

3. Peace negotiations in America

- In the Americas there were four negotiations during 2022, 10% of the world total.
- In Haiti, the government and part of the opposition began talks about the deep economic, humanitarian, political and institutional crisis gripping the country, but no significant agreement was reached.
- The Colombian government and the ELN began a formal negotiating process with a first round of talks in Venezuela.
- The Colombian Truth Commission presented its report, which stated that most of the victims of the armed conflict were civilians and non-combatants.
- The Venezuelan government resumed dialogue and reached an agreement with the opposition alliance Unitary Platform in Mexico, began talks with other opposition factions and sought common ground with the US government.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in the Americas in 2022, 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 2022.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2022

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Colombia (ELN)	Government, ELN	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Venezuela, Norway, Mexico and Chile) United Nations Verification Mission, Catholic Church, supporting countries (Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain)
Colombia (FARC)	Government, Comunes	UN Verification Mission in Colombia, International Verification Component (Technical Secretariat of the Notables, University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute)
Haiti	Government, social and political opposition	Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and Germany, France, Brazil, Canada, Spain and US Governments), "Mediation Committee" (made up of three representatives of religious, academic and business organisations)
Venezuela	Government, social and political opposition	Norway, Russia, Netherlands, International Contact Group

3.1 Negotiations in 2022: regional trends

In 2022, the Americas were the scene of four peace processes, one more than in 2021, when a negotiating process began between the Haitian government and the political opposition and was facilitated by various international actors. The negotiating processes in Colombia continued, with the start of a formal peace process between the Colombian government and the armed group ELN and the implementation of the peace agreement reached between Bogota and the FARC guerrilla group in 2016. In Venezuela, talks between the government and the opposition resumed after being interrupted for over a year and were supported by different governments and international actors.

The governments of the respective countries participated in all the different negotiations as one of the negotiating parties. The ELN was the only armed opposition group

that participated as a negotiating party in a peace process after it was reactivated with the Colombian government. Two negotiating delegations were appointed to conduct these negotiations, which formally began in November after previous exploratory meetings. The government delegation's chief negotiators were Otty Patiño and Iván Cepeda and the chief negotiator of the ELN delegation was Pablo Beltrán. Talks as part of the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla group took place between Caracas and the Comunes political party, which emerged from the demobilisation of the FARC-EP guerrilla group as a result of the peace agreement. Two important forums for dialogue between the parties were reactivated during the year: the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI)

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America in 2022



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2022

and the National Commission for Security Guarantees (CNGS). Both bodies were established by the peace agreement but had remained non-operational during the administration of President Iván Duque, who ended his term of office in 2022, giving way to President Gustavo Petro, the winner of the last presidential election. In Venezuela and Haiti, the main parties involved in the talks were the respective governments and the political and social opposition of both countries on different platforms. In Haiti, the opposition platform was called the “Montana Accord” and was made up of nearly a thousand political and social organisations with a road map for a political transition, although other opposition groups were also important, such as the Protocol for National Understanding (PEN) and the National Transition Council, resulting from the agreement between the two previous ones. The talks in Venezuela were held mainly with the opposition alliance called the Unitary Platform, although the government also met with other important opposition actors, such as the Democratic Alliance, the Lápiz Alliance and the Civic Forum.

A negotiating process began between the Haitian government and the opposition

Third parties were prominent in all the negotiations that took place in the Americas, playing different supporting, mediating and facilitating roles with the aim of bringing the parties in dispute closer together and promoting attempts at dialogue to transform the conflicts or disputes. Many of the facilitating actors were international and external to the countries that were the scenarios of the

different conflicts. Some of the facilitating actors were governments, but international and regional organisations such as the UN, OAS and EU also played a prominent role. Third parties also very frequently acted as a group or in a coordinated manner under different umbrellas and formats, such as guarantor or supporting countries, the International Contact Group and the Core Group. This coordination was necessary, given the participation of a wide variety of third parties in all negotiations. Actors that had already played a fundamental role in facilitating previous peace processes in Colombia, such as Norway, Cuba and Venezuela, were active in resuming the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN, which also enjoyed the support of other countries in the region such as Mexico and Chile and four European countries (Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain).

