two factions of Platform. The report also noted that work continued on the creation of an independent observatory for women in order to monitor their participation in political and peace processes and assess the repercussions of the application of the agreement on vulnerable populations. At the end of the year, however, it had still not been established. On 28 October, “women's situation rooms” were launched, with the participation of 200 women from civil society organisations and political parties. This mechanism seeks to help to establish peace, providing a physical space and a framework to work with communities, especially with women and young people, to promote equal access and female participation in political and electoral processes during the transition period. By the end of the year, eight rooms had been created, one in Bamako and others in seven regions of Mali.

The situation of political instability in Mali and disagreements between the parties prevented progress in implementing the clauses of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement

44. See the summary on Mali in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

3. Peace negotiations in America

- Three negotiating processes took place in the Americas: two in Colombia and one in Venezuela, accounting for an 8% of the negotiations held in 2021.
- All the negotiating processes in the Americas had third-party support.
- In Venezuela, the government and the opposition resumed negotiations in Mexico, facilitated by Norway.
- The Colombian government announced that it had made indirect contact with the ELN through the Catholic Church and the United Nations, but ruled out resuming direct dialogue with the guerrilla group.
- Five years have passed since the peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC and its implementation remains uneven.
- Despite the difficulties and delays, the implementation of the gender approach included in the peace agreement in Colombia continued, although at a much slower rate than the application of the agreement as a whole.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in the Americas in 2021, 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 2021.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2021

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	Catholic Church, United Nations, OAS
Venezuela	Government, political and social opposition	Norway, Russia, The Netherlands, International Contact Group

3.1 Negotiations in 2021: regional trends

In 2021, the Americas were the scene of three negotiating processes, one less than in 2020 and two less than in 2019. Of the three processes analysed, two took place in Colombia and one in Venezuela, while the process in Haiti was considered to have broken down. The fifth anniversary since the peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC was celebrated and an assessment of its implementation over the previous five years included verification of its progress, as well as the continuity of several of the institutions it had established, such as the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, though many obstacles remained in a year marked by social protests in the country. Though the negotiating process between the Colombian government and the guerrilla group ELN was not officially resumed, the government revealed that contact had been made with the ELN in Cuba through the United Nations, the Catholic Church and the OAS. In Venezuela, talks were resumed between the government and the opposition in a highly political process aimed at resolving the socio-political crisis.

The **parties** directly involved in the different negotiating processes all included the national government, except for the Colombian government, which did not negotiate directly with the ELN, since it stuck to its position of rejecting any formal negotiating process until the ELN accepts its conditions. The ELN was the only active armed group in the Americas to demand talks to resolve the conflict. The main parties involved in the process to implement the agreement with the FARC included the Colombian government and the political party that emerged from the FARC-EP demobilisation process set out in the peace agreement. The most notable development in Venezuela was the resumption of talks between the government and the opposition. A large part of these talks were held in Mexico in a process that was mediated by Norway and accompanied by Russia and the Netherlands.

The three active negotiating processes in the Americas were mediated or facilitated by **third parties**, which accompanied the talks between the parties in different formats. In the process to implement the peace

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America in 2021



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2021

agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC, the accompaniment format established in the agreement was maintained. Thus, the international actors involved in the process of verifying implementation of the agreement were the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, headed by Carlos Ruiz Massieu as the UN Secretary-General's special representative and head of mission, and the International Component of Verification, formed by the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute and the Technical Secretariat of the Notables, which was executed by the Colombian organisations CINEP and CERAC. In accordance with the mission's mandate, it was in charge of verifying the points of the agreement related to the economic, social and political reintegration of the FARC into civilian life, security guarantees and the fight against criminal organisations and conduct. The Kroc Institute and the Notables presented their follow-up reports on the implementation of the agreement.

After the previous facilitation scheme in the negotiating process between the government of Colombia and the ELN broke down, in which different facilitation roles were played by Brazil, Norway, Cuba and Chile as guarantors and by Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy as companions, it emerged during the year that Bogotá had requested support to resume the talks from the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor

The three negotiating processes in the Americas were mediated or facilitated by third parties, which accompanied the talks between the parties in different formats

Montemayor, the UN Secretary-General's special representative in the country, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and the head of the OAS verification mission, Roberto Menendez. Thus, several meetings were reportedly held at the headquarters of the apostolic nunciature and in Havana between Father Darío Echeverri, as a representative of the Vatican, the lawyer Carlos Ruiz, who had previously been a legal advisor in the peace negotiations between the ELN and the government of Juan Manuel Santos, and the representative of the UN

Secretary-General. Although it was later announced that the process had once again failed, the ELN acknowledged that indirect contacts were being maintained through the Vatican and the United Nations. In Venezuela, a new negotiating process was also begun with a new format of third-party accompaniment. The negotiating process took place in Mexico as the host country, where several rounds were held, and was facilitated by Norway and accompanied

by Russia and the Netherlands. Thus, all the active negotiating processes received external international support, both from intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and the OAS and from governments, such as Norway, Russia and the Netherlands, and other actors such as the Catholic Church. A notable diversity of tasks and roles were performed, from the facilitation of indirect and exploratory contacts between the Colombian government and the ELN, to the facilitation of direct talks between the parties in Venezuela and the

verification of agreements already signed between the Colombia government and the FARC.

The **negotiating agendas** reflected the particular aspects of each context and process, although, as in previous years, they were all linked in one way or another to the governance of the respective countries and the political, economic and social transformations underlying the different conflicts. In Colombia, the discussions focused on aspects related to implementation of the different points of the peace agreement and the functioning of the institutions it established, again in a context of great insecurity and threats against former FARC combatants, social leaders and human rights defenders. Although the specific content of the exploratory contacts with the ELN were not made public, Bogotá repeated that it was sticking to its demands as a condition for official talks to start: a halt to kidnapping and the release of all kidnapped people and an end to all criminal acts such as recruiting minors, planting antipersonnel mines, kidnapping and attacking energy infrastructure. Another issue that came up was the construction of architecture for potential future talks. The ELN maintained its position that any talks should begin without preconditions. In the memorandum of understanding that led to the start of formal talks in Venezuela between the government and the opposition, an agenda was established with the following points: political rights for all, electoral guarantees for all and an election timetable for observable elections, the lifting of sanctions and restoration of the right to assets, respect for the constitutional state of law, political and social coexistence, the renunciation of violence, reparations for victims of violence, protection of the national economy and social protection measures for the Venezuelan people and guarantees of implementation, monitoring and verification of what was agreed.

Developments in the negotiating processes in the Americas were more positive than in previous years, since new avenues of dialogue were explored in some of the contexts in which the talks had stalled in previous stages. However, all the processes encountered multiple obstacles, including mistrust between the parties and the lack of agreement on central aspects of the agenda. The announcement of indirect exploratory contacts revitalised the process with the ELN after it was suspended in 2019. However, at the end of the year the main actors publicly voiced opposing views regarding the continuity of the negotiations and the government denied that they were still active. In Venezuela, the dialogue resumed with a new format and setting, but it was also interrupted in October and its continuity was not clear going into 2022.

The **gender, peace and security** agenda was not discussed in any of the various negotiating processes, except for the implementation of the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government.

Despite the difficulties and delays, the gender approach included in the peace agreement continued to be implemented, although at a much slower rate than the application of the agreement as a whole. Women's civil society organisations continued their work of supervising implementation of the gender approach. Although the gender, peace and security agenda did not inform the content of the talks in Venezuela, several women participated in the negotiating delegations of both the Venezuelan government and the opposition.¹

3.2 Case study analysis

South America

Colombia (FARC)	
Negotiating actors	Government, FARC
Third parties	UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)
Relevant agreements	The Havana peace agreement (2016)
Summary:	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 implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC continued in 2016, although difficulties persisted in achieving full compliance with the agreement. On the fifth anniversary of the peace agreements, there were many assessments of the progress made in the application of the agreement and of the pending challenges. The Kroc Institute, which has a mandate to verify the status of implementation of the peace agreement, pointed out that five years after it was signed, only 30% of the 578 provisions contained in the agreement had been fully implemented and an intermediate degree of implementation had been achieved for 18% of those provisions. In addition, 37% had been implemented at a minimal level and application of 15% of the provisions of the agreement had not yet begun. The Kroc Institute also analysed the ethnic and gender approaches, stating that 13% of the provisions of the ethnic approach had been fully implemented and the same number intermediately, while implementation of 12% of the provisions with a

1. See the list of signatories of the *Agreement for the ratification and defence of the sovereignty of Venezuela over Guayana Esequiba*. 6 September 2021.

gender approach was complete, compared to 15% to an intermediate degree. The points of the agreement that had achieved a greater degree of implementation were related to the end of the conflict and the mechanisms of implementation, verification and non-repetition, while the points related to solving the problem of illicit drugs and the victims of the conflict were already in an intermediate stage of implementation. The Kroc Institute reported that implementation of the points on comprehensive rural reform and political participation had barely begun, since most of the provisions had not yet started or were in a minimal state of implementation. Specific achievements in 2021 include final approval of the Special Transitory Districts for Peace, provided for in the peace agreement so that the areas most affected by the armed conflict could enjoy greater political representation. For two election cycles, these constituencies will allow the election of MPs from among people recognised by the Single Victim Registry encompassing 170 municipalities in candidacies that can only be registered by victims' organisations, peasant organisations and social organisations.

The work of the different transitional justice institutions also continued. The mandate of the Truth Commission was extended for nine months since it was scheduled to end in November and the final report had not been completed. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace continued its work, which was especially focused on seven macro-cases: the taking of hostages and other serious deprivations of liberty committed by the FARC-EP; the territorial situation of Ricaurte, Tumaco and Barbacoas (Nariño); killings and forced disappearances presented as combat fatalities by government agents; the territorial situation of the Urabá region; the territorial situation in the region of northern Cauca and southern Valle del Cauca; the victimisation of members of the Patriotic Union; and the recruitment and use of girls and boys in armed conflict. Significant progress was made in the macro-case related to false positives, as 21 soldiers admitted their responsibility for the murder of civilians who were accused of being guerrilla fighters. This acknowledgment was part of the macro-case investigating these murders, specifically the killing and forced disappearance of 120 people in El Catatumbo and 127 on the Caribbean coast. The highest-ranking military officer to acknowledge his involvement in these false positives was General Paulino Coronado. The JEP had previously indicated that at least 6,400 civilians presented as "combat casualties" died between 2002 and 2008 under President Álvaro Uribe's administration as a result of the action of government military forces. Other high-ranking military officers such as Colonel Publio Hernán Mejía and Colonel Juan Carlos Figueroa denied having any responsibility for what happened.

As part of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, 21 Colombian soldiers acknowledged responsibility for the murder of civilians in cases known as false positives

They could face prison sentences of up to 20 years if convicted and were referred to the Investigation and Accusation Unit of the JEP. Those who did recognise their responsibility will participate in a restorative process that will include a hearing to acknowledge the truth and take responsibility. The JEP ordered the government to adopt precautionary measures to protect ex-combatants and their families from violence due to the homicides, threats and displacement suffered since the peace agreement was signed. In addition, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced it was closing the investigation into the crimes committed during the armed conflict in the country, delegating this task to the national courts, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. However, the Colombian judicial authorities must inform the ICC about the progress made on transitional justice in the country.

Gender, peace and security

The implementation of the specific gender measures contained in the agreement continued, as did the work of the mechanisms established to monitor the gender approach, such as the Special Instance of Women to Help to Guarantee the Gender Approach in the Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement, which presented its follow-up report on the first four years of implementation. In addition, various women's civil society organisations analysed the status of implementation of the specific measures with a gender focus in the agreement. The women's organisations said that in keeping with the same trend since the peace agreement was signed, the gender approach was being implemented at a slower rate than the agreement as a whole, given Bogotá's lack of commitment not only to the agreement in general, but specifically to this approach. The GPAZ working group, which brought together several women's organisations, presented its implementation follow-up report, which stated that 26% of the 109 measures analysed had not advanced or had made minimal progress, especially those related to rural reform and political participation, confirming the downtrend in implementation observed since 2018. Slightly more than half (54%) of the measures analysed had experienced partial progress and 20% had made adequate progress in their implementation. Thus, for example, the GPAZ said that changes aimed at reducing inequality between men and women in access to land ownership were not taking place, as established in the peace agreement on comprehensive rural reform. Victims' organisations continued to demand that the JEP open a specific macro-case on sexual violence committed during the armed conflict.

Colombia (ELN)	
Negotiating actors	Government, ELN
Third parties	Catholic Church, United Nations, OAS
Relevant agreements	"Heaven's Door" Agreement (1988)

Summary:

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.

In May, the Colombian government acknowledged engaging in indirect contacts with ELN guerrilla group, even though the formal talks have been suspended since 2019. High Commissioner for Peace Miguel Ceballos issued a statement on 9 May indicating that an indirect space for rapprochement and exploration with the ELN" had been established. Ceballos said that he had the support of both the Holy See and the United Nations, although he affirmed that the indirect meetings did not imply that a direct dialogue had been initiated between the guerrillas and the government. Ceballos acknowledged that in the previous 17 months, four trips had been made to Cuba and 28 meetings had been held. Twenty-two of the meetings had taken place at the Apostolic Nunciature in Bogotá and six at the Palace of Nariño, the seat of the presidency of the Colombian government, with the president attending them. Ceballos added that the government had requested support from the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Montemayor, the UN Secretary-General's special representative in the country, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, and the head of the OAS verification mission, Roberto Menéndez. The trips and meetings in Havana were carried out by Father Darío Echeverri, representing the Vatican, the lawyer Carlos Ruiz, a legal advisor in the peace negotiations held between the ELN and the government of Juan Manuel Santos, and the UN Secretary-General's special representative. The government held firm to its conditions for the beginning of direct talks: a halt to kidnapping, the release of all kidnapped persons and an end to criminal acts such as recruiting minors, planting antipersonnel mines, kidnapping and attacking energy infrastructure. He also said that the construction of architecture for possible negotiations had been explored if the conditions were accepted. However, the statement also said that the ELN had not yet responded.

The government later appointed Tulio Gilberto Astudillo Victoria, alias "Cuéllar" as a peace manager to facilitate dialogue with the ELN. A member of the ELN national leadership, Cuéllar had already played the role of peace manager on several previous occasions. In response to the High Commissioner's statement, the ELN stated that the group is willing to negotiate, but that it did not accept any conditions or impositions. However, Ceballos resigned as High Commissioner for Peace in late May, claiming that former President Álvaro Uribe had been in contact with the ELN in Havana without having informed him or consulted with him. The new High Commissioner for Peace, Juan Camilo Restrepo Gómez, took office in June. Pablo Beltrán, a member of the ELN's national leadership and a spokesman for the armed group, said in November that indirect contact with the government was ongoing through the Catholic Church and the UN. Coinciding with the anniversary of the signing of the peace agreements with the FARC, former President Juan Manuel Santos indicated that he understood that Iván Duque's government was exploring ways to resume talks with the ELN and voiced support for possible negotiations. However, the president of the Colombian government denied this. In December, Restrepo claimed that the ELN had no intention of engaging in dialogue and that the government would not back down.

Venezuela	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	Norway, Russia, The Netherlands, International Contact Group
Relevant agreements	--

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.

In August, the government and a large part of the opposition began a new negotiating process in Mexico, with the mediation of Norway and the accompaniment of Russia and the Netherlands. Despite the completion of the negotiations in Barbados and Oslo in 2019, the government of Nicolás Maduro repeatedly declared its willingness to resume dialogue since the start of the year, while in February and March, a Norwegian government delegation travelled to Venezuela to explore the willingness of both parties to enter negotiations. Finally, the negotiations were formally established on 13 August at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, shortly after both parties signed an agreement on their guiding principles and substantive agenda in the presence of the Mexican foreign minister. This agreement established seven points of negotiation: political rights, an electoral schedule with guarantees, respect for the rule of law, the lifting of sanctions, the renunciation of violence, social protection measures and guarantees of implementation of what is agreed upon. The head of the Norwegian facilitation team, Dag Nylander, said that the results of the negotiations would be irreversible, while the government indicated that the dialogue in Mexico would be supreme, with international support, but without pressure or extortion of any kind. The government delegation was headed by the president of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, and composed of the son of President Maduro and others, while Gerardo Blyde led the delegation of the Unitary Platform of Venezuela, which represents different opposition groups and includes people close to Juan Guaidó (recognised as the interim president of Venezuela by dozens of countries) and Henrique Capriles, a presidential candidate on several occasions. In early September, the International Contact Group, made up of Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Panama, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay and the EU, hailed and supported the resumption of the dialogue and thanked Norway for its role in facilitating the negotiations.

Several agreements were reached during the three rounds of negotiations that took place during the year (13-15 August, 3-6 September and 25-27 September), such as the claim and defence of Venezuelan sovereignty over the Guyana Esequiba region, which Caracas has

disputed with Guyana for 180 years, and the need to rescue and recover frozen assets abroad, inaccessible to the government since 2019, to use them for the country's economic recovery and the fight against the pandemic (equipment and rehabilitation of hospitals, purchase of COVID-19 vaccines, etc.). Regarding this last point, it was agreed to create a Social Assistance Board made up equally by the government and the opposition to launch child nutrition, transplant and vaccination programmes. The start of the third round of negotiations was postponed for one day after the Norwegian foreign minister criticised the human rights situation in Venezuela at the UN General Assembly, although Caracas finally decided to resume negotiations after accepting public explanations from Oslo, as well as its commitment to neutrality in facilitating the dialogue.

However, the day before the start of the fourth round of negotiations, scheduled for mid-October, the Venezuelan government withdrew from the negotiations after the extradition to the United States of Alex Saab, a Colombian businessman who was a close collaborator with the government. Some see him as a key figure for eluding US economic sanctions and supplying Venezuela with basic necessities in times of scarcity and some media outlets accuse him of being a figurehead for President Maduro. Saab was arrested in Cape Verde in June 2020 and was extradited to the United States in October 2021 to stand trial for money laundering. Two days before his extradition, the Venezuelan government proposed that Saab join the government delegation in Mexico, but the opposition was strongly against it. Nevertheless, in early November, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Félix Plasencia declared that the negotiations had not broken down and that they would resume at some point, but a few weeks later, President Maduro indicated that the conditions for the resuming the dialogue had not been met and once again criticised Saab's extradition and defended his right to take part in the negotiations in Mexico. In late November, opposition leader Juan Guaidó said that the Unitary Platform was willing to resume the talks and that the negotiating agenda must include the Supreme Court of Justice's cancellation of the opposition candidate's victory in the state of Barinas in the regional and local elections held on 21 November. During the first half of the year, there were negotiations between the government and part of the opposition led by Henrique Capriles to form a more inclusive National Electoral Council. Finally, the National Assembly appointed a new five-member council (four men and one woman), two of which were close to the opposition. Although the appointments were rejected by parts of the opposition linked to Juan Guaidó, it was a decisive step for a large part of the opposition to decide to participate in an electoral process for the first time since 2017. The regional and local elections, in which the ruling party won a large majority, had a low turnout (41.8%) and some irregularities, according to the head of the electoral mission of the EU and the US government.

4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- In Asia, 10 negotiating processes were reported in 2021, accounting for approximately one quarter of the total peace processes around the world.
- In comparative terms, Asia was one of the regions in which more direct negotiations took place without the facilitation of third parties.
- In approximately half of the cases analysed in Asia, a certain paralysis and even regression in the negotiations was reported.
- The withdrawal of US troops and the Taliban military advance sank the peace negotiations, causing a change of regime and the fall of the government of Ashraf Ghani.
- In Mindanao (southern Philippines), the period of the transitional government of the new Bangsamoro region (led by the MILF) was extended by three years and the third stage of the reintegration of the 40,000 MILF ex-combatants began with significant delays.
- The Philippine Government declared the NDF a terrorist organisation, which in recent decades has negotiated with Manila on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing (the NPA).
- The Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government formally began the process of negotiating the political status of Bougainville.
- The president of South Korea proposed signing a declaration that would end the Korean War and allow negotiations to move forward on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.
- The military coup in Myanmar shut down the Panglong 21 dialogue with the insurgency.

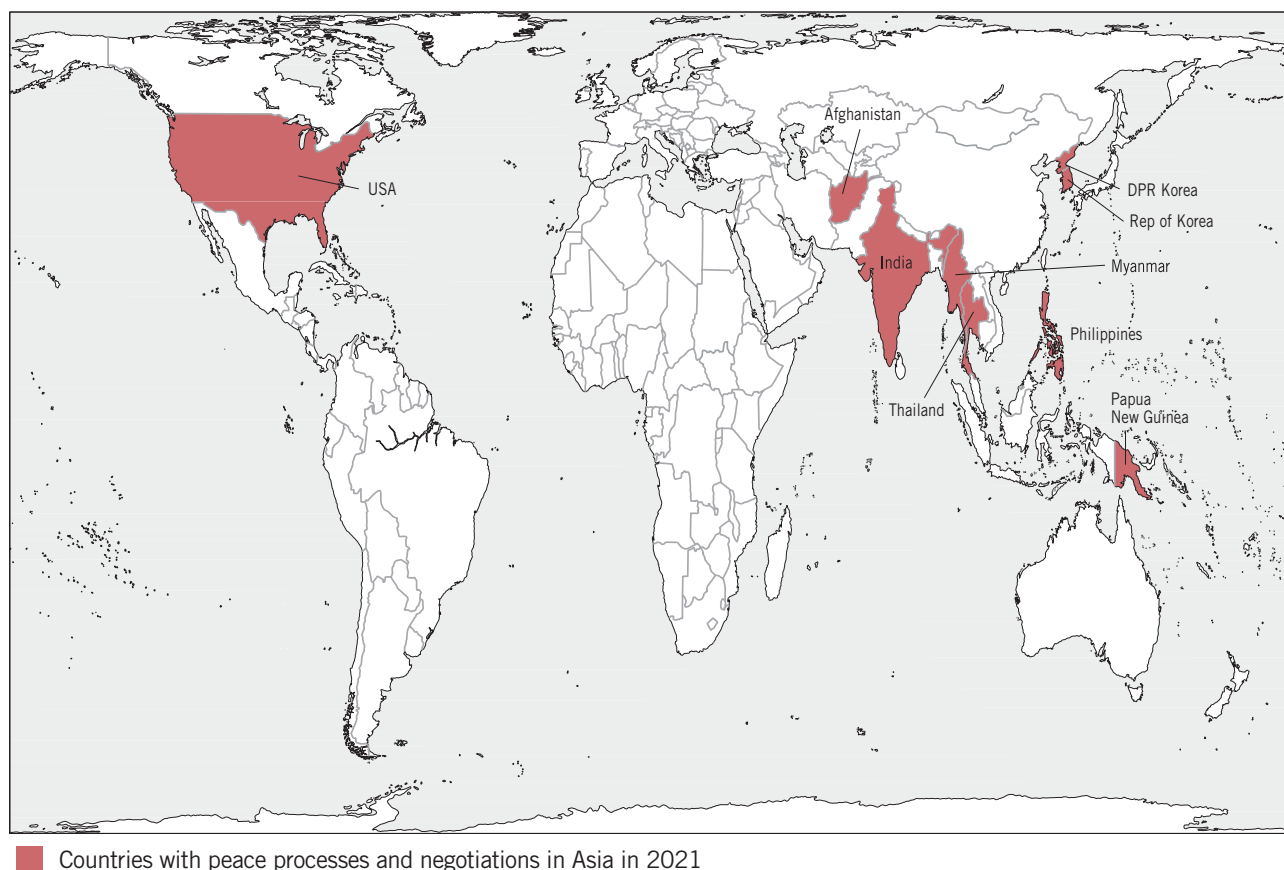
This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2021, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on the continent throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Asia that hosted peace negotiations during 2021.

