

## 4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- During 2022 there were 10 peace negotiations in Asia, 26% of the total negotiations in the world.
- The government of Pakistan and the Taliban armed group TTP held talks for several months, which ended in November with the TTP's withdrawal from the negotiations.
- In the southern Philippines, the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement made substantial progress, both in the institutional development of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and in the demobilisation of MILF fighters.
- After almost two years of deadlock in the negotiations, the government of Thailand and the BRN resumed talks and reached some agreements in 2022.
- The governments of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville reached an agreement in the negotiations on the future political status of Bougainville, but relations between the two parties later deteriorated and the process was interrupted.
- Negotiations continued to stall between ASEAN and the Myanmar military junta on the return of democracy to the country.

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 2022

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
<b>Korea, DPR – Korea, Rep. of</b>	North Korea, South Korea	--
Korea, DPR – USA	North Korea, USA	--
<b>India (Assam)</b>	Government, ULFA-PTF, ULFA-I; AANLA, AANLA (FG), BCF, BCF (BT), STF, ACMA, ACMA (FG) and APA	--
<b>India (Nagaland)</b>	Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF	--
<b>Myanmar</b>	Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups that have not signed the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA and MNDAA	China, ASEAN
<b>Pakistan</b>	Government, TTP	Afghanistan
<b>Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)</b>	Government, Autonomous Bougainville Government	United Nations
<b>Philippines (MILF)</b>	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in- Muslim Mindanao	Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body
<b>Philippines (NDF)</b>	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway
<b>Thailand (south)</b>	Government, BRN	Malaysia

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

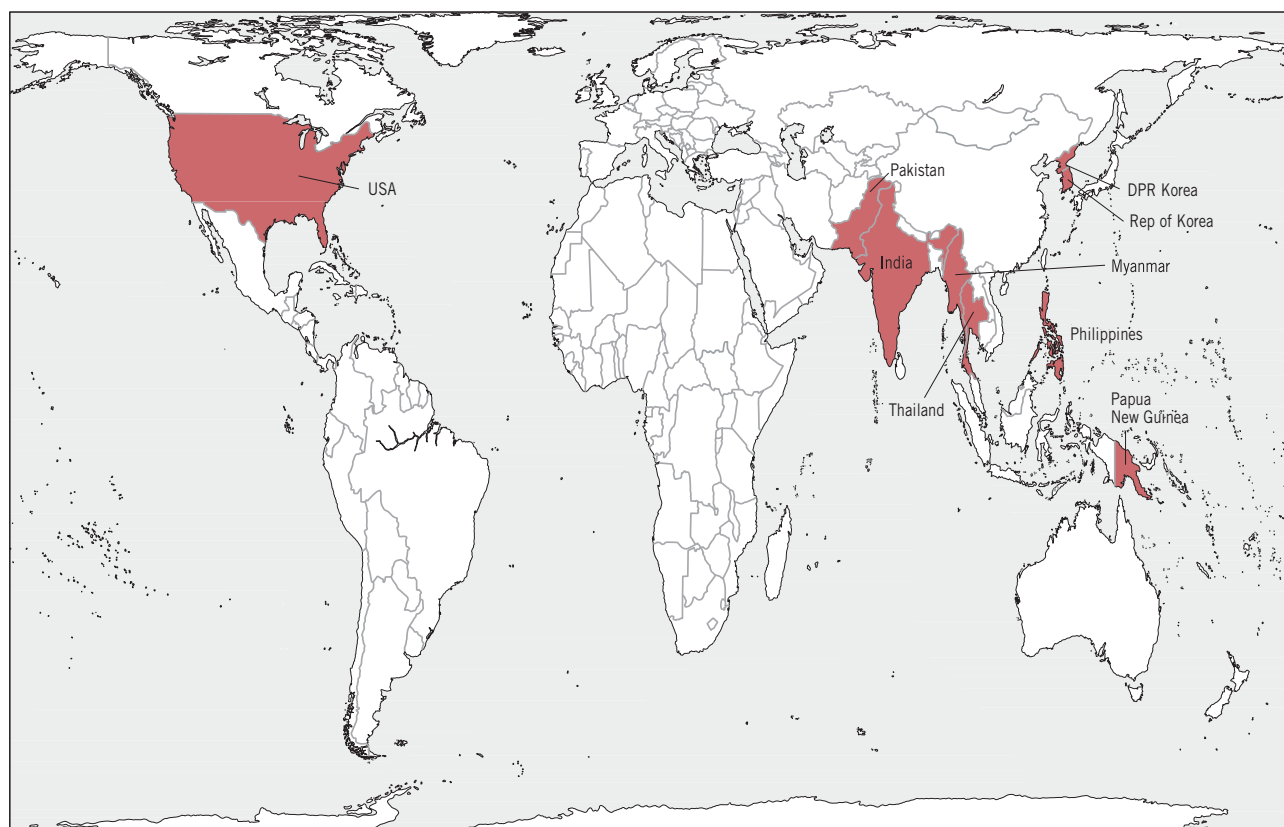
-- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

### 4.1 Negotiations in 2022: regional trends

There were **10 peace negotiations** in Asia in 2022, the same number as the previous year. This number did not change, as even though the negotiations in Afghanistan

ended after the withdrawal of international troops from the country and the fall of the Afghan government, a new negotiating process began between the Pakistani

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia in 2022



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2022

government and the Taliban armed group TTP, though it was discontinued at the end of the year due to the TTP's withdrawal. Four of the negotiations took place in Southeast Asia, notably in the Philippines (MILF and NDF), Myanmar and Thailand (south). Three were conducted in South Asia: in India (Assam and Nagaland) and Pakistan. Two were held in East Asia (DPR Korea-Rep of Korea and DPR Korea-USA) and the tenth negotiating process took place in the Pacific region, between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. As in previous years, half the negotiations aimed to resolve active armed conflicts, though with different degrees of violence and clashes between the parties, such as in the Philippines (MILF and NDF), Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand (south), while the other half dealt with domestic and interstate socio-political crises, as was the case of DPR Korea-Republic of Korea and DPR Korea-USA, India (Assam and Nagaland) and Papua New Guinea (Bougainville).