The parties also asked the US government to play an undefined role as a partner in the process. In addition to these governments, other supporting actors included the United Nations, specifically the Verification Mission in the country and the Catholic Church, which also played an important role in the previous attempt at dialogue with the ELN. The UN Verification Mission in Colombia and the International Verification Component (made up of the Technical Secretariat of the Notables and University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute) continued to monitor the proper implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, as provided for in the text of the agreement. There was both an international and an internal dimension in the

external support for the negotiating process in Haiti, with the former offered by the Core Group, made up of the UN, the OAS, the EU and the governments of Germany, France, Brazil, Canada, Spain and the US, and the latter provided by what is known as the “Mediation Committee”, made up of three representatives of religious, academic and business organisations. Finally, the negotiating process in Venezuela continued to enjoy the support of three countries (Norway, Russia and the Netherlands) as well as the International Contact Group, made up of European and Latin American countries.

Facilitators participated prominently in all the peace negotiations in the Americas

Each negotiating agenda reflected the circumstances and characteristics of its corresponding process, as well as the specific demands of the actors concerned.

The agenda of the negotiating process between the Colombian government and the FARC is marked by the commitments outlined in the 2016 peace agreement and compliance with the same. In the negotiations with the ELN, the parties agreed to resume the agenda already agreed upon in the previous process, with some updates and adjustments, but starting from a base established beforehand. In fact, the agreement on the agenda was one of the first built at the beginning of the negotiations. The negotiations in Haiti and Venezuela revolved around issues related to the governance of both countries and the political transformations demanded by their respective oppositions, including the important issue of elections. In Haiti, the opposition presented a road map for a political transition in the country, but there was disagreement with the government over which aspects should be part of the negotiating agenda.

The negotiating processes generally made progress, especially in Colombia, where there was significant headway. The resumption of contact between the Haitian and Venezuelan governments and their respective oppositions was also a good sign, though disagreements and obstacles had to be faced. Negotiations with the ELN formally resumed and the negotiating actors and facilitators generally expressed a constructive attitude and an openness to rapprochement, reaching agreements on very important issues such as the agenda, format and location of the talks and thereby facilitating their continuity. The reactivation of the dialogue is part of a policy of the new government called “Total Peace” that is intended to promote rapprochement with the armed actors in the country. In the case of the dialogue with the Comunes party for the implementation of the peace agreement, it is worth noting the reactivation of crucial instances for this. In Venezuela, the most positive development was the resumption of direct talks between Caracas and the opposition and rapprochement between Caracas and Washington. In Haiti, the enormous gulfs between the government, considered illegitimate by the opposition, and the different opposition platforms became clear, though some important progress was achieved, including an agreement for the transition.

This agreement was not endorsed by all opposition groups, however, which questioned its ability to serve as a basis for achieving a solution to the serious social and political crisis in the country.

Regarding the implementation of the gender, peace and security agenda, **important challenges to women’s meaningful participation in the different negotiating processes persisted**, although female involvement was verified once again in the peace processes in Colombia.

The negotiating processes in Haiti and Venezuela were characterised by their exclusive nature, with no significant role for women, nor were gender issues included in the topics for discussion on the agendas. However, the peace processes in Colombia enjoyed significant female participation and development of gender agendas. Thus, bodies designed by the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC to supervise the implementation of the gender approach continued to be active, such as the Women’s Body for a Gender and Peace Focus. The gender approach was also important in the work of organisations such as the Truth Commission, which included this perspective extensively in its report, collecting Colombian women’s experiences in the conflict with recommendations for the future. Although the first exploratory contacts in the peace negotiations with the ELN took place without female participation, once the formal talks began, both delegations included a significant amount of female negotiators, which increased as they went on. Meanwhile, civil society continued to be active in promoting the preparation of a National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325.

3.2 Case study analysis

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

Haiti	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	Core Group (UN, OAS, EU and Germany, France, Brazil, Canada, Spain and US Governments), “Mediation Committee” (made up of three representatives of religious, academic and business organisations)
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

In recent years, especially after former President Jean Bertrand Aristide left the country in February 2004 and the subsequent deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH), there have been several attempts at consultation and dialogue between various political and social sectors to cope with the institutional fragility, political-social polarisation and economic and security crisis facing the country. Yet none of these initiatives, most of which agreements or have led to permanent or stable spaces or

mechanisms for negotiation. Though President Jovenel Moïse's mandate has been controversial since its inception after he was accused of electoral fraud in the 2015 election, his attempts to create a national dialogue in 2019 came in response to the deepening crisis in mid-2018 and the outbreak of protests and episodes of violence in 2019.