Table 4.1. **Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2021**

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgency, USA	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, USA, UN
DPR Korea – Republic of Korea	North Korea, South Korea	--
DPR Korea – USA	North Korea, USA	--
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, ULFA-I	--
India (Nagaland)	Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF	--
Myanmar	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
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	Government, Autonomous Bougainville Government	United Nations, Bertie Ahern
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in- Muslim Mindanao	Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body
Philippines (NDF)	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway
Thailand (south)	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 2021



4.1 Negotiations in 2021: regional trends

In 2021, **10 negotiating processes were reported in Asia**: four in Southeast Asia (the Philippines (MILF and NDF), Myanmar and Thailand (south)), three in South Asia (Afghanistan, India (Assam) and India (Nagaland)), two in East Asia (North Korea-USA and North Korea-South Korea) and one in the Pacific (Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)). Half these negotiations were linked to active armed conflicts (Afghanistan, the Philippines (NDF), the Philippines (MILF), Myanmar and Thailand (south)), while nearly the other half were socio-political crises (North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-USA, India (Assam) and India (Nagaland)).

The nature of these conflicts, and therefore the heart of the peace negotiations, hinged in half these cases on questions of self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional adjustment or recognition of the identity of various national minorities, as in the cases of the Philippines (MILF), India (Assam and Nagaland), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south). Two other cases focused mainly on the denuclearisation and political détente of the Korean peninsula, while in both the Philippines (NDF) and Afghanistan, countries in which the contending parties to the armed conflict had conflicting state models, structural and systemic economic and political issues (especially in the

Philippines) were addressed alongside religious and military ones (especially in Afghanistan). In addition to resolving the substantive aspects of the conflict, several peace processes stood out for the management of the pandemic and the signing of ceasefire agreements or measures to reduce and limit violence. Ceasefires or similar measures had been decreed in 2020 in response to the call for a global ceasefire by the United Nations Secretary-General in March 2020 in some countries in the region, notably Afghanistan, the Philippines and Thailand. Finally, in Afghanistan and the Philippines (NDF), part of the negotiations between the parties was related to the implementation of agreements reached in previous years: the global peace agreement of 2014 in the case of the Philippines and the agreement between the US and the Taliban, signed in Doha in February 2020. However, in Afghanistan, the military takeover of political power by the Taliban scuttled the previous negotiations.

The vast majority of the negotiations were of an internal nature and took place mainly within the country in which the conflict was taking place, but some of them had a very clear international dimension, either due to the participation of foreign third parties in facilitation or mediation (Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar, Papua

New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south)); to holding negotiations outside the country in question (Afghanistan, Thailand); to the residence abroad of certain leaders of armed groups in negotiations with the state (Afghanistan, Myanmar, India and Thailand) or to the influence of third countries in the dynamics of the negotiations (China in Myanmar and the Korean peninsula, Pakistan in Afghanistan and Malaysia in southern Thailand). The negotiations were interstate in two cases (North Korea and the United States and North Korea and South Korea).

Over half the **actors participating in the negotiations** were governments, armed groups or their political representatives: Afghanistan, India (Assam and Nagaland), the Philippines (NDF) and Thailand (south). In the other four cases, the negotiations were mainly between governments. The two negotiations that took place on the Korean peninsula were interstate (North Korea and South Korea, and the US and North Korea); while in the other two cases (the Philippines (MILF) and Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)), the main core of the negotiations was conducted by the governments of the Philippines and Papua New Guinea and by the regional governments of Bougainville and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In both cases, the autonomous governments were headed by leaders of former armed organisations, such as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (of which Ishmael Toroama was a prominent leader) and the MILF (led in recent decades by Ebrahim Murad, who is currently the maximum representative of the transitional government that will operate in the BARMM until 2025). In addition to the southern Philippines and Bougainville, the regional governments of Assam and Nagaland also played an important role in the negotiations in Nagaland. For example, the negotiating leader of the armed group NSCN-IM met with the chief ministers of Assam and Nagaland, who in turn maintained close contact with the central government in Delhi. Similarly, the main parliamentary forces of the state of Nagaland reached an agreement to form a unity government without opposition to facilitate the signing of an agreement to put an end to the conflict that has been active in the region for decades.

Several of the **armed groups** negotiated with the government directly, like 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, but in some cases they did so through political organisations that represented them, such as in the Philippines, in which Manila negotiated with the National Democratic Front (NDF) on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA, or through coalitions that brought together and represented various armed groups, such as in Nagaland

(the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), which brings together seven insurgent organisations) and in Myanmar, where various armed groups negotiated with the Burmese government through umbrella organisations such as the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee.

Forty per cent (40%) of the negotiations analysed in Asia did not have any type of **third-party** facilitation or external mediation, making it the area with the highest proportion of direct and bilateral negotiations between the parties. The cases in which dialogue was facilitated by third parties in some way were in Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south), although the degree of internationalisation and complexity of intermediation structures was very uneven among those cases. In some contexts, dialogue facilitation fell mainly to a single actor, such as Norway in the Philippines (NDF), Malaysia in southern Thailand

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and the United Nations and Bertie Ahern in Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government, while in other cases, the dialogue mediation space was broader. There was a high degree of internationalisation of the peace processes in the Philippines (Mindanao) and in Afghanistan (prior to the Taliban military takeover of the country). In the Philippines (MILF), in addition to the official mediation of the government of Malaysia during the negotiations that led to the signing of the 2104 agreement, the peace process had other international support structures: the International Monitoring Team, in which the EU participated, along with countries such as Malaysia, Libya, Brunei Darussalam, Japan and Norway; the Third Party Monitoring Team (responsible for supervising the implementation of the agreements signed between the MILF and the government); the International Decommissioning Body (made up of Turkey, Norway, Brunei and the Philippines, which supervised the demobilisation of 40,000 former MILF combatants); and finally, though less prominently in the implementation phase of the peace agreement, the International Contact Group, made up of four states (Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four international NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources). In Afghanistan, many international actors supported the intra-Afghan peace negotiations in some way. For example, Turkey hosted a meeting between the two sides and Russia hosted a peace conference shortly before the 1 May deadline for the complete withdrawal of US troops. Qatar also organised meetings between the Taliban and the Afghan government during the year and had previously hosted the negotiations between the Taliban and the US government, which led to the signing of the February 2020 agreement. In other contexts, some actors informally (without an explicit mandate)

tried to facilitate dialogue between the parties. In Myanmar, for example, the government asked China for support in carrying out negotiations with ethnic armed groups based in the north of the country, while the South Korean President Moon Jae-in has exerted great diplomatic effort in recent years to resume the negotiations between the US and South Korea on the denuclearisation of North Korea.

Regarding the role played by **international organisations** in facilitating peace negotiations and supporting dialogue processes, the United Nations was active in Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF) and Papua New Guinea (Bougainville). The United Nations envoy to Afghanistan and head of UNAMA highlighted the involvement of the United Nations mission in intra-Afghan negotiations on numerous occasions throughout the year. For example, in 2021 the United Nations organised a peace conference attended by countries such as Russia, Pakistan, China, Iran, India and the US. In the Philippines, the United Nations implemented institutional development and strengthened programmes for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and supported the demobilisation and reintegration of former MILF combatants, in the latter case through the UNDP. Regarding the negotiations between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, in recent years the United Nations has supported the implementation of the peace agreement (2001) and in 2021 signed an agreement with the government of Papua New Guinea to provide political and economic support to the negotiating process between both governments to determine the political status of Bougainville after the massive support for independence in the self-determination referendum held in 2019.

Regarding other intergovernmental organisations, ASEAN played a notable role in the crisis unleashed in Myanmar after the coup d'état in February, the EU was active in the Philippine region of Mindanao through the International Monitoring Team, which supervises the ceasefire between the government and the MILF, and the World Bank played a growing role in Mindanao, as it will manage the Bangsamoro Normalisation Trust Fund, whose objective is to centralise the contributions of international cooperation (international organisations, governments and other donors) aimed at implementing the peace agreement. In comparative terms with other regions, however, intergovernmental organisations were less involved in mediation and dialogue facilitation in Asia. There were also several **states** that actively participated in some peace processes, such as Norway in the Philippines, which has facilitated negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF for years and participates in the International Decommissioning Body and the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao, and Qatar in Afghanistan, which gave its support both to the intra-Afghan dialogue and previously to the negotiations between the US and the

Taliban. Malaysia also acted as a mediator, facilitating negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF and between the Thai government and the insurgency operating in the south of the country, while also participating in the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao.

As for the **evolution of the peace processes**, approximately half the cases analysed experienced some paralysis or even regression in the negotiations. In Afghanistan, even if there were significant meetings between the government and the Taliban, the seizure of power by the Taliban in August brought any dialogue process to an abrupt end. In the Philippines, negotiations had been inactive for some time, but the designation of the NDF as a terrorist organisation in mid-2021 nipped in the bud any chance of a resumption of negotiations under the current Duterte administration. In Myanmar, the coup d'état carried out by the Burmese Armed Forces in February froze the 21st Century Panglong Conference, temporarily suspended the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and ended negotiations between the government and the armed groups that had signed it. In other contexts there were no such obvious setbacks, but the negotiations remained at an impasse. On the Korean peninsula, for example, there were no high-level meetings or significant progress in either the inter-Korean talks or those between North Korea and the US on Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

Similarly, in Thailand, the government and the BRN did not meet in person throughout the year. On a positive note, negotiations began over the political status of Bougainville between the autonomous government of the island and the government of Papua New Guinea. Other causes for hope included the institutional establishment of a new autonomous region in the southern Philippines as a result of the 2014 peace agreement (the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) and the start of the third phase of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process for around 40,000 MILF combatants.

Finally, regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, women scarcely participated in peace negotiations in Asia. However, four women were included in the negotiating delegation of the government of Afghanistan in its negotiations with the Taliban in Qatar, although the subsequent seizure of power by the Taliban put an end to any progress on the agenda. Moreover, a woman (Juliet de Lima) chaired the NDF's negotiating panel in its talks with the Philippine government and another woman, Laisa Alamia, was appointed head of the body that will oversee the demobilisation of former MILF combatants in Mindanao (southern Philippines). A high proportion of women participated in the Bougainville Autonomous Government's consultations with civil society regarding the negotiations with the government of Papua New Guinea on the political status of the island and the women's organisations' demonstrations

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in Myanmar calling for the restoration of democracy. However, there was a significant setback in women's rights in Afghanistan after the Taliban took power and it was found that there were still relatively very few women in the parliament of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

4.2. Case study analysis

East Asia

DPR Korea – Republic of Korea	
Negotiating actors	North Korea, South Korea
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	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.

Even though there was less political and military tension between the two countries and on some occasion both leaders expressed their willingness to promote inter-Korean dialogue and improve relations between their countries, there were no high-level meetings or significant progress in the talks between North Korea and South Korea during the year. Early in the year, South Korean President Moon Jae-in repeated his

desire to improve relations with North Korea as he had done several times in 2020 and urged the new US administration to resume dialogue with Pyongyang based on the progress reported during the previous Trump administration. Along the same lines, in late February Moon Jae-in suggested that the celebration of the Olympic Games in Tokyo could be a good opportunity to promote dialogue between the main regional actors. However, **the development that had the greatest political and media impact was Moon Jae-in's speech at the UN General Assembly in September, in which he proposed signing a political declaration that would put an official end to the Korean War (1950-53)**, which did not end through a peace agreement, but rather an armistice signed by North Korea, the USA (representing the United Nations Command) and the People's Volunteer Army of China (although the Chinese government did not recognise any organic link with it). According to the South Korean government, such a declaration would put an end to an anomalous situation (the two countries are still technically at war) and could open the door to the signing of a peace agreement and the establishment of peace on the peninsula. In addition, according to Seoul, such a proposal would be a very pragmatic approach to resolving the conflict, since it would allow both countries and the US to build trust and initiate a dialogue on the denuclearisation of the peninsula without having to lead to short-term military, political or institutional changes. According to Seoul, such a roadmap would also weaken the justifications and motivations for provoking military tensions between North and South Korea, including the development of nuclear weapons.

During the diplomatic rapprochement between North Korea and the US in 2018 and 2019, both Pyongyang and Seoul had been in favour of ending the war and even signing a peace agreement. The Trump administration had also expressed its agreement. However, the end of the negotiating process between the two countries during 2019 meant that the proposal was abandoned. Previously, Pyongyang had on some occasions proposed signing a peace agreement with the US, since according to some analysts, this would allow Pyongyang to demand the withdrawal of the approximately 28,500 US soldiers permanently stationed in South Korea and ask for a relaxation of the sanctions imposed on it. Some analysts say that the US government supports such a declaration to end the war because it would show its determination to halt what North Korea calls a hostile policy. However, they also point out that Washington does not currently unconditionally support signing any peace agreement that would change the terms of the 1953 armistice, as among other things it would affect the United Nations contingent deployed in the region and the design and operation of the Demilitarised Zone, around which approximately one million soldiers are stationed. Shortly after Moon Jae-in's statements at the UN General Assembly, North Korea's representative to the United Nations indicated that they could be a smokescreen to legitimise Washington's hostile attitude, but a few days later, **Kim Yo-jong, the sister of Kim**

Jong-un and main person in charge of relations with South Korea, opened the door to dialogue if Seoul ceased its provocations, double standards and hostile policy. Kim Yo-jong was also open to discussing the aforementioned declaration on ending the war, holding an inter-Korean summit and re-establishing the border liaison office that both countries created as part of the summits held in 2018, and that Pyongyang detonated in June 2020 once the inter-Korean dialogue process and the negotiations between the US and North Korea on the North Korean nuclear programme were aborted. A few days after these important statements were made by Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un called for the re-establishment of communications with South Korea, which had been interrupted by Pyongyang in August in protest of the joint military exercises between the US and South Korea. According to some analysts, the rapprochement of positions between both countries is mutually convenient. Moon Jae-in, whose term was coming to an end, would like to bequeath a new stage in inter-Korean relations. The North Korean government may suspect that the next administration may not be as prone to dialogue and reconciliation as the current one and would like to use the resumption of inter-Korean negotiations to obtain economic compensation from South Korea and to get Seoul to intercede with the US to relax the sanctions against it.

DPR Korea – USA	
Negotiating actors	North Korea, USA
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	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.

Despite the fact that both governments were open to dialogue and that South Korean President Moon Jae-in urged the resumption of the negotiating process of 2018 and 2019 on several occasions, there were no presidential summits or technical working meetings during the year between the North Korean and US governments. **At various points during the year, new US President Joe Biden offered Pyongyang a sincere, sustained and substantial dialogue on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and stressed that his government does not have a hostile policy towards North Korea.** However, Biden also warned North Korea against any escalation of the situation, urged Pyongyang to end its ballistic or nuclear tests that violate international law and urged the international community and especially its closest allies in the region (Japan and South Korea) to fully implement United Nations sanctions against North Korea. In April, Biden made a speech before Congress in which he called North Korea's nuclear programme a threat, drawing severe criticism from Pyongyang. The Chinese government also expressed its hope that Biden's review of US foreign policy towards the Korean peninsula focus more on the resumption of dialogue than on confrontation and provocation.

In mid-June, Kim Jong-un said that his country should be prepared for both dialogue and confrontation with the US, in statements that high-ranking representatives of the US government viewed very positively. However, both the North Korean foreign minister and Kim Yo-jong (sister of Kim Jong-un and, according to some media, responsible for relations with the US and South Korea) cautioned against misunderstanding the words of the Korean head of state and mistakenly expecting an early resumption of negotiations. A few weeks earlier, the US government had appointed Sung Kim as the new US special envoy to the Korean peninsula, in charge of designing the agenda for the working meetings prior to the summits between Kim Jong-un and former President Donald Trump. According to several media outlets, North Korea welcomed the decision. According to some analysts, Pyongyang expects more incentives,

gestures and guarantees from the US before resuming talks at the highest level, but at the same time there is speculation that the serious economic and humanitarian situation in the country (which some reports consider to be the worst in recent history) is forcing North Korea to take some steps regarding its weapons programme to get some sanctions against it relaxed. These same analysts think that the US government is designing a pragmatic and incremental policy of trying to reach agreements in certain areas and that the offer of dialogue with Pyongyang without conditions does not imply any willingness to make important concessions on the aspects on which North Korea has been more insistent in recent years. These include the (total or gradual) lifting of sanctions, the withdrawal of the more than 28,000 US soldiers permanently stationed in South Korea and the cancellation of the military exercises jointly carried out every year.

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Negotiating actors	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA
Third parties	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Norway, US, UN
Relevant agreements	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.

The peace process in Afghanistan broke down with the return of the Taliban to power after the withdrawal of US and international troops and the military seizure of the country that led to the fall of the government headed by Ashraf Ghani. Until their breakdown, the negotiations were shaped by the prior agreement on this withdrawal, reached by the US government under the Trump administration and the Taliban, in which the Afghan government did not participate. Thus, two processes unfolded alongside each other, continuously interconnected throughout the year: the intra-Afghan negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government on the one hand and the review and

implementation of the agreement between the US and the Taliban on the other. The year had begun with a new round of meetings in Doha that concluded at the end of January. Known as intra-Afghan negotiations, they had begun in September 2020 and were paused by agreement of the parties for three weeks in December to hold internal and external consultations. Coinciding with the restart of the talks, the US envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, also travelled to Qatar to meet with the Taliban and later went to Kabul, although the Afghan president refused to meet with him because it emerged that Khalilzad's proposal for an interim government would include the political opposition. In February, the Afghan government and the Taliban met again with the aim of agreeing on an agenda, but without achieving substantial progress. After the inauguration of Joe Biden as US president, Washington announced that it should review the agreement reached in February 2020 regarding the US military withdrawal from the country. A bipartisan committee of the US Congress recommended that the troop withdrawal be conditional on a peace agreement, but the Taliban demanded that the agreement on the troop withdrawal be respected, saying that there would be consequences otherwise.

In March, Ghani and Khalilzad met to try to get the situation moving and Ghani declared that any change of government in the country had to be formed from elections, in response to the US proposal for an interim government with Taliban participation. In addition, as revealed by TOLONews media, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken also wrote to the Afghan president with a plan to reactivate the peace process by calling a conference facilitated by the United Nations, with the participation of Russia, Pakistan, China, Iran, India and the US, as well as a high-level meeting of both parties in Turkey. Blinken noted that a proposal for a 90-day ceasefire was being prepared with the aim of preventing a Taliban offensive in the spring and paving the way for a peace agreement. The letter concluded by noting that the US had not ruled out any options regarding Afghanistan, including a complete troop withdrawal before 1 May. At the Moscow conference, which was held six weeks before the deadline set for the US withdrawal, all international actors called on the parties to agree to a ceasefire. Abdullah Abdullah, the chief government negotiator, said that the government was willing to negotiate on any issue. In response to Blinken's plan, Ghani said that he would be willing to lead an interim government until elections could be held, noting that **the transfer of power through an electoral process was a red line for the Afghan government.** Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar repeated **that the US had not complied with the 2020 agreement and refused to participate in international conferences until the withdrawal of troops took place**, which led to the postponement of the conference that was to be held in Turkey in early April.

Finally, **on 14 April, Biden announced the full withdrawal of US troops, setting the deadline of 11**

September, postponing by four months the agreement with the Taliban to withdraw in February 2020. After the announcement, many said that a withdrawal without a peace agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban could lead to the collapse of the government. In May, for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, the Taliban proposed a three-day ceasefire, to which President Ghani agreed, after weeks of escalating violence. Coinciding with the ceasefire, both parties met again in Doha and agreed to keep the talks active. The Taliban, pressured by Pakistan, presented several conditions so that the meeting in Istanbul could take place: it had to be short, lasting no more than three days (it had initially been proposed to last 10 days); the agenda should not include decision-making on central issues; and the Taliban delegation would be low-profile. The leader of the Taliban negotiating team was reported to have held consultations in Pakistan with Taliban leader Sheikh Hibatullah Akhundzada in meetings that had lasted for a month. In June, the Afghan president met in Washington with Joe Biden, who assured financial support for the Afghan government and security forces, as well as a plan to evacuate from the country Afghan citizens who had collaborated with US troops and the US government. However, as The New Yorker revealed later, Biden's commitment was vague and depended on an Afghan government military plan in response to Taliban military advances. In July, the Taliban said they would present a peace plan within a month and spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said peace talks were expected to enter an important phase. Mujahid said that despite their military advantage, the Taliban remained serious about the peace talks. These statements came at a time when thousands of members of the security forces had abandoned their posts in the face of Taliban advances and the takeover of large parts of the country. In addition, various international diplomats involved in the negotiations stepped up pressure on Pakistan to try to get the neighbouring country to exert more influence over the Taliban to reach an agreement, warning that time was running out. Although meetings between the Taliban and the government were held in Qatar and Iran in July, no progress was made. In the final days before the Taliban military victory and the capture of Kabul, the US Secretary of State proposed to Ghani the release of 3,000 prisoners by both parties in exchange for a one-month ceasefire. Ghani rejected this proposal. According to The New Yorker, Khalilzad asked Ghani for a delegation led by Abdullah Abdullah and Hamid Karzai to travel to Doha to negotiate an orderly transition. Ghani replied that he was willing to leave power only if elections were held to appoint his successor, which was ruled out by the US for not considering it realistic. According to The New Yorker, on 14 August Ghani would have been willing to accept any proposal, given the information that the Taliban had already entered Kabul. Although a high-level delegation travelled to Doha to reach an agreement in extremis,

On 15 August, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani left the country after the failure of the peace process and the Taliban military advance, leading to the imposition of the new Taliban-led regime

finally on 15 August, Ashraf Ghani left Afghanistan, giving way to Taliban control of the government.