The respective governments were **active in all the different negotiating processes** and armed opposition groups participated in all those that involved armed conflicts. Thus, the governments of Pakistan, the Philippines, Myanmar and Thailand held talks in different formats with armed groups of different kinds. Although some of the negotiations took place directly between the insurgent groups and the governments involved in each conflict, as was the case between the Pakistani government and the TTP, the Indian government and the NSCN-IM and the Thai government and the BRN, in other scenarios the talks took place

through political organisations linked to and acting on behalf of the insurgents, as in the Philippines, where Manila was negotiating with the National Democratic Front (NDF) representing the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA.

In other contexts, the negotiations were conducted solely by governments, as occurred in the inter-state negotiations that took place between the governments of North Korea and South Korea, as well as between North Korea and the US. In other contexts, the negotiations took place between central and regional governments, like those between the government of the Philippines and the regional Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and those between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Although Nagaland was not a negotiating actor, the state government was involved in promoting the process and different political and parliamentary actors also played an important role in promoting a negotiated solution to the conflict. Thus, decentralised government actors played an important role in several of the negotiating processes in Asia, in line with the characteristics of the conflicts to resolve. Issues related to autonomy, self-determination, independence, land use and recognition of the identity of different national minorities were some of the central lines of dispute in many conflicts in the region, such as in India (Assam and Nagaland), the Philippines (MILF), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (south), hence the importance of the participation of political actors from different administrative levels.

**Third parties** played a smaller role in peace processes in Asia than in other regions and 40% of the negotiations did not receive support from external actors. This was the case in the Indian states of Assam and Nagaland, where dialogue took place directly between armed groups and the government, and in interstate negotiations between the two Koreas and between North Korea and the US. In addition, the negotiations that did receive external support were also characterised by a smaller presence of third parties in different roles, since in most cases there were only one or two actors facilitating the dialogue. This was the case in the negotiations between the Philippines and the NDF, which were supported by Norway; between the Pakistani government and the TTP, facilitated by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan; between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government, supported by the United Nations; and between the Thai government and the armed opposition group BRN, facilitated by Malaysia. This was also the case in Myanmar, where China tried to promote negotiations between the government and different ethnic armed groups and ASEAN maintained contact with the military junta to resolve the political crisis affecting the country since the 2021 coup. The only case in which third-party support consisted of a network of different actors and facilitators was in the implementation of the peace agreement signed between the Philippine government and the armed group MILF. In this case, the actors involved in the current phase of implementing the agreement were organised through different teams for coordinating supervision and support, such as the Third Party Monitoring Team, in charge of overseeing the implementation of the agreements signed between the MILF and the Philippine government; the International Decommissioning Body, made up of Turkey, Norway, Brunei and local staff from the Philippines to supervise the demobilisation of 40,000 former MILF combatants; and, finally, though with a less prominent role in the implementation phase of the peace agreement, the International Contact Group, made up of Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia and four international NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources).

**International and regional organisations** played a smaller role in facilitating peace processes in Asia than in other regions, where organisations such as the United Nations played a fundamental facilitating role. In Asia, ASEAN played a prominent role in finding a solution to the political crisis in Myanmar after the 2021 coup, though unsuccessfully for now. The United Nations also played a role in facilitating the dialogue between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government. It also supported different initiatives related to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, such as in the implementation of the peace agreement in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, with a reintegration

programme for female MILF fighters. The end of the peace process in Afghanistan shrank the role of international organisations in promoting peacebuilding in the region, since Afghanistan had been the focus of many international efforts and interventions in the area due to the foreign military presence and the prominent role played by the United Nations and the EU.

Though several of the peace processes in Asia that had been stagnant in previous years were reactivated during the year, others deteriorated, leading to deadlock or interruption of the talks between the negotiating actors. This was true of the negotiations between the Taliban armed group TTP and the Pakistani government, where the dialogue facilitated by the Taliban government of Afghanistan ended with the TTP's withdrawal and an escalation of violence. In Papua New Guinea, the deterioration in relations between the negotiators led to the postponement of the process, though important progress had been made early in the year, such as an agreement regarding the completion of the referendum and the implementation of constitutional amendments. The reactivation of the negotiations in Nagaland did not yield any significant progress, and for yet another year they were subject to impasse and a lack of agreement between the parties on crucial and more complex issues. Relations between the two Koreas deteriorated significantly after the change of government in South Korea, which prevented any kind of headway in the dialogue. No progress was even made on the reunions of families separated by the 1950

Korean War, which had been a point of rapprochement at earlier times in the process. In Myanmar, no significant progress was made in the negotiations between the Burmese government and some insurgent groups or in ASEAN's contact with the military junta, and the implementation of the five-point agreement to resolve the crisis remained at a standstill. One positive development was the agreement signed between the Indian government and eight Adivasi armed groups from the state of Assam requiring their demobilisation, with political trade-offs and recognition of the rights of the Adivasi population. Significant progress was also made in the peace process in Thailand, despite the ongoing violence.

Little significant headway was made in the application of the **gender, peace and security agenda** and in women's participation in peace processes, as women continued to be excluded from most peace negotiations. This was the case of the negotiations in Assam and Nagaland in India, in Pakistan, between the two Koreas, between the NDF and the Philippine government, in Myanmar and in Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), where female involvement was only found in some negotiation-related areas. The gender, peace and security agenda continued to be considered a key issue in most peace negotiations, despite women's organisations' mobilisation and advocacy efforts in different parts of Asia. However, some significant progress was made in some of the cases

analysed. This was the case in the peace negotiations in Thailand (south), where the government appointed a woman as special representative in the negotiations with the BRN, with a mandate to promote the role of women in the process. In the negotiations to implement the peace agreement reached between the government of the Philippines and the MILF, considered one of the processes where the gender perspective has been included the most, there were higher levels of female participation in different areas, such as in Parliament, though shortcomings persisted, as seen in the low number of female candidates in the May elections. Thus, Asia remained the scene of major challenges in implementing the gender, peace and security agenda as part of peace negotiations.