Amidst a deep economic, humanitarian, political and institutional crisis, **negotiations took place throughout the year between the acting Haitian government and various social organisation platforms and opposition political groups** that do not recognise the legitimacy or legality of Ariel Henry's government. The multilevel and multisectoral negotiations were sponsored by the US government, the Core Group (which includes representatives of the OAS, the UN, the EU and the US, France, Germany, Canada, Brazil and Spain) and certain civil society groups. The two main actors in the negotiations were the government of Ariel Henry, who has served as president and prime minister of the country since the assassination of the previous president, Jovenel Moïse, in July 2021, and a platform called the "Montana Accord", a pact signed on 30 August 2021 by nearly one thousand political and social organisations that proposed a road map for ensuring the political transition and for grappling with the growing insecurity and humanitarian crisis in the country. Promoted by the civic platform Commission to Search for a Haitian Solution to the Crisis, the Montana Accord laid out a two-year transition plan until the next presidential election is held in February 2024, the formation of a 52-member National Transition Council (appointed by political parties, political groups and civil society organisations), the creation of a five-member presidential college and the appointment of a prime minister and a ministerial cabinet.

In mid-January, the Unity Summit was held in Louisiana (USA) between representatives of the Montana Accord and the Protocol for National Understanding (PEN), the other great opposition platform made up of hundreds of social and political organisations, to reconcile their respective proposals for the political transition. As a consequence of this consensus between both platforms, on 30 January the National Transition Council elected former prime minister and former Central Bank Governor Fritz Jean as interim president and former Senator Steven Benoit as interim prime minister. The acting president and prime minister, Ariel Henry, supported in turn by the Musseau Accord (signed on 11 September 2021 by around 600 political and social organisations), did not recognise the vote of the National Transition Council, rejected the road map proposed by the Montana Accord and the PEN and argued that the only way to solve the country's political and institutional impasse was via general elections and a constitutional referendum. The legislative elections should have originally been held in October 2019, but they were postponed first until November 2021 and indefinitely thereafter. Similarly,

the referendum on the amendment of the 1987 Constitution, proposed by former President Jovenel Moïse, should have been held in June 2021, but it was also postponed and no date has been scheduled for it. As such, a significant part of the Haitian political class considered it illegal for Ariel Henry to remain president and prime minister of the country beyond 7 February 2022, since this was the date when former President Jovenel Moïse's term would have ended.

Although Ariel Henry met behind closed doors with representatives of the Montana Accord Monitoring Office on 11 February, the organisation indicated that negotiations would not continue until certain conditions were met, such as the suspension of the new Provisional Election Council and Henry's cooperation in the investigation of the murder of former President Moïse, as he is suspected of being involved. Faced with this deadlock, the US and the president of the Senate of Haiti launched several initiatives to seek common ground between the parties, but they were not successful. Along the same lines, a "Mediation Committee" was created in late March that was made up of representatives of the Conference of Rectors, Presidents and Heads of Haitian Universities (CORPUHA), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Haiti (CCIH) and the local organisation Religions for Peace Haiti. Sponsored by the government and supported by the Core Group, the Mediation Committee publicly declared in the middle of the year that it had held talks with around 40 political parties of various inclinations, five political groups, several signatories of four political agreements, the president of the country and members of the Senate. However, the main opposition coalitions, such as the Montana Accord and the PEN, did not recognise the Mediation Committee's legitimacy, describing it a unilateral initiative of the de facto government.