Gender, peace and security

During the course of the negotiations, women's organisations warned of the serious risk to their rights if the peace process did not reach an agreement that guaranteed their rights. Even though the negotiating government delegation in Qatar included four women (Fawzia Koofi, Habiba Sarabi, Fatema Gailani and Sharifa Zarmati Wardak), some very important meetings for the negotiating process, such as the one that took place in Moscow, continued to exclude them. Only Habiba Sarabi was part of the delegation that participated in the meeting in Moscow and in which she expressed the women's discontent for being excluded from this meeting and other spaces of the negotiations. After the fall of the Ghani government in August, the situation deteriorated enormously for women, since the new Taliban government imposed strict restrictions on their participation in the public, political, working and cultural life of the country, preventing their involvement in the new government institutions. Many female activists and politicians had to leave the country, including those who had been involved in the negotiations and in different peacebuilding initiatives.

India (Nagaland)	
Negotiating actors	Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/ NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/ GDRN/NA, ZUF
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	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 experienced progress and setbacks at different times of the year, without any substantive agreement being reached. In January, it emerged that the NSCN-K group had announced in the final days of December 2020 that it was resuming the ceasefire agreement that it had unilaterally suspended in 2015 and was joining the peace negotiations. After several months without progress, in September the Indian government dismissed the government negotiator and state governor RN Ravi after trust between him and the NSCN-IM was broken the year before, which had conditioned any progress in the process that had led the armed group to harden its position on central issues linked to Naga sovereignty. In his place, the government appointed AK Mishra, until then the director of intelligence. Mishra met with NSCN-IM chief negotiator and Secretary General Thuingaleng Muivah in the city of Dimapur in Nagaland. Sources from the armed group stressed that the negotiations should start from the framework agreement that was signed between the Indian government and the insurgency in 2015. In parallel, the Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, also met in Dimapur with Muivah, in a meeting in which the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, also participated. The meeting took place after the Indian Home Minister and Sarma had met in Delhi. After the meeting with the insurgent leader, the Chief Minister of Assam met with the government negotiator and other members of the Assam government, without the content of the different meetings being revealed. Subsequently, in October there was a new meeting in Delhi between Mishra and the NSCN-IM, which focused on the issues of the flag and the Naga constitution. The deadlock on these two issues, which have been central to the discussions in recent years, was not broken and no progress was made in this regard. The NSCN-IM reportedly rejected the proposal that the Naga flag be considered a “cultural symbol” and refused to leave solving these issues until after the signing of a possible agreement. Meanwhile, the NNPG group, which brings together seven Naga insurgent organisations and had supported keeping RN Ravi as the government negotiator, backed the proposal that the issue of the flag and the constitution would not interfere in a possible agreement with the government. The NNPG also held meetings with AK Mishra, both in Dimapur and Delhi.

The political forces with parliamentary representation in the state reached an agreement to form a unity government without opposition, called the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), with the aim of facilitating the achievement of an agreement on the Naga issue. Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio met several times with members of the central government accompanied by the Chief Minister of Assam.

However, the peace process entered a crisis in December after 14 people were killed by the security forces. Six coal mine workers were killed during a military operation in Mon district after being mistaken for a group of insurgents, according to official sources. As a result of the protests that followed and their violent repression,

another seven civilians and a soldier died in the days that followed, in the worst escalation of violence in the state in several years. The murders of civilians once again reopened questions about the anti-terrorist legislation in force in the northeastern region of India, which grants wide powers to the security forces and has been denounced on multiple occasions by human rights organisations, given the impunity that it enjoys. After the incidents, the armed groups announced the suspension of the peace negotiations and the State Legislative Assembly unanimously approved a declaration calling for repeal of the legislation. After the protests, the Indian government tried to resume contact with the insurgent groups to resume the negotiations.

Gender, peace and security

A delegation of 29 women representing different civil society organisations delivered a petition to the state governor demanding justice for the 14 workers killed by the security forces, calling for the repeal of anti-terrorist legislation and denouncing the militarisation of the state and its consequences for the Naga civilian population. The organisations that filed the petition included the Naga Mothers' Association, which has played a crucial role in facilitating dialogue with the armed groups, and other women's organisations and different Naga tribal organisations like Angami Women Organisation, Watsu Mungdang, Sumi Totimi Hoho, Lotha Eloie Hoho, Zeliang Women Organisation, Pochury Mothers Association, Chakhesang Mothers Association, Chakhesang Women Society, Rengma Mothers Association, Tenyimi Women Organisation, Kuki Mothers Association and Global Naga Forum.

South-east Asia and Oceania

Philippines (MILF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in-Muslim Mindanao
Third parties	Malaysia, Third-Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body
Relevant agreements	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.

Both the government and the MILF recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic was having a significant impact on the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement, but at the same time they expressed their commitment to the process and reached **important agreements on the institutional development and consolidation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and the reintegration of former combatants**. Regarding the first aspect, in October President **Rodrigo Duterte signed the amendment to the Bangsamoro Organic Law postponing the first elections in the BARMM, scheduled for May 2022, until May 2025, thus prolonging by three years the mandate of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA)**. Made up of 80 representatives appointed jointly by the Philippine government and by the MILF but headed by the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, the BTA was established in 2019 after a referendum was held in the region and after the dissolution of the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Since the beginning of the year, both the MILF and various voices in civil society in Mindanao and even in the government have warned that the expansion of the pandemic was making it difficult to implement key aspects of the peace agreement and that the necessary conditions for holding the elections in May 2022 were not being met. Thus, the Third Party Monitoring Team supervised both the talks between the MILF and the government and the deliberations that took place in Congress for much of the year to amend the Bangsamoro Organic Law. During the negotiations that led to the 2014 peace agreement, the MILF had already advocated a longer transition period, indicating that in other cases where a peace agreement was signed, the transition periods tend to be longer.

The second most important aspect in terms of development of the peace agreement and of negotiations between the peace implementation panels of the Philippine government and the MILF was the resumption of the disarmament, demobilisation

and reintegration process for the 40,000 MILF combatants recognised in the 2014 peace agreement. The International Decommissioning Body (IDB) certified that so far the first two phases of the process had been satisfactorily completed (concluded in June 2015 and March 2020 respectively), with a total of 12,145 combatants. It also announced that **between November 2021 and January 2022, the third phase will be completed, with 14,000 combatants**, and that the fourth and final phase will begin later, with another 14,000 combatants. The IDB attributed the delay in the start of the third phase to COVID-19 restrictions. In November the head of the MILF's peace implementation panel and the group's former chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, lamented that so far only between 300 and 400 former MILF combatants had joined the Joint Peace and Security Team, a body that according to the peace agreement should be made up of 6,000 troops (3,000 ex-combatants, 1,600 police officers and 1,400 soldiers) and should guarantee peacekeeping in the region. Finally, the Bangsamoro Normalisation Trust Fund was established in May, which will bring together the funds coming from international cooperation (international organisations, governments and other donors) earmarked for the implementation of the peace agreement and will be managed by the World Bank. The main objective of this fund will be the reconstruction and development of certain communities and the transformation of six MILF camps recognised in the peace agreement into productive economic zones in which the reintegration of tens of thousands of combatants can take place.

Gender, peace and security

The minority leader in the Bangsamoro Parliament, Laisa Alamia, has been appointed head of the Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities (TFDCC), whose main objective is to help the peace implementation panel to identify and implement socio-economic priorities and development projects for former MILF combatants undergoing reintegration and their communities. In October, the NGO Oxfam published a report based on the testimony of Moro women from the civil society sector and the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade, an exclusively female unit that provided support to the armed wing of the MILF for decades, that concluded that gender inequalities and biases clearly persist in the disarmament and demobilisation of ex-combatants and urged greater female participation in all areas of decision-making and in the normalisation process in the region. Thus, the organisation Catholic Relief Services (CRS) stated that as part of the recently created Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, only 221 women hold leadership positions at the municipal and provincial levels and only 13 of the 80 seats in Parliament are held by women (16.2%). CRS also announced the start of a leadership and participation training process with 300 women leaders and 18 women's organisations.

Philippines (NDF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political wing of the NPA)
Third parties	Norway
Relevant agreements	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.

In line with the situation in 2020, **there continued to be many clashes between the Philippine Armed Forces and the armed opposition group NPA in 2021. There were also no face-to-face meetings between the negotiating panels of the Philippine government and the NDF**, which represents the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA. Despite the fact that the president terminated the negotiations and declared the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines terrorist organisations in late 2017, at the beginning of the year the former head of the government's negotiating panel, Silvestre Bello, said during a conference of religious organisations supportive of peace that both exploratory contacts and informal and confidential dialogue between the parties were still active. According to Bello, both he and former Minister of Agrarian Reform Hernani Braganza should have travelled to Utrecht (in the Netherlands, the country where the members of the NDF negotiating panel have lived since the 1980s) to find common ground and explore both parties' willingness to negotiate, although in the end this trip had to be called off due to COVID-19 restrictions. In this regard, Bello said that President Duterte was willing to resume peace talks. The interim president of the NDF negotiating panel, Juliet de Lima, also confirmed that exploratory talks were being held between both parties and even pointed out that their objective was to work on an interim peace agreement, which would include the declaration of a limited ceasefire and the delimitation of

the territories in which neither of the two parties could operate in order to avoid direct confrontation.

However, **on several occasions during the year, President Duterte and senior government officials stated that the peace negotiations has definitively ended and ruled out any possibility of resuming the dialogue.** In fact, the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP) issued a public statement in June to criticise and refute the calls for the resumption of dialogue by religious groups and civil society, denouncing the attitude and lack of sincerity and political will of the NDF during all the negotiations and valuing the efforts of the Duterte administration since 2016 to reach an agreement. Furthermore, in mid-July, **the government declared the NDF a terrorist organisation.** Previously, in May, it had already declared 19 leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines as terrorists, including several people who in recent years had acted as NDF consultants in peace negotiations. According to some civil society organisations, this decision could affect a possible resumption of negotiations in the future. Along these lines, **during the year Manila declared that it would activate various international pressure mechanisms so that the government of the Netherlands will deport Jose María Sison to the Philippines. The leader and founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA,** Jose María Sison has lived in the Netherlands since the mid-1980s. Manila claims that he is responsible for many violations of international humanitarian law. This demand made to the Dutch government was supported by various demonstrations and political influence by some Philippine organisations, such as the League of Parents of the Philippines (LPP) and Liga Independencia Pilipinas (LIPI). At the end of the year, the current vice president and presidential candidate for the 2022 election, Leni Robredo, expressed her willingness to resume dialogue with the NDF, but within the framework of the local peace negotiations that had already been promoted by the current administration.

Myanmar	
Negotiating actors	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
Third parties	China, ASEAN
Relevant agreements	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 taken 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 negotiating process between the Burmese government and the ethnic armed groups was affected by the coup d'état that took place in the country in February and was led by the Burmese Armed Forces, which seized power to prevent the formation of the Parliament resulting from the November 2020 elections.¹ **Although the dialogue process with part of the insurgency known as Panglong 21 was suspended as a result of the coup, there were meetings between the new military government and different armed opposition groups at different times of the year.** After the military coup, the armed groups adopted different positions with respect to the new government established by the Burmese Armed Forces and the repression and detention of a large part of the political opposition. Some groups positioned themselves alongside the political opposition and clashes were reported in areas controlled by the KIA, MNDAA and TNLA, while others were more ambiguous. In April a negotiating team from the military junta met with the armed groups UWSP and NDAA, none of them having signed the ceasefire agreement, to ask them not to get involved in the resistance against the military regime. In July, the coordinating body of the armed groups that signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST), formally declared the end of the peace negotiations with the government and the temporary suspension of the ceasefire agreement. According to a spokesman, the negotiations with all the armed groups were suspended, but each group could decide whether to hold bilateral negotiations with the government. In December, government representatives met with most of the members of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC), which brings together the armed groups UWSA, AA, TNLA, KIA, MNDAA, NDAA and SSPP/SSA, none of them signatories of the ceasefire agreement. Neither the KIA nor the TNLA participated in the meeting. The meeting took place at the request of China, which had urged the government to negotiate with the armed groups since the coup d'état. It was also attended by a

Chinese representative. **During Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Sun Guoxiang's visit to the country, General Min Aung Hlaing requested Chinese support to carry out negotiations with the armed ethnic groups based in the north of the country.** According to the media outlet The Irrawaddy, the military junta would intend to resume negotiations with the members of the FPNCC, interrupted after the coup and which had faced obstacles in 2020, when these groups refused to participate in the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

Other notable developments included the **diplomatic efforts of the regional organisation ASEAN to try to resolve the crisis that broke out after the coup** in the country. International actors delegated to ASEAN the diplomatic efforts to approach the military regime. The European Union, United States and United Kingdom imposed sanctions on the regime. In April, ASEAN convened a regional summit in Jakarta attended by General Min Aung Hlaing in which a five-point consensus was reached to deal with the situation in Myanmar, including the decision to appoint an envoy to visit Myanmar and establish contacts with the new government and the opposition. The government was also asked for authorisation to distribute humanitarian aid. However, after the summit, Min Aung Hlaing retracted his commitments. The envoy for Myanmar, Brunei Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof, did not take up his post until August. Given the regime's refusal to allow him to meet with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who was ousted by the coup, he was unable to visit the country, as this was a precondition for doing so. UN Special Envoy Christine Burgener was also unable to visit the country and in October the UN Secretary-General appointed Noeleen Heyzer to be his new special envoy. Finally, ASEAN decided to exclude Min Aung Hlaing from the regional summits, which meant that he could not participate in the one that took place in October. In December, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn was appointed the organisation's envoy for Myanmar and he was expected to be able to visit the country in early January. In addition, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, who is ASEAN's rotating president for 2022, repeated that the situation in Myanmar should be resolved internally, although ASEAN could lend its support. In December, Hun Sen met with the Burmese foreign minister in Phnom Penh in a meeting focused on "finding ways to restore cooperation and solidarity in ASEAN" and also announced that he hoped to travel to Myanmar to meet with Min Aung Hlaing in January to start "silent diplomacy". Hun Sen was against the exclusion of Myanmar's leaders from the organisation's summits. Cambodia's internal opposition questioned whether a dictatorial government like Cambodia's could help to resolve the political crisis in Myanmar. Hun Sen also noted that he had discussed the situation in Myanmar and his possible trip to the country with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio.

1. See the summary on Armed conflict in Myanmar in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

Gender, peace and security

On 8 March, the women's organisations Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process, CEDAW Action Myanmar, Gender Equality Network, Triangle Women Organisation and Women's Organisations Network (Myanmar) made an appeal to ASEAN, the United Nations and the international community, asking for help to resolve the political crisis in the country, in a statement with the slogan "Choose to Challenge Dictatorship". They also specifically addressed ASEAN to ask it to demand that the Burmese government accept the 2020 election results, release detained persons and respect human rights in the country. In addition, various civil society organisations, including women's organisations, sent ASEAN their demand that the regional organisation exclude the Burmese government from the summit held in October to pressure the military regime to restore democracy to the country, emphasising the government's lack of willingness to negotiate.

Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Papua New Guinea, government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville
Third parties	United Nations, Bertie Ahern
Relevant agreements	Bougainville Peace Agreement (2001)

Summary:

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.

After several delays in 2020, negotiations finally began between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on the political status of the island after nearly 98% of the population voted for independence for Bougainville in late 2019. Such a referendum was foreseen in the 2001 peace agreement that put an end to the armed conflict that devastated the island between 1988 and 1998 and caused the death of around 20,000 people, or 10% of

the population. However, also according to the peace agreement, the results of the referendum were not binding, so both governments must begin a negotiating process and consult with the population to prepare a political proposal on the political status of Bougainville that must be ratified by the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea. Although the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Body (main coordination body between both governments) was held in March 2020, the start of the negotiating process was delayed due to the expansion of the pandemic, the political crisis experienced in Papua New Guinea in late 2020 and the political situation in Bougainville, which held elections after the Supreme Court rejected former Bougainville President John Momis' bid to run for a third term. The election was won by former combatant Ishmael Toroama. In January, Toroama and the prime minister of Papua New Guinea met and issued a joint statement recognising the validity and legitimacy of the results of the referendum on independence, stating that they had agreed on the meaning of the word "independence" before holding the referendum (separation from Papua New Guinea) and promising to immediately start the consultation and negotiating process. **Three rounds of negotiations were held during the year (in May, July and December) between the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, led respectively by James Marape and Ishmael Toroama**, as part of the Joint Consultative Body and the Intergovernmental Consultations on the results of the Bougainville referendum. Throughout the year, Marape and Toroama held other informal meetings while both governments' working groups met more regularly.

At these meetings, it was agreed that **the negotiating process will be chaired by the United Nations and that former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern will moderate the dialogue**. Even if Toroama had suggested a roadmap that would culminate in Bougainville's declaration of independence by September 2025, in the end the commitment ratified by both parties is limited to having a final political agreement no earlier than 2025 and no later than 2027. The government of Papua New Guinea indicated that during 2025 the National Parliament would rule on the proposal that emerges from the negotiating and consultation process and that, whatever the direction of the vote of the National Parliament, its implementation would last until 2027. Previously, by the end of 2022, a constituent assembly was supposed to have been established in Bougainville and the process of transferring powers from Papua New Guinea to Bougainville was supposed to have been completed. Even though the Autonomous Bougainville Government has demanded that these include powers over international relations and border control, Marape has pointed out that this cannot be done if the Constitution is not previously amended. By late 2024, Bougainville's constituent assembly should have decided on the draft of the new Bougainville Constitution. On several occasions during 2021, Prime Minister Marape said that despite the clarity of the 2019 referendum result, Bougainville's independence is only one of the possible

expressions of the negotiating and consultation process, calling into question the viability of the economy of Bougainville as an independent country and warning that full independence for the island could destabilise and fragment Papua New Guinea, fuelling aspirations for autonomy in a country made up of many islands in which more than 800 languages are spoken. Thus, Marape announced his intention to begin consulting with the population at the national level, drawing harsh criticism from the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Along the same lines, at the beginning of the year, the Autonomous Bougainville Government convened the Bougainville Leaders Consultation Forum, which brings together members of the Bougainville House of Representatives and various sectors of civil society for the purpose of identifying the main challenges of the region and bolstering the government's negotiating position.

Gender, peace and security

UNDP stated at the end of the year that the Bougainville Transitional Dialogues project had had almost 30,000 participants since its inception in 2019, 50% of whom were women and 30% youth. This project, which is paid for by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, aims to make civil society aware of the details of the negotiations between the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, convey to both negotiating teams the demands and expectations of civil society in Bougainville, raise awareness of the benefits of peace in the region and identify the challenges and opportunities of the transition process currently under way on the island.

Thailand (south)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups)
Third parties	Malaysia
Relevant agreements	--

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.

Levels of violence continued to decline in the three southern Muslim-majority provinces, but there were no face-to-face meetings or significant progress in the negotiations between the Thai government and the armed opposition group BRN. This process officially began in early 2020, after several informal talks held in Indonesia and Germany in late 2019. In January and March 2020, two rounds of negotiations were held in Kuala Lumpur in which some common ground was found and the procedural bases of the negotiating process were set, but the expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic caused the third round of negotiations scheduled for November 2020 in the Malaysian state of Kedah to be called off. **In February 2021, both parties publicly acknowledged having held a technical virtual meeting to resume the talks.** According to some sources, in one such meeting the government proposed declaring a ceasefire during the month of Ramadan (which was between mid-April and mid-May in 2021), but the BRN rejected the idea and said it preferred to address the issue during the face-to-face meeting that both parties agreed to hold in May in Malaysia, whose government is facilitating the dialogue. As such, the Thai government accused the BRN of focusing only on issues of protocol, procedure and logistics to try to buy time. In early May, the head of the BRN negotiating panel, Anas Abdulrahman (also known as Hipni Mareh), publicly declared that in the upcoming round of negotiations scheduled for May, both parties should address the substantive issues of the negotiations for the first time, such as political solutions to the conflict or a ceasefire. Anas also said that the process should be more inclusive, such as by consulting with the local population, and that the people of southern Thailand want to have greater control over their language, culture, economy and politics.

Along these lines, a few months earlier, **the Provincial Islamic Committees had presented a proposal to boost the negotiations between the Thai government and the BRN, including issues such as community police, local courts to deal with family issues, the use of the local language in all government offices and public signs and consultations with the Provincial Islamic Committees on the appointment of provincial governors and judicial officials.** According to some analysts, focusing on such issues, which are politically less sensitive than the self-determination of the Patani people and the political status of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat provinces, could be a good starting point for resuming dialogue. Even

though both parties had told the media about the meeting in May, there is no public record of it taking place, or any other throughout the year. Some analysts say that the parties still do not have enough trust or political will, so both negotiating panels have the mandate to dialogue, but not to make significant concessions. In addition, there are groups within both the government and the BRN that are clearly hostile to the peace talks.

According to other voices, in addition to the negative consequences of COVID-19 on the negotiations, the political instability that both Thailand and Malaysia are going through also helps to explain the lack of progress in the peace process. However, other analysts believe that the negotiations will remain active as long as the BRN remains willing to explore non-violent ways to achieve its political objectives.

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2021, seven of the 37 peace processes in the world (19%) took place in Europe.
- All the negotiating processes in Europe involved third parties in supporting roles.
- On the 10th anniversary of the definitive end of ETA's armed activity, new progress was made in terms of coexistence and prisoners in the Basque Country.
- The negotiations around Ukraine faced serious obstacles, given the delay in implementing the Minsk agreements, the massive deployment of Russian troops along the border and Moscow's demands for a new security architecture in the continent from NATO and the US.
- Under Russian mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan addressed issues related to the opening of transport and economic ties, the delimitation of the border, the exchange of prisoners and demining in an antagonistic atmosphere after the 2020 war.
- Informal contacts in Cyprus during the year failed to resume official negotiations and the parties remained at a standoff.
- Women's civil society organisations from Kosovo, Georgia, Cyprus and other countries demanded effective participation in the negotiating processes, with specific proposals.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2021. 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 2021.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2021

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Ibid.
4. 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.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

5.1. Negotiations in 2021: regional trends

In Europe, seven peace processes were identified in 2021, the same number as in 2020. They account for 19% compared to the total number of peace processes across the globe in 2021 (37 worldwide). Of the two active armed conflicts in Europe, only one (Ukraine) was subject to negotiations, while the war between Turkey and the PKK (active since 1984) continued without dialogue. Five other processes covered crises of varying intensity (Armenia and Azerbaijan, regarding Nagorno-Karabakh; Georgia, in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia; Moldova, over Transdniestria; Cyprus; and Serbia and Kosovo), including the case of Armenia-Azerbaijan, which was the scene of a war in 2020 and was still facing militarised tension in 2021. One case, that of the Basque Country, was not considered a crisis.