## 4.2. Case study analysis

### East Asia

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

#### Summary:

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

**Amidst increased military tensions on the Korean peninsula, not only were there no meetings or negotiations between the governments of North and South Korea in 2022, but relations between them deteriorated notably after new South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol took office in May.** In the first half of the year, South Korean President Moon Jae-in called for a resumption of the negotiations between both countries and in late April, shortly before leaving office, he exchanged personal letters with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in which he urged him to establish peaceful and cooperative relations with the next South Korean administration. In August, Yoon Suk-yeol made his policy towards North Korea public, noting that North Korea's denuclearisation is a prerequisite for advancing on the path to peace and prosperity in the region and proposing a large-scale economic aid plan if Pyongyang takes determined and verifiable steps towards its denuclearisation. Yoon Suk-yeol also announced his intention to strengthen the country's military capabilities, reserving the possibility of even carrying out pre-emptive strikes in the face of the threats and risks posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programme. Shortly after he made these statements, Kim Yo-jong, a senior government official and sister of Kim Jong-un, categorically rejected Yoon Suk-yeol's inter-Korean cooperation plans, describing them as a copy of those that had already been carried out by the administrations of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye between 2008 and 2013 and saying that economic aid packages cannot be used as barter for her country's arms programme. Kim Yo-jong added that her government did not intend to meet in person with the new South Korean president during his term. Previously, in July, South Korean Unification Minister Kwon Young-se had announced his intention to promote inter-Korean relations based on respect for all the agreements that both countries have signed in recent decades and declared that any possible dialogue or summit between them should include the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, since this was important enough for building trust between the two countries to be included in the bilateral dialogue and not to be left solely to the international community. Shortly after these statements were made on the 50th anniversary of the first official agreement signed between the two countries, the South-North Joint Communiqué of 1972, North Korean government-owned media outlets said that one of the reasons for the political and military tension between both countries is South Korea's lack of compliance with and implementation of it. In the South-North Joint Communiqué, which establishes the guiding principles of the Korean reunification process, both parties agree to promote reunification without interference from foreign powers, without resorting to the use of force and building national unity as one people that transcends ideologies and systems.

Despite the impasse in the dialogue, in early September the South Korean government officially proposed the start of talks to hold new gatherings of families separated by the Korean War (1950-53). Since 1988, more than

133,000 people have registered to participate in these reunions, but currently only about 44,000 of them are alive and 67% of these are over 80 years of age. Since the end of the war, 21 meetings have been held, the last of which was in 2018, amidst rapprochement between the two countries and a sustained dialogue between the governments of North Korea and the US. Although these family gatherings had normally been facilitated by the Red Cross, on this last occasion, the South Korean Ministry for Unification proposed them directly to the North Korean government and channelled them through the joint liaison office, which some media outlets interpreted it as a political gesture by Seoul aimed at starting direct bilateral talks between both countries. The North Korean government did not respond to the proposal. In late September, Yoon Suk-yeol spoke at the UN General Assembly. It was the first time that a South Korean president's speech made no mention of North Korea.

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## South Asia

India (Assam)	
<b>Negotiating actors</b>	Government, ULFA-PTF, ULFA-I; AANLA, AANLA (FG), BCF, BCF (BT), STF, ACMA, ACMA (FG) and APA
<b>Third parties</b>	--
<b>Relevant agreements</b>	--
<b>Summary:</b> The Indian state of Assam has been the focal point of several conflicts and socio-political crises between the Indian government and different armed groups that have demanded Assamese independence or greater recognition for the political and cultural rights of different ethnic minorities. The demographic transformations in the state after the partition of the Indian subcontinent, with the arrival of two million people from Bangladesh, are at the origin of the demands of the population of Assamese ethnic origin for recognition of their cultural, civil and social rights and the creation of an independent state. Violence escalated several times during the 1980s and 1990s and there were failed attempts at negotiations. In 2005, a peace process began with the armed group United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), which was interrupted in 2006, giving rise to a new escalation of the conflict. Since 2011, there has been a significant decrease in violence in the state and many armed groups have handed over their weapons or started talks with the government, including the main insurgent organisation in the state, ULFA, which split as a result of the negotiations since one faction was against them.	

**In September, the Indian government signed a peace agreement with eight Adivasi armed groups operating in the state of Assam, in the northeastern region of the country. The groups that signed it were the All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA), AANLA (FG), Birs Commando Force (BCF), BCF (BT), Santhal Tiger Force, Adivasi Cobra Militant of Assam (ACMA), ACMA**

**(FG) and Adivasi People's Army (APA), with which a ceasefire agreement had been in force since 2016. It was a tripartite peace agreement between the central government of India, the government of the state of Assam and the armed groups, and the signing ceremony was attended by Interior Minister Amit Shah and Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The eight armed groups had a total of 1,182 insurgents. The agreement involves the demobilisation of the combatants and their acceptance of current Indian legislation. The Indian government pledged to protect and preserve the social, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identity of the Adivasi groups; to ensure the development of tea plantations in the Adivasi villages of Assam; to establish an Adivasi welfare and development council; to rehabilitate armed combatants and guarantee the welfare of tea plantation workers; and to provide a special development package worth one billion rupees to improve infrastructure in Adivasi villages.** The Minister of the Interior framed the agreement as a government plan to ensure that no group that the government considered extremist would remain active by 2025 and to resolve all territorial disputes between the different states of northeast India by 2024. The insurgents have lived in "designated camps" (cantonment centres) since the ceasefire was signed. In December, around 1,200 members of the Bru tribal armed groups Bru Revolutionary Army of Union (BRAU) and United Democratic Liberation Front of Barak Valley (UDLF-BV) also handed in their weapons. Having started their negotiations in 2017, the Bru armed groups presented their demands for the creation of an autonomous economic council, seeking full Scheduled Tribe (Plain) status in the state and a land deal for the Bru community of Assam.