Ariel Henry met twice in May with one of the representatives of the Montana Accord, former Minister Magali Comeau-Denis, who proposed the objectives of the political negotiations, the place and duration of the discussions, the negotiating agenda, the composition of the delegations and other issues. However, in late May the de facto government made a counterproposal that disregarded the terms set out in the Montana Accord and focused the talks on insecurity and corruption, the amendment of the Constitution, the formation of the Provisional Electoral Council to organise the elections and social protection programmes. In early June, the Montana Accord publicly revealed its negotiating delegation (made up of seven people), while the provisional government issued a letter in late June to announce the formation of a delegation of six people representing the government and the political groups supporting it (also known as the Musseau or 9/11 Accord). However, after no progress was made on substantive or procedural matters in the negotiations in July, the Montana Accord Monitoring Office interrupted

the talks in early August, accusing Henry and his allied political groups of lacking the political desire to move forward in the negotiations, discuss institutional governance alternatives or agree on conditions and dates for the elections. Even though the US Secretary of State travelled to Haiti in September to encourage the resumption of negotiations and the Mediation Committee continued to hold many meetings, there no new meetings between the government and the main opposition platforms in the country throughout the rest of the year and many of the opposition parties encouraged massive anti-government protests in its final months. Amidst a substantial rise in violence in the country (which even prompted the United Nations and several countries to consider deploying a military force to deal with the instability), the government declared that it would begin organising the postponed elections at the end of the year, though it did not specify a date. On 21 December, the government announced that an agreement called the Haitian Consensus had been signed with various political groups and civil society and private organisations to ensure an inclusive transition and transparent elections. The agreement provides for a 14-month transition that includes elections before the end of 2023, the inauguration of the new government on 7 February 2024 (the date until which Ariel Henry will remain in office as prime minister) and the formation of a High Transition Council, made up of a representative of civil society, a representative of the political parties and a representative of the private sector, as well as a Control Body for Government Action. Although Henry called the agreement historic and over 600 organisations had shown their support for it by the end of the year, both the Montana Accord and some of the country's main opposition parties rejected the pact since it was signed by the same organisations that had shown their support for the government thus far and argued that it only sought to keep Ariel Henry in power and did not provide a solution to the country's structural problems.

South America

Colombia (ELN)	
Negotiating actors	Government, ELN
Third parties	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Venezuela, Norway, Mexico and Chile) United Nations Verification Mission, Catholic Church, supporting countries (Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain)
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.

Major progress was made in the **peace negotiations between the government of Colombia and the ELN in 2022.**

After the inauguration of President Gustavo Petro, who won the presidential election in June, a delegation of the Colombian government and representatives of the ELN held their first meeting in Havana after the peace process had remained at a standstill for years. The government delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Álvaro Leyva and supported by High Commissioner for Peace Danilo Rueda and Historic Pact Senator Iván Cepeda, who is very close to Gustavo Petro. The delegation was also accompanied by the special representative of the UN Secretary-General and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Norwegian special envoy for peace, John Otto, and the Cuban ambassador to Colombia, Javier Caamaño. After this first meeting, the government announced that it would take the necessary legal steps to facilitate the talks, in reference to the reactivation of the protocols that had already been agreed on with the ELN during the past negotiations and that were later deactivated by the government of Iván Duque. Shortly thereafter, the ELN indicated that it expected the peace negotiations to begin shortly and the Venezuelan government confirmed its willingness to act as a guarantor in response to Colombian President Gustavo Petro's request and the resumption of diplomatic relations between both countries. In October, it was officially confirmed that the negotiations would begin in November in an announcement made in Venezuela by High Commissioner for Peace Danilo Rueda, Senator Iván Cepeda, Monsignor Héctor Fabio Henao and ELN commanders Pablo Beltrán and Antonio García. It was also announced that the process would initially be supported by guarantor countries Cuba, Venezuela and Norway, later to be joined by Mexico and Chile, while Brazil's response to the invitation was still pending. Supporting special guests were to include the UN Verification Mission (with Carlos Ruiz Massieu, head of the mission as a representative in the negotiations) and the Catholic Church (with Monsignor Héctor Fabio Henao as a representative). The USA, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain were also invited to support the process. The negotiations with the ELN are framed within the new Colombian government's "Total Peace" policy, which seeks to hold talks simultaneously with all armed actors in the country, including the ELN and the FARC dissidents, and to put an end to the activity of criminal armed actors linked to narco-paramilitarism. To this end, the Chamber of

Representatives approved a draft bill in late October to give legal coverage to the “Total Peace” policy. Formulas to give these armed actors access to justice would also be laid out. It also includes the possibility of negotiating with FARC dissidents who abandoned the reincorporation process after the 2016 agreement was signed. The draft bill establishes that peace must be state policy and involve all government departments.

Peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the armed group ELN were formally restarted in November and the first round of talks took place.

The negotiations had been frozen in 2019 after an attack by the ELN. This will be the seventh time that the Colombian government and the ELN have launched a peace process. The start of the new talks took place in Caracas, Venezuela. The government negotiating delegation was initially headed by chief negotiators Otty Patiño, who was a negotiator with the government in 1990 as a member of the M-19, and Iván Cepeda, and also included María José Pizarro, Horacio Guerrero, Olga Lilia Silva, Danilo Rueda, José Félix Lafaurie (the executive president of the Cattlemen’s Federation, who is a supporter of Uribe’s political ideology), Carlos Rosero, Orlando Romero, Alvaro Matallana, Rosmery Quintero and Dayana Paola Urzola. It was later expanded. The ELN’s negotiating team was led by chief negotiator Pablo Beltrán and also included Aureliano Carbonell, Bernardo Téllez, Gustavo Martínez, Silvana Guerrero, María Consuelo Tapias, Nicolás “Gabino” Rodríguez, Isabel Torres, Viviana Henao and Óscar Serrano.

At the end of the round of negotiations, the parties announced that they had reached four agreements. The first agreement was on the negotiating agenda, which would resume what Santos’ government and the ELN had agreed on in 2016, though some adjustments are expected to be made. This agenda was made up of six points: the participation of society in peacebuilding, democracy for peace, transformations for peace, victims, the end of the armed conflict and implementation. The second agreement was on the institutionalisation of the Peace Talks Table regarding the basic principles and procedures for its operation. The third agreement was on humanitarian actions and dynamics and included a related partial agreement in the regions of Bajo Calima in the Valle del Cauca Department and Medio San Juan in the Chocó Department. The parties also agreed to provide humanitarian emergency care to ELN prisoners and the armed group claimed to have released 20 people (civilians and members of the security forces) as a sign of its commitment to peace. However, shortly after the announcement of the humanitarian agreement, the ELN’s Western War Front, which is active in the area included in the agreement, announced an indefinite so-called “armed strike” alluding to the presence of the Gulf Clan (ACG). The fourth agreement was on education and communication to facilitate the participation of Colombian society and the international community in

Peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the armed group ELN were formally restarted

the negotiations. On 19 December, the ELN announced a ceasefire between 24 December and 2 January, though it noted that it reserved the right to defend itself. It also called on the government to dissolve the paramilitary groups. At the end of the first round, it was announced that the negotiations would resume in January 2023 in Mexico. On 31 December, President Gustavo Petro announced a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the ELN, the Second Marquetalia, Estado Mayor Central, the AGC and the Self-Defence Forces of the Sierra Nevada from 1 January to 30 June 2023, which could be extended depending on the progress made in the negotiations. Two days later, however, the ELN denied that a bilateral agreement had been reached.

Gender, peace and security

The Government had eight women on its negotiating delegation with the ELN, after having added four more women to the four initially appointed because it had come under fire for having formed a delegation with so few women. Culture Minister Patricia Ariza was similarly critical and demanded parity in the government’s negotiating delegation. The appointments were made on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Thus, the initial four female members (Senator María José Pizarro, human rights activist Olga Lilia Silva, the head of an organisation of small and medium-sized companies, Rosmery Quintero, and indigenous rights activist Dayana Paola Urzola) were joined by journalists Mabel Lara and María Jimena Duzán, lawyer Nigieria Rentería and theologian Adelaida Jiménez. The ELN had six women on its delegation: Consuelo Tapias, Silvana Guerrero, Isabel Torres, Vivian Henao, Cataleya Jiménez and Manuela Márquez. Alongside the negotiations, civil society organisations promoted discussion and advocacy to prepare for a National Action Plan to implement the women, peace and security agenda.

Colombia (FARC)	
Negotiating actors	Government, Comunes
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 reached in 2016 between the Colombia government and the former FARC guerrilla group continued. **The new government headed by President Gustavo Petro, who took office in August, reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of the peace agreement as part of its “Total Peace” policy.** One of the most noteworthy events of the year was the Truth Commission’s publication of its final report after four years of work, with a mandate established under the peace agreement signed between the government of Colombia and the FARC in 2016. Entitled *Hay futuro si hay verdad* (“There is a future if there is truth”),¹ the report states that 456,666 people lost their lives as a consequence of the violence between 1986 and 2016, that 50,770 people were kidnapped and that over eight million people were forcibly displaced. The Truth Commission concluded that most of the victims of the conflict were civilians and non-combatants. Forty-five per cent of the victims were afflicted between 1995 and 2004 and 45% of the homicides in the conflict between 1985 and 2018 were committed by paramilitary forces, 21% by the FARC and 12% by members of government forces. The report also includes other impacts of the conflict such as torture, forced disappearance, sexual violence, violations of the right to liberty, the recruitment of boys and girls, forced labor and more. In its recommendations, the Truth Commission emphasised the importance of fully implementing the peace agreement and restarting the dialogue with the ELN and proposed the establishment of a Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation. The report also recommends establishing a culture of peace in the country; reforming in the security sector, mainly in the police and the armed forces; committing to establishing a memory policy; taking action to end impunity; and striving to promote an international discussion on banning drugs. President Petro publicly reconfirmed his commitment to comply with the Truth Commission’s recommendations.

Meanwhile, **two key institutions for the implementation of the agreement were relaunched: the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI) and the National Commission for Security Guarantees (CNGS).** The UN Verification Mission, the OAS Mission to Support the Peace Process and representatives of countries that support the peace process, as well as representatives of the extinct FARC and the government also resumed their

work. The work of the CSIVI and the CNGS had slowed down and even came to a standstill while the previous government was in power, which had led to significant obstacles in implementing the peace agreement. In fact, in its latest verification report on the implementation of the peace agreement, the Kroc Institute stated that as of November 2021, only 30% of the provisions had been fully implemented, 19% were in an intermediate state of implementation, 37% had reached only a minimal state of implementation and 15% had not begun to be implemented.² By the end of 2022, 13,539 people had submitted to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), 72.7% of which belonged to the FARC and 26% of which were members of government forces.

Gender, peace and security

The Special Forum on Gender continued to work on the implementation of the gender focus of the peace agreement. In July, the JEP announced that it would open a macro case on sexual violence and other crimes motivated by the victims’ gender, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. Various human rights organisations had submitted reports on this subject to the JEP and the Ombudsman’s Office had requested the same.

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

1. Truth Commission, final report. *Hay futuro si hay verdad*, June 2022.

2. Echavarría Álvarez, Josefina, et al. *Cinco años después de la firma del Acuerdo Final: Reflexiones desde el monitoreo a la implementación*. Notre Dame, IN: Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies/ Keough School of Global Affairs, 2022.

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.

After an interruption of over a year, the Venezuelan government resumed talks and reached an agreement with the opposition alliance Unitary Platform in Mexico, while also beginning talks with other opposition factions and seeking common ground with the US government at the same time. Since the start of the year, both the International Contact Group (made up of several EU and Latin American countries) and Washington repeatedly urged the Venezuelan government and the Unitary Platform to resume the negotiations, which had begun in Mexico in August 2021 with Norway facilitating, but which were interrupted in mid-October 2021 after three rounds had been held. However, it was not until May 2022 that the heads of both delegations, Jorge Rodríguez (government) and Gerardo Blyde (opposition) met privately to explore whether the conditions were in place to resume the negotiations. The opposition asserted that any agreement reached would have to allow for a free and fair presidential election to be held, but it also called for the restoration of institutions in the country and restitution of the citizens' fundamental rights. The Venezuelan government once again demanded the release of Alex Saab, a Colombian businessman close to Caracas whose extradition to the US from Cape Verde in October 2021 caused a breakdown in the negotiations. The Venezuelan government also called for Saab to participate in the negotiations. Despite this meeting between the government and the opposition, the official negotiations did not resume until late November, again in Mexico City, facilitated by Norway and supported by the Netherlands and Russia. On 26 November, both delegations signed the Second Partial Agreement for the Social Protection of the People, whereby both parties agree to take all nationwide and international steps aimed at gradually recovering around three billion USD of Venezuelan state assets frozen abroad to fund social programmes for health, education, food and electrical infrastructure. The agreement formalises the creation of the Fund for the Social Care of the Venezuelan People, a trust fund administered and supervised by the United Nations that will be supplied with Venezuelan assets

frozen in the international financial system, as well as the establishment of three working groups (the National Board for Social Care, the Overcompliance Group and Monitoring Commission), which are complementary to and not intended to replace the negotiating table. The facilitator of the negotiations, Dag Nylander, reported that both parties also promised to continue the talks in December to address the political issues on the agenda established in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in August 2021, though he did not specify the date and place of the following meetings. Immediately after the agreement was signed, Washington announced that it had authorised the oil company Chevron to resume its oil extraction operations in Venezuela for export to the US, and Caracas announced the signing of several agreements between the national oil company PVDSA and Chevron. UN Secretary-General António Guterres publicly expressed his satisfaction with the agreement and urged both parties to remain fully committed to the negotiations, while a joint statement from the EU and the governments of the US, Canada and the United Kingdom urged both parties to show good faith and the political commitment to achieve a comprehensive agreement leading to free and fair elections in 2024, while also expressing their willingness to review political sanctions if significant progress is made in the negotiations.

Even though both parties expressed their satisfaction that the agreement had been signed, in early December the Unitary Platform demanded that the Venezuelan government set a date for continuing the negotiations on political issues, such as the conditions for the next elections, the release of people that the opposition considers political prisoners and the return of exiled people. The opposition also accused Maduro of lying about the scope of the signed agreement, of wanting to impose new conditions not provided for in the previous agreements to promote his political agenda in the negotiations and of promoting, making visible and legitimising other opposition factions outside of the Unitary Platform and simulating negotiations with them for his own benefit. Thus, in early December, a few days after the agreement was signed in Mexico, Maduro welcomed to the Presidential Palace representatives of the Democratic Alliance (made up of by 18 political organisations) and the Lápiz Alliance, neither of which is involved in the Unitary Platform, and announced the commitment to issue a document with proposals and agreements on economic, social, political and electoral matters within 30 days. After these meetings, both parties stressed the importance of promoting a nationwide dialogue in Venezuela that includes other voices and sectors in the negotiations. Along these same lines, in March the government announced its intention to promote an inclusive national dialogue with political, business and union groups, in line with a section of the Memorandum of Understanding that calls for bringing other political and social actors in the country on board.

Previously, in February, Caracas had begun talks with political and social opposition groups and accepted the appointment of 10 civil society representatives in the parliamentary committee that chose the Supreme Court judges, although in the end the vast majority were considered close to the government. Subsequently, in April, the government met with representatives of the Democratic Alliance and the Civic Forum, which brings together around 690 organisations and 194 civil society actors. In late December, a US judge rejected Alex Saab's request for diplomatic immunity to avoid trial for money laundering. Nicolás Maduro had requested his release on several occasions.

Finally, the governments of the US and Venezuela attempted to find common ground throughout the year. In early March, senior US government officials met with Maduro in Caracas to discuss the release of Americans imprisoned in Venezuela, although Washington acknowledged that the negotiations also revolved around issues of energy security and its need to secure alternative sources of energy due to its ban on the import of oil from Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. In May, the US government authorised US oil company Chevron to negotiate a license with Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, but not to drill or export oil of Venezuelan origin. It also removed Carlos Erik Malpica

Flores, a high-ranking PDVSA executive and nephew of the first lady of Venezuela, Cilia Flores, from the Office of Foreign Assets Control's list of sanctioned persons. Washington declared that both decisions were made at the request of the interim government led by Juan Guaidó and by the Unitary Platform to facilitate the resumption of talks between the two parties, which had been interrupted since October 2021. Later, in early October, both governments agreed to an exchange of prisoners, which some media outlets considered the most important agreement between both countries since President Biden took office. The exchange, which took place in a third country, included two nephews of Maduro's wife who had been detained by the DEA in Haiti in 2015 and were serving an 18-year sentence in the US and seven US citizens imprisoned in Venezuela, including five former high-ranking US employees of Citgo, a PDVSA subsidiary in the US, who had been arrested by the Venezuelan authorities in 2017. At the end of the year, Maduro declared that his government was fully ready to normalise diplomatic relations with the US a few days after the 2015 National Assembly, considered the only legitimate democratic institution in the country according to the opposition, but outlawed by the government, decreed an end to the interim government and presidency of Juan Guaidó.