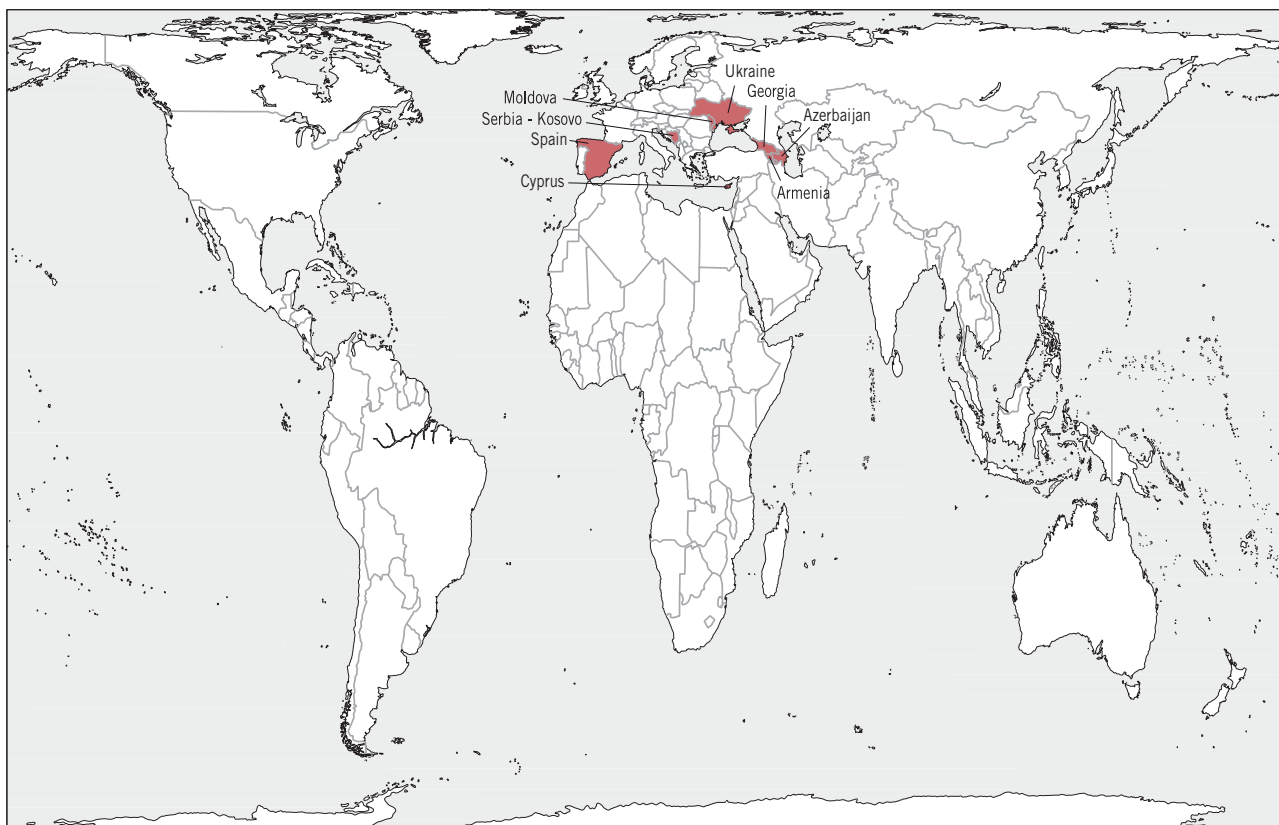
One distinctive feature of Europe was the relatively high proportion of **actors** representing self-proclaimed states (Transdniestria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic) participating in various formats under the decisive influence of countries exercising political, economic and military influence over them. In 2021, there was a trend towards a greater internationalisation of actors, mainly in relation to Ukraine. The escalation

***Peace processes
in Europe in 2021
accounted for 19% of
all cases worldwide***

of military tension around Ukraine, with the massive deployment of Russian troops near the Ukrainian border and the risk of a military invasion, represented a hardening of Russia's geostrategic stance towards Euro-Atlantic actors, with Moscow making demands of the United States and NATO regarding Ukraine and the entire security architecture of Europe. Stalled in its Normandy format, the negotiating process over Ukraine was extended to direct dialogue between Russia and the US. This was scheduled to continue in early 2022 with more meetings between Russia and the US, also interrelated with the Strategic Stability Dialogue between the US and Russia, as well as dialogue between NATO and Russia and within the framework of the OSCE.

Europe continued to stand out for the proportion of third parties involved in the negotiations. All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks. Most of the mediating or facilitating actors continued to be intergovernmental organisations, although the role of states increased. 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 (Transdniestria) and Ukraine (east). On the other hand,

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe in 2021



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2021

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. It also became more actively involved in the negotiating process between Armenia and Azerbaijan during the year. 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. The role of various states increased in 2021, such as Russia in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, following the trend of the previous year, in which Moscow mediated the agreement that ended the six-week war. Moscow’s role in Europe continued to be controversial, but also in other regions⁷, considered both a party to the conflict and a third party in Georgia and Ukraine.

Most negotiations in Europe faced obstacles and/or deadlock during 2021

With regard to the peacekeeping and ceasefire observation missions and mechanisms in 2021, there were Russian peacekeeping troops in Nagorno-Karabakh and in the Lachin corridor, which connects the enclave with Armenia. The Russian troops were deployed at the end of 2020 under the agreement that ended the war that year. During 2021, their limitations were revealed, without a clear mandate and with a presence in areas far from the new front lines that resulted from the 2020 conflict. Another development in 2021 was Russia’s veto of the extension of the OSCE Observer Mission (OM) at the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints (OM), which had supervised these two checkpoints on the Russian side of the border and was different from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine.

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. In 2021, military and political-military aspects remained relevant in several of the contexts. It was a year of massive deployment of Russian troops along the border with Ukraine, accompanied by a hardening in Moscow’s geostrategic stance towards NATO and the US that placed political-military issues such as Europe’s security architecture in the spotlight. Russia demanded guarantees not to expand NATO membership eastward, including to Ukraine, and to ban deployments of military forces and weapons outside NATO’s 1997 borders. In turn, the United States threatened economic sanctions and other measures in the event of a Russian military escalation over Ukraine. Meanwhile, Ukraine and the self-proclaimed authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk reached a new **ceasefire** in December as part of the Trilateral Contact Group, again adhering to the one reached in 2020, although violations of the ceasefire continued to occur. Despite the armed incidents and violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement that ended the 2020 war, Armenia and Azerbaijan

agreed to establish an EU-supported channel of direct communication between their defence ministers as an incident prevention mechanism. Russian peacekeeping troops were also involved in coordinating and cooperating with the armies of both countries to resolve incidents.

On the other hand, 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. In Ukraine, disagreements continued over the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the sequence of their content, which includes the status of Donetsk and Luhansk, elections and border control. Their unfavourable terms for Ukraine, insofar as they leave recovering control of its border for the end of the process, made it difficult for Ukraine to comply. In Cyprus, with the high-level political process at an impasse and only informal contacts, the gulf between the parties continued to widen and the leadership of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus reaffirmed its defence of a two-state solution. In Kosovo, the Kosovar prime minister forwarded a proposal that included bilateral relations with mutual recognition. It was rejected by Serbia, which called for the creation of the association of Kosovo Serb municipalities in compliance with previous agreements.

Regarding their **evolution**, Europe faced profound obstacles and/or stagnation in most of the negotiating processes, as well as great questions. There was serious deterioration in Ukraine, hand in hand with deep disagreement over the Minsk agreements, the massive deployment of Russian troops along the border with Ukraine and Russia’s arm wrestling with the US and NATO. Even if the highest-level dialogue was restarted for the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo during the year, significant disagreement and tension persisted, as evidenced by the most serious incidents since 2011 between the two territories. Armenia and Azerbaijan committed to work for the delimitation and demarcation of the border, as well as for the re-establishment of transport and economic connections, although the delay during the year regarding these matters demonstrated the antagonism between the parties after the 2020 war. The processes in Moldova (Transdniestria) 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. Although the guarantor countries Greece and Turkey resumed their exploratory dialogue, the growing distance between the Turkish Cypriot (and Turkish) and Greek Cypriot positions and the continued tension in the Eastern Mediterranean generated concern. An exception was in Spain the process in the Basque Country, with progress during the year in areas such as transferring prisoners closer to prisons in the Basque Country and

7. See chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East).

Navarra and to the autonomous communities closest to them, as well as progress in co-existence.

Faced with the stagnation and obstacles in the formal negotiating processes in Europe, civil society initiatives advocated dialogue and greater participation. Peace process formats mostly focused on the high political level in Europe, with few mechanisms for the participation of civil society and with few links with initiatives promoted from the base. Among other initiatives, around fifty civil society organisations from Serbia and Kosovo urged the leaders of both territories to resume sustainable dialogue and to refrain from incendiary rhetoric against their respective minority populations. In Cyprus, activity and calls for civil society dialogue intensified prior to the informal summit in April.

Regarding the **gender perspective**, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mainly by low levels of women's participation in the negotiating teams, as well as by the lack of mechanisms or gender architecture. Nevertheless, as part of Sweden's rotating presidency of the OSCE, the organisation stepped up efforts during the year to achieve greater female participation in negotiating processes. This impetus took the form of some appeals, consultations and training. The United Nations also urged strengthening the gender dimension in the processes. The UN Secretary-General joined others in calling on the parties in Cyprus to guarantee a minimum of 30% women in their delegations. Women's organisations and women activists in Europe demanded to participate in peace processes and integrate the gender perspective into them. Georgian women raised specific demands in meetings with government representatives participating in the peace process and proposed the creation of a space for direct dialogue between Georgian and Ossetian women, among other initiatives. In Cyprus, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network called for the integration of the gender perspective and the participation of women in the negotiating process, offering to identify potential participants from both communities. The Kosovo Women's Network told the Kosovo government that it demanded substantive female participation in the negotiations, including in the negotiating team and in consultation formats.

Finally, even if they are not covered by this yearbook as they are not defined as peace processes, other crisis situations in Europe were the subjects of political dialogue or calls for dialogue. This was the case of the negotiations between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan regarding the delimitation of their borders in a context of security incidents, with an especially serious one between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2021. Kyrgyzstan

and Uzbekistan reached landmark border demarcation agreements in 2021. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, international calls and appeals for political dialogue multiplied amid the serious deterioration of the political situation in 2021, with the Republika Srpska approving withdrawal from key federal institutions (army, tax and judicial systems) and opened the door to developing their own. Various international actors warned of the risks to the legal framework established by the Dayton Peace Accords (1995).

In relation to the tension surrounding the status of Catalonia, in June the central government approved pardons for the nine pro-independence political and social leaders sentenced to prison terms of between 9 and 13 years in 2019 under accusations of disobedience and sedition. The pardons suspended their prison sentences but not the penalty of absolute professional disqualification. In September, the dialogue began with a meeting between a delegation from the central government of Spain and another from the government of Catalonia, without the involvement of the Junts per Catalunya party, a member of the coalition government. Different explanations were offered for their absence, but the door was left open to their future participation. This meeting was preceded the same day by another meeting between the prime minister of Spain and the president of the government of Catalonia. Despite the cordial climate, the gulf between the parties' points of departure was clear. The Spanish government adhered to its 44-point "Agenda for Reunion",⁸ or some updated version of it, while the government of Catalonia defended a referendum on independence and amnesty for the people involved in legal proceedings related to the conflict. Both leaders agreed to dialogue without specific deadlines, as well as to hold regular meetings and discreet meetings as well. There were no new public meetings for the negotiations for the rest of the year.

Civil society organisations carried out initiatives and advocated dialogue and greater participation in peace processes, as it was the case in the Serbia-Kosovo and Cyprus processes

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria
Third parties	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Relevant agreements	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 Transdniestria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997)

8. Government of Spain, *Agenda para el reencuentro*, 6 February, 2020.

Summary:

Transdniestria is a 4,000 km² 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 Transdniestria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria 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 Transdniestria. 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 at various levels and progress was made towards resuming the 5+2 format, which brings together the parties to the conflict and the mediators (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine) and observers (USA, EU), though it finally had to be postponed.

Meetings were held among political representatives and joint expert working groups during the year. The chief negotiators of Moldova and the self-proclaimed Transdniestria, Vladislav Kulminski and Vitaly Ignatiev, met in a 1+1 format on several occasions, facilitated by the OSCE mission. Several times, OSCE representatives commented on the constructive atmosphere of the negotiations, the parties' willingness to participate in the 5+2 format, the coordination between the parties in addressing the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and action to restore freedom of movement between Moldova and the territory controlled by Transdniestria. Overall, however, difficulties continued to bog down implementation of the package of measures known as Berlin Plus. The OSCE urged the parties to prepare joint proposals for confidence-building measures related to the package.

The parties to the conflict moved towards resuming the 5+2 format under the impetus of the Swedish rotating chairmanship of the OSCE and 2-3 November were set as the dates for holding a 5+2 round. However, it was finally cancelled at Moldova's request. Transdniestria described the cancellation as alarming, saying that it made addressing many issues impossible. The delegation of the self-proclaimed region had planned to raise various issues during the round, including the ban on the entry of vehicles from Transdniestria to Ukraine

since September. The Transdniestrian authorities also accused Moldova of failing to implement previous agreements, including the Berlin and Berlin Plus packages and the 2017 and 2018 protocols. **The Moldovan government said that it was willing to hold a 5+2 round in the future, but that it must first appoint a new chief negotiator after Kulminski's resignation** in early November, allegedly for personal reasons. Some analysts argued that the issue of Transdniestria was not a priority for the new government, which was more focused on the anti-corruption agenda and European integration, and that the internationalised dimension of the conflict made it difficult to address internally. Others said that resolving the conflict first required internal reforms within the Moldovan state. Although the round was cancelled, the Moldovan authorities and president indicated that the negotiating process was ongoing, that the talks with the participants of the 5+2 format were continuing and that the only option was a political solution to the conflict.

This went on in a year of important political changes in Moldova, with an impact on the geopolitical relations projected onto the conflict and the negotiations. After Maria Sandu was elected the new president in late 2020, defeating the pro-Russian acting president Igor Dodon, the early parliamentary elections in July 2021 handed the victory to Sandu's party, which is pro-European, though favourable to maintaining relations with Russia. Following the election of the new government, the deputy head of the Russian presidential administration, Dmitry Kozak, met with Sandu in the Moldovan capital in a meeting described by Kozak as very constructive and expressive of goodwill. In August, Sandu said that relations with Russia would be based on pragmatism and that one of her goals was not to allow any destabilisation in the conflict. However, relations between Moldova and Russia deteriorated in the last four months of the year due to a serious gas crisis when the contract between Moldova and the Russian company Gazprom expired without an agreement on prices and terms for a new long-term gas agreement. The EU accused Russia of turning gas into a weapon against Moldova and some analysts described the crisis as Russian retaliation against the country for its pro-European electoral shift. The parties reached an agreement in late October, but in November tensions flared again with threats to shut down gas if Moldova did not pay for recent supplies. Finally, Moldova approved amendments to its budget to approve the required payments and prevent a major energy crisis. In this heated context, the negotiating process remained in the background and by early December the new chief negotiator to replace Kulminski had not yet been appointed. Transdniestrian President Vadim Krasnoselsky, who was re-elected in the presidential election in December, though it was not recognised by Moldova or the international community and had only one other candidate, urged Moldova to name a new chief negotiator and resume the 5+2 format.

Gender, peace and security

References to the women, peace and security agenda increased in meetings at different levels of the negotiating process, under the impetus of the Swedish rotating presidency of the OSCE and the new general secretariat of the organisation. Among other pronouncements, the special representative of the OSCE rotating chairpersonship urged the parties to the conflict to strengthen the role of women in the conflict resolution process, including by appointing more women to the co-leadership of the joint expert working groups, among other positions. At the end of the year, the OSCE mission in Moldova joined together with UN Women and the rotating OSCE chairmanship to co-organise an intensive training course for female members of joint working groups focused on capacity-building in mediation, negotiation, conflict analysis and communication, with a gender perspective.

Ukraine (east)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, government of Russia ⁹
Third parties	OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia ¹⁰ also participate), Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia ¹¹), USA
Relevant agreements	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 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.

The peace process of the conflict in eastern Ukraine continued to face difficulties at its various levels (Normandy format, trilateral contact group, monitoring mechanisms, among others), amid an impasse in the negotiations and a year of escalating international tension surrounding the conflict, with Ukrainian and US warnings of the risk of invasion by Russia. Overall, no progress was made in the negotiating process. The Normandy format continued, though without meeting at its highest level (leaders from Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France). Meetings did take place among these different countries' political advisors, in which they addressed issues such as ceasefire violations, the implementation of the Minsk agreements and prisoner exchanges, as well as trilateral meetings between Germany, France and Ukraine. The Ukrainian issue was on the agenda of the talks between the US and Russian presidents, including their meeting in Geneva in June and by videoconference in December.

The Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Ukraine and Russia, in dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk) held meetings throughout the year, though not in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Disagreements persisted on substantive issues in the security, political and humanitarian working groups. Disagreements in the political working group prevented the development of an action plan to implement the Minsk agreements.** In March, a German-French proposal for a resolution was leaked, which included a concrete proposal on the issues under discussion. Some analysts blamed the leak on Russia as part of a strategy to highlight Ukraine's lack of support for the process and weaken its position. In late October, OSCE Special Representative Mikko Kinnunen, who had taken office in August, replacing Heidi Grau, described the two sides' "continuous differences" as "profound". The parties continued to differ on the sequence of the substantive elements of the Minsk agreements (special status of Donetsk and Luhansk, elections in those areas, Ukrainian-Russian border control and others). Russia continued to give more importance to the Minsk II Agreement, while Ukraine defended the unity of the various agreements together (Minsk I and Minsk II). At the beginning of the year, the OSCE representative had also emphasised the unity of the Minsk agreements.

9. 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.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

Seeking to deny France and Germany's claims that Russia did not want to summon the Normandy format, in November Moscow published confidential diplomatic messages sent between France, Germany and Russia, provoking accusations of breaking diplomatic protocol and demonstrating the gulf between the parties. The French and German governments said that publishing these messages showed Russia's attempts at obstruction with unacceptable preconditions and urged Moscow to return to the Normandy talks.

The escalation of militarisation in November led to a crisis and an increase in diplomatic activity, stoked by intelligence from the US and Ukraine on the massive deployment of Russian troops around the border with Ukraine and warnings of a possible invasion and Russian accusations of the Western-backed militarisation of Ukraine and provocation. **The Russian and US presidents discussed the crisis in a videoconference meeting in early December and again at the end of the month.** Russia demanded legal guarantees that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, and a ban on deploying troops and weapons outside NATO's 1997 borders, among other demands. Moscow also blamed Ukraine for the non-implementation of the Minsk agreements. US President Biden warned of economic sanctions and other responses in the event of a military escalation over Ukraine. Both presidents agreed that their teams would continue to meet to de-escalate the crisis. Negotiations between the US and Russia, NATO and Russia, and the OSCE and Russia were scheduled for early January. Russia expressed its demands in two treaties, addressed to NATO and the US, which it demanded they sign and that would amount to a profound change in Europe's security architecture.

The lack of agreements to restore the 2020 ceasefire during the year, the periodic escalations and ceasefire violations, the presence of weapons in exclusion zones and the restrictions on the OSCE observation mission all illustrated the chronic fragility of the security situation and the negotiating process. **There was also no progress in designating new demilitarised areas** during the year and the situation worsened in one of the three areas, Petrivske. Meanwhile, Russia vetoed the renewal of the OSCE observation mission's mandate at the Russian checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk (OM), which expired on 30 September. This led to the dismantling of the mechanism for monitoring the situation on the ground and movements across the border. **The negotiations of the working group on humanitarian issues did not lead to the reopening of any crossing points during the year and only two crossings were open throughout 2021.** Talks on a prisoner exchange continued. A ceasefire was reached at the end of the year, but new ceasefire violations were reported.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process continued mostly without women's participation. As pointed out in a gender-themed report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) covering the period between November 2018 and June 2021, women's voices remained largely unheard on policy issues.¹² The SMM highlighted the roles played by women of civil society in peacebuilding initiatives, including by providing humanitarian assistance and psychosocial support, ensuring access to healthcare and defending the rights of internally displaced people and former combatants (including in areas along the Line of Contact), as well in initiatives launched by relatives of disappeared persons and dialogue activities. Public and non-public efforts at dialogue promoted by female civil society activists continued during the period studied in the report. The OSCE mission noted obstacles and challenges faced by female activists and women's organisations in their peacebuilding initiatives, including security risks, resistance and social distrust, difficulties in meeting because of closed crossing points and pandemic-related restrictions, as well as the trust-building limitations of online formats, the lack of access to the peace process, the lack of interest and support from political actors in women's peace initiatives and from some donors, difficulties in accessing stable and long-term funding, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions (including due to the COVID-19 pandemic), difficulties in promoting local ownership and local priorities with donors.

Disagreements over the implementation of the Minsk agreements continued in Ukraine during a year of escalating militarisation and warnings of a possible Russian attack on the country

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan
Third parties	Russia, OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey), Turkey
Relevant agreements	Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994), Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation (2020)
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	

12. OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, *Gender dimensions of SMM monitoring: women's perceptions of security and their contributions to peace and security. 1 November 2018 – 15 June 2021*. OSCE, September 2021.

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 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.

After the six-week war in 2020 between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh that ended with a trilateral ceasefire agreement, the situation in 2021 was marked by **deep antagonism between the parties, disagreements and difficulties in implementing the points of the agreement, the fragility of the ceasefire and uncertainty about the future resolution of the status of the enclave**. An ad hoc negotiating framework was adopted, with Russia predominant as the main mediator (it hosted two meetings at the highest political level, in January and December). This led to a certain displacement of the OSCE Minsk Group, though it held some separate meetings with the parties, as well as a joint meeting alongside the UN General Assembly and another in November that supported the Russian initiatives. Thus, in addition to being a donor, the EU became involved in efforts to facilitate dialogue between the parties.