India (Nagaland)	
<b>Negotiating actors</b>	Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/ NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/ GDRN/NA, ZUF
<b>Third parties</b>	--
<b>Relevant agreements</b>	Framework agreement (2015)
<b>Summary:</b> 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 negotiations between the NSCN-IM and the Indian government resumed in April after several months on pause,** following the episode of violence that took place in Nagaland in late 2021 that shut down the talks.<sup>1</sup> However, at the end of the year, not enough progress had been made in achieving a signed definitive agreement. The lead negotiator for the Indian central government, A. K. Mishra, travelled to Nagaland and met with representatives of the armed group for the first time, including NSCN-IM Secretary General Thuingaleng Muivah at his headquarters in Camp Hebron. This location was chosen for the meeting due to Muivah's health. An octogenarian, he had been hospitalised in the weeks running up to the meeting. Mishra also met with the state government's central committee for the Naga political issue, headed by Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and representatives of Naga civil society. During his visit to the state, Mishra and three armed groups (NSCN-NK, NSCN-R and NSCN-KK) also agreed to extend the ceasefire agreement for three months. In May, a delegation of 10 NSCN-IM representatives travelled to New Delhi to continue the negotiations and held several meetings with the central government, which reportedly repeated the urgency of reaching a solution and reaffirmed its position that it would not accept a Naga flag or a Naga Constitution. Also in May, the Indian government held meetings with other Naga stakeholders, such as representatives of the NNPG group and the government of Nagaland. Various sources indicated that after the meetings and government's proposals, the NSCN-IM could have ended its participation in the negotiations. In July, the Naga government, made up of all parties with parliamentary representation, asked the Indian government to invite the NSCN-IM back to New Delhi to continue discussions on the government's proposal. The Nagaland chief minister stressed the entire Naga legislature's commitment to the peace process. In August, after several months of uncertainty, the NSCN-IM said it had decided to continue validating the framework agreement reached in 2015, while standing firm in its demand for a Naga flag and a Naga Constitution. Different meetings were held in the following months, but they failed to resolve the situation completely and the discussions around the issue of the Naga flag and Constitution, the main obstacles to signing a final agreement, did not lead to any agreement between the parties. However, the NSCN-IM and the NNPG reached an agreement to

form the "Council of Naga Relations and Cooperation", thereby overcoming divisions between the different Naga insurgencies. Though different analysts pointed out that this rapprochement did increase the chances of an agreement, by the end of the year no significant results had been achieved in this regard.

## Gender, peace and security

Women remained excluded from the peace process despite the outstanding peacebuilding work that civil society organisations have done in Nagaland. The organisation Naga Mother Association, which has played a role of rapprochement between the parties in conflict at different times during the negotiations, repeated its call on the Indian government to revoke the anti-terrorist Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), denouncing the human rights violations that have been committed against the Naga population by the security forces under the protection of this legislation.

Pakistan	
<b>Negotiating actors</b>	Government, TTP
<b>Third parties</b>	Afghanistan
<b>Relevant agreements</b>	--

### Summary:

In recent years, the Pakistani government and the Taliban armed opposition group Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have made several attempts to negotiate an end to the armed conflict between them since 2007, stemming from the armed conflict in Afghanistan between the Taliban and the US-led international coalition. In 2013 and 2014, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif began a process of rapprochement with the Pakistani Taliban insurgency, but an attack on a school in Peshawar, which killed 145 people, put an end to the negotiations. After the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the new Afghan regime promoted fresh rapprochement between the Pakistani government and the TTP, leading to a temporary ceasefire in 2021 and the start of negotiations in 2022.

**The Pakistani government and the Taliban armed group TTP held talks for several months, but the TTP withdrew from them in late November.** Following the month-long ceasefire that the Pakistani Taliban announced in 2021, which ultimately failed without negotiations, the Taliban armed group announced another new ceasefire in May. Initially it was a 10-day truce to mark the Eid religious festival that was extended until 30 May. However, the armed group ended up announcing an indefinite ceasefire. Also in May, the Taliban government of Afghanistan declared through its spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, that it was mediating in talks in Kabul between the Pakistani Taliban insurgency and Pakistani political

1. See the summary on Nagaland in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2021: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022.

and military representatives. After the announcement of the indefinite nature of the ceasefire, the Pakistani government officially recognised its participation in the negotiations with the Taliban through statements by Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, who indicated that they had begun in 2021. After the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan, there had been an uptick in Taliban violence in Pakistan, which had further strained relations between Kabul and Islamabad. The ceasefire announcement was reportedly the result of several weeks of secret talks in Kabul between the TTP and representatives of the Pakistan Armed Forces, which were later followed by further public talks between the TTP and Pakistani tribal leaders. The release of dozens of TTP members imprisoned in Pakistan was also announced, including commanders Muslim Khan and Mehmood Khan. The Pakistani military negotiators were led by Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed, the former head of the Pakistani secret services (ISI). The TTP presented several demands for the negotiating agenda: a substantial reduction of the military presence in the former tribal areas of the country and a reversal of the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas with the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which had been enacted via a constitutional amendment in 2018. Faiz Hameed would have offered the Taliban a safe return to Pakistan in exchange for a long-term ceasefire that could lead to the dismantling of the armed group and its political integration. The Pakistani government considered the demand for the FATA to regain their administrative status prior to the 2018 merger inadmissible, so on 26 July a delegation of religious leaders met with TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud in Kabul, but they were unable to convince him to give up the demand. Finally, on 28 November, the TTP announced that it was abandoning the ceasefire and urged its members to carry out attacks in Pakistan. The TTP said it was breaking the ceasefire due to the rise in military operations by the Pakistani Armed Forces against the insurgent group in the northwestern tribal areas and elsewhere in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. On 30 November, an attack took place against the police who were protecting a polio vaccination health team in Balochistan. The announcement that the ceasefire agreement was broken came one day before Asim Munir took over as the new head of the Pakistani Armed Forces.

## Gender, peace and security

While the negotiations between the Pakistani government and the TTP remained active, women did not play an active role in any of the negotiating delegations and no issues related to the rights of women or the LGBTQIA+ population had been included in the negotiating agenda. However, after the Afghan-facilitated process broke down, Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar travelled to Kabul to meet her Afghan counterpart in a gesture that was seen as a

***The government of Pakistan and the Taliban armed group TTP began a negotiating process that fell apart in November***

challenge issued by the Pakistani government against the Afghan Taliban.