Various points of the 2020 agreement were addressed with great difficulty during the year. In contrast, the issue of the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was excluded from the 2020 agreement, was left out of the ad hoc dialogue held during the year. At the January summit between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, mediated by Russian President Vladimir Putin, **a trilateral working group to negotiate the opening of transport connections and economic relations** was announced and began meeting that same month. **However, it was suspended for several months of the year**. In relation to the difficulty to reopen the connections, the ceasefire was fragile and volatile and tension rose due to armed incidents, with escalations in May and November that ultimately led to a new truce. In this context, in May Russia proposed **creating a joint commission to delimit and demarcate the border between both countries**. The proposal was accepted by the parties at the trilateral meeting in November, where they also promised to intensify efforts to establish transport connections and economic relations. In December, at

a meeting of the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders in Brussels, mediated by EU Council President Charles Michel, both sides reaffirmed their previous commitments and **agreed to proceed with the restoration of railway lines** based on the principle of reciprocity and through border control and customs agreements. The EU also offered technical support in the form of an expert mission or border delimitation consultation group. Meanwhile, a new regional dialogue format to promote cooperation was launched in Moscow in December, bringing together Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Iran and Turkey, at the proposal of Baku and Ankara. Also that month, Turkey and Armenia announced the appointment of special representatives to normalise their relations.

In relation to the **ceasefire**, Russia kept its peacekeeping mission troops deployed in the Lachin corridor connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia as well as inside Nagorno-Karabakh. The troops were located on the main roads of Nagorno-Karabakh but far from the front lines and did not patrol them or nearby settlements. By mid-year they still did not have a clear mandate due to the disagreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which added uncertainty. In practice, the Russian troops were involved in many tasks, including support for reconstruction and accompaniment of civilians on the move, as well as coordination and cooperation with the respective Armenian and Azerbaijani top military commands regarding their daily activities and resolving incidents.¹³ In January, the joint Turkish-Russian observation centre began its operations based in the Aghdam district, under Baku's control since the 2020 war, while monitoring the situation on the front lines using drones. Taken together, the close physical distance between the Armenian and Azerbaijani troops and their closer proximity to civilian settlements due to the shift of the front lines after the 2020 war, as well as the limitations of observation mechanisms, all highlighted **the fragility of the situation and the ceasefire system**. As a step forward, in dialogue with the EU, in November the parties **agreed to establish a direct communication channel between their defence ministers** as an incident prevention mechanism.

The issue of **prisoners of war** remained contentious. Even though both governments claimed to have complied with the point of the 2020 trilateral agreement committed to the exchange of prisoners of war, international actors (the Council of Europe, the EU and others) expressed concern that not all Armenian prisoners were being released by Azerbaijan. For example, Baku considered dozens of Armenians detained after the November 2020 agreement to be terrorists and not prisoners of war. It also claimed to be unaware of the whereabouts of several dozen other detainees during the war, prompting concern about possible forced disappearance. Nevertheless, several limited agreements were reached during the year for prisoner swaps (January, February, September) and for the release of Armenian prisoners by Azerbaijan and the delivery of maps with the location of mines by Armenia (in June, July and

13. International Crisis Group, *Post-war Prospects for Nagorno-Karabakh*, ICG Report n° 264, 9 June 2021.

December). Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent districts remained one of the most heavily mined regions in the world.

In relation to other **humanitarian consequences** of the conflict laid out in the 2020 agreement, particularly the return of the displaced population, supported by UNHCR, the parties did not reach an agreement regarding international access to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, an obstacle linked to their antagonism around the issue of its status. Each party demanded that access to Nagorno-Karabakh only be allowed from its territory, which blocked any potential support from UNHCR in the population returns that took place in the months after the end of the war. In the political and social sphere, narratives linked to patriotism and militarism predominated. Some local civil society peacebuilding initiatives were produced on a limited scale and in a regional context of obstacles, including the stigmatisation of civil society that was involved in critical analysis of the war and promoted peacebuilding.

Gender, peace and security

The new negotiating scheme did not include the participation of women from civil society or a gender dimension, in continuity with their exclusion prior to the 2020 war. In this sense, a resolution of the European Parliament in May on prisoners of war in the period after the recent armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan included a call to the governments of both countries, as well as to mediators, to systematically include women in the peace process as well as to consult with female human rights activists. Female human rights defenders and activists from Armenia and Azerbaijan cited the high degree of militarisation between women and men in both countries, including through the roles that citizens of both countries played in promoting and exalting military mobilisation in 2020, in a context of entrenched military propaganda and patriotism in multiple spheres and structures (political, educational and social). Female activists also noted the rise in discourse on the links between motherhood, defence of the nation and militarism, as well as the obstacles to performing peacebuilding work in the current situation, including because of their stigmatisation.

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, government of Russia ¹⁴
Third parties	OSCE, EU and UN; USA Russia ¹⁵
Relevant agreements	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)

14. 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.

15. Ibid.

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 involving Georgia, the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia remained active, though beset with chronic obstacles. At the highest-level negotiating arena, four new face-to-face rounds of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) were held in March, June, October and December, co-mediated by the OSCE, EU and UN. After the slowdown in 2020, when only one round had been held in situ due to the pandemic (December), along with a series of prior consultations by videoconference and trips to the region by the co-mediators, the normalised resumption of the rounds of the GID in 2021 was hailed as a sign of progress by mediating actors such as the EU, faced with the challenges that the pandemic posed to the negotiating process. However, **the obstacles and the gulf between the parties on substantive issues became evident in the GID throughout the year.**

Within the GID working group on security the key issue of the non-use of force remained deadlocked. Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia continued to demand bilateral

agreements between Georgia and each of the regions on the commitment to the non-use of force, while Georgia maintained its position that the agreement on this matter should be between Russia and Georgia, which Russia rejected as it does not consider itself a party to the conflict. Georgia also expressed concern at the GID about the action plan for creating a common socio-economic space adopted by Abkhazia and Russia in late 2020, which includes “harmonisation” in areas such as dual nationality, double taxation and customs and which regulates the activity of NGOs and “foreign agents”, among many other aspects. Georgia also denounced Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia’s fait accompli practices of extending the administrative border, expanding the territory under their control. The de facto independent regions denounced what they consider to be the militarisation of Georgia within the framework of Tbilisi’s relations with NATO and its member states, such as the modernisation of its forces, joint military exercises and other activities. They also advocated delimiting the border between them and Georgia.

Other issues addressed in the security and humanitarian GID working groups included the detention of people crossing the administrative border, movement restrictions, people missing due to the conflict, ways to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, the language rights of the Georgian minority in Abkhazia and others. The humanitarian working group continued to struggle, with some sessions being abandoned by representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as in previous years. On a positive note, the 2021 rounds included spaces for discussion on “human security” and common challenges faced by the populations of the conflict zone, and some aspects related to the women, peace and security agenda were addressed at the GID level. **International actors welcomed a certain degree of cooperation between the parties in conflict in dealing with the pandemic.** Even so, most of the year the crossing points of the administrative border remained closed. This closure aggravated the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation of the population living in the conflict zone.

The Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) for South Ossetia, co-facilitated by the EU and the OSCE, remained active. In contrast, **the Gali IPRM remained inactive and was not reactivated during the year, although both parties expressed their willingness to do so in the last round of the GID of the year, in December.** The co-mediators also cited positive signs about its possible restart. Issues such as the prolonged closure of crossing points and their impact on the population were addressed at the Ergneti IPRM. On a positive note, cooperative measures regarding the use of water during the summer were praised. The co-facilitators highlighted the constructive climate of the Ergneti IPRM throughout the year.

Gender, peace and security

The women, peace and security agenda was promoted at various levels in the country throughout the year, although civil society organisations continued to state that greater implementation was necessary. **Meetings continued to take place between Georgian government representatives participating in the GID and the IPRM and women’s organisations,** coordinated by Georgian institutions with the support of UN Women, with other actors such as the EU participating. These meetings addressed challenges and dynamics of the negotiating process, initiatives to strengthen women’s participation and women’s priorities and proposals. At the April meeting, Minister of State for Reconciliation and Civic Equality Tea Akhvlediani announced the establishment of a working group on women, peace and security with women’s organisations involved to facilitate exchange and consultation on reconciliation and peacebuilding policies and strengthen the structured participation of displaced women and other women affected by the conflict in the peace process. At the November meeting, women’s organisations raised the need to address issues such as participation formats, specifically for displaced women and women affected by the conflict; awareness and access to vaccines against COVID-19; the property rights of new generations of displaced people and access to education in the Georgian language. At a meeting in May, Georgian participants of the Ergneti IPRM and women’s organisations **proposed creating a space for direct dialogue between Georgian and Ossetian women** to address and negotiate common problems, according to UN Women.

At the briefing of the three co-mediators before the OSCE Permanent Council, UN mediator Ayşe Cihan Sultanoğlu said that they continued to advocate for measures for women’s participation and that the UN’s Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DAPCP) was working on a gender analysis of the conflict aimed at strengthening inclusive peacebuilding under the GID. In turn, Annika Söder, the special representative for the South Caucasus of the OSCE rotating chairmanship, whose appointment increased the proportion of women at the highest levels of co-mediation, described a greater understanding of the different gender impacts of conflict in the GID, a basis on which progress is expected in the coming rounds. The process to draft Georgia’s fourth national action plan on women, peace and security began in July. Various participatory meetings were held with women’s civil society organisations, representatives of municipalities and other stakeholders to identify priorities and actions for the new plan. The needs identified at the meeting with 15 municipalities included the daily needs of the displaced population and those affected by the conflict, specifically women and girls, including access to healthcare and other essential services, infrastructure, transportation and education according to UN Women, which co-organised participatory meetings for the new plan.

South-east Europe

Cyprus	
Negotiating actors	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Third parties	UN, EU; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Relevant agreements	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.

The peace process remained deadlocked, with no resumptions of formal negotiations. Following the preparatory meetings, an informal 5+1 summit was held in Geneva in April, convened by the UN Secretary-General, bringing together the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, the three guarantor countries (Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom) and the UN. The three-day meeting, which included bilateral and multilateral meetings of the UN Secretary-General, aimed to assess conditions for the resumption of formal negotiations for a solution to the conflict. The summit highlighted the growing gulf between the parties' views on the Turkish Cypriot position (already expressed in 2020 after the election of the new Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar) in defence of a two-state solution, also defended by Turkey, which broke with the consensual solution of a bizonal and bicomunal federation with political equality promoted by the UN and supported until then by the parties. The Turkish Cypriot leadership claimed

Informal meetings in Cyprus failed to resume official negotiations and the positions of the parties remained quite at odds during the year

that the formula was exhausted. The Greek Cypriot side continued to advocate a bizonal and bi-communal federation solution. Despite the gap, the parties agreed to continue the dialogue. In his mid-year report, the UN Secretary-General said that the UN Security Council had made it clear in resolutions for half a century that there was only one sovereign state on the island, while noting that it took note of the situation of the island and the importance conveyed by the parties to achieve a framework for political equality to take the form of shared and effective participation.¹⁶

In September, the UN Secretary-General hosted separate meetings and a new informal joint meeting with the leaders of both communities on the island, outside the UN General Assembly. **The Turkish Cypriot leadership entrenched its position in defence of a two-state solution. Meanwhile, it was revealed that the Greek Cypriot proposed solution of a decentralised federation in a reunified state, which could be reached through a multi-step roadmap, including the signing of a strategic agreement, the return to the 1960 Constitution,** arguing that this was not a step towards a unitary state, but one in which the Turkish Cypriot side could take the positions to which it was entitled, and the start of negotiations for the establishment of a decentralised federation, including territorial adjustments. Each side rejected the other's position on resolving the conflict. The UN Secretary-General's High Representative Jane Holl Lute, a senior United Nations official who ended her mandate in autumn 2021, held meetings with the leaders of both communities and their representatives and with guarantor countries. In his December report, the UN Secretary-General repeated that the parties' positions remained very much at odds.¹⁷

During the year, the complexity of achieving rapprochement was compounded by obstacles related to the context of regional tension around Cyprus, including the continuing dispute between the guarantor powers Turkey and Greece and their respective allies over the delimitation of maritime borders and exclusive economic areas, access to hydrocarbons and the sovereignty of some islands. In 2021, Greece and Turkey resumed exploratory dialogue after five years and held several rounds, though they yielded no tangible results. They also kept the military communication channel active under the NATO umbrella, although militarised tension continued in the waters around Cyprus and in the region, albeit at a lower level than in 2020, when it escalated, involving the collision of two warships. Distrust between the parties also continued to be fuelled by tensions over Varosha, an island city taken by Turkish forces during Turkey's 1974 invasion, from which its Greek Cypriot population

16. UN Secretary-General, *Mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2021/634, 9 July 2021.

17. UN Secretary-General, *Mission of good offices in Cyprus*, 2/2021/1109, 31 December 2021.

fled. Abandoned, closed and partially reopened in 2020, Varosha continued to be reopened by the Turkish Cypriots 2021, including with the transfer of part of the town from military to civilian control. The move sparked criticism from Greek Cypriots and calls from international actors such as the UN Security Council to reverse the reopening.

Along with informal meetings with the UN Secretary-General and with the High Representative Lutte, meetings were held between the UN Secretary-General Special Representative Elizabeth Spehar, whose term ended in November and was succeeded by Colin Stewart, and representatives of the leaders of both communities, to promote trust between the parties and address various issues, though little progress was made. In December, both leaders met informally at a reception by the UN mission in their first meeting on the island in a year. The joint technical committees continued to face obstacles and most met only sporadically. The work of the technical health committee was notable, with frequent exchanges and harmonisation of measures between the parties to address the pandemic.

Other areas of dialogue remained active, such as the Swedish-backed Religious Track, which brings together religious leaders from both communities, and which during the year held meetings and made calls for dialogue and a solution to the conflict and reciprocal visits, as well as the dialogue among political party representatives promoted by Slovakia. Civil society organisations were also involved in intercommunity activities to promote a solution to the conflict, including actions prior to the informal summit in June. Overall, the UN identified a trend of increased intercommunity activity in favour of a solution.

Gender, peace and security

Civil society women's organisations continued to demand greater participation in the peace process as well as integration of the gender perspective in the process. These demands were put forward to the parties and the international community in meetings and actions prior to the informal 5+1 summit in June. Along these lines, the UN Secretary-General urged the parties to the conflict to draw up an action plan to promote and guarantee women's participation and the integration of the gender perspective into the process and to promote links with civil society organisations in developing that plan. In relation to the 5+1 summit, the UN Secretary-General lamented the low participation of women and called for future delegations to at least reach the threshold of 30% women. As part of the peace process' joint technical groups, the gender committee remained partially active during the year, with changes in the composition of its Turkish Cypriot members, as the Turkish Cypriot elections and the change of leadership in 2020 led to changes in the Turkish Cypriot teams of the technical committees.

Serbia – Kosovo	
Negotiating actors	Serbia, Kosovo
Third parties	EU, UN, USA
Relevant agreements	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 negotiating process faced obstacles during the year and the gulf between the parties was evident.

International actors were involved in calls for the resumption of dialogue, including the EU, the US, Germany and France. Following the early parliamentary elections in Kosovo in February, in which the Vetëvendosje party emerged victorious, with 48% of the vote and a parliamentary majority of 58 of the 120 seats, and which made Albin Kurti the prime minister, various meetings of EU representatives with the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo took place separately, in both territories and in Brussels. Through its special envoy for the Western Balkans, Matthew Palmer, the United States also participated in meetings in the region.

The high-level political dialogue resumed in mid-June in Brussels, facilitated by the EU, followed by a new meeting in that format in July. No progress was made and substantive disagreements were evident. **Serbia**

accused Kosovo of breaching the agreement aimed at establishing an association of Serb municipalities in Kosovo and of instead insisting on recognition for Kosovo. Meanwhile, Kosovo accused Serbia of other breaches and criticised Belgrade for its lack of openness towards a multi-point Kosovar proposal (creation of a free trade area in southeastern Europe on equal terms; commitment not to attack each other; bilateral relations with mutual recognition, including issues relating to their respective minorities, with the proposal to create a national council for the Serb population of Kosovo; and replacement of the chair of the commission on missing persons of Serbia). After the July meeting, Serbia agreed with three points proposed by the EU (increasing joint efforts on missing persons, refraining from actions that could destabilise the situation on the ground and monthly meetings between the chief negotiators) and accused Kosovo of not accepting the second point. Kosovo delved into the points of its June proposal with a new proposal for a declaration, while continuing to accuse Serbia of not being open to its proposals. **The special representative of the EU, Miroslav Lajčák, confirmed the gulf between the parties and the work ahead. The planned meeting between Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić and Kurti in September did not take place, due to the lack of sufficient progress for technical meetings.**

The negotiating process was also affected in September by the political and security crisis around the border between Serbia and Kosovo after Kosovo decided not to renew a previous temporary agreement on vehicle registration and instead issued requirements for a temporary Kosovar license plate to enter its territory, in reciprocity of action taken by Serbia. This led to protests and barricades by the Serb population in northern Kosovo, blocking key crossing points, and the deployment of special armed Kosovo Police units. Serbia raised the alert level of the Serbian Army in the border area and its warplanes flew over the area, in what was considered **the worst crisis since the 2011 border incidents. After international calls for de-escalation, Serbia and Kosovo reached an interim solution agreement in late September**, facilitated by the EU, that included the withdrawal of police forces and barricades, the deployment of NATO at the crossing points for two weeks and the concealment of the emblems of each territory with white labels, as well as an agreement to create a joint working group to reach a permanent solution to the vehicle registration issue.

The negotiating process remained stalled in the final months of the year. Around fifty civil society organisations from Serbia and Kosovo urged the leaders of both territories to resume sustainable dialogue and to refrain from incendiary rhetoric against their respective minority populations. At the end of the year, Kurti insisted on the need for a new approach, with mutual recognition at the centre.

Gender, peace and security

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), a platform that groups together over 150 civil society women's organisations from Kosovo, continued to demand women's participation in the negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo, as well as the inclusion on the agenda of priority issues for women. **During the year, the KWN complained that the group of experts in the negotiating process did not include women. As a specific demand, it called on the Kosovar government to substantively involve women in decision-making processes related to the talks, including in the formal negotiating team and in public consultations.** The KWN repeated that it was willing to provide suggestions of qualified women for the negotiating process and that it supported holding consultations to move towards an inclusive and transparent process.

KWN representatives also met in June with new female Kosovar President Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu, elected in April as the new leader by the Kosovar Parliament. KWN's goals for the meeting included boosting women's participation in the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo.

Western Europe

Spain (Basque Country)	
Negotiating actors	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)
Third parties	Permanent Social Forum, Bake Bidea
Relevant agreements	--

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 Alsasua 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.

On the 10th anniversary of the definitive end of ETA's armed activity, significant steps were taken in the peacebuilding process in the Basque Country, including in areas such as coexistence and prisoners. The 10th anniversary of the Aiete International Conference was commemorated, which in October 2010 brought together political, social and trade union actors from the Basque Country and international stakeholders and resulted in the Aiete Declaration, to which ETA responded days later by announcing the definitive end of its armed activity. The achievement of 10 years without armed activity was celebrated by institutional, political and social actors in the Basque Country, which as a whole assessed the current situation as better than it had been a decade before. Institutional and social events were held for the anniversary of the end of the armed action and the Aiete Declaration. **One of the milestones was the statement made by the political parties EH Bildu and Sortu on behalf of the Basque pro-independence left, which included specific reference to the victims of ETA violence and conveyed "regret and pain for the suffering caused" while affirming that it "never should have happened" and that they "should have reached Aiete before", recognising that it was not possible to undo the damage and promising to try to mitigate it.** The statement was hailed by many political and social actors that said it was a very important step forward in coexistence, including the Collective of Victims of Terrorism (Covite), though it and other actors such as the president of the Basque government demanded more steps and self-criticism.

The Basque government presented the Coexistence, Human Rights and Diversity Plan (Udaberri 2024) in September after months of contrast and modification as part of consultations with political parties, victims' associations and various groups since the draft was

presented in May. Among other aspects, **the plan recognises the start of a new era and a new challenge after the end of ETA, described as one of coexistence in plurality and diversity, and calls for sincere self-criticism of those who exercised, justified or contextualised the violence, as well as acknowledgment that it was unfair.** One of the major coexistence-related events of the year was the announcement by the group of ETA prisoners (EPPK) in November that the reception of prisoners leaving prison (*ongi etorris*) would be carried out "privately" and "discreetly". This responded to an issue that had created political and social tension and had led to significantly less public celebrations in recent years. The EPPK said that it did not want to fuel controversy in a context in which they saw some actors and parties seeming to seek confrontation and recognised that the receptions cause pain to the victims. The announcement was widely celebrated by political and social actors, including the state government, though some said that it was late in coming and more steps were needed. In November, the Permanent Social Forum presented the conclusions and recommendations of its work during the previous year on democratic coexistence. The Permanent Social Forum said that the time had come to move from confrontation and the "battle over the narrative" to a framework of constructive discussion, and to establish the new landscape with critical contributions from the past by the different actors. Progress continued to be made on municipal policies to promote coexistence, with discussion tables for local politicians and citizen groups and forums, with external facilitation support as well as institutional support.

On the 10th anniversary of the Aiete Conference and the definitive end of ETA's armed activity, new progress was made in terms of coexistence and prisoners

In relation to other key issues, the situation of ETA prisoners yielded significant progress. New steps to transfer prisoners to prisons in the Basque Country or closer were taken and at the end of the year the Spanish government announced the end of the dispersion policy, revealing that **all prisoners were at least 200 kilometres from their homes and none were in a first-degree situation.** In May the central and Basque governments signed an agreement for the transfer of penitentiary powers to the Basque Country, which entered into force in October. **In the middle of the year, the Permanent Social Forum assessed the results of what it considered the first stage of the change in prison policy,** one of the main lines in the peacebuilding process, and signalled the move to the second stage, for which it set objectives such as having all prisoners in prisons in the Basque Country and Navarre serve their sentences; reclassifying as third-grade over 100 prisoners who have served half their sentence and meet the conditions for it; providing access to ordinary exit permits for the around 30 prisoners who have served at least one fourth of their sentence and meet the conditions for it; getting public institutions to provide a reintegration plan agreed with different actors; and addressing the issue of the accumulation of sentences served in France. According

to the Permanent Social Forum, the change had been made possible by the determination of the Spanish and Basque governments and the group of prisoners, and their efforts were promoted and supported by institutional, political, trade union and social actors. In May, 125 Basque city councils had signed the Euskalduna Declaration, in favour of bringing the prisoners closer and the end of the exceptional prison policy, promoted at the end of the previous year with the support of all the unions of the Basque Country and various political forces. The organisation SARE, a civic network for defending the rights of ETA prisoners, escapees and deportees, praised the transfers, which it described as a great relief for many prisoners' families, saying that the process to end the distancing policy was

beginning. SARE and the association for the relatives of prisoners, Etixerat, called for the end of the blockade against grade progressions, among other demands.

Gender, peace and security

Women from the Basque Country continued to participate in many different areas of peacebuilding, including in local policies to promote coexistence, in various spaces to support and defend the rights of victims of violence and in the promotion of dialogue and political and social consensus-building. Female survivors of different kinds of violence shared testimony in joint public spaces as part of coexistence initiatives.

6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East

- The Middle East witnessed five negotiating, dialogue and exploratory processes that accounted for 14% of the total in the world in 2021.
- The cases in the region once again illustrated the importance of regional and international actors and the influence of their interests and antagonism in developing some of the negotiating processes.
- Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme resumed in 2021, but developed unevenly, in part due to Iran's breaches of the points of the 2015 agreement.
- Difficulties persisted in establishing a nationwide ceasefire in Yemen and a negotiated path to address the multidimensional conflict affecting the country.
- Palestinian-Israeli negotiations continued to stall, although some high-level contacts took place after the new Israeli government took office.
- Despite signs of rapprochement in the first quarter, the fracture between Hamas and Fatah persisted, especially after the president of the Palestinian Authority decided to postpone what would have been the first Palestinian elections in 15 years.
- The negotiating process for Syria promoted by the United Nations continued in 2021, but the rounds of meetings between representatives of the government, the opposition and civil society did not yield any significant results.
- Women's organisations and activists in the region continued to claim the need for more inclusive peace processes and women's substantive participation in decision-making.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East during 2021. 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 2021.

Table 6.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2021

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

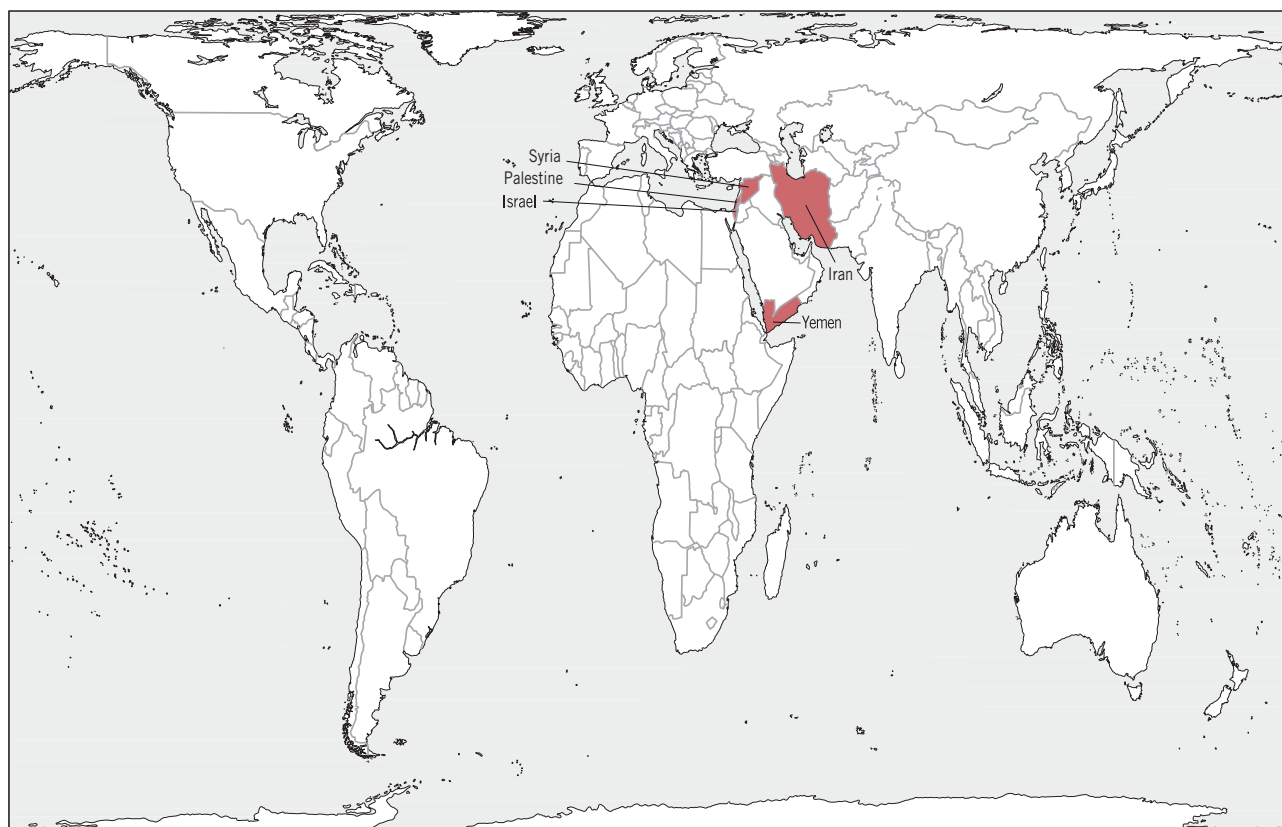
6.1. Peace negotiations in 2021: regional trends

This chapter analyses five negotiating, dialogue and exploratory processes that took place in the Middle East during 2021, the same number of cases as the previous year, accounting for 14% of the total peace processes worldwide. Three of these negotiations were linked to armed conflicts: Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. The other two processes were related to socio-political crises: one between the Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah and the other linked to the

Iranian nuclear programme. Except for the intra-Palestinian dispute, which was internal in nature, the rest were internationalised (the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen) or international (the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the tension over the Iranian nuclear programme).¹ Three of the processes analysed were located in the Mashreq (Israel-Palestine, Palestine and Syria) and the other two took place in the Gulf (Yemen and Iran).

1. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

Map 6.1. Peace negotiations in the Middle East in 2021



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2021

All negotiating processes in the Middle East included the participation of the respective governments through direct and indirect channels. Government actors were involved in negotiations, dialogue and/or contacts with a range of different actors, mainly other states and opposition organisations, armed and unarmed, as part of formal and informal negotiation schemes, depending on the context. Thus, for example, representatives of Iran and other countries that signed the 2015 nuclear agreement (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia and China, known as the P4+1 group) continued their direct contacts as part of the formal negotiations. In 2021, the new Biden administration rejoined the Vienna process, though through indirect contacts, due to Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear pact in 2018 during the Trump administration. Throughout the year, the US government conditioned the return to the deal and formal talks on Tehran compliance with a series of demands. The government of Yemen, supported by the international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, continued to be involved in the United Nations-sponsored peace process focused on the dispute with the Houthis, an armed group also known as Ansar Allah that controls a large part of the country. There were no direct contacts between the parties, who continued to express their positions in meetings with mediators. Meanwhile, despite the signing of the Riyadh agreement in 2019 and the formation of a unity government in late 2020, the Saudi-mediated negotiations continued to try to

resolve the tensions between the forces of President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and separatists of the south active under the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in 2021.

The Syrian government of Bashar Assad formally remained in the UN-backed Geneva process and maintained direct contacts with representatives of the opposition and Syrian civil society. In this format, and due to pressure from Turkey, Kurdish actors representing the autonomous region of northeastern Syria were excluded. At the same time, Damascus continued to participate in the Astana process, sponsored by Russia, Turkey and Iran, which also involved representatives of the Syrian opposition. Through Moscow's facilitation, Damascus also took steps to reactivate ceasefire agreements with armed actors during the year, notably the Kurdish groups of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the northwest and other opposition forces in the southeast. Although the negotiations between Israel and Palestine continued to be chronically deadlocked, in 2021, unlike previous years, there were some high-level contacts between the PA and representatives of the new Israeli government formed after the end of the Netanyahu administration. The unusual meetings between the president of the PA and the defence minister of the new Israeli government revealed the range of positions held by Palestinian and Israeli actors, as confirmed by the declarations of the Israeli

prime minister, who ruled out that these contacts could be considered the reopening of a diplomatic process with the Palestinians. Additionally, as in previous periods, there were indirect contacts between Israel and Hamas to agree on a ceasefire after the intense escalation of violence in 2021. As for the intra-Palestinian dispute, negotiations continued between the PA and Hamas, which controls and governs the Gaza Strip, in addition to other Palestinian groups.

The peace processes in the Middle East once again illustrated the importance of regional and international actors and the influence of their interests, the dynamics of their relationships and antagonism, which had a significant effect on some

of the processes in the area. This is due either to their direct participation in the armed conflicts whose resolution is being negotiated in support of one or the other side, their influence over one of the parties in conflict or the strategic calculations involved in the development of some of these conflicts. This situation was once again especially evident in Syria, where countries such as Turkey and Russia continued to play a crucial role in ceasefire agreements as part of their active involvement in the conflict, directly and through their ascendancy over some armed groups operating in the country. Ankara's influence in the negotiations was also felt as it blocked the participation of Kurdish representatives from the autonomous region of northeastern Syria, linked to its historic dispute with the PKK.² The country continued to be a scenario where tensions between the US and Israel with Iran were also clear, taking the form of various incidents and attacks against Tehran's interests in Syria, given the important Iranian presence in the country as part of its support for the regime of Bashar Assad. In this context, the UN special envoy for Syria stressed that the lack of progress in the negotiations was due in part to the lack of "constructive international diplomacy" because the divisions between international actors hampered the possibilities of reaching agreements on different topics.

Another emblematic case along these lines was that of Yemen. The country continued to be the scene of an armed conflict in which regional conflicts were projected, especially between Riyadh and Tehran, but also to a lesser extent between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). During 2021, Saudi Arabia and Iran re-established contact after breaking their diplomatic ties in 2016 and representatives of both countries met under Iraqi mediation in an attempt to open a direct

The negotiating processes and exploratory meetings in the Middle East accounted for 14% of the cases worldwide in 2021 and were linked to three armed conflicts and two socio-political crises

One of the key issues on the negotiating agenda in the processes in the Middle East continued to be the establishment (or re-establishment) of ceasefire agreements

channel between the regional adversaries. According to reports, one of the main issues discussed was the Yemeni conflict, where they support opposing sides: Riyadh supports the Hadi government and Tehran supports the Houthis. Nevertheless, attempts to find

common ground between the Yemeni actors was not successful. According to various analysts, the progress of the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme and Iran's need to maintain a position of strength also influenced its strategic calculations in Yemen. Tensions also ran high between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, accused by Saudi sources of torpedoing implementation of the Riyadh agreement as part of its support for the STC during the year. The influence of the United States and the repercussions of its

change of government were also observed in Yemen. The incoming Biden administration reversed the Houthis' designation as a "terrorist organisation", one of the final actions taken by the Trump administration that threatened to block the group's participation in the UN-sponsored negotiating process. It also became more actively involved in diplomatic efforts to redirect the conflict.

The US was also a decisive actor in the Palestinian-Israeli case, as was especially evident in the years of unequivocal alliance between Trump and Netanyahu. After both men left power, however, no significant changes were observed in US policy towards Israel and the Biden administration did not roll back any of the controversial actions taken by his predecessor in 2021. The influence of regional disputes was also reflected in intra-Palestinian tension. Thus, after Morocco's decision in 2020 to re-establish relations with Israel in exchange for US support for its claims over Western Sahara, its main regional rival, Algeria, sought to position itself as a key supporter of the Palestinian cause in the face of the "normalisation" and as a mediating actor in the struggle between Fatah and Hamas. The importance of regional and international actors in the dynamics of the negotiations was also observed in other contexts in North Africa and the Middle East (the MENA region), particularly in the case of Libya.³

Third parties were involved in all the cases analysed in the Middle East. In various contexts, this role was played by states. One example was the role performed by Oman in addressing the Yemeni conflict. Despite its tradition of discreet mediation and facilitation in other theatres in the region, as well as in the Yemeni conflict in previous years,

2. See the summary on Turkey (southeast) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

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

Oman took on an unusually explicit and public role in 2021. Its performance was made possible by the good relations it maintains with both Iran and the US and its recent strengthening of relations with Saudi Arabia. As in previous years, Egypt continued to play an important role in establishing ceasefires between Israel and Hamas and in mediating the intra-Palestinian dispute between Fatah and Hamas. Egypt also participated in the Munich Group, created in 2019 to reactivate the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, made up of France, Germany and Jordan. In several complex armed conflicts, there were states that officiated as an involved party while also facilitating and/or mediating as a third party, such as Russia in Syria and Saudi Arabia in Yemen. Other countries in the region assumed the role of observers, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq as part of the Astana process for the Syrian conflict. In terms of international organisations, the United Nations continued to be involved in most cases in the region through various formats, including the special envoys for Syria and Yemen and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO). The UN also participated in multilateral formats, such as the Quartet for the Middle East (made up of the EU, the US and Russia), and remained involved in monitoring the commitments made after the signing of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme in 2015. In Syria, the UN led one of the negotiating formats (the Geneva process) and participated as an observer in the Astana process promoted by Russia, Turkey and Iran. Regional organisations did not play a prominent role in the negotiating processes in the region, except for the EU's role in coordinating the negotiations over the Iranian nuclear programme as part of the Vienna process.

The items on the agendas of the negotiations in the Middle East were varied, given the uniqueness and specificities of each context. **Even so, following the trend of previous years, one important and recurring issue that was observed in several cases in the area was an attempt to establish (or re-establish) ceasefire agreements.** Thus, for example, in Yemen, the attempts to establish a nationwide truce failed and the ceasefire agreement governing the port of Al Hodeidah, as part of the Stockholm Agreement signed in 2018, was called into question due to changes in the correlation of forces in the area and successive clashes during the second half of the year. Meanwhile, in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, mediated by Egypt, was decreed again in May after the worst escalation of violence since 2014. At the

Women's groups and activists in the region continued to claim the need for more inclusive peace processes and substantive female participation in decision-making

In most cases in the region, negotiations and diplomatic contacts took place against a background of persistent and serious violence or incidents with a highly destabilising potential

end of the year, the truce was maintained, but in a fragile atmosphere. In Syria, difficulties continued to be observed in upholding the truce in Idlib, validated mainly by Russia and Turkey, throughout the year. At the same time, Moscow tried to re-establish ceasefire agreements previously signed by the Syrian government with Kurdish forces in the northwest and with opposition groups in the southeast, as part of what were called "reconciliation agreements". Other prominent issues on the region's negotiating agenda were nuclear non-proliferation (in the case of the Iranian nuclear programme), constitutional reforms (Syria) and elections (Palestine).

Regarding the gender, peace and security agenda in the region, women's organisations and activists continued to draw attention to what from their point of view should be priority issues in negotiations and diplomatic contacts. Thus, for example, they cited the need to address the impacts of the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen on the population, incorporating a gender perspective; the urgency of dealing with the grave humanitarian situation; and the importance of responding to the problem of detained and disappeared persons. In Yemen, they also highlighted the urgency of a ceasefire and called for the eradication of military camps and weapons depots from the cities. In Syria, they requested that the discussions on a new constitutional framework incorporate international instruments that seek to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and demanded that the international community become more actively involved in issues such as the forced return of refugees. In both countries, feminist organisations demanded truly inclusive peace processes that guarantee women's effective participation in discussions about the future. Thus, for example, Yemeni women denounced their exclusion from spaces of power and decision, as illustrated by the campaign that exposed the absence of women in the unity government established in late 2020 as part of implementation of the Riyadh agreement. Consultative mechanisms made up of women continued to function in Syria (Syrian Women's Advisory Board) and Yemen (Technical Advisory Group) as part of UN-sponsored processes and as a formula to implement the commitments of the international women, peace and security agenda. However, some critics claimed that these consultative schemes were not enough to guarantee substantive female participation.

The evolution of the negotiations and peace processes generally followed the trend set in previous years and illustrated the difficulties faced by the dialogue and negotiating processes to promote peace in the region.

In line with what was observed in previous periods, there was chronic impasse in the negotiations (as the Palestinian-Israeli case illustrated for yet another year, with formal negotiations suspended since 2014), with some parties stepping back from previous commitments (as evidenced in the discussions on the Iranian nuclear programme), rounds of contacts or meetings between parties without positive results (such as the UN-sponsored Geneva process to address the crisis in Syria), obstacles to re-establish political dialogue due to the profound differences between the parties (as in Yemen and Palestine) and serious difficulties in achieving sustainable, long-lasting and wide-ranging ceasefire agreements that do not lead to limited pauses in hostilities or recurrent violations. In most cases in the region, negotiations and diplomatic contacts took place against a background of persistent and serious violence (Yemen and Syria continued to be high-intensity armed conflicts in 2021), serious escalation (as in the Palestinian-Israeli case, which reported the worst body count in seven years and faced dynamics of direct and chronic structural violence) and security incidents with high destabilising potential (such as acts of violence that involved Iran, the US and Israel, among other actors, and escalated tension around the discussions over the nuclear programme and the sanctions against Tehran). In Yemen, United Nations representatives stressed the need to maintain open channels of dialogue and negotiation even without a cessation of hostilities, given the serious way that events were moving and the deep humanitarian crisis in the country.

In this context, various voices underlined the international responsibilities in the difficulties faced by the processes in the region, not only from the perspective of the events that occurred in 2021, as analysed in previous paragraphs, but also from a longer-term perspective. On the 30th anniversary of the Madrid-Oslo process, many analysts underlined how this scheme had helped to entrench the Israeli occupation and worsen Palestinian oppression, dispossession and fragmentation. Critics characterised this framework as a “fictional peace process” and underlined the need for a new approach that favours a fair approach and resolution of the conflict. The problems in the evolution and dynamics of the negotiating processes in the region also encouraged calls to take new approaches in other contexts. Thus, for example, in Yemen, the new UN special envoy and various analysts highlighted the importance of promoting a more inclusive political process, which effectively incorporates Yemeni actors not involved in the hostilities. In Syria, after verifying the failure of the two rounds held in 2021, the previous problems in advancing in a political dialogue and the indications of the government's lack of real will to negotiate, the UN special envoy explored the possibilities of launching a new format to deal with the conflict.

6.2 Case study analysis

Mashreq

Israel-Palestine	
Negotiating actors	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas
Third parties	Egypt, Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), Munich Group (Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan)
Relevant agreements	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.

Suspended since 2014, the negotiations between Palestine and Israel remained chronically blocked in 2021, although unlike in previous years, some high-level contacts did take place. Meanwhile, the commemoration in 2021 of the 30th anniversary of the Madrid-Oslo peace process provided a new opportunity to make a critical assessment of the dynamics that were imposed at the time and that in practice have helped to entrench the policies of the Israeli occupation, emphasising Palestinian fragmentation, oppression and dispossession. In this context, some said it was necessary and urgent for international actors to undergo a paradigm shift and take a new approach. The UN's report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 dealt extensively with this issue,⁴ arguing that one of the main problems with the Madrid-Oslo process launched in 1991 has been that Israel imposed its demand that the negotiations with the Palestinian representatives take place outside the framework of

4. United Nations, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, A/76/433, 22 October 2021.

applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and the UN resolutions. Along these lines, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also said that the Israeli policy of gradual de facto annexation of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 has dimmed the possibilities of a two-state solution and emphasises that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not a dispute between equals that can be resolved through bilateral negotiations.⁵

Critics of the Madrid-Oslo process said that the main international actors' systematic adherence to the two-state formula, ignoring the reality on the ground and without demonstrating any effective political desire to resolve the conflict, has resulted in a "diplomatic pantomime"⁶ and a "fictional peace process".⁷ Palestinian analysts argued that the peace process has become part of an Israeli strategy to evade accountability and entrench its domination over the Palestinian population.⁸ In this context, some called for recognition that the international community's approach to address the Palestinian-Israeli issue in recent decades had failed and claimed that a new approach was urgent, even more so considering the developments in 2021, including the worst escalation of violence in seven years, with incidents in Gaza and the West Bank, but also between Palestinians with Israelis and Jewish-Israelis in various cities in Israel.⁹ The events that rattled historic Palestine in 2021 confirmed that the status quo is not sustainable and that despite the fragmentation imposed by the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian people together continue to lay claim to their collective rights. The proposals for a new approach to address and fairly resolve the conflict included action such as active international intervention to address the asymmetry of power between the parties, a rights-based approach in accordance with international standards that guarantees respect for the rights of both peoples and urgent action to dismantle the Israeli occupation.

The events of 2021 included Israeli attacks as part of Operation Guardian of the Walls in the Gaza Strip, which caused the deaths of 260 Palestinians, half of them civilians, in just 11 days; while the missiles launched by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza killed 12 Israelis. **As on previous occasions, the hostilities in Gaza ended in a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, after which both parties proclaimed themselves**

victorious. At the end of the year, the truce was still standing, although in a very fragile atmosphere, with periodic episodes of violence in the Gaza Strip, but also in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In this scenario, the UN special coordinator for the Middle East warned of the importance of concerted action to avoid any new escalation of violence. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid reportedly discussed the Gaza truce and ways to bolster it during his visit to Egypt in December, where he met with his counterpart Sameh Shoukry and President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi.

There was a change of government in Israel in June 2021, marking the end of Benjamin Netanyahu's administration. Still, the heterogeneous eight-party ruling coalition led by ultra-nationalist Neftali Bennet did not bring about any major changes regarding the Palestinian issue. However, some unusual high-ranking contacts were made following the inauguration of the new Israeli government. **In August, new Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz, a former general, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas held the first direct high-level meeting in a decade in Ramallah.** According to reports, Gantz and Abbas discussed issues related to security and the economy during the meeting. Based on the idea that strengthening the PA weakens Hamas, Gantz may have offered Abbas a loan of

132 million euros as an advance payment of taxes that Israel collects on behalf of the PA, in addition to a package of work permits and building licenses for Palestinian houses in area C. The meeting took place shortly after Neftali Bennet visited the US, where he met with President Joe Biden. The Israeli prime minister, who said in Washington that the negotiations would not resume, stressed that the contacts between Gantz and Abbas should not be interpreted as the start of a diplomatic process with the Palestinians. According to various analysts, the new Israeli government assumes that the conflict will not be resolved any time soon, that both sides are too politically divided to resume negotiations and that, therefore, their focus should be on "reducing" or "minimising conflict". To do this, they offer an "economic peace", meaning a rescue of the deteriorated Palestinian economy, but without resuming the peace process. Critics claim that it is only a new "mantra" that seeks to maintain the status quo and fait accompli policies, such as the continuous expansion of the settlements, which entrench the occupation and prioritise Israeli interests.¹⁰

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations remained chronically blocked in 2021, although some contacts did take place between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and new Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz

5. Ban Ki-moon, "US should back a new approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict", *The Financial Times*, 29 June 2021.