## South-east Asia and Oceania

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

### Summary:

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

Even though there was a major confrontation between the Philippine Armed Forces and a MILF battalion at the end of 2022, both parties held regular and periodic meetings throughout the year and significant progress was made in implementing the 2014 peace agreement. In fact, in December the government declared that the successful development of the peace process in Mindanao is the main asset that Manila intends to show to the international community in order to secure a seat on the UN Security Council in 2027. These statements regarding the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement and the subsequent Bangsamoro

Organic Law that institutionalised the main commitments of the agreement are in line with the latest report issued by the Third-Party Monitoring Team (TPMT), the body in charge of evaluating and advising on the progress of the peace process between the Philippine government and the MILF. Issued in March, the report covers the period between November 2020 and January 2022. It confirms constant and positive progress in the peace process in the region throughout the period and especially stresses the validity of the ceasefire and the functioning of the mechanisms supervising it, the institutional development of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) through the activity of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), the approval of legislation essential to its operation, regular and effective interaction between the Philippine government and the Bangsamoro government through the Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB), the start of the third phase of the demobilisation of MILF combatants in November 2021, progress in granting amnesty to MILF members and the set-up of the Bangsamoro Normalisation Trust Fund. However, the TPMT pointed out that the implementation of the peace process was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic and the discussion on extending the transition period beyond the originally scheduled date of June 2022. The TPMT's input largely coincides with the assessments of the Peace Implementing Panels of the government and the MILF, which issued a joint statement in the middle of the year praising the development of the peace process and announcing several agreements, as well as the opinion of the Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB), the main bilateral negotiating mechanism between Manila and the BARMM government, which has met regularly after since its establishment in 2019. In June, the IGRB submitted its second monitoring report on the negotiations between both administrations (covering the period between December 2019 and December 2021), noting that both governments' cooperation is very effective for establishing peace in Mindanao.

During 2022, the process to implement the peace agreement made substantial progress both politically and institutionally, as well as in terms of normalisation, which includes the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former MILF combatants, the transformation of the six MILF camps into peaceful and productive areas, amnesty for MILF combatants, the withdrawal and redeployment of the Philippine Armed Forces in the region, the dismantling of armed groups and private militias and other issues. Regarding the section of the 2014 peace agreement on normalisation, in January the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives approved three concurrent resolutions regulating amnesty for former MILF and MNLF combatants, by which they can be pardoned only for punishable crimes committed for political reasons and beliefs. However, at the end of the year, both the MILF and the TPMT

***The meeting held in early September between Nur Misuari and Ebrahim Murad was of great historical significance, as it was the first meeting in more than two decades between the leaders of the MNLF and the MILF***

regretted that the National Amnesty Commission had not yet been set up, which is tasked with processing amnesty requests from former Moro and Communist rebels and determining whether the applicants have a right to amnesty by virtue of Proclamations 1090, 1091, 1092 and 1093, issued by President Duterte in February 2021. In October, the MILF Peace Implementing Panel submitted 524 amnesty requests for former MILF combatants and MILF leader Mohagher Iqbal urged Manila to speed up its processing of them, since they are essential to the reconciliation process in the areas affected by the armed conflict. The second key aspect of normalisation was the resumption of the third phase of the demobilisation of 40,000 former MILF combatants. From the start of the process in 2015 until the resumption of its third phase in October 2022, 19,345 MILF combatants had demobilised. The third phase of the process began in November 2021, but its continuation was hampered by the spread of COVID-19. According to the peace agreement,

14,000 combatants were supposed to demobilise during the third phase, of which 7,200 had done so by October 2022, with another 5,500 combatants pending demobilisation before the end of the year. This process is supervised by the International Decommissioning Body, made up of the governments of Turkey, Norway and Brunei Darussalam and by local staff appointed by Manila and the MILF. Although the Philippine government indicates that the implementation schedule for the agreement is following the expected pace, the MILF had repeatedly criticised the slowness and paralysis of

the process throughout 2022. Finally, in June the EU, the UNDP and the Office of the Presidential Advisor on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) launched a two-year project to transform the six MILF camps into peaceful and productive communities by boosting local capacities and developing sustainable livelihoods through support for agricultural companies, alternative professional training programmes and microcredit to diversify productive activity.

The most important political event of the year related to the peace agreement was undoubtedly the inauguration in August of the 80 people that make up the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), whose original mandate (2019-2022) was extended for another three years (until 2025) in late 2021 by President Duterte, since the spread of COVID-19 had slowed down the BTA's institutional development, legislative activity and government action. Since its establishment, the BTA has been headed by MILF leader Ebrahim Mura. According to the peace agreement, the MILF has the power to designate 41 of the 80 members of the BTA, while the central government is responsible for appointing the remaining 39 people. After Manila names its appointees, the BARMM Parliament will have 55 of its 80 representatives appointed by the historical insurgent

groups in Mindanao: 41 from the MILF (41) and 14 from the two main factions of the MNLF: one led by the founder of the group, Nur Misuari (7) and one led by Muslimin Sema and Yusoph Jikiri. Although the Sema and Jikiri factions had already directly participated in the peace process between the government and the MILF (by joining the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, for example), the participation of Misuari's MNLF faction in the Parliamentary Assembly of the BARMM (where two of his sons will have a seat) implies the de facto reconciliation or convergence of the two negotiating processes that the government maintained with the MILF and the MNLF. Thus far, Nur Misuari had decided to hold direct and parallel negotiations with the government on the full implementation of the peace agreement that Manila and the MNLF signed in 1996, refusing to participate in any forum or decision-making mechanism stemming from the 2014 peace agreement between Manila and the MILF and even rejecting its legitimacy. Thus, the meeting held in early September between Nur Misuari and Ebrahim Murad was of great historical significance, as it was the first meeting in more than two decades between the leaders of the MNLF and the MILF. The unity between the MILF and the MNLF also became official in the formation of the new BARMM government, which is led by Ebrahim Murad and made up of prominent historical figures from the MNLF, such as Muslimin Sema and the son of Yusoph Jikiri. During the inaugural session of the BTA legislature, new Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos pledged to continue supporting the peace process and urged the Bangsamoro Parliament to pass the necessary legislation for the BARMM to function properly, noting that there will be further extensions of the BTA transitional period beyond May 2025, the date when the first regional elections in the BARMM should take place.