6. United Nations, Report of the Special Rapporteur... (2021), op. cit.

7. José Abu Tarbush (2021), op. cit.

8. Inés Abdel Razek, "Thirty Years On: The Ruse of the Middle East Peace Process", *al-Shabaka*, 31st October 2021 and Yara Hawari, "Thirty years of sham 'peace process'", *al-Jazeera*, 1 de noviembre de 2021.

9. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

10. Patrick Kingsley, "'Shrinking the Conflict': What Does Israel's New Mantra Really Mean?", *The New York Times*, 30 September 2021; Juan Carlos Sanz, "Israel se ofrece a rescatar la economía de la Autoridad Palestina sin reanudar el proceso de paz", *El País*, 30 August 2021.

In September, after returning from a visit to Egypt where he met with President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, the first meeting in 10 years by an Israeli prime minister to the Arab country, Bennett publicly reiterated his opposition to a Palestinian state. A well-known detractor of the two-state formula, he stated in several interviews that a Palestinian state would be a “very serious mistake”.¹¹ In this context, Abbas gave Israel an ultimatum during his speech before the UN General Assembly, warning that if it does not withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories within one year, including East Jerusalem, it would stop recognising the state of Israel based on the pre-1967 borders. The Palestinian president also asked the UN Secretary-General to convene an international peace conference. Israeli officials dismissed Abbas’ ultimatum as “delusional”.¹² In December, Abbas met again with Gantz, this time in the home of the Israeli defence minister.

After the meeting, Gantz said that they had addressed how to promote economic and civic activity to build confidence. The meeting was criticised by far-right Israeli parties, such as Likud, and also within the new Israeli government. Gantz reportedly briefed the prime minister and foreign minister, but most cabinet members learned of the meeting from the media. Thus, Israeli ministers openly criticised Gantz. The meeting also produced disagreements and conflicting positions in Fatah, whose internal conflicts worsened in 2021, and was condemned by Hamas, which claimed that these types of initiatives further deepened intra-Palestinian divisions. Thus, after an apparent rapprochement in early 2021, the Islamist party and Abbas’ entourage once again stepped back from each other after the president’s decision to suspend what would have been the first Palestinian elections in 15 years.¹³

Regarding the mediating actors, after four years without meetings, the Quartet for the Middle East (US, Russia, EU and UN) issued a statement in March 2021 expressing its concern about the economic disparities between Palestinians and Israelis and the impact of COVID-19, calling on the parties to avoid unilateral actions. New statements in May and November voiced concern about the violence in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and reiterated the Quartet’s commitment to a two-state solution. Additionally, in 2021 the activities of the Munich Group continued, formed during the Security Conference held there in February 2020. Made up of Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan with the declared purpose of reactivating the peace process, the group held some meetings during the year, though their efforts did not cause a change of scenery.

Palestine	
Negotiating actors	Hamas, Fatah
Third parties	Egypt, Qatar, Algeria
Relevant agreements	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.

As in previous years, some events in 2021 pointed to an agreement between the Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah. However, as the months went by, the division and impasse in the negotiations prevailed. As analysts have pointed out, in practice this situation favours the status quo and the distribution of power quotas between both groups and threatens the renewal of leadership and generational change in Palestine.¹⁴ After finding common ground in 2020 in reaction to the announcements by the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu to formalise annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories, Hamas and Fatah held relatively eventful talks **that in the first few days of 2021 led to an agreement to call the first Palestinian elections in 15 years.** Fatah’s preferred option of holding the legislative elections separately, on 22 May, from the presidential one, scheduled for 31 July, prevailed (Hamas preferred to hold both votes together). In addition, a third vote was scheduled for 31 August to renew the Palestinian National Council, the PLO parliament that brings together representatives of the occupied Palestinian territories and the diaspora. The agreement around the elections was then celebrated by UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, who described it as a key step towards Palestinian unity.

Other events during the first quarter pointed to rapprochement. Fourteen Palestinian groups meeting

11. Tovah Lazaroff, “Palestinian statehood would be a ‘terrible mistake’ – Bennett”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 September 2021.

12. Europa Press, “Israel rechaza el ‘delirante ultimátum’ de un año dado por Abbas para lograr un acuerdo de paz con Palestina”, *EP*, 25 September 2021.

13. See the summary on Palestine in this chapter.

14. Itxaso Domínguez de Olazábal, “Praxis of Palestinian Democracy: The Elections that Never Were and the Events of May 2021”, *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook*, IEMED, November 2021.

in Cairo decided that a unity government would be formed after the elections, the electoral tribunal tasked with supervising the vote was set up and Hamas released 45 Fatah members. According to reports, in addition to the public agreements, Hamas and Fatah may also have agreed that the Islamist group would not aspire to occupy key positions that could veto any new Palestinian cabinet. The elections raised expectations: 93% of the eligible population registered to vote, 36 parties presented lists with candidates and 405 women ran as candidates (29% of the total 1,389 applicants). However, critics warned of a series of obstacles and action taken by the PA that hindered a plural competition, among them the minimum age of 28 years for the candidates (the average age is 21 years and that of the leaders is 70), the high cost of the fee for the applicants and the short time between the announcement of elections with a new proportional system that would benefit the established parties.¹⁵ At the same time, political tensions began to emerge. One fault line occurred within Fatah, where three lists were outlined for the elections: an “official” one dominated by Mahmoud Abbas and his entourage, another led by prominent Palestinian prisoner Marwan Barghouti and the nephew of Yasser Arafat, Nasser al-Qudwa (the “Freedom” list) and a third one (the “Future” list) consisting of candidates supported by former security chief Mohammed Dahlan, expelled from Fatah in 2011. Senior Fatah officials tried unsuccessfully to persuade Barghouti not to run for election. Abbas also expelled al-Qudwa from Fatah for promoting a separate list of candidates for the legislative elections.

In this context, on 29 April, Abbas announced that the elections were being scrapped indefinitely. Officially, the decision owed to the difficulties for Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem to participate because of the obstacles imposed by Israel, despite its obligation to guarantee the vote according to the terms established in the Oslo agreements. However, various analysts said that Abbas’ decision was also influenced by concern about the internal division of Fatah and a victory for Hamas (or, at least, substantial representation in the Legislative Council). This concern was shared by international actors and by Israel, which was not interested in a vote that could theoretically strengthen the Palestinian leadership and its ability to challenge the policies of the occupation.¹⁶ The cancellation of the elections was described as a disappointment and a usurpation of power by various groups and as a “coup” by Hamas. International actors limited themselves to regretting it and generically urging a new date for

the elections. According to reports, Egypt and Jordan have also intervened to cancel the elections due to the possible repercussions that a Hamas victory could have for their internal affairs.¹⁷

In this scenario, there was an escalation of hostilities in Gaza in May, which was preceded by a series of incidents in East Jerusalem that gave way to protests, acts of violence and a general strike throughout historical Palestine, in what was called the “Unity Intifada”.¹⁸ In the midst of the clashes, which caused more than 260 deaths in 11 days, **Abbas called for the formation of a unity government “committed to international legitimacy”**. Abbas’ approach drew criticism and was described as an empty and provocative gesture at an inopportune moment, amid the intense Israeli bombing of Gaza and the popular uprising in the West Bank and Israeli cities with large Palestinian populations.¹⁹ According to reports, the Palestinian president had sent one of his main advisors to Qatar so the kingdom could use its good offices and convince Hamas to accept the conditions put forth by the Quartet for the Middle East: recognition of the previous agreements signed by the PLO and a commitment not to launch rocket attacks at Israel.²⁰ Hamas rejected Abbas’ proposal. Despite the death toll during the clashes in May, the Islamist group presented itself as victorious, boosting its support and popular legitimacy, as revealed by some polls.²¹ The PA appeared as a spectator in the conflict between Hamas and Israel and the events encouraged criticism of its lack of legitimacy and irrelevance. Criticism and protests against the PA intensified after prominent activist Nizar Banat, a well-known critic of Abbas’ government, was killed by Palestinian security forces in June.

After the ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas (21 May), Egypt deployed new efforts to try to reach an agreement between the Palestinian group and Fatah. However, the contacts yielded no results due to disagreements about the issues to be agreed upon and Egyptian officials were unable to organise a direct meeting between the parties in June. Hamas wanted the negotiations to involve all the Palestinian factions and not be bilateral (as the PA prefers) and said that the discussions should focus on the PLO and the calling of elections. However, the PA insisted that the only item on the agenda should be the formation of the unity government.²² According to reports, the PA demanded acceptance of the Quartet’s conditions, including recognition of Israel, and that the PLO issue not be addressed for the time being. Likewise, there were

15. Salem Barrameh, “The Israeli and Palestinian elections offend democracy – each in their own way”, *The Guardian*, 17 March 2021.

16. International Crisis Group, *Why Palestinian Elections Should be Back on Track*, ICG-USMEP Joint Statement, 30 April 2021.

17. Adnan Abu Amer, “Postponed Palestinian Elections: Causes and Repercussions”, *Sada*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 11 May 2021.

18. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

19. Adnan Abu Amer, “Hamas ignores Abbas’ call for unity government as cease-fire holds”, *Al-Monitor*, 21 May 2021.

20. Daod Kuttab, “Will PLO and Hamas find common ground?”, *Al-Monitor*, 25 May 2021.

21. Policy and Survey Research, *Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No (80)*, PSR, 15 June 2021.

22. Adnan Abu Amer, “Hamas’ Inability to Capitalize on the War in Gaza”, *Sada*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 20 July 2021.

disagreements between Hamas and Fatah over which actor should lead the reconstruction of Gaza.²³

Throughout the year, the distance grew between both sides, especially after Abbas held meetings with representatives of the new Israeli government, such as his meeting with Defence Minister Benny Gantz in Ramallah in August.²⁴ This took place in a context in which the new governments in the US and Israel were willing to back up the PA. In November, as part of the 17th anniversary of Arafat's death, Abbas repeated his call for a Palestinian unity government made up of forces committed to "international legitimacy" and recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Hamas has refused to join the PLO until it conducts internal reforms.²⁵ At the end of 2021, **Algeria expressed its willingness to mediate between the Palestinian factions.** After meeting with Abbas in early December, Algerian President Abdelmajjid Tebboune highlighted the role that his country could play in the Palestinian cause in the face of "normalisation" agreements with Israel signed by other Arab countries, including its regional rival, Morocco, and announced that a conference of Palestinian groups would be held in Algeria. Hamas publicly confirmed its participation in the meeting, which would take place in early 2022, describing Algiers' position as equidistant from all Palestinian groups. In addition to the dispute between the two main Palestinian groups, Palestinians and international figures expressed doubts during the year about the significance of the elections given the Israeli domination and occupation, stressing that they would only support the structures of oppression and fragmentation, to which Fatah and Hamas have also contributed. Experts also warned about the generational gap that is stressing Palestinian society and about a status quo that benefits Hamas, Fatah and Israel and makes it difficult for alternative types of leaders to emerge.²⁶

Syria	
Negotiating actors	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition
Third parties	UN, EU, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and also Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (acting as observers in the Astana process)
Relevant agreements	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)) ²⁷
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.

In the year that marked the 10th anniversary of the armed conflict in Syria, negotiations and mediation initiatives continued to show little effectiveness in stopping the cycle of violence in the country. Despite a drop in the death toll in recent years, hostilities persisted in the country and in 2021 they claimed between 3,900 and 5,500 lives, according to counts from various sources, with the involvement of many different local, regional and international actors. Meanwhile, the economic and humanitarian situation worsened in the country.²⁸ In line with what was reported in previous years, **the United Nations' backed negotiating process continued at an uneven pace and did not offer any significant results.** The Syrian Constitutional Committee only met twice in all of 2021. At the end of both meetings, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Otto Pedersen did not hide his frustration at the lack of progress. The first meeting of the year, corresponding to the fifth round since the committee began its work in September 2019, took place in January in Geneva and again included representatives of the government, the opposition and civil society. After five days of work, Pedersen acknowledged the lack of progress with respect to the limited expectations he had set for this round due to the procedural and substantive differences between the parties, considered the meeting a missed opportunity and singled out the Syrian government delegation for its lack of commitment to the process. According to him, the representatives of Damascus rejected a comprehensive proposal that the opposition accepted. Various analysts said that the Syrian regime was not

23. The Arab Weekly, "Cairo fails to bring together Hamas, Fatah as common ground is elusive", AW, 19 June 2021.

24. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in this chapter.

25. Khaled Abu Toameh, "What are the chances for a Palestinian unity government? – analysis", *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 November 2021.

26. Alaa Tartir, "A new approach to elections in Palestine", *al-Shabaka*, 1 May 2021; Domínguez de Olazábal (2021), op. cit.

27. 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.

28. See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

willing to advance in the negotiations a few months before calling a new presidential election in the country, in May, in which Bashar Assad intended to win a new seven-year term (his fourth), and in which he finally received 95% of the vote, although many international figures denounced it as fraudulent.²⁹ In this context, Western actors denounced the self-interested Syrian regime for deliberately delaying the drafting of a new Constitution and thereby preventing the elections from being held under the supervision of the United Nations, as established by the UN Security Council resolutions of reference on Syria, especially UNSCR 2254 (2015). Along these same lines, the leader of the opposition delegation to the Syrian Constitutional Committee, Nasr al-Hariri, warned that the regime was buying time to regain control of the country militarily.

In January, the fifth round reunited the 45-member Constitutional Committee in charge of drafting the proposal, (15 from each delegation, 30% women), but due to pressure from Turkey the representatives of the Kurdish-controlled autonomous administration of north-eastern Syria were excluded. Consequently, the Kurdish authorities said they do not consider the committee's work to be binding. In February, after reporting to the UN Security Council, Pedersen stressed that the lack of progress in the political discussions on Syria also reflected the lack of "constructive international diplomacy" and that the disagreements among the international players obstructed any advancement along the constitutional or any other track. In this context, the UN special envoy resumed his efforts and contacts with key international actors.³⁰ The diplomatic deadlock lasted several months and it was not until September that Pedersen announced an agreement on the methodology for holding a sixth round of the Constitutional Committee, which involved regular meetings between the UN envoy and the heads of delegations. Pedersen also stressed that for the first time he had met with the co-chairs of the commission (Ahmad Kuzbari, appointed by the government, and Hadi al-Bahra, appointed by the opposition) and had been able to negotiate directly on how to proceed with the constitutional reform (17 October). According to Pedersen, both representatives had agreed that the drafting phase of the new Constitution would finally begin in the sixth round, after the failure of the five previous rounds.³¹ With these precedents, a new meeting of the Constitutional Committee took place in October, also in Geneva. For four days the different delegations (absent any Kurdish representation) offered their visions on basic principles,

The Syrian Constitutional Committee met twice in 2021. After both meetings, the UN special envoy expressed his frustration at the lack of progress

along lines that had been distributed among them. The official delegation presented a text on the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria and on terrorism (18 October); the opposition delegation presented another on the armed forces, security and intelligence agencies (19 October); and the civil society delegation presented a text on the rule of law (20 October). Later, Damascus' representatives presented a second text on terrorism and extremism (21 October). However, there was no agreement on how to continue the discussions in the plenary session (22 October). According to reports, the Syrian government delegation refused to revise its proposed constitutional text, while the opposition delegation and the civil society delegation submitted observations and revised texts. In the end, there was no understanding. The debates ended with mutual recriminations and there was no agreement to define a new meeting for the committee. Opposition representatives reiterated their claims about obstructionism and the Syrian regime's attempts to stall the process. Analysts argued that Damascus has shown that it has no real will to negotiate and that Assad has no interest in the process because any genuine reform would mean his removal from power.³¹

Pedersen recognised progress and setbacks during the negotiations, but forcefully admitted that the sixth round had ended in great disappointment and that mechanisms had to be defined for the process to be truly substantive.³² Days after the meeting in Geneva, the UN special envoy admitted that the refusal of the Syrian regime's delegation to negotiate the proposed constitutional text was one of the keys to the failure of this latest round of meetings. However, Pedersen insisted that the process could build trust if it were properly carried out, but real political will would be needed to try to reach agreements.³³ In previous statements, the UN representative had said that the committee would not resolve the Syrian conflict by itself, that it was essential to address other aspects of the crisis, such as the issue of prisoners and missing persons, and that it was important to implement a nationwide ceasefire. In Pedersen's closed-door consultations with members of the UN Security Council in November, some countries reportedly voiced concern about the consequences of the efforts of the UN-sponsored negotiating process, including improvements in diplomatic and economic relations between the Syrian government and other countries in the region, including Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, which proposed that Syria should be readmitted to the Arab League in 2021. These concerned countries said that the

29. Jennifer Holleis, "Geneva talks: Is Syria's new constitution a mission (im-)possible?", *Deutsche Welle*, 30 January 2021.

30. Security Council Report, *Syria: March 2021 Monthly Forecast*, 26 February 2021.

31. Security Council Report, *Syria: November 2021 Monthly Forecast*, 29 October 2021.

32. Paul McLoughlin, "Constitutional crisis: The Syria peace talks that are going nowhere", *The New Arab*, 6 December 2021; Sara Hëllmüller (interview), "What's next for Syria's peace process?", *Geneva Solutions*, 2 November 2021.

33. Sarah el Deeb, "UN: Syria constitution drafting process 'big disappointment'", *AP*, 22 October 2021.

34. Associated Press, "UN Envoy Blames Syria for Failure of Constitution Talks", *AP*, 27 October 2021.

“normalisation” process would discourage Damascus’ further engagement in the political negotiations.³⁵ According to reports, in the middle of the year Pedersen held some exploratory meetings with key players to assess the possibilities of a new international format to address the conflict in Syria.

Meanwhile, the “Astana process” remained active. Started in 2017, it is led by Russia, Turkey and Iran, which act as guarantors, but are also the international actors most militarily involved in the Syrian armed conflict. The previous high-level face-to-face diplomatic meeting under this format had taken place in December 2019; these kinds of meetings were reactivated in 2021. Three other rounds were held during the year, on 15 February in the Russian city of Sochi and on 16 July and 17 December in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan. The meetings addressed issues such as the problems faced by the Constitutional Committee in the UN-backed process, the humanitarian situation in Syria and the development of events in the north-western part of the country. In the meetings, the parties restated their commitment to the ceasefire in Idlib and discussed the release of prisoners and missing and kidnapped persons and the exchange of bodies. Some detained persons were exchanged in July. Representatives from the United Nations, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq participated in the meetings of the Astana process with “observer” status. **Furthermore, Russia facilitated tasks to reactivate some ceasefire agreements between the Syrian government and other armed actors in 2021.** For example, at the beginning of the year it intervened in response to growing clashes between Syrian troops and Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the northwest. Later, in the middle of the year, Moscow addressed an escalation of violence between the regime and opposition forces in the southeast, despite the “reconciliation” agreements signed for the area at Russia’s request in 2018. These events, together with the continuous violations of the ceasefire in Idlib, led some analysts to raise doubts about Moscow’s abilities to guarantee long-term agreements in Syria and the complexities of its role in the conflict, as it fights aligned with the regime in some areas and mediates, protecting its interests in others.³⁶

Gender, peace and security

During the year, the UN special envoy continued to meet with the Women’s Advisory Board (WAB), which continued to urge consideration of the impacts of the armed conflict on the population and to reinforce the mechanisms to guarantee the protection of women and their participation in the future of Syria. Echoing reports prepared by the Women’s Advisory Board, Pedersen told the UN Security Council about the lack of progress regarding detained, kidnapped and disappeared people

in Syria, an issue that especially affects women fighting to know where their relatives are. **Syrian representatives also addressed the Security Council directly and indicated priority issues.** Thus, for example, at a meeting held in June, Abber Hussein, representing the Syrian Women’s Political Movement, emphasised the importance of reaching a genuine political solution in Syria, giving priority to international instruments in the draft Constitution to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and focusing efforts on living conditions in the country, aggravated by COVID-19. In September, the director of the organisation Sawa for Development and Aid, Rouba Mhaissen, demanded that the UN Security Council be more actively involved in the communities affected by the conflict and said it was important to address humanitarian issues in political discussions and deal with issues such as the forced return of refugees to Syria. The activists said that the demands of the women who rose up against the Syrian regime in 2011 were still valid and questioned the presidential election in which Bashar Assad won another term. Others, such as Mouna Ghanem of Syrian Women’s Forum for Peace (SWFP), who resigned from the WAB in 2018, repeated their criticism of the UN-mediated process, arguing that the plan outlined in Resolution 2254 (2015) had failed and urging a new approach that addresses the root causes of the conflict, helps the Syrian population to break the cycle of violence and convulsion and ensures substantive participation of Syrian women.³⁷

The Gulf

Iran (nuclear programme)	
Negotiating actors	Iran, P4+1 (France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany)
Third parties	UN, EU
Relevant agreements	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

35. Security Council Report, *Syria: December 2021 Monthly Forecast*, 30 November 2021.

36. Taim al-Hajj, “Is Russia Reneging on its Reconciliation Agreements in Syria?”, *Sada*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 16 November 2021.

37. Mouna Ghanem, “The UN-Led Peace Process for Syria Has Failed. Women Must Be Part of the Next One”, *PassBlue*, 8 March 2021.

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.

The negotiations around the Iranian atomic programme resumed in 2021, but developed unevenly due to multiple factors, including changes in leadership in the US and Iran, Tehran's retreat from the commitments made as part of the 2015 nuclear agreement and a background characterised by security incidents on several different fronts. At the end of the year, uncertainties about how the talks might develop threatened to put their future at risk. In early 2021, much attention was focused on the possibility that the Trump administration would engage in some last-minute offensive action as Trump's presidency came to a close. With the arrival of Joe Biden to power in late January, expectations were focused on the change in policy towards Iran, given the new administration's desire to return to the nuclear agreement, since Trump had withdrawn US from it in 2018, and stepped back from the "maximum pressure" strategy promoted by his predecessor. In this context, the new US government appointed Robert O'Malley, who had already been involved in the 2015 negotiations, as the special envoy for Iran. In the weeks that followed, both the US and Iran said that the other side was responsible for taking the first step to re-establishing negotiations. US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said that Tehran must first resume compliance with the 2015 agreement. A day later, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ali Khamenei, said that Iran would only act once it had observed initiatives taken by the other side, while Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif insisted that the US must lift all sanctions effectively and without conditions.