## Gender, peace and security

The legislature of the new BTA Parliament was inaugurated in September. It included 80 members, 41 appointed by the MILF and 39 by the central government. In this term (2022-2025), 16 of the 80 MPs are women, a higher number than in the previous Parliament (2019-2022). However, in the elections held in May, women accounted for only 20% of the candidates running for executive or legislative office in Mindanao's 27 provinces and 33 cities. In addition, most of these women are the wives, daughters or sisters of public office holders, or of those who are finishing their third and last term. In the previous term (2019-2022) women held 15% of Mindanao's 27 governorates and 15% of its district seats and accounted for 33% of its mayors. According to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, the Philippines remains the best-performing country in Asia in terms of gender equality, ranking 17th out of 156 countries. In December, the United Nations announced the completion of a civil reintegration training and empowerment programme for 2,000 ex-combatants of

the MILF's Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB). The programme, which was implemented over the course of two years by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, with the support of the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund, also promoted the establishment of the Peace, Security and Reconciliation Office under the Office of the Chief Minister of the BARMM to strengthen security and conflict mediation during the transition, strengthen the capacities of regional and local institutions to deal with potential conflicts during the BARMM transition period and work together with the Bangsamoro Women Commission to implement the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

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

### Summary:

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

**As in previous years, there were no formal talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) in 2022, though both the outgoing administration of Rodrigo Duterte and the incoming administration of Ferdinand Marcos continued to conduct direct local negotiations with units of the armed group known as the New People's Army (NPA). The first half of the year was marked by the Duterte government's categorical refusal to establish any type of contact with the NDF and by the presidential election in May, in which none of the candidates openly called for resuming the negotiating process with the NDF, which in recent**

decades has negotiated on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the NPA. In February, the founder of the CPP and the NPA, Jose Maria Sison, had indicated that negotiations could resume after the election if certain conditions were met, such as the repeal of the Anti-Terrorism Law (enacted in 2020), the dissolution of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and the removal of the NPA, the CPP and the NDF from Manila's list of terrorist organisations. In this regard, in late February the Anti-Terrorism Council designated 16 organisations that supposedly form part of the CPP and the NDF as terrorist organisations. After Ferdinand Marcos won the presidential election, he did not mention resuming talks with the NDF in his inaugural speech.

Along the same lines, after the first meeting of the NTF-ELCAC under the new government in July, both National Security Advisor Clarita Carlos and Presidential Advisor on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Carlito G. Gálvez said that the NTF-ELCAC had advised Ferdinand Marcos not to resume negotiations with the NDF, though they made it clear that the final decision on this issue depends on the new president. They also indicated that the government's intention is to continue with the approach of local or localised peace negotiations, since it is working and enabling the pacification of the country. To corroborate this statement, the NTF-ELCAC cited data from the Department of National Defence according to which at least 26,414 NPA combatants (which the government officially calls the Communist Terrorist Group) had surrendered or turned themselves in since May. According to official data, the number of NPA fighters is currently slightly over 2,000 and 75% of the group's 89 fronts have been neutralised. The NTF-ELCAC also recommended that the government grant amnesty to NPA combatants (but not to fighters of other Communist armed groups). According to Gálvez, this could benefit between 8,000 and 10,000 NPA combatants, although it would depend on the Senate's guidelines if it came to pass. In early 2022, Karapatan, one of the most important human rights networks in the country, declared that since the NTF-ELCAC was created, 3,908 civilians have been forced to surrender, while nearly another 4,000 people have been detained on politically motivated charges, many of them publicly labelled Communist sympathisers, NPA members, terrorists or all of the above.

Both the NDF and the CPP firmly opposed the localised peace negotiations, considering them a counter-insurgency strategy aimed at dividing the revolutionary movement, promoting psychological warfare, obtaining intelligence information and exercising greater control over people, relatives or communities with ties to the insurgent group. The CPP also claimed that this approach is a smoke screen to divert attention away from large-scale combat operations and promotes corruption among

the military, public administrations and municipalities participating in such programmes. Similarly, the NDF and CPP criticised the proposed amnesty and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes as a way to demobilise and co-opt NPA fighters. Despite their complaints, Jose Maria Sison once again declared that he was open to resuming negotiations in late June if the government would simply ratify the agreements signed by both parties since 1992, when the Hague Declaration was adopted as the negotiating framework. Throughout the year, civil society organisations staged demonstrations and actions to raise social awareness and political advocacy in support of resuming formal negotiations between the government and the NDF, arguing that it is the only format that can address the

social and political issues that originally gave rise to the NPA. The Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP), a network of five religious federations, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP), the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), the Conference of Major Superiors of the Philippines, and the Ecumenical Bishops' Forum (EBF) played a special role in these demonstrations. Jose Maria Sison died in mid-December at the age of 83, in Utrecht. Sison lived in exile in Europe after being released after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship in the mid-1980s, and in recent years he had worked as a consultant for the NDF, although both the media and the government thought that he was still having a decisive impact on formulating the political, military and negotiating strategy of the Communist movement.

***In mid-December, the founder of the CPP and the NPA, Jose Maria Sison, died at the age of 83. He had lived in exile in Europe following his release after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship in the mid-1980s***

Myanmar	
<b>Negotiating actors</b>	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups not part of the: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA
<b>Third parties</b>	China, ASEAN
<b>Relevant agreements</b>	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (October 2015)
<b>Summary:</b> Since the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of Myanmar and ethnic-based insurgent groups began in 1948, several negotiations have take place in an attempt to end the violence. Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have reached ceasefire agreements with the Burmese Government. Although definitive peace agreements were never reached, violence did decrease significantly as a result of these pacts. In 2011 there was a change in the Administration as a result of the 2010 elections and the new Government made several overtures to the armed insurgency that brought about the start of peace negotiations and the signing of agreements	

with most of the armed groups operating in different parts of the country. By mid-2012 the Government had signed a ceasefire agreement with 12 insurgent organizations. In 2013, talks began with different insurgent groups aimed at reaching a nationwide ceasefire agreement and promoting political talks. In 2015, the government and eight armed opposition groups signed a ceasefire agreement (NCA), taking the first steps towards political dialogue. In 2016, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which brought the government together with the armed opposition groups, beginning a new phase in the peace process. The conference has been convened several times in subsequent years.

**The military regime summoned armed insurgent organisations to talks that began in May. Seven of the groups that had signed the 2015 ceasefire agreement participated in these talks:** the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, New Mon State Party (NMSP), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Pa-Oh National Liberation Organisation (PNLO) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU). Three armed groups that had not signed the ceasefire agreement also participated in the talks: the United Wa State Army (UWSA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA-Mongla) and Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP). The talks took the form of bilateral meetings between the top leader of the military junta, Min Aung Hlaing, and representatives of the armed groups. They were criticised by civil society organisations and other armed groups, which claimed that they only helped to legitimise the military regime, but not to solve the armed conflict rocking the country. The armed groups insisted on their demands for self-government and the Burmese government offered to let them join the official security forces. In December, seven armed groups that signed the ceasefire agreement demanded to hold a new meeting with the chairman of the government's National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC), Lieutenant General Yar Pyae, but the government rejected any possibility of holding this meeting, arguing that the crises in the country prevented it. The armed groups hoped to hold a low-profile meeting in Chiang Mai (Thailand) involving representatives of both parties, followed by a round of meetings in the Shan or Mon states. The groups that had requested the meeting were the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), New Mon State Party, Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (KPC), Arakan Liberation Party, Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, Pa-O National Liberation Organisation (PNLO) and Lahu Democratic Union. Some analysts described most of these groups as irrelevant (with the exception of the RCSS) and said that the armed organisations' call for this meeting could be an attempt at survival. Other groups that signed the agreement, such as the KNU, indicated that they had no intention of meeting with the regime and that they would continue to battle with it.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic efforts exerted by the regional organisation ASEAN to seek a political solution to the

country's crisis continued, but no progress was made in implementing the 2021 five-point agreement to resolve the crisis: the immediate cessation of the violence in the country, dialogue between all parties, the appointment of a special envoy, ASEAN humanitarian assistance and a visit by the special envoy to Myanmar to meet with all parties. In November, ASEAN reaffirmed the five-point agreement and tasked foreign ministers with developing a concrete implementation plan while upholding a ban on members of Myanmar's military government from participating in ASEAN summits. In December, Thailand held a meeting bringing together foreign ministers from ASEAN member states Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as government representatives from Myanmar. However, representatives of the member states that are most critical of the Burmese military government, notably Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore, did not attend. No concrete progress was made at the meeting, which addressed implementation of the five-point agreement and the country's humanitarian situation.

#### Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)

<b>Negotiating actors</b>	Government of Papua New Guinea, government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville
<b>Third parties</b>	United Nations
<b>Relevant agreements</b>	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.

**In April, the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) reached an important agreement in the negotiations on the future political status of Bougainville, but relations between the two parties deteriorated during the second half of the year and the talks were even postponed.** In early April, Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape and ABG President Ishmael Toroama signed

the Era Kone Covenant on the Finalisation of the Bougainville Referendum, which stipulates that the results of the 2019 referendum and the conclusions and agreements of the consultations and negotiations that the two parties have held since then must be presented to the Parliament of Papua New Guinea before the end of 2023. Moreover, once the Parliament has voted on both governments' proposed political agreement for Bougainville, it should be implemented no earlier than 2025 and no later than 2027. Following its ratification by both governments, the agreement also stipulates that technical teams from both governments would draft the constitutional regulations necessary to move forward on the road map described in the agreement. During the signing of the agreement, Toroama thanked James Marape and the government of Papua New Guinea as a whole for their commitment to the negotiating process. Marape guaranteed that the Era Kone Covenant and the continuation of the negotiating process would be binding on both the Parliament and the government of Papua New Guinea, regardless of who won the upcoming general elections in July. In February, the Autonomous Bougainville Government announced the creation of the Bougainville Constitutional Planning Commission (BCPC), made up of 40 people from various parts of the region and representatives from different social groups, such as women, young people, veterans and members of religious denominations. The BCPC has a mandate to draw up a draft constitution for a possible independent Bougainville, which should foreseeably be ready by the first quarter of 2025. In April, the government transferred its political road map and guiding principles and international standards on constitutional design to the BCPC and called for consultative and participatory processes to begin throughout the Bougainville region to ensure that the new constitution was truly inclusive and democratic.

Despite the signing of the Era Kone Covenant, relations between the two governments deteriorated in the second half of the year to the point that the ABG called for the deferral of the meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body, the main mechanism and negotiating forum between both parties. In August, following his repeat victory in elections marred by violence and accusations of fraud, James Marape declared that the determination of Bougainville's political status affected issues of great political importance such as national sovereignty and the country's borders, so citizens of the entire country should have a say in it. After pointing out that the country's national unity was defined in the 1975 Constitution and that only a constitutional amendment could modify such unity, Marape said that until mid-2023, the government would consult with the public throughout the country on the constitutional implications of the political agreement on Bougainville, which would have to be ratified by the national

Parliament of Papua New Guinea. A few months later, a government representative declared that no political agreement could usurp the power and authority of the Constitution, and that the government's obligation was to protect the Constitution while submitting to it. He also added that a decision as important as the secession of a part of the territory should be voted on and approved by all citizens. Shortly after making these remarks, the Australian defence minister met with James Marape and said that his government would defend and support any decision the government of Papua New Guinea made on Bougainville. He also announced his intention to sign an ambitious security treaty with Papua New Guinea. The Autonomous Bougainville Government and its president, Ishmael Toroama, said that both the 2019 referendum and the implementation of one of its options (the independence of Bougainville) were constitutionally guaranteed and that there is no legal basis whatsoever for the citizens of the entire country to be consulted, since the 2001 peace agreement makes it clear that the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville are the only two parties that must discuss and agree on a proposal on the political status of Bougainville based on the results of the referendum, and that this proposal must be approved by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea. Toroama also criticised Australia's position supporting the national government and regretted that in recent times the Australian government had ignored all demands for cooperation and assistance in all activities promoted by the Bougainville government to prepare for the country's possible independence. Toroama also said that Australia wields its power and influence in the region and the announcement of a security treaty with Papua New Guinea was meant to intimidate the population of Bougainville and shape the decisions of its government. Given these circumstances, in late October the Autonomous Bougainville Government called for the postponement of the meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body, arguing that the government of Papua New Guinea was not showing the political resolve to implement the 2001 peace agreement and was moving away from the spirit and letter of the Era Kone Covenant signed in April.