The diplomatic process did not start back up again until April, when Iran and the P4+1 countries (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany), which still adhered to the agreement, held new meetings, some virtually and others in person, in Vienna. **In May, the Austrian capital hosted a new round of negotiations (the sixth) with the participation of the EU. The US was also indirectly involved, as it had withdrawn from the agreement. According to reports, progress was made in this round from 12 to 20 June, but the process was put on hold pending the inauguration of the new Iranian government** after ultra-conservative politician Ebrahim Raisi won 61.9% of the vote in the presidential election on 18 June. In the months that followed, there was a breakdown in the negotiations amid EU and US warnings to Tehran regarding taking other kinds of action in case the diplomatic impasse persists and a climate of growing

alarm over the development of their atomic activities.

Throughout the year, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) warned of Iran's failure to comply with the terms of the 2015 agreement. Among other issues, it drew attention to the signs of 20% uranium enrichment activity, which is at pre-agreement levels (according to the agreement, uranium production is prohibited until 2031 and uranium reserves are being enriched 14 times higher than what it stipulates), while the supervision of activities in some facilities is being made difficult through restricted access. Additionally, information emerged about sabotage at Iranian nuclear facilities (Natanz, in April; Busher in June), some of which Iran blamed on Israel. As a result, Iran announced its intention to enrich uranium up to 60%. European countries involved in the negotiations expressed serious concern about some of these developments and the US said it viewed Iran's atomic progress as provocative. In September, the head of the IAEA visited Tehran to try to extract a series of commitments but said that concerns remained

about Iran's level of cooperation due to difficulties in performing monitoring and verification work. In December, Iran and the IAEA reached an agreement to replace the surveillance cameras in the Karaj facilities, enabling Iran to circumvent a possible motion of censure against it by the organisation.

Potentially destabilising incidents continued to occur throughout 2021 and stoked tensions between different actors with interests in the nuclear discussions. Several episodes, some of unclear authorship, took place at sea, such as an explosion that rocked an Israeli ship in the Gulf of Oman that was blamed on Iran in February, another explosion on an Iranian ship in the Mediterranean in March, a bomb attack on another Iranian ship in the Red Sea blamed on Israel in April, incidents between US and Iranian ships in the Strait of Hormuz in April, May and November and an attack on a cargo ship off the coast of Oman that was also blamed on Iran. Other incidents that escalated tension took place in the context of the armed conflicts in Iraq and Syria, such as US attacks against armed groups backed by Iran in both countries and attacks against US interests in Iraq, for which Tehran was blamed, although the Iranian authorities denied their involvement.

In this scenario, given the persistent deadlock in the Vienna negotiating process, some analysts described it as a strategy of delay by the new Iranian authorities so they could present the new government with a different strategy than the previous one, which had been criticised domestically for appearing too gullible to its Western dialogue partners. Khamenei reportedly asked the Raisi government not to make the same mistakes as Rouhani had in this area. Consequently, the new administration seemed committed to changing the

The negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme resumed in 2021, but they developed unevenly, amidst a tense climate due to Tehran's retreat from the obligations defined in the 2015 agreement and other factors

pace of the negotiations, since among the elites there was general a consensus that lowering sanctions was imperative to the economy's recovery.³⁸

Finally, **after a five-month break in the negotiations, they resumed in late November in Vienna (seventh round). However, the talks stalled and were suspended within days after Iran raised new demands.** Representatives of the European countries participating in the negotiations reported that the new authorities in Tehran had stepped back from the agreements reached with the previous Iranian government after months of work. Among other issues, Iran reportedly required the lifting of some US sanctions by the new Biden administration not related with the nuclear agreement. Faced with warnings from European countries and Washington that they would abandon the negotiations and after pressure from China and Russia, Tehran revised its position and said it was willing to negotiate based on the texts agreed in June. After the Iranian negotiator returned to his country for consultations and the P3 European countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) and the United States warned that time to save the nuclear agreement was running out, the talks resumed in Vienna on 27 December (eighth round), coordinated by senior EU diplomat Enrique Mora. Meanwhile, Iran conducted some tests with missiles, drones and space research devices that once again prompted criticism from Western countries. According to some analysts, if the impasse persisted, one possible scenario was for the UN Security Council to denounce Iran for non-compliance with the agreement. This could lead to Tehran withdrawing from the agreement and a subsequent demand to involve Israel in the agreement as a condition for rejoining it.³⁹ Israel, which according to various sources possesses nuclear weapons, has not signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is not part of the negotiating process with Iran, insisted that Iran is only looking to buy time to develop its atomic programme.

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

Throughout 2021, obstacles continued to undermine the establishment of a nationwide ceasefire and a negotiated path to address the multidimensional conflict in Yemen. In general terms, the conflict remained militarised, with high levels of violence as reported in recent years, which had very serious consequences for the civilian population. The diplomatic and mediation initiatives focused on the main line of confrontation in the country, the one pitting the Houthis against the forces of the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, supported by Saudi Arabia and other forces, such as southern separatist groups, tribal forces and Salafists. Third-party efforts were led by the United Nations, Oman and the US, which assumed a new role after Joe Biden took office. Meanwhile, growing tensions were evident in another line of conflict in Yemen between Hadi's forces and the separatists of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), despite the signing of the Riyadh Agreement in 2019 and the formation of a unity government in late 2020. Saudi Arabia continued to try to mediate between the parties in a climate marked by mutual accusations, growing protests in the south and clashes and acts of violence that intensified at the end of the year.⁴⁰

In February, the new US administration reversed Donald Trump's decision in early 2021 to designate the Houthis and their top three leaders as "terrorists", which threatened to hinder contact with the group, accused of operating with support from Iran. The new US government also decided to halt support for what it described as "offensive operations" launched by the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and appointed diplomat Timothy Lenderking as the US special envoy for Yemen. This appointment was interpreted as a sign of Washington's renewed commitment to diplomatic channels and a way to strengthen support for UN mediation efforts led by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. In the following months, it emerged that Lenderking had proposed a ceasefire plan throughout

38. Esfandiyar Batmangheledi, *Nuclear talks under Raisi: Iran's diplomats going slow to appear smart*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 19 October 2021.

39. Patrick Wintour, "Talks with Iran on restoring 2015 nuclear deal suspended", *The Guardian*, 3 December 2021.

40. See the summary on Yemen in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

Yemen in exchange for lifting the restrictions on the Sana'a airport and the port of Hodeidah, in addition to a mechanism to resolve the nationwide payment of wages to entice the Houthis. In March, Saudi Arabia also presented an initiative to end the Yemeni conflict, in line with a previous proposal that the Houthis had already discarded. Meanwhile, the Houthis maintained their position throughout the year that the reopening of the port of Al Hudaydah and the Sana'a Airport and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country were preconditions for political dialogue. Midway through the year, both Griffiths and Lenderking expressed frustration at the lack of progress in agreeing on a cessation of hostilities.

The new UN special envoy for Yemen was in favour of a more inclusive peace process, led by Yemenis, and insisted that the negotiations should continue even without a cessation of hostilities

In this context, Griffiths finished his role as UN Special Envoy for Yemen and he was appointed the new head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Before leaving his post, however, he stressed the negative outlook for the conflict and held out hope for Oman's mediating efforts. In an unusual event in March, the official Omani agency reported a series of meetings to address the Yemeni conflict in coordination with Yemeni actors, Riyadh and the UN and US envoys.⁴¹ An Omani delegation travelled to the Houthi-controlled Yemeni capital (Sana'a) in June to address proposals for a ceasefire and the re-establishment of negotiations and continued with its efforts in the following weeks. The delegation's trip, which was joined by Houthi leaders residing in the Omani capital, Muscat, was considered another unusual visible example of the mediating role played by the Arab country, involved in other processes in the region. Oman maintains good relations with both the US and Iran and has recently strengthened its relations with Saudi Arabia.

In August, Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg took office as the new UN special envoy for Yemen and held meetings with Saudi officials, such as Hadi and members of his government in Riyadh in September, and with Houthi delegates in Muscat in October, with senior Iranian officials in Tehran and other Yemeni actors in Aden and Taiz in November, confirming the disagreements between the parties. In this context, events affecting the Hodeidah area highlighted the fragility of one of the three points of the Stockholm Agreement. The ceasefire in the area was called into question after the Joint Resistance Forces, one of the armed actors allied with Saudi Arabia and the Hadi government, decided to withdraw, allowing a shake-up in the correlation of forces in the area. After this group withdrew, in a move that was not reported to the UN mission that monitors the ceasefire in Hodeidah

(UNMHA), the Houthis occupied their positions and reopened the road to Sana'a. In the following weeks, there were many clashes between the Houthis and rival forces in the area, as well as air strikes from Riyadh in support of their allies. The armed clashes caused the highest number of victims on the Red Sea coast since 2018. Unlike in 2020, when the release of a significant number of prisoners was announced, thereby fulfilling another stipulation of the Stockholm Agreement, there was no progress in the negotiations between the Houthis and the Hadi government for an exchange of prisoners throughout 2021. Moreover, at the end of the year Grundberg alerted the UN Security Council that there was an alarming increase in the number of people detained by the parties to the conflict.

Given this scenario, the new UN special envoy for Yemen expressed concern about how the conflict was developing, the military escalation and the possibility that the war could evolve into an even more violent and fragmented scenario. **Grundberg said that he was in favour of a more inclusive peace process led by Yemenis** and stressed the need to keep communication channels open to try to address the disagreements between the parties, which have deepened since their last talks in Kuwait in 2016. In December, at the briefing to the UN Security Council, the diplomat highlighted the importance of involving Yemeni actors in the political process that are not involved in the hostilities, supporting initiatives that reduce violence in the short term, opening parallel channels of negotiation and continuing the dialogue even without a ceasefire. Before this session, Grundberg had made another visit to Oman where he met with Yemeni and Omani officials and with the Houthi chief negotiator, Mohamed Abdul Salem. At the end of the year, the Houthis continued to deny him entry to Sana'a.

Some analysts reported the need to reformulate the negotiating framework so that it more fittingly reflects the different actors and lines of the Yemeni conflict and therefore allows the incorporation of new voices in the negotiations on a ceasefire and in political discussions. In this vein, it has been underlined that until now the interpretations of UNSC Resolution 2216 (2015) have limited the negotiations to two large groups (the Houthis and the Hadi government) that in practice do not have either territorial or political control or legitimacy among the Yemeni population. Therefore, it seems imperative to overcome the reluctance of both sides and of Saudi Arabia and bring other actors into the negotiations, including local entities and women's organizations

41. The Arab Weekly, "Oman brings into the open its mediation on Yemen", *The Arab Weekly*, 31 March 2021.

42. International Crisis Group, *The Case for More Inclusive –and More Effective– Peacemaking in Yemen*, Middle East Report no.221, 18 March 2021.

that have been key promoters of peace and stability in Yemen in recent years.⁴² Regarding the prospects for the negotiations, some mentioned Grundberg's experience as EU ambassador in Yemen as a positive factor, as it increases the possibility that he will be able to agree on a European position on the conflict. The recent rebalancing in relations between the Gulf countries and particularly the more visible role played by Oman as part of its closer ties with Riyadh were also indicated as having the potential to break the deadlock. Others suggested that the Houthis would find it difficult to agree to a ceasefire while the battle for Ma'arib is at stake. Additionally, the growing political and economic tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE were identified as potentially destabilising, considering Abu Dhabi's role in supporting the STC.

Saudi media openly criticised the UAE for its role in Yemen, accusing it of boycotting the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement, especially with regard to security deals.⁴³ Finally, meetings between Iran and Saudi Arabia were re-established after having cut all their diplomatic ties in 2016. According to reports, their security talks focused mainly on the situation in Yemen.

Yemeni women denounced exclusion and also highlighted some priorities for negotiations, such as a ceasefire and the eradication of military camps and arms depots from cities

Gender, peace and security

Throughout 2021, organisations working on gender, peace and security continued to draw attention to the gendered impacts of the conflict. **The need for an inclusive peace process was also stressed, with the substantive participation of diverse Yemeni women (from all regions and political affiliations) at all levels and stages. It was also seen as important for the UN special envoy for Yemen to maintain regular contacts with women's groups.** Women were not involved in consultations on the release of prisoners during the year. The need became clear to consider some of the priorities indicated by women's groups in addressing the conflict, such as their call to eradicate military camps and weapons depots in the cities and the urgency of a ceasefire in Ma'arib. Activists demanded support for the #NoWomenNoGovernment campaign launched in December 2020 to denounce the total exclusion of Yemeni women from the unity government formed under the Riyadh Agreement. They also asked the international community to financially support implementation of the Yemeni National Action Plan for Resolution 1325, considering the recommendations made by civil society to improve the plan.

43. Eleonora Ardemagni, *Saudi Arabia's New Balances on Yemen*, Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), 20 July 2021.

Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2021¹

Conflict ² -beginning-	Type ³	Main parties ⁴	Intensity ⁵
			Trend ⁶
AFRICA			
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 of Camerron, Government of Nigeria, 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), multiple militias and smaller armed groups	3
	Self-government, Identity		=
CAR -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups that are members of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC, made up of anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, 3R, FPRC, MPC and UPC), other local and foreign armed groups, France, MINUSCA, Rwanda, Russia (Wagner Group)	3
	Government, Resources		↑
DRC (east) -1998-	Internationalised internal	Government, 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), security forces of the Amhara and Afar regions, Fano Amharic militia	3
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, Civilian Joint Task Force pro-government milita, 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	2
	Government, Resources, System		↓

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.
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.
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 2021 with those that of 2020. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2021 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.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
AFRICA			
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), Russia	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), Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Mission in Mozambique of the Southern African Development Community (SAMIM)	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), South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA) – which includes the rebel organizations NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC), 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, UNITAMS	3
	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, Russia	3
	System, Resources, Identity		↑
AMERICA			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, ELN, FARC (dissidents), EPL, paramilitary groups	2
	System		↑
ASIA			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, international coalition (led by USA), NATO, Taliban, warlords, ISIS (ISIS-K), National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF)	3
	System		↑
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)	1
	System		↓
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Government, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, United Jihad Council, The Resistance Front (TRF)	1
	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) PDF	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias, foreign militias, USA	2
	System		↑

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
ASIA			
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, civil society, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura), ISIS	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Philippines (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) -1969--	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		=
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, BRN and other separatist armed opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
EUROPE			
Turkey (southeast) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
Ukraine (east) -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups in the eastern provinces, Russia	2
	Government, Identity, Self-government		↑
MIDDLE EAST			
Egypt (Sinai) -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	1
	System		↓
Iraq -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 -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	2
	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	3
	System, Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Yemen ⁷ -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, separatist groups under the umbrella of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), AQAP, ISIS, 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

7. In previous editions of the report *Alert!*, the armed conflict led by the Houthis and the AQAP were addressed separately. This year they are analyzed jointly due to the convergence in the dynamics of conflict.

Annex 2. Summary of socio-political crises in 2021¹

Conflict ² -beginning-	Type ³	Main parties	Intensity ⁴
			Trend ⁵
AFRICA			
Algeria ⁶	Internal	Government, military, social and political opposition, Hirak movement, armed groups AQIM (former GSPC), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS)	2
	Government, System		=
Benin	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Burkina Faso	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, army sectors	2
	Government		↑
Central Africa (LRA)	International	Ugandan, CAR, Congolese, Sudanese and South Sudanese Armed Forces, self-defence militias of the countries of the region	1
	Resources		=
Chad	Internal	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (among others Wakit Tama coalition, which includes Les Tansformateurs party), Chadian armed groups (among others FACT, CCMSR, UFR), Nigerian armed group Boko Haram, community militias, private militias	3
	Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↑
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		=
Djibouti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FRUD-armé	1
	Government		↑
DRC	Internal	Government led by the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents from former president Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political opposition (among others, Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and social	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	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Eritrea – Ethiopia	International	Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia	1
	Territory		↓

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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.
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 2021 with 2020, using the (↑) symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2020 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.
6. As of the 2022 edition of the report *Alert!* the so-called "Algeria" tension also includes the activities of jihadist groups (particularly AQIM) that in the past were analyzed separately

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
AFRICA			
Eswatini	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Ethiopia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups	3
	Government		↑
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	Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan	2
	Resources		↑
Ethiopia – Sudan	International	Government of Ethiopia, Government of Sudan, community militias	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	3
	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		↑
Morocco – Western Sahara	International ⁷	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Mozambique	Internal	Government, RENAMO	1
	Government, System		↓
Niger	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias, criminal gangs, IMN	3
	Identity, Resources, Government		↑
Nigeria (Biafra)	Internationalised internal	Government, IPOB, MASSOB, armed group ESN	3
	Identity, Self-government		↑
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, armed groups MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from the Ijaw, Itsekiri, 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	Rwanda, Burundi, armed groups	2
	Government		↓

7. 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
AFRICA			
Rwanda - Uganda	International	Rwanda, 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	3
	Government		↑
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Sudan, South Sudan	1
	Resources, Identity		=
Tanzania	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	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	2
	Government, System		↑
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
AMERICA			
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Chile	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Colombia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Cuba	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, System		↑
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	3
	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		=

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
AMERICA			
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		↓
ASIA			
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		=
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	1
	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		↑
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 ⁸	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	2
	Government		=

8. 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
ASIA			
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	2
	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		=
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	2
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		↑
Thailand	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Uzbekistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	1
	Government, System		↑
EUROPE			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Armenia, Azerbaijan, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Turkey	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓
Belarus	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, EU, Poland, US, Russia	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	2
	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)	1
	System, Identity, Government		↓
Serbia – Kosovo	International ⁹	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		↓
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Identity		=

9. 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
MIDDLE EAST			
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	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		=
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 ¹⁰	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.
↑: escalation of tension; ↓: decrease of tension; =: no changes.

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

Glossary

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

INTEX: 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	SSLA: South Sudan Liberation Army
PNA: Palestinian National Authority	SSOMA: South Sudan Opposition Movement Alliance
PNDPC: Pan Niger Delta Peoples' Congress	SSPP: Shan State Progress Party
PNLO: Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization	SSPP/SSA-N: Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army – North
PNV: Basque Nationalist Party	SSUF: South Sudan United Front
POLISARIO: Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro	START: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
PP: Spain's Popular Party	STC: Southern Transitional Council
PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak	TAK: The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons
PREPAK (Pro): People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak / Progressive	TCG: Trilateral Contact Group
PS: Province of Sinai	TFG: Transitional Federal Government
PSE-EE: Socialist Party of the Basque Country-Euskadiko Ezkerra	TMC: Transitional Military Council
PSOE: Spanish Socialist Worker's Party)	TNLA: Ta-ang National Liberation Army
PYD: Democratic Union Party of Kurds in Syria	TPLF: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
R-ARCSS: Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan	TTP: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
RABMM: Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	UAE: United Arab Emirates
RAMM: Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao	UDPS: Union for Democracy and Social Progress
RCSS/SSA- South: Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army – South	UFDD: Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development)
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	UFR: Union of Resistance Forces
RED-Tabara: Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi	ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam
RENAMO: Mozambican National Resistance	ULFA-I: United Liberation Front of Assam - Independent
REWL: Red Egbesu Water Lions	ULFA-PTF: Pro-Talks faction of United Liberation Front of Asom
RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front	UN: United Nations
RPF: Revolutionary People's Front	UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
RSADO: Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization	UNAMI: United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
RSF: Rapid Support Forces	UNAMID: United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur
SADC: Southern Africa Development Community	UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
SADR: Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	UNFICYP: United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
SCACUF: Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front	UNISFA: United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
SDC: Syrian Democratic Council	UNLF: United National Liberation Front
SCDF: Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces	UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo
SDF: Social Democratic Front of Cameroon	UNMHA: United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement
SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces	UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan
SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index	UNOCA: United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
SLA: Sudan Liberation Army	UNOCI: United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
SLA-AW: Sudan Liberation Army - Abdul Wahid	UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
SLA-MM: Sudan Liberation Army - Minni Minnawi	UNSMIL: United Nations Support Mission in Libya
SLDF: Sabaot Land Defence Forces	UPC: Union for Peace in Central Africa
SLM-MM: Sudan Liberation Movement - Minni Minnawi	UPLA: United People's Liberation Army
SOCADEF: Southern Cameroons Defence Forces	UPR: Universal Periodic Review
SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army	UPyD: Union for Progress and Democracy
SPLA-IO: SPLA in Opposition	USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement	USA: United States of America
SPLM-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Movement – in Opposition	UWSA: United Wa State Army
SPLM-N: Sudan People's Liberation Army - North	UWSP: United Wa State Party
SRF: Sudan Revolutionary Forces	WILPF: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
SSA: Shan State Army	YPG: People's Protection Unit
SSA-N: Shan State Army - North	YPJ: Women's Protection Units
SSDM/A: South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army	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 2021. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2021. 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 2021. 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.

As in previous years, *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* once again constitutes an invaluable resource for anyone trying to understand the complex landscape of contemporary peacemaking. This publication highlights efforts undertaken towards peace, despite the many challenges and setbacks, by diverse actors including governments, armed groups, third party mediators, civil society, and women's groups. It captures a wide variety of peace processes taking place around the world, identifying trends and patterns both globally and regionally, while also offering short yet thorough overviews of individual cases. This combination of the bird's eye and case-specific perspectives makes *Peace Talks in Focus* the go-to publication for anyone – peace practitioner, policy-maker, or scholar – interested in up-to-date analysis of peace processes.

Dr. Dana Landau
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Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios is an essential annual report. Its global and comparative perspective make it a unique tool, while its thorough, applied analysis is hugely valuable to those involved in negotiations, constituting an outstanding contribution that

strives to play its part in conflict resolution and peace processes. Its unswerving focus on the Women, Peace and Security agenda is crucial; without women, there can be no lasting or sustainable peace.

María Solanas
Director of Programmes at the **Elcano Royal Institute** and
member of the **Mediterranean Women Mediators Network**

The yearbook *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* by the School for a Culture of Peace is a much valued publication for facilitators, mediators and anyone else engaged in peace and reconciliation efforts. *Peace Talks in Focus* gives us unique insight into ongoing processes all over the world. The report also has a particular emphasis on a comparative perspectives that is extremely useful for practitioners. Mediation/facilitation is a developing tradecraft that has to adapt to the changing dynamics of conflicts and international global trends. *Peace Talks in Focus* is a treasured source of accumulated insight into how to successfully promote dialogue and peace.

Kristina Lie Revheim
Special Representative to the **Philippines**, **Norwegian**
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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