### Gender, peace and security

In April, the Australian National University published an article<sup>2</sup> on women's participation in the negotiating process between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government since the 2019 referendum that verified that the delegations of both parties in the intergovernmental talks and within the Joint Supervisory Body are made up entirely of men. The article points out that the four female MPs in the Bougainville Parliament participate as "observers" in the JSB meetings, together with other diplomats and

2. Kabuni, Michael and Hansen, Ancuta, *Women's Inclusion in the Post-Referendum Consultation Process between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville*, 2022, Canberra, ACT: Dept. of Pacific Affairs, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, The Australian National University.

officials from both governments, and states that there are no female MPs in the Parliament of Papua New Guinea. The Australian National University highlights the importance of involving women more in the negotiations between both governments, yet also mentions that the Autonomous Bougainville Government has provided for and encouraged the participation of women in various forums, such as the Bougainville Leaders Consultation Forum, created to encourage certain civil society groups to present their demands and proposals to the government regarding the post-referendum negotiations; the Independence-Ready Mission Programme, a body to promote preparations for independence at internally, nationally and internationally; and the Bougainville Constitution Planning Commission (BCPC), created to draw up the constitution of a potential independent Bougainville.

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

**Although significant levels of violence continued to be reported in the southern part of the country, formal face-to-face negotiations between the government and the armed opposition group BRN resumed during the year and important progress was even made,** such as an agreement on the substantive issues of the negotiating agenda, the formation of working groups and a commitment to reduce violence during Ramadan. After almost two years in which the COVID-19 pandemic

restricted dialogue to informal, exploratory and online contacts between the parties, the third meeting of the negotiating process (formally called the Joint Working Group-Peace Dialogue Process) was held in Kuala Lumpur on 11 and 12 January in southern Thailand. The first two meetings had taken place in January and March 2020. In this third meeting, both parties discussed the three substantive issues on the negotiating agenda: resolving the conflict through political agreements; reducing violence in the three southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat; and including and involving civil society in the peace process through various consultation mechanisms. The negotiating framework had been discussed throughout 2021 through informal channels and agreed during a confidential and informal meeting between both parties held in Turkey in November 2021. During the January 2022 meeting, the parties agreed to establish mixed committees for each of the three substantive aspects of the negotiations to produce more flexible and continuous workspaces between the parties. They also agreed to define the terms of reference and the procedures to implement each of the three aforementioned topics. In response to the BRN's repeated demands to have some kind of international observation of the process, both parties agreed to the appointment of five experts to observe and accompany it, though only two of them were present in Kuala Lumpur.

Though there were many clashes between the parties in January, February and March, the fourth official meeting of the negotiating process was held on 31 March and 1 April in Kuala Lumpur and was facilitated by the government of Malaysia. A member of the BRN's military wing, Deng Awaeji, participated in the meeting for the first time, which some media outlets interpreted as an attempt to publicly convey an image of internal unity and to show Bangkok a firmer commitment to the negotiating process. Both parties formalised the substantive points of the negotiating agenda during the meeting, which was made official as the General Principles of the Peace Dialogue Process. In addition to reducing the levels of violence and promoting public consultations in the south of the country on the content of the peace process, both parties pledged to seek political solutions in accordance with the wishes of the Pattani community under the unitary state of Thailand in accordance with the Thai Constitution. Previously, the Malaysian facilitator of the negotiations, Abdul Rahim Noor, had indicated that the creation of an autonomous region in the south of the country (Patani Darussalam) had been discussed, while the chief negotiator of the BRN, Anas Abdulrahman (also known as Hipni Mareh) had declared that both parties agreed to focus the talks on issues of governance, education, the economic system and recognition of Patani Malay identity. In the fourth round of negotiations, the Thai government and the BRN also agreed on the Ramadan Peace Initiative, aimed at reducing violence between 3 April and 14 May. Both

parties also agreed that BRN members in prison could spend the Muslim Eid holiday at home and that BRN members operating in hiding could return to their homes during Ramadan without being arrested (as long as they did not carry weapons or carry out attacks). To this end, the Thai government and the BRN formed a working group to oversee the decrease in violence during that period. In general terms, the terms of the agreement to reduce violence were respected, though there were still some episodes of violence. In mid-April, Kasturi Mahkota, the leader of the PULO (one of the armed groups operating in the region in recent decades, though it has not carried out any significant armed actions since 2016), claimed responsibility for a double attack in Pattani province launched to remind the Thai government that peace negotiations in southern Thailand should include the main armed groups active in the region, and not just the BRN. Along the same lines, in late June, Makhota said that the PULO was likely to join the negotiations between the government and the BRN. In 2015, peace negotiations began between the Thai government and MARA Patani, an umbrella organisation that included the main southern insurgent groups, including the BRN. However, the negotiations ended in 2019 without any significant agreements shortly before an exclusive new negotiating process began between Bangkok and the BRN.

On 1 and 2 August, the fifth round of negotiations was held in Kuala Lumpur, in which the terms of reference of the joint working groups created in January were addressed, such as the ones on public consultation

***After almost two years in which the COVID-19 pandemic restricted the negotiations to informal and remote contacts between the government and the BRN, significant progress was made during the year***

and the reducing acts of violence. During this round, Bangkok also proposed a second initiative to reduce violence from 15 August to 30 November, though the BRN rejected it on the grounds that there was not enough time to conclude the agreement. However, on 30 October, the BRN issued a statement via Twitter repeating its commitment to the peace process and to the General Principles of the Peace Dialogue Process. The International Crisis Group research centre later noted that both negotiating panels had met in Berlin in early December and that their technical teams met in Malaysia a few days later. The BRN issued a statement explaining that both parties were working on a road map that included security issues and reducing violence, legal immunity for BRN representatives who conducted consultations with civilians and the BRN's proposal for a democratic governance system in the southern part of the country.

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

In January, the government appointed Rachada Dhnadirek as its special representative in the peace negotiations with the BRN. According to Bangkok, one of her duties will be to promote the role of women in the peace negotiations. Rachada Dhnadirek was a government spokesperson and had served as vice chair of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, an executive of the International Liberal Human Rights Committee and member of the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB).