

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Twenty peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2024, accounting for nearly 39% of the 52 worldwide. Most of them deteriorated, however.
- In January, the military junta of Mali declared the “immediate termination” of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement, which was permanently suspended.
- The dialogue between Somalia and Ethiopia to resolve the crisis stemming from the agreement between Addis Ababa and the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland to provide Ethiopia with access to the Red Sea culminated with an agreement between both countries facilitated by Türkiye in December.
- Regional diplomatic initiatives aimed at getting the DRC and Rwanda to reach an agreement failed as the M23 offensive persisted and Rwanda pursued direct military intervention.
- The different dialogue initiatives in Sudan did not make substantive progress to end the violence during the year.
- A declaration of commitments was achieved as part of the negotiations known as the Tumaini (“Hope”) Peace Initiative, in which the parties in conflict in South Sudan pledged to support efforts to end the hostilities.
- In an unusual dynamic, the UN mediation efforts in Libya were led by two women for most of the year.

This chapter analyses the peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2024. First it examines the general characteristics and trends of peace processes in the region, then it delves into the evolution of each of the cases throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the beginning of the chapter, a map is included that identifies the African countries that were the scene of negotiations during 2024.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2024

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	Government of Cameroon; four interim governments (IGs) proclaiming themselves representative of the people of Ambazonia: IG Sisiku (Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, first President of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, and Vice President Dabney Yerima); the other three IGs are derived from IG Sisiku, each created after the previous IG refused to give up power: IG Sako (Samuel Sako); IG Marianta (Iya Marianta Njomia); IG Chris Anu (ally of Leke Olivier Fongunueh's Red Dragons armed group); the Ambazonia Governing Council coalition (AGovC, led by Cho Ayaba, armed wing Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF); other political, military and social movements, and religious groups: Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT), which includes APLM/ SOCADEF, FSCW, MoRISC, SCARM, SCAPO, SCNC (North America faction) and RoAN; Southern Cameroons Stakeholder Platform (SCSP), which includes political movements, civil society, armed groups, religious groups: IG Sisiku, SCNC (except the North America faction), Consortium, Global Takumbeng, SCAWOL, SCEW, SNWOT, SCCOP, AIPC, AYC, SCYC, SCCAF, WCA, DAC, CHRDA, CHRI, Reach Out, prisoners organisations, displaced population and refugee organisations, traditional leaders and others.	Church, civil society organisations, USIP, Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN), Vatican, Canada, USA
CAR	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Séléka coalition, anti-balaka militias	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant'Egidio, ACCORD, OIC, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, China, Russia, Sudan

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Chad¹	Doha process: Transitional Military Council, 52 armed groups, including the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) and the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR) DNIS: Transitional Military Council, civil society organisations, 34 of the 52 armed groups that signed the Doha process The 18 armed groups that did not sign the Doha agreement formed the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR), including the FACT and the CCSMR	Qatar; AU and UN, among others; Community of Sant'Egidio, ECCAS
DRC	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, armed group M23, armed groups from the eastern part of the country, political opposition and civil society	AU, SADC, ICGLR, EAC, EU, UN, OIF, USA, Angola, Qatar
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Government of Eritrea and government of Ethiopia	United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, USA
Ethiopia	Government, political parties, political and social opposition, citizens	UNDP, EU, Germany, Norway, Berghof Foundation
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Federal government, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)	IGAD, Kenya, Norway and Tanzania
Ethiopia (Tigray)	Federal Government, political and military authorities of the Ethiopian region of Tigray (Tigray People's Liberation Front)	AU, USA, IGAD
Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan	Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan	AU, World Bank (WB), UAE, EU and USA
Ethiopia – Somalia (Somaliland)	Ethiopia, Somalia	Türkiye, Qatar
Libya	Government of National Unity (GNU), Government of National Stability (GNS), Presidential Council, High State Council (HSC), House of Representatives (HoR), LNA/ALAF	UN; Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Germany, France, Italy, UK, USA, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Türkiye, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia (Berlin Process)
Mali	Government, Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD) that brings together Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) –MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, civil society organisations, Mauritania, Carter Center (Independent Observer of the Peace Agreement)
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO Front)	UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)
Mozambique	Government, RENAMO, RENAMO military junta	AU, National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church, UN, Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Senegal (Casamance)	Government, factions of the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)	ECOWAS, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sub-regional Coordinator for Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Casamance (COSAPAC)
Somalia	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan and sub-clan leaders, Somaliland	Turkey, Norway
Somalia – Somaliland	Federal Government of Somalia, Republic of Somaliland	Türkiye, Norway
South Sudan²	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)(2018): Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others), two independent factions of the SPLM-IO: the Kitgwang faction led by Simon Gatwech Dual and the faction headed by General Johnson Olony. Peace talks in Rome: Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NSSSOG, previously SSOMA): National Salvation Front (NAS), South Sudan United Front (SSUF), the Real SPLM, South Sudan People's Patriotic Movement (SSPPM).	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018): IGAD Plus (Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda), AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches, Rome negotiations: Community of Sant'Egidio

1 Regarding Chad, reference is made to two initiatives: The Doha peace agreement between a segment of the Chadian insurgency and the government, and the implementation of the commitments reached in the Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue (DNIS). Furthermore, a consultation process is also underway with the segment of the insurgency that did not sign the Doha agreement, facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio.

2 This peace negotiation process includes two distinct spaces: 1) Negotiations on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018); and 2) Peace negotiations between the Government and armed groups not signatory to the R-ARCSS in Rome and Nairobi. The actors involved in each of these are specified in the "actors" column.

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Sudan³	Peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile: Government of Sudan, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions National crisis peace negotiations: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	Peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile: African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, IGAD, UNITAMS Peace negotiations between the Sudanese Army and the RSF: Trilateral Mechanism (UN, AU, and IGAD (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, and Uganda)); Jeddah Mechanism (US and Saudi Arabia), Egypt, Switzerland, Türkiye, UAE and EU
Sudan – South Sudan	Government of Sudan, Government of South Sudan, Ethnic communities of the Abyei region	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU, UNISFA, UN

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

2.1 Negotiations in 2024: regional trends

Throughout 2023, there were **20 peace processes and negotiations in Africa**, accounting for 39% of the 52 peace processes identified worldwide. This is more than in previous years (18 peace processes and negotiations in 2023, 15 in 2022, 12 in 2021, 13 in 2020 and 19 in 2019), though fewer than reported in 2018 (22). Eleven negotiations were located in the Horn of Africa (Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Ethiopia-Somalia (Somaliland), Somalia, Somalia-Somaliland, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan), three in Central Africa (Chad, the CAR and the DRC), three in West Africa (Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, and Senegal (Casamance)), two in North Africa (Libya and Morocco-Western Sahara) and the remaining one in southern Africa (Mozambique).

The increase in 2024 compared to 2023 is due to the addition of two new peace negotiations during the year, such as the national dialogue currently underway in Ethiopia and the negotiations between Ethiopia and Somalia, facilitated by Türkiye, to resolve the dispute between both countries regarding the crisis created by the agreement signed in January 2024 between Addis Ababa and the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland to provide Ethiopia with access to the Red Sea. Meanwhile, exploratory talks began in December between the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland and the leaders of the Dhulbahante clan of the self-proclaimed state of SSC Khatumo. In early 2023, there had been a serious escalation of clashes between Somaliland security forces and local SSC Khatumo militias. This violence persisted throughout 2024. In late December 2024, a meeting was held between SSC Khatumo leaders and a delegation from the Ethiopian regional state of Somali, which

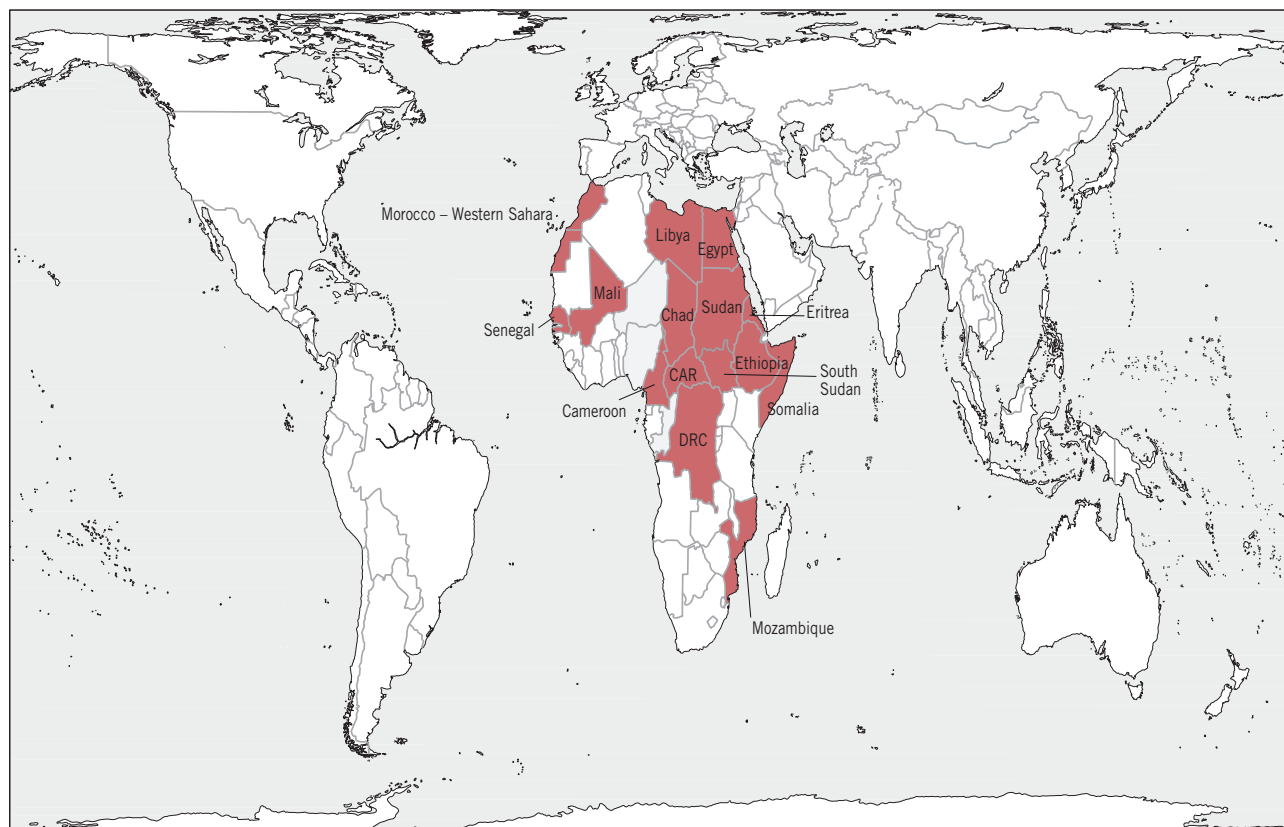
confirmed that they were working on finding a solution to the conflict between Somaliland and SSC Khatumo.

Ten of these 20 peace negotiations were linked to armed conflicts: Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), Libya, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The other ten negotiating processes took place in contexts of socio-political crisis, which in some cases had also suffered episodes of war: Chad, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Ethiopia-Somalia (Somaliland), Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, Senegal (Casamance), Somalia-Somaliland and Sudan-South Sudan. Some of the peace processes corresponded to conflicts that began in the last decade –Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest, 2018), Libya (2011) and Mali (2012)–, while others date back to the previous decade, like the CAR (2006), Sudan (2003), South Sudan (2009) and Sudan-South Sudan. Still other conflicts and crisis situations date back to the 1990s, such as the cases of the DRC and Somalia, or even further, as is the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, countries that have historically been at odds and at the same time are inevitably united by many factors, so the initiatives and peace negotiations linked to these conflicts have evolved profoundly since their origin in terms of the actors involved and the causes of the disputes.

The longest-running peace process studied in Africa, which suffers from structural paralysis, is the one between Morocco and Western Sahara, which began after the 1991 ceasefire agreement. Since the fall of Siad Barre in Somalia in 1991 and the self-proclamation of Somaliland as an independent republic that same year, though it was not recognised by the international community, different initiatives have failed to promote reconciliation between both administrations and to reintegrate Somaliland into Somalia. These cases demonstrate that the wounds left open during the

3 This negotiating process includes two different peace processes: 1) peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, to resolve the armed conflicts in both regions; and 2) peace negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to resolve the armed conflict that began in Sudan in 2023. The column of actors specifies who participates in each of them.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2024



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2024

colonial and post-colonial periods have continued to shape the present and future of these areas.

In relation to the actors participating in the negotiations, in 2024 only five negotiating processes exclusively involve governments of the respective countries and armed groups or political and military movements. These are the cases of Ethiopia, with the implementation of the agreement between the Ethiopian federal government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region, as well as between the Ethiopian federal government and the OLA armed group; Mozambique, between the government and the opposition group RENAMO; the CAR, between the government and the armed groups that did not abandon the peace process in December 2020; and Senegal, between the government and a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC). There were no notable developments in Mozambique and Senegal during the year. Meanwhile, seven of the other 20 peace processes were characterised by a more complex array of actors, including governments, armed groups and the political and social opposition. This was observed in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest),

Mali, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and the DRC. Other negotiating processes to resolve interstate disputes were led by the governments of neighbouring countries or regional organisations. This was true of the dialogue to settle the disputes between Sudan and South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia and Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as the talks between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan regarding the management of the waters of the Nile River.

States also continued to play a leading role as third parties in peace processes and negotiations in Africa. All the peace processes studied had states leading or supporting initiatives of dialogue and negotiation

All the **peace processes and negotiations studied in Africa involved third parties**, including international organisations, regional organisations, states, religious organisations and organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation. In all cases, more than one actor was a mediator and facilitator, with the UN and the AU playing prominent roles.

States also continued to play a leading role as third parties in peace processes and negotiations in Africa. All the peace processes studied had states leading or supporting initiatives of dialogue and negotiation. In 2024, notable roles were played by Türkiye and, to a lesser extent, by Qatar, in the peace negotiations between Ethiopia and Somalia. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Egypt,

the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland and other states made efforts to resolve the armed conflict between the Sudanese Army and the RSF. Organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation were also involved, particularly the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which in recent years has tried to promote negotiations in Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, the CAR and Senegal, and the Community of Sant'Egidio, which has done the same for Chad, Mozambique, the CAR and South Sudan.

As part of this proliferation of mediators, **the participation of third parties in joint formats continued to be frequent, as in previous years**, such as groups of friends and support groups. This was the case with the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia) in the negotiating process between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front; the international monitoring committee in Libya, in which the Libyan Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU and EU) participate, as well as a dozen countries; the International Support Group (which includes the UN and the EU) and the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which was involved in the CAR and promoted by the AU and the CEEAC, with support from the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad, and coexisted with other mediators in the CAR; other coordination formats included the IGAD Plus, which facilitates dialogue in South Sudan and which consists of the IGAD, the five members of the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria). The outbreak of a new armed conflict in Sudan in 2023 was detrimental to the progress achieved thanks to the dual mediation process operational thus far: the trilateral mechanism (made up of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), the AU and the IGAD) and the Quad (which includes the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and the UAE), which were unified in the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group.

Regarding **the agendas** of the negotiations, there were **cessations of hostilities and ceasefire agreements** in different contexts, like in Libya, in the Ethiopian regions of Oromia and Tigray, Senegal (Casamance), Sudan or the DRC, in relation to the armed groups in the east of the country and especially M23. **Security sector reform** was also a recurrent issue, especially the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and the reform or creation of new security forces in peace agreements with various types and names, such as mixed units, joint forces or unified national armies. These were found in most of the cases analysed, such as Chad, Ethiopia (Tigray), Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Senegal (Casamance), Sudan, South Sudan and Libya. Issues related to **governance** were also discussed in the

ongoing negotiations in various contexts, such as in Chad, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Libya. **Degrees of self-government and levels of administrative decentralisation, including independence** for some areas, were discussed in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), Mali, Senegal (Casamance), South Sudan, and Morocco-Western Sahara. Though it was particular, the negotiating process between Somalia and Somaliland would be part of this group. Finally, with regard to the **management of resources and territory**, unfinished border demarcations were another subject of negotiations in Africa, as in the disputes between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Sudan and South Sudan, the disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia and between Somalia and Somaliland, as well as was the dispute over the management of the waters of the Nile River between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan.

Peace negotiations generally deteriorated in Africa in 2024, with some lacking any dialogue at all. The only negotiating process that made progress during the year was between **Ethiopia and Somalia**, which culminated in December with an agreement between both countries facilitated by Türkiye. The agreement may help to end the dispute between both countries, which set off a deep crisis throughout the region in 2024. **Indeed, different negotiating dynamics in Africa were interrelated and developments in some processes shaped or influenced the progress made in others.**

The agreement between Ethiopia and the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland early in the year triggered a serious crisis between Ethiopia and Somalia and the impasse in the negotiations between Somalia and Somaliland damaged relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Meanwhile, Somalia stepped up its rapprochement with Egypt, which in turn is involved in an ongoing dispute with Ethiopia over the GERD. Meanwhile, the escalating armed conflict in Sudan and political uncertainty in South Sudan hampered progress in the negotiations between both countries.

Some progress was made in some negotiating processes, through significant challenges and difficulties remained. These included the national dialogue in **Ethiopia**; the negotiations between the Ethiopian government and actors in the **Tigray** region of Ethiopia and between Addis Ababa and the insurgents in the **Oromia** region; relations between the federal government of **Somalia** and the federated states; the implementation of the peace agreements in the **CAR**; the various diplomatic initiatives led by Angola in the **DRC**; the dialogue between the **Sudanese Army** and the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)**; and the negotiations in **South Sudan**. Modest headway was made in the national dialogue in **Ethiopia**, where activities and meetings related to the regional phases of the national dialogue continued, despite the difficulties and the general instability.

However, various analysts indicated that the Ethiopian national dialogue had little chance of achieving its objectives, as it lacked the support of the country's main political forces and insurgent groups. In Ethiopia's **Tigray** region, the implementation of the Pretoria peace agreement was slow and even stalled for much of the year, alongside rising tensions within the TPLF leadership, which hindered it. The AU noted some progress, though deadlock in the political dialogue, delays in the DDR process for combatants, the need for civilian protection and other issues persisted. In the negotiations between the **Ethiopian government and the Oromo insurgency**, attempts to explore dialogue between the government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the military wing of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which took place in Tanzania in 2023, were not resumed during the year, and fighting continued. The Ethiopian government also tried to weaken the OLA during the year by issuing calls for the surrender or reintegration of its fighters, attempting to exploit divisions within the OLA leadership, as seen in the December agreement between the government and the OLA splinter faction led by Sagni Negasa, who had been a member of the OLA central command. In **Somalia**, various forums for negotiations and dialogue remained blocked or were hampered by various difficulties. There was no dialogue or contact between the Somali federal government and the armed group al-Shabaab. Furthermore, relations deteriorated between the Somali federal government and some federal states, primarily the state of Jubaland, resulting in military clashes in December despite attempts at mediation. The implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (CAR), the 2021 Luanda Roadmap and the 2022 Republican Dialogue recommendations continued slowly and with great difficulty during the year and many problems were identified related to the DDR programmes implemented by the various national and international actors involved in the country. Even though the two peace initiatives underway in the CAR—the Luanda Roadmap and the 2019 Agreement—were merged into a joint peace process in 2022, their interrelationship has suffered from a clear lack of clarity. Diplomatic initiatives failed in the **DRC** despite Angolan-led AU efforts to reach an agreement between the DRC and Rwanda and to achieve a ceasefire between the DRC and the armed group M23, which is supported by Rwanda and pursued its offensive in 2024. **Sudan** was mired in a complex process that failed to end the armed conflict between the Sudanese Army (SAF) and the paramilitary group RSF. Throughout this period, international mediators, especially from the region, attempted to facilitate dialogue between the conflicting parties, but disagreements between the SAF and the RSF complicated mediation efforts. Peace talks in **South Sudan** achieved some progress but also faced multiple challenges reflecting their fragility. Efforts to overcome disagreements between the government and

Most peace negotiations in Africa suffered setbacks in 2024

the political opposition, both within the country and in exile, were hampered by simmering internal political tensions, challenges in implementing the 2018 peace agreement and uncertainty surrounding the elections scheduled for 2024, which were ultimately postponed. Finally, the Tumaini (“Hope”) Peace Initiative, hosted by Kenya, produced a declaration of commitments in which the parties to the conflict pledged to support efforts to end hostilities.

No progress was made in the remaining dialogue and negotiating processes (Cameroon, Mali, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Libya, Morocco-Western Sahara and Sudan-South Sudan), which were bogged down and stuck in deadlock. There were no new meetings in **Cameroon** in 2024, following the failure of exploratory contacts between late 2022 and early 2023. Various members of the international community attempted to draw attention to the seriousness of the situation. Daniel Capo, the former leader of the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, led by Ayaba Cho Lucas), called for a cessation of hostilities, but it had no impact on the ground. The military junta of

Mali definitively suspended the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (the Algiers Agreement) following the resumption of fighting in late 2023 that pitted the Malian Armed Forces—supported by the Russian government unit Africa Corps, formerly the Wagner Group—against the Tuareg Arab armed groups that had signed the agreement. The military junta announced the start of a new national dialogue for peace and reconciliation, though neither the separatist armed groups of the CSP or the jihadist groups and other key political actors who boycotted the dialogue were involved. Furthermore, the implementation of the peace agreement reached between **Eritrea and Ethiopia** in 2018 remained at a complete standstill and tensions between both countries mounted throughout the year. The slow implementation of the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the leaders of Ethiopia's Tigray region, mentioned above, did nothing to promote progress in the negotiating process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Likewise, no headway was made in the talks between **Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan** toward reaching an agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). On the contrary, the rise in regional tension resulting from the agreement between Ethiopia and the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland brought Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia closer together in an attempt to gain influence over Ethiopia. The exploratory dialogue held between **Somalia and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland** was called off as a result of the agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland reached on 1 January 2024. It remains to be seen whether the agreement reached in December between Ethiopia and Somalia, which invalidates this agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland to some extent, will help to resolve the

situation. Mahamat Déby won the presidential election in **Chad**, which the main opposition parties boycotted and described as fraudulent. His victory ended the political transition that had begun in 2021 following the death of his father, President Idriss Déby, and the subsequent coup d'état carried out by a military council that put him in power. Mahamat Déby broke his promise to the AU to hold elections after an 18-month transition and to not run for president. He also failed to comply with commitments he had made in the Doha Agreement signed with part of the insurgent groups in 2022. Furthermore, he did not implement the main recommendations of the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) held that same year. No contact was made with the rest of the insurgent groups that did not sign the Doha Agreement during the year, despite efforts by the Community of Sant'Egidio and Switzerland. The intensification of the armed conflict in Sudan and the political uncertainty in South Sudan hindered progress in the negotiations between **Sudan and South Sudan**, particularly those related to resolving the dispute over the Abyei region and border issues, though some progress was made in resolving inter-communal disputes. Diplomatic efforts in **Libya** failed to break the impasse and three years after the presidential and legislative elections were postponed indefinitely, the political and institutional divide persisted between the UN-recognised Government of National Unity (GNU), headed by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah, on the one hand, and the Government of National Stability (GNS), headed by Prime Minister Osama Hamad and supported by various parties, including the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA or ALAF), led by former military officer Khalifa Haftar. Overall, however, the ceasefire in place since 2020 was maintained and outbreaks of violence were sporadic. Finally, as in previous years, the negotiations between **Morocco and the Polisario Front** to address the issue of Western Sahara remained deadlocked and did not resume, although the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy, Staffan de Mistura, continued to exert diplomatic effort to try to revive them.

The peace processes in Africa continued to suffer major shortcomings in incorporating the **gender, peace and security agenda**, characterised by significant gender gaps, the absence of women's participation in negotiating teams and a lack of architecture that integrates the gender perspective into these processes. However, UN Women and other UN agencies and missions on the ground expended notable efforts to try to reverse this situation, as did civil society organisations and especially women's organisations. These groups remained active

Despite the persistent absence of women in formal negotiating processes in Africa, the UN and civil society made efforts to reverse the situation, particularly women's organisations

in promoting the women, peace, and security agenda in different contexts, demanding women's participation in negotiations and inclusive dialogue between the opposing parties, as evidenced in Cameroon, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan and elsewhere. The AU also tried to help to change this dynamic by holding a high-level ministerial seminar in Swakopmund, Namibia in March where the Swakopmund Process was adopted, a mechanism to strengthen and monitor women's participation in peace processes in Africa, especially in track one processes.⁴ Women from across Africa mobilised to support the peace initiatives promoted by Angola in the DRC and the High-Level Regional Forum of Women of the Great Lakes Region was held in Luanda in October,⁵ focused on strengthening women's participation and leadership in peace and security processes in the region. In a dynamic that is virtually non-existent elsewhere, the United Nations' mediation efforts in **Libya** were led by two senior-ranking women, Stephanie Koury and Rosemary Di Carlo, and they were expected to be joined by the new female special representative appointed in early 2025. Once again, many local, national and international organisations cited the continuation and even rise in sexual violence in various conflict areas, especially in the eastern DRC and Somalia, and indicated the gender-differentiated impacts of humanitarian consequences and food insecurity in most contexts.

2.2. Case study analysis

Great Lakes and Central Africa

CAR	
Negotiating actors	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias
Third parties	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue; Russia, Sudan
Relevant agreements	Republican pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the CAR (2015), Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities (June 2017), Khartoum Political Accord for Peace and Reconciliation (Bangui, 6 February 2019), Joint Roadmap for Peace in the CAR (Luanda, September 2021)

4 UA, *Conclusions: Ministerial High-Level Seminar of the Peace and Security Council Commemorating 20 Years of the PSC by Taking Stock of Women's Participation and Leadership in Peace Processes in Africa: 23 March 2024 - Swakopmund, Namibia*, 23 March 2024.

5 UA, *High-Level Regional Forum of Women of the Great Lakes Region*, 18-19 October 2024.

Summary:

Since gaining independence in 1960, the situation in the Central African Republic has been characterized by ongoing political instability, leading to numerous coups d'état and military dictatorships. After the 2005 elections won by François Bozizé, which consolidated the coup d'état perpetrated previously by the latter, several insurgency groups emerged in the north of the country, which historically has been marginalized and is of Muslim majority. In December 2012 these groups forced negotiations to take place. In January 2013, in Libreville, François Bozizé's Government and the coalition of armed groups, called Séléka, agreed to a transition Government, but Séléka decided to break the agreement and took power, overthrowing Bozizé. Nevertheless, self-defence groups ("anti-balaka"), sectors in the Army and supporters of Bozizé rebelled against the Séléka Government, creating a climate of chaos and generalized impunity. In December 2014 a new offensive brought an end to the Séléka Government and a transition Government led by Catherine Samba-Panza was instated. Regional leaders, headed by the Congolese Denis Sassou-Nguesso facilitated dialogue initiatives in parallel to the configuration of a national dialogue process, which was completed in May 2015. Some of the agreements reached were implemented, such as the holding of the elections to end the transition phase. However, the elections did not lead to an inclusive peace process, which fuelled ongoing insecurity and violence. The various regional initiatives came together in a negotiating framework called the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation launched in late 2016 (mediated by the AU and ECCAS and supported by the UN), which established the Libreville Roadmap in July 2017 and that it contributed to reaching the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of February 2019, in the implementation phase, despite the difficulties. However, in December 2020, representatives of six of the country's most powerful armed groups, including the main groups that signed the 2019 peace agreement (the anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, the 3R, a faction of the FPRC, the MPC and the UPC), denounced its breach by the government, withdrew from the process and created the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), after which hostilities resumed throughout the country. In 2021, Angola promoted a process that culminated in the signing of the Joint Roadmap for Peace in the CAR (Luanda Roadmap), which involved the immediate cessation of hostilities and the start of negotiations between the Central African government and the CPC. The talks were held with some of the armed groups that are members of the CPC. Since then, there were two separate peace processes (the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the Luanda Roadmap), but they were combined in 2023. A government-backed national dialogue called the Republican Dialogue was held in March 2022. It was not joined by the CPC coalition and the main actors of the political opposition in the implementation phase.

The implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (hereinafter, the 2019 Agreement), of the 2021 Luanda Roadmap⁶ and of the recommendations of the 2022 Republican Dialogue dragged on and

were plagued by problems throughout the year, whilst many obstacles bogged down the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes carried out by the various national and international actors involved in the country. The government also dissolved the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission created in 2019 as part of that year's agreement, allegedly over issues related to its management and financing. Although the two peace initiatives under way in the country since 2022 (the Luanda Roadmap, which aims to bring together armed groups of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) around the negotiating table, and the 2019 Agreement) have been merged into a joint peace process, civil society leaders have consistently reported a lack of clarity in the relationship between them. According to confidential UN sources, one reason for the vagueness could be due to the fact that whilst the 2019 Agreement is a readily available public document, the same is not true of the Luanda Roadmap for Peace, which contains some technical timetables that have been periodically updated. According to the August 2024 report of the UN independent expert on the situation of human rights in the country, some tentative progress was made, particularly in the initiatives of the Implementation Unit of the National Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation and Reintegration Programme, which led to the dissolution of 9 of the 14 armed groups that signed the 2019 Agreement, the disarmament and demobilisation of 4,884 ex-combatants, including 280 women, of which 1,112 were integrated into the defence and security forces, and the reintegration of 3,081 ex-combatants.

Meanwhile, clashes in the country increased, according to the UN. MINUSCA relaunched the initiative to support meetings of the implementation committees of the 2019 Agreement and awareness-raising activities in the prefectures to explain the Luanda Roadmap for Peace. However, representatives of the armed groups that signed the 2019 Agreement, such as the 3R group, the UPC and the FPRC, have been largely absent from the meetings of the implementation committees in the prefectures. These groups remain part of the CPC and are still openly hostile to the government. Since April 2023, several armed groups that signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation have declared their official dissolution or transformed into political parties and some have done so after splitting internally. These former armed groups include Renewed Séléka for Peace and Justice, the Belanga faction of Revolution and Justice, the FPRC branch led by Abdoulaye Hissène, the FDPC led by Jean Rock Sobi, whose original leader, Martin Koutamadji, also

⁶ The Luanda Joint Roadmap for Peace of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), signed in September 2021, was intended to revive the peace process and accelerate the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. However, its implementation has led to the launch of two processes. See UN Security Council, *Carta de fecha 5 de junio de 2024 dirigida a la Presidencia del Consejo de Seguridad por el Grupo de Expertos sobre la República Centroafricana*, United Nations, S/2024/444, 10 June 2024; and Embassy of the Republic of Angola in Spain, *La Diplomacia angolëña devuelve la paz a la RCA*, 18 October 2021.

known as Abdoulaye Miskine, was arrested in Chad in November 2019 and has since been in custody in N'Djamena, and the MPC led by Hassan Adramane.⁷ There were reports questioning the role of Chad and its intelligence agency in managing the political and military leaders hosted in the country under the Luanda Roadmap, as some were detained and not provided with the agreed payments.⁸ The splintering of some groups meant that while some factions expressed renewed commitment to the 2019 Agreement, others remained on the sidelines.⁹ The division between groups and the restructuring of the insurgency were accompanied by an escalation of fighting by the Central African Armed forces with the support of mercenaries from Africa Corps (a successor to the Wagner Group) during the year. In August, Ali Darassa, the leader of the armed group UPC, a member of the CPC coalition, announced a ceasefire and his willingness to enter into peace negotiations with the government. This was described as betrayal by the leader of the CPC, former President François Bozizé, who lives in exile in Guinea-Bissau, and caused divisions within the coalition. Meanwhile, a new faction, CPC-F, split off from the CPC, which, combined with the UPC's announcement, put the CPC in a delicate situation. However, some questioned whether Ali Darassa's announcement was credible.

Meanwhile, the armed groups continued to restructure. According to local sources, a new alliance called the Military Coalition for the Salvation and Recovery of the People (CMSPR) was formed in May, led by former Central African Army Colonel Armel Sayo, whose origins allowed him to recruit former members of both the Séléka and anti-balaka movements.¹⁰ In November, the UN Security Council approved the extension of MINUSCA's mandate for another year, given the seriousness of the situation and amidst competition between Russia, the US and France to strengthen their alliance with the Central African authorities. Russia's intention was made clear, among other things, by its opening of a military base in Berengo in February. This base could house up to 10,000 Russian soldiers, increasing its capacity to act regionally, with the appointment of Russian national Dmitri Podolsky as the new security advisor to President Touadéra in late September. Moreover, the country's new law on foreign agents, similar to the Russian law of 2012, is aimed at

increasing state control over organisations that receive international financial support. Many civil society actors describe the law as repressive. France resumed its financial aid to the CAR in November, three years after having suspended it following the demonstrations and propaganda instigated against it by Russia. This propaganda also intensified against the US. The US has also increased its support to the country, through the US private security company Bancroft. Finally, in October, the CAR and Chad agreed to create a joint force to increase security along their 1,200-km shared border. The DDR programme ran into significant problems in identifying, registering and monitoring recovered weapons. Many UN officials reported the problem of monitoring and the possible recirculation of these weapons to armed factions, which perpetuates ongoing conflicts, according to the Group of Experts.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process showed no evidence of the involvement of female negotiators or of the integration of the gender perspective. However, attempts were made to promote the participation of women in local reconciliation initiatives. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), of which the country is a beneficiary, financed a project to support inclusive social and community dialogue in the country. Implemented by UNDP and UN Women between October 2021 and February 2024, this initiative focused on the northwestern and southeastern regions of the country and on boosting women's participation in local governance. The UN noted that local peace and reconciliation committees, as well as local and religious authorities, helped to address community conflicts related to transhumance, land issues and chieftaincy, resolving different conflicts with the support of UNDP, UN Women and funding from the PBF. Since 2021, the work of local peace and reconciliation committees, with women involved, has helped to reduce community violence in the northwestern and southeastern regions by 40%, according to the UN. Furthermore, civil society actors have established 11 "peace circles" with the support of MINUSCA. These "peace circles" are forums for dialogue to support the work of female leaders in community reconciliation.¹

7 On 3 November 2023, MPC leader Mahamat Al-Khatim announced that his movement was leaving the CPC. He had reportedly reached an agreement with the CAR government to return to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. However, he has so far remained in Chad, concerned that he would be arrested if he returned to the CAR. See RFI, "Centrafrique: le groupe armé MPC annonce quitter la coalition rebelle CPC", 3 November 2023, available at: [He was arrested in N'Djamena on 11 April 2024.](#)

8 UN Security Council, *Carta de fecha 5 de junio de 2024 dirigida a la Presidencia del Consejo de Seguridad por el Grupo de Expertos sobre la República Centroafricana*, United Nations, S/2024/444, 10 June 2024.

9 Ibid.

10 Corbeau News, *Centrafrique : création d'une nouvelle coalition des groupes armés... la CMSPR*, 19 November 2024.

11 UN Security Council, *República Centroafricana. Informe del Secretario General*, UN, S/2024/730 11 October 2024.

Chad	
Negotiating actors	Doha process: Transitional Military Council, 52 armed groups, including the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) and the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR) DNIS: Transitional Military Council, civil society organisations, 34 of the 52 armed groups that signed the Doha process The 18 armed groups that did not sign the Doha agreement formed the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR), including the FACT and the CCSMR
Third parties	Qatar; AU and UN, among others; Community of Sant'Egidio, ECCAS
Relevant agreements	Doha Peace Agreement and the Participation of the Politico-Military Movements in the Chadian National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (2022), National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (2022)

Summary:

Frequently classified as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, Chad has faced a wide, complex and interrelated range of challenges and sources of fragility and instability in recent decades, and has also been the scene of attempts at dialogue and political negotiation. President Idriss Déby died in 2021 and a military junta suspended the Constitution and replaced it with a transition charter and the promise of free elections in 18 months following the holding of a national dialogue and appointed his son, Mahamat Déby, to be the new president during the transition stage. The Transitional Military Council (CMT) promised to promote a national dialogue in December 2021, in which the different insurgent groups active in the country were intended to participate. In 2022, a peace process was held in Doha (Qatar) under Qatari mediation and an agreement was reached on 7 August with 34 of the 52 insurgent groups, which finally gave way to the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) between 20 August and 8 October. Different actors participated in the DNIS, including the groups that signed the Doha agreement. The Doha peace process and the DNIS ended with the CMT's mandate being extended for another 24 months under the image of a new government, described as of one national unity, and the continued presidency of Mahamat Déby, eligible to run in the 2024 election, ignoring the promises made to the AU, which has meant perpetuating the constitutional break begun in April 2021. Who may run in the 2024 election, which has only prolonged the break from the Chadian Constitution that began in April 2021. At the end of the transition (which had been extended by the DNIS), historic demonstrations in October 2022 were heavily repressed, causing over one hundred fatalities. The crackdown demonstrated the authoritarian drift of the government and the silencing of the political and social opposition. In December 2023, a constitutional referendum was held that allowed Déby to run in the 2024 election, putting an end to the political transition that began in 2021.

Elections were held in 2024, marking the end of the political transition that began in April 2021

following the death of President Idriss Déby and the subsequent coup d'état by a military council that installed his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, as president. After the coup d'état, Mahamat Déby had promised the AU that he would hold elections after an 18-month transition and that he would not run, although the Doha Agreement for Peace and the Participation of Political-Military Movements in the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue signed in August 2022 and the subsequent National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) in 2022 led to the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council (CMT) for a further 24 months and allowed Mahamat Déby to run in the elections of May 2024. Various analysts also noted that Mahamat Déby had failed to set up a committee to monitor the Doha Agreement and had also failed to implement the recommendations of the DNIS held that same year. The implementation of the Doha Agreement continued to pose problems of inclusion and insufficient financial resources, as noted in a report by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This report was made public during a PBF delegation visit to the country in October 2024. Chad has been a beneficiary of the PBF's reconstruction and consolidation instrument in recent years and in 2023 it was the main recipient of PBF resources globally, demonstrating the international community's support for the transition in the country, despite its shortcomings.¹² Chad sought to prolong this support, and also to renew its eligibility for the World Bank's Prevention and Resilience Allocation.

Several armed groups that did not sign the Doha Agreement expressed interest in disarmament, whilst those who did sign the agreement were frustrated by the slow progress of its implementation of DDR and other provisions. The Chadian government's failure to fund the DDR programme on which it had agreed with the political and military groups in Doha could lead to tensions and further instability, according to some analysts. Several hundred fighters affiliated with Libya-based Chadian rebel groups that signed and did not sign the peace agreement reportedly returned from Libya in 2024 to join disarmament efforts. Meanwhile, several Chadian armed groups active in Libya, Sudan and the CAR, aligned with the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR) coalition, including FACT and CCSMR, continue to pose latent threats despite the efforts exerted by the Community of Sant'Egidio and Switzerland to promote a political agreement, though there was no evidence of progress or contacts during the year.

The presidential election was held on 6 May 2024 and legislative, regional and municipal elections were held on 29 December for the first time in a decade. However, both elections were questioned and described as fraudulent by local and international organisations and

12 Nations Unies Tchad, "Partner visit to Chad", *United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund*, October 2024.

boycotted by the main opposition parties.¹³ Previously, a constitutional referendum had been held in December 2023 that allowed President Déby to run for president. Déby won the presidential election in May with 61% of the vote. Succès Masra, the leader of the opposition party Les Transformateurs, came in second place with 18.5% of the vote. Masra had returned to Chad in January 2024 following an agreement with Déby and was appointed prime minister in what many saw as an attempt by Déby to win the support of opposition members, which also undermined Masra's credibility. According to this agreement, Déby also pardoned hundreds of people who took part in the demonstrations of 20 October 2022. Pardons were also given to the security forces responsible for an excessive use of force during the demonstrations in which at least 128 people were killed, 518 were injured and around a thousand were arrested. Pressure on the opposition had been mounting in recent months and reached a climax on 28 February 2024 with the killing of opposition figure Yaya Dillo, the leader of the Socialist Party Without Borders and (PSF) and a cousin of Mahamat Déby. The government claimed that Dillo died whilst resisting arrest, but the opposition said that he was extrajudicially killed in a military operation. Saleh Déby, the uncle of the transitional president and brother of the late president, was arrested during the operation. Earlier in February, he had left the ruling party, the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), to join Yaya Dillo's PSF.¹⁴ His defection, along with expressions of dissent from other members of the Zaghawa clan, the ethnic group to which the Déby family belongs, raised tensions within the ruling elite. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), Dillo's death was a glaring example of the growing discord within the Zaghawa clan.¹⁵ Though this clan makes up just over 5% of the Chadian population, it has controlled the country for 30 years with the support of other elites from the north that belong to the Gorane and Arab ethnic groups. The Constitutional Court disqualified 10 candidates, including two prominent opposition figures, Nassour Ibrahim Neguy Coursami and Rakhis Ahmat Saleh, for alleged irregularities in their candidacies.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding women's participation and the inclusion of a gender perspective, only one woman representative was involved in the entire Doha process (2022), according to the United Nations, and although women's and youth organisations participated in the DNIS, their proposals did not appear in its conclusions. Despite attempts to achieve a 30% female quota in all designated positions, a 2024 study on its implementation cited several constraints that continue to undermine women's electoral success. These constraints, whether structural,

financial or cultural, significantly reduced the prospects for women's representation in the National Assembly.¹⁶

DRC	
Negotiating actors	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, armed group M23, armed groups from the eastern part of the country, political opposition and civil society
Third parties	AU, SADC, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EAC, EU, UN, OIF, USA, Angola, Qatar
Relevant agreements	Sun City Agreement, Pretoria Agreement and Luanda Agreement (2002); Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC (2002); Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (2013), Comprehensive, Inclusive Peace Accord in the DRC (2016), Luanda Agreement (2022)

Summary:

The demands for democratization in the nineties led to a succession of rebellions that culminated with the coup d'état carried out by Laurent Desiré Kabila between 1996 and 1997 against Mobutu Sese Seko. Later, what is sometimes called the First African World War (1998-2003), broke out what is sometimes called the First African World War (1998-2003) broke out because of the participation of a dozen countries in the region and numerous armed groups. The signing of a ceasefire in 1999, and of several peace agreements between 2002 and 2003, led to the withdrawal of foreign troops, the setting up of a transitional government through an agreement of distribution of political power. However, did not mean the end of violence in this country, due to the presence of dozens of factions of non-demobilised groups and the role of Rwanda, which views the FDLR as a threat, as it was originally created by members of the Hutu community who fled Rwanda after participating in the genocide against the Tutsi community and against members of the Rwandan Hutu community in 1994. Based in the DRC, it is a group with which Rwanda does not intend to engage in dialogue. The breach of the 2009 peace accords between the government and the armed group CNDP led to the 2012 desertion of soldiers of the former armed group CNDP, forming part of the Congolese army, citing threats against the FDLR and the marginalisation of their community and organised a new rebellion called the 23 March Movement (M23), promoted by Rwanda in 2012, formed by members of the Tutsi community. In December 2013, the rebellion was defeated and some of its members fled to Rwanda and Uganda. Nevertheless, the violent and unstable atmosphere persisted and the M23 resumed its attacks in late 2021. The DRC has repeatedly accused Rwanda of supporting the M23, whilst Rwanda has singled out the DRC for continuing its support for the FDLR. Two negotiating processes were activated in 2022: one between the Congolese government and armed groups in eastern DRC, including the M23, known as the Nairobi process; and another between the governments of the DRC and Rwanda, known as the Luanda process, which is mediated by Angola on behalf of the AU. However, fighting persisted despite regional dialogue initiatives and the establishment of regional military operations by the EAC and SADC, whilst attempts to establish a ceasefire failed.

13 See chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

14 RFI, "Tchad: pourquoi Saleh Déby Itno, oncle du président de la transition, rallie l'opposant Yaya Dillo?", RFI, 12 February 2024.

15 International Crisis Group, *Chad: Averting the Risk of Post-transition Instability*, 3 May 2024.

16 EISA, *Is the Chadian Parliament Open to Women?*, EISA, 4 November 2024.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was marked by intensified fighting in 2024 and little progress was made in diplomatic negotiations.

Diplomatic initiatives failed in this regard, despite the Angolan-led efforts of the AU to reach an agreement between the DRC and Rwanda and to achieve a ceasefire between the DRC and the armed group M23, which is supported by Rwanda. The political atmosphere in the country became increasingly tense due to proposals for constitutional reforms rejected by the political opposition. The M23 offensive was directly supported by Rwanda. The UN and the rest of the international community drew attention to this support and even to the direct participation of Rwandan troops in the conflict, though these allegations did not lead to credible pressure to change the situation.

In December 2023, the EAC peacekeeping mission was finally withdrawn at the request of the Congolese government due to its ineffectiveness and discredit. Meanwhile, an offensive military operation was deployed by the SADC regional organisation, SAMIDRC, which had been agreed upon in May 2023. This mission provided military support to the FARDC during 2024 to halt the advances of the armed group M23, although the latter continued to take control of more areas. The SAMIDRC mission was unable¹⁷ to stop the actions of the M23 and Rwanda.

The beginning of 2024 was marked by the formation of the new Congolese government led by Félix Tshisekedi after the elections held in December 2023 amidst a climate of political violence, which shut down possible diplomatic initiatives until it took office. Angolan President Joao Lourenço attempted to relaunch peace negotiations with the support of the United States during the first part of 2024. In February, Tshisekedi met with Lourenço in Luanda. Later, in March, Rwandan President Paul Kagame confirmed his willingness to meet with his Congolese counterpart, Félix Tshisekedi, at Lourenço's request, following a meeting between the Angolan president and his Rwandan counterpart in Luanda. However, this meeting did not take shape in the months that followed, given the escalation of M23 actions and Rwanda's support for the armed group, confirmed by the UN in June.

On 5 July, a two-week humanitarian truce entered into force¹⁸ between the Congolese Armed Forces and the

armed group M23, promoted by the US and Angola. It was extended until 3 August. Sporadic clashes occurred during the truce. On 30 July, Lourenço succeeded in pushing through a new ceasefire agreement between the DRC and Rwanda, which came into effect on 4 August. Signed by the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the DRC and sponsored by the Angolan president, the agreement demonstrated Rwanda's involvement in the hostilities, as it presented itself as a co-belligerent. It included an ad hoc verification mechanism to monitor implementation, but this agreement was systematically violated by the M23, especially starting in October, which revealed the fragility of the situation and the lack of political will to honour the commitments made.¹⁹ The group did not consider itself bound to the agreement, as the Luanda process did not include the M23, while the Nairobi process, which did include the M23, remained at a standstill.²⁰

Diplomatic initiatives failed despite Angolan-led AU efforts to reach an agreement between the DRC and Rwanda and to broker a ceasefire between the DRC and the Rwanda-backed armed group M23

The August agreement was followed by several unsuccessful rounds of negotiations between the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the DRC that attempted to address the root causes of the conflict. The FDLR neutralisation plan presented by Kinshasa was reviewed at meetings held on 7 and 8 August, focusing on the need to strengthen the ad hoc verification mechanism by integrating experts from both countries and Angola. The possibility of involving other actors to ensure the ceasefire in force since 4 August was also discussed. An agreement was finally reached following a meeting

between the heads of the intelligence services of both countries in Rubavu, Rwanda, on 29 and 30 August.²¹ The Rubavu agreement centred on three main points: neutralising the FDLR, withdrawing the Rwandan Armed Forces from the DRC and the possibility of involving Rwandan forces in a military operation against the FDLR.²² The last point relates to an ad hoc mechanism set up in the 2022 process to verify the implementation of the agreement. It would include three Rwandan, three Congolese and 18 Angolan military officers and would be led by Angola.²³ In the meantime, the M23 has made demands that go beyond the issue of dismantling the FDLR that Rwanda is demanding, such as the return of refugees, citizenship, access to land, control of natural resources and, above all, the lack of government authority in the eastern DRC. Angolan mediators proposed direct negotiations between the DRC government and the M23, which Kinshasa rejected.

17 Schwikowski, Martina, "Congo: Can SADC troops defeat M23 rebels?", *DW*, 13 May 2024.

18 US Department of State, "Welcoming the Humanitarian Truce in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo", *US Embassy to Angola*, 4 July 2024.

19 Ngutjinazo, Okeri, "Congo-Rwanda cease-fire: A lasting peace effort?", *DW*, 1 August 2024.

20 See the summary on the DRC in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2023. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2024.

21 Tilounine, Joan, "War in the east: Congolese and Rwandan intelligence services close to finalising agreement", *Africa Intelligence*, 3 September 2024.

22 Hoinathy, Remadji, "Eastern DRC peace processes miss the mark", *ISS*, 8 February 2023.

23 Asanzi, Philippe, "The revived Luanda Process – inching towards peace in east DRC?", *ISS*, 21 October 2024.

The chronological order of the agreement's implementation was the main stumbling block, with Tshisekedi and Kagame refusing to budge on key issues. The draft agreement reached in August was rejected by the DRC, which called for Rwanda to withdraw during the dismantling of the FDLR. On 14 September, the parties met again in Luanda to discuss progress in the implementation of the agreement reached on 4 August, mainly concerning the neutralisation of the FDLR and the withdrawal of troops from Rwanda.²⁴ Later, experts from the DRC and Rwanda met in Luanda on 31 October to develop a harmonised plan to dismantle the FDLR and get Rwanda to withdraw. The foreign ministers of both countries approved the framework proposal on 25 November. Called a concept of operations, it was hailed as a major breakthrough.

However, the AU's attempts to promote an agreement between the DRC and Rwanda suffered a significant setback in December ahead of a meeting between President Félix Tshisekedi and his Rwandan counterpart Paul Kagame, scheduled for 15 December. This meeting was supposed to address the partial agreements reached thus far.²⁵ At the last minute, however, Rwanda demanded that Kinshasa hold talks with the M23 as a precondition, so the meeting was called off. This would have been their first head-to-head meeting in 18 months. Angolan President Joao Lourenço met with Tshisekedi without Kagame. The president of Angola hoped to sign an interim agreement that would address each leader's main grievances in the dispute.²⁶ Accordingly, the DRC should primarily dismantle the FDLR, which has been active in the eastern part of the country for over 25 years, and Rwanda should withdraw its forces, which have been supporting M23 rebels in the same area.

Gender, peace and security

Various initiatives were attempted to promote women's participation in the various regional peace initiatives. In March 2024, the AU Peace and Security Council held a high-level ministerial seminar in Swakopmund, Namibia, which adopted the Swakopmund process, a mechanism to strengthen and monitor women's participation in peace processes in Africa, especially

in track one processes.²⁷ Following MONUSCO's recommendations, in 2024 the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security held consultations with the leaders of Angola, Burundi, Kenya and Rwanda on women's participation in the DRC and the region and called for greater attention to be paid to the conflict. In April, Judith Suminwa Tuluka was appointed as the new prime minister in what Tshisekedi sought to defend as a change in policy in favour of gender equality in the country. However, it remains to be seen whether her appointment will help to integrate the gender perspective into the ongoing negotiations, particularly with the participation of women and young people, and whether it will have a real impact on the gender dimension of the conflict in the country, according to various analysts.

Other steps included those taken by the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region (OSESGL). In partnership with the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, the OSESGL convened a consultative meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in April, stressing the importance of including women in the Luanda process as an opportunity to engage women as peacebuilders and the need for a regional women's coalition in support of ongoing regional peace processes. In August, Burundi, which holds the presidency of the AU Peace and Security Council, convened a forum with women from the Great Lakes region. The forum discussed the recent visit of women from the DRC to Luanda on 16 July 2024 and welcomed Angola's commitment to promote the inclusion of women from the Great Lakes region in pursuit of lasting peace. One prominent recommendation was for the appointment of a Goodwill Ambassador to defend the aspirations of women in this region. Women from all over Africa mobilised to support the peace initiatives promoted by Angola. In this regard, the High-Level Regional Forum of Women of the Great Lakes Region²⁸ was held in Luanda on 18 and 19 October 2024. Focused on strengthening women's participation and leadership in peace and security processes in the Great Lakes, it was organised by the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security in cooperation with the African Women Leaders Network, FemWise Africa and the AU Peace and Security Programme.

24 Actualité.co, "RDC-Rwanda: une nouvelle réunion autour du médiateur angolais ce 14 septembre pour faire avancer le plan de neutralisation des FDLR et du retrait des RDF", 11 September 2024.

25 AFP, "DR Congo, Rwanda peace talks canceled", VOA, 15 December 2024.

26 Fabricius, Peter, "Tshisekedi, Kagame to meet on crucial eastern DRC peace deal", ISS, 13 December 2024.

27 UA, *Conclusions: Ministerial High-Level Seminar of the Peace and Security Council commemorating 20 years of the PSC by taking stock of Women's Participation and Leadership in Peace Processes in Africa: 23 March 2024 - Swakopmund, Namibia*, 23 March 2024.

28 UA, *High-Level Regional Forum of Women of the Great Lakes Region*, 18-19 October 2024.

South Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018): Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others), two independent factions of the SPLM-IO: the Kitwang faction led by Simon Gatwech Dual and the faction headed by General Johnson Olony. Peace talks in Rome: Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NSSSOG, previously SSOMA composed of:): National Salvation Front (NAS), South Sudan United Front (SSUF), the Real SPLM, South Sudan People's Patriotic Movement (SSPPM).
Third parties	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018): IGAD Plus (Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda), AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN, South Sudan Council of Churches, Rome negotiations: Community of Sant'Egidio
Relevant agreements	Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018)
Summary: <p>After years of armed conflict between the Central Government of Sudan and the south of the country, led by the SPLM/A guerrilla, South Sudan became an independent State in 2011, after holding the referendum that was planned in the 2005 peace agreement (Comprehensive Peace Agreement –CPA–) facilitated by the mediation of the IGAD. The Peace between Sudan and South Sudan and achieving independence was not achieved, however, were not enough to end the conflict and violence. South Sudan has remained immersed in a series of internal conflicts promoted by disputes to control the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neopatrimonial practices and corruption in the Government, 42 Peace Talks in Focus 2021 all of which has impeded stability and the consolidation of peace. As part of the peace negotiations promoted in April 2013, the President offered an amnesty for six commanders of the rebel groups, but this was not successful initially. However, at a later date, in December 2013, tensions broke out among the factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to the former Vice-President Riek Machar, leader of the SPLM/A-inOpposition (SPLA-IO), which gave way to a new escalation of violence in several of the country's regions. In January 2014, with the mediation of the IGAD, the Government and the SPLAIO launched peace conversations in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Diplomatic efforts were found against many obstacles to achieve effective ceasefire agreements, after signing nine different commitments to the cessation of hostilities and transitory measures between December 2013 and August 2015, which were systematically violated and have rendered it impossible to lay the foundations for a political solution to the conflict. On 17 August 2015, after strong international pressure and threats of blockades and</p>	

economic sanctions, the parties signed a peace agreement promoted by the IGAD Plus, although there is still much uncertainty surrounding its implementation, as well as other later agreements. Subsequently, new agreements were reached between the parties, such as the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017) and the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R -ARCSS) (2018), which open new paths to try to end the violence. Since 2019, the government has held peace talks in Rome (between 2018 and 2024) and later in Nairobi.

During 2024, peace talks in South Sudan were marked by some progress and several different challenges that reflect the fragility of the peace process in the country. Efforts to overcome disagreements between the South Sudanese government and the political opposition, both in the country and in exile, were shaped by ongoing internal political tensions, the challenges of implementing the 2018 peace agreement and uncertainty about the general elections scheduled for December 2024, which were ultimately postponed.

In connection with the **peace talks in Nairobi**, in late December 2023, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir asked the Kenyan government to take on the role of mediator in the peace talks between the South Sudanese government and the armed groups that did not sign the 2018 peace agreement. Organised in the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA), these groups include the National Democratic Movement-Patriotic Front (NDM-PF), led by Emmanuel Ajawin; the National Salvation Front (NAS) led by Thomas Cirillo; the South Sudan United Front (SS-UF), led by Paul Malong; and the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement (R-SPLM), led by Pagan Amum Okiech. All these groups refused to sign the revitalised peace agreement in 2018 (R-ARCSS) under the umbrella of the SPLA-IO led by Riek Machar, which had been mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. Kiir's request was inspired by the lack of progress after four years of negotiations in Rome. In January, South Sudan sent a delegation to Kenya, which met with President William Ruto. Ruto later met with representatives of the Community of Sant'Egidio during the Italy-Africa Summit in Rome. Ruto agreed to take over the mediation effort and transfer the process to Nairobi, which is already a guarantor of the R-ARCSS, adding that he would work closely with the former mediators.

Once the negotiations began in Kenya, they were marked by intermittent progress, deep disagreements and tensions between the parties involved. Known as the Tumaini ("Hope") Peace Initiative, the negotiations began their first round on 9 May and brought together the South Sudanese government and some SSOMA groups, including the South Sudan United Front, the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the South Sudan People's Movement/Army (SSPM/A). The

round concluded with the signing of a **Declaration of Commitments** in Nairobi on 16 May in which the parties promised to support efforts to end the hostilities and to move forward on key issues such as security reform, the judicial system and the drafting of a new constitution. The signing ceremony, held in Nairobi, was attended by senior South Sudanese government officials, diplomats, opposition groups, civil society leaders and bilateral partners. Pagan Amum Okiech, the spokesman for the opposition Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement (R-SPLM), said that the Declaration of Commitments to the Tumaini Initiative marked the beginning of a new era of lasting peace, unity and respect for political pluralism. However, other members of the SSOMA rejected Kenya's mediation and did not attend the negotiations in Nairobi, including the National Salvation Front (NAS), led by General Thomas Cirillo; the National Democratic Movement-Patriotic Front (NDM-PF), led by Emmanuel Ajawin; and the Kitgwang faction of the SPLA-IO, led by General Simon Gatwech Dual.

A Declaration of Commitments to the Tumaini ("Hope") Peace Initiative was reached, in which the parties pledged to support efforts to end the hostilities

In mid-June, the Kenyan mediation team presented a draft peace agreement to the parties involved, which included security, financial and judicial reforms, as well as provisions to complete the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement. However, Vice President Riek Machar, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), rejected the draft agreement and withdrew from the peace process, arguing that it undermined the 2018 peace agreement. Machar's withdrawal led to a temporary halt in the talks and exacerbated tensions between the main South Sudanese political actors. Although Kiir's government continued to attend meetings in Nairobi, opposition groups were reluctant to return to the negotiating table due to the lack of substantial progress. The negotiations were resumed in late November after Ruto visited Juba to try to give them a boost, urging the parties to sign an agreement within two weeks. However, the government and opposition delegations failed to reach a consensus and the talks stalled again in mid-December due to disagreements. Despite the impasse, Kenya's mediation efforts continued with the hope of resuming the negotiations in January 2025.

Alongside the peace negotiations in Nairobi, tensions in South Sudan simmered during the year in connection with the **presidential election** scheduled for December 2024, with several discussions focused on determining how and when it would be held and on ironing out requirements to ensure its legitimacy. In April, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa mediated talks between Kiir and Machar to reach agreement on the

election. The two parties disagreed about the country's ability to guarantee it would be free and fair. However, as the year progressed, criticism increased about the lack of conditions for a free and fair election. International partners were disappointed in the South Sudanese leaders' lack of political desire to guarantee a transparent election. In June, the South Sudanese government and the parties that signed the 2018 peace agreement discussed the feasibility of holding the election in December, given the delays in preparations and the lack of political consensus. Finally, on 13 September, Kiir's government decided to extend the transition period for two additional years, which postponed the election. This is the second time the election has been postponed, with the first time happening in February 2023. The extension was seen as

a way to give the government and the parties involved more time to implement the remaining protocols of the 2018 peace agreement, such as drafting a constitution and conducting a census. However, the extension was widely criticised both inside and outside the country, with the leaders coming under fire for lacking political will. Whilst the UN reaffirmed its support for the country, it also expressed serious misgivings, noting that the same thing had happened two years before and that it had backed the decision at the time on the condition that there would be no further extensions. The Troika, composed of the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway, also expressed "deep concerns" about the announcement of the two-year electoral delay, calling the extension of the transitional government's mandate a "failure". The extension also affected the peace talks, as some feared the postponement could hamper the Tumaini Initiative and jeopardise negotiations with opposition leaders in exile.

Gender, peace and security

At a forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in August, the South Sudan Women's Coalition for Peace (SSWCP) called for increased women's participation in all peace and development processes to reach 35% representation. Formed in September 2017, the coalition is an organisation of over 50 women and women-led organisations from South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. However, women's participation was minimal in the dialogues taking place under the Tumaini "Hope" Initiative in Kenya in 2024. In this regard, UNMISS reported that to support women's inclusion and participation in the initiative and in the peace process in general, it provided financial support to five women leaders of the South Sudan Women's Bloc, academia and civil society organisations to attend the Tumaini Initiative in Nairobi as observers.²⁹

29 United Nations Security Council, *Situation in South Sudan. Report of the Secretary-General*, 25 October 2024.

Sudan ³⁰	
Negotiating actors	Peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile: Government of Sudan, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur), Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar and Abdelaziz al-Hilu factions National crisis peace negotiations: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF)
Third parties	Peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile: African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany, AU, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, IGAD, UNITAMS National crisis peace negotiations: Trilateral mechanism (UNITAMS, AU and IGAD (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda)); Quad (USA, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates), Egypt
Relevant agreements	Peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile: Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) (2006), Road map Agreement (2016), the Juba Declaration for Confidence-Building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation (2019), Juba Peace Agreement (2020)

Summary:

Different armed conflicts (Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan) remain active in the country, as well as tensions between the government and the opposition which have led to different peace negotiations and a de-escalation of violence. In Darfur, amidst peace talks to resolve the historical dispute between the north and south of the country, which ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, various armed groups, mainly the JEM and the SLA, rebelled in 2003 around demands for greater decentralisation and development in the region. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was reached in 2006, which included only one SLA faction, led by Minni Minnawi, while the conflict persisted amidst frustrated attempts at dialogue, mainly promoted by Qatar as part of the Doha peace process, in which the different parties were involved. Furthermore, in the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), the secession of South Sudan in July 2011 and the resulting national reconfiguration of Sudan aggravated tensions between those border regions and the Sudanese government, since both regions had supported the southern SPLA insurgency during the Sudanese armed conflict. The African Union High Level Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) has mediated to seek a peaceful resolution between the parties (government and SPLM/N rebellion) that revolve around three main lines in the peace negotiations: the ceasefire model, the type of humanitarian

access to the Two Areas and the characteristics and agenda of the National Dialogue. In early 2014, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir asked all armed actors and opposition groups to join the National Dialogue. From the outset, the proposal involved former South African President Thabo Mbeki and the AUHIP to promote peace negotiations and a democratic transformation. After the fall of the al-Bashir regime in April 2019, the different peace processes and scenarios between the new transitional government and the different rebel groups in the Two Areas and Darfur have merged, achieving the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020. However, several armed groups, including the SPLM-N alHilu (Two Areas) and the SLM/A-AW (Darfur), refused to sign the peace agreement, holding the talks separately. In 2022, due to the governance crisis in the country provoked by the military junta's rise to power, talks began between the junta and political and military actors to achieve the political transition, which incorporated a review of the Juba Agreement for Peace. In 2023, the negotiations broke down with the outbreak of a new armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF), giving rise to new mediation initiatives.

Sudan was immersed in a complex mediation process and peace negotiations during the year that failed to end the armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). International mediators, and especially regional ones, tried to facilitate talks between the parties to the conflict throughout the year, but their differences complicated these efforts. During the first few months of the year, international mediators sought to revive the peace negotiations that had run aground in 2023. In January, senior officers of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF met three times in Bahrain, facilitated by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. This was the first meeting between the parties at this level in nine months of conflict, as the talks held last year in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, had been attended by lower-ranking representatives of both sides. UN Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths later reported an agreement between the parties to discuss the implementation of the delivery of humanitarian aid under the Jeddah Agreement, inviting a next round of talks to be held in Switzerland. However, the Sudanese government reiterated its commitment to negotiate only through the format followed in Jeddah under the mediation of Saudi Arabia and the United States. In late March, Tom Perriello, appointed US special envoy for Sudan, announced that peace talks in Jeddah would resume on 18 April. He added that the talks were intended to be inclusive, involving the African Union, the East African bloc IGAD, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, in an attempt to merge the different mediation efforts pursued separately since the armed conflict broke out in April 2023. The priority of the talks was to secure a

30 This negotiating process includes two different peace processes: 1) peace negotiations in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, to resolve the armed conflicts in both regions; and 2) peace negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to resolve the armed conflict that began in Sudan in 2023. The column of actors specifies who participates in each of them.

peace agreement that would end the violence, guarantee full humanitarian access to all citizens and facilitate the country's return to civilian rule. As the peace talks gained momentum, the war continued, causing a significant impact on the Sudanese population and expanding the humanitarian and human rights crisis in the country. In this regard, a report by the UN group of experts in Sudan stated that the RSF and its allied militias carried out ethnic killings and widespread rapes in their offensive on West Darfur, which could constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk also deplored the deliberate and systematic denial of safe access to humanitarian agencies in the country, which could be a war crime.

The humanitarian crisis and the escalation of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF prompted France, Germany and the European Commission to host an international humanitarian summit for Sudan and neighbouring countries in Paris in mid-April. The aim of the summit was to lobby donors for humanitarian aid and to seek greater coordination in mediation efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire in the country. The summit's organisers intended to make the conflict in Sudan a priority on the international agenda and to raise humanitarian funding. At the end of the summit, \$2.1 billion was pledged to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. The summit also reaffirmed the commitment to peace initiatives, with Saudi Arabia and the United States promising to restart the Jeddah process within three weeks. The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) also announced a meeting of the Political Dialogue from 10 to 15 July in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where warring factions in Sudan and other political movements would meet to try to reach agreements. Tom Perriello warned the warring Sudanese parties that the international community is ready to explore alternative measures if the warring factions in Sudan do not demonstrate a genuine commitment to the peace negotiations. Domestically, several Sudanese political coalitions continued to call for an end to the violence and the transfer of power to civilians. On 8 May, one of these political coalitions, the "Coordination of National Forces", which is aligned with the Sudanese Armed Forces and includes more than 40 political parties, armed groups, community leaders and civil society organisations, approved a political charter that proposes a three-year transitional government with a joint military-civilian sovereign council and a transitional legislative council.

Later, a new round of peace negotiations aimed at ending the war in Sudan was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 14 to 16 August. The talks were led by the United States and co-organised by Saudi Arabia and Switzerland, while the African Union, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and the United Nations completed the Aligned for Advancing

Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group. The aim of the negotiations was to achieve a ceasefire and ensure humanitarian access. However, only the RSF delegation attended the meeting, as the Sudanese Armed Forces' delegation did not appear. Sudan's foreign ministry had previously established conditions for participating in the peace talks in Switzerland, which included consultations beforehand regarding the agenda and who could attend, stressing that the RSF must first withdraw from towns and villages and end attacks on civilians as a prerequisite for any peace talks. The absence of the SAF's delegation prevented any ceasefire agreement from being reached, but the negotiations were still useful by making progress on securing humanitarian access on two key routes into the country.

The stalemate in the negotiations further aggravated the dire humanitarian situation in Sudan, where millions of people were in urgent need of assistance. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported that about one in five people were displaced in the country, with 10.7 million people internally displaced and 2.3 million having fled across borders, and urged countries to increase their donations in response to the world's largest displacement crisis.

In the last quarter of the year, Saudi Arabia attempted to facilitate a new round of dialogue between the parties in Jeddah, but progress was limited. Tensions between the RSF and the SAF's allies, including neighbouring countries Egypt and Chad, continued to complicate any possible peace agreement. In this context, Turkish President Erdoğan offered to mediate talks between the SAF and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which the SAF accuses of providing weapons to the RSF.

At the end of the year, Sudan remained mired in one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world due to the intensification of the armed conflict and the lack of substantive progress in the peace negotiations. The war, which began in April 2023, had left a devastating toll by the end of 2024 with more than 12 million people displaced, millions facing severe food shortages and parts of the Darfur region suffering from famine. The humanitarian situation has worsened due to Sudan's withdrawal from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system, fettering international efforts to monitor and address the food crisis. In December, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the US government had formally declared that the RSF had committed genocide during the country's ongoing civil war, announcing sanctions against RSF commander Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo.

Gender, peace and security

A conference entitled "Sudan Women's Peace Dialogue" took place in Kampala, Uganda on 3-4 July,

bringing together over 60 Sudanese women from diverse backgrounds. Participants included representatives of peace organisations, political groups, religious organisations and civil society. The conference was convened by the chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, through the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security and under the leadership of the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan (HLP-Sudan). Its aim was to raise the voices of Sudanese women in efforts to achieve a lasting peace and security in Sudan. Participants in the conference called for the comprehensive inclusion of Sudanese women in all political and peace processes and for ensuring that women's voices are not only heard, but are also central to decision-making and implementation. A common agenda was also formulated for a gender-sensitive peace process focusing on inclusion, justice and sustainable development. The dialogue concluded with a commitment to continue advocating for female representation in the upcoming peace negotiations. Participants also agreed on criteria for selecting female representatives in the political dialogue and developed strategies for building a broad-based women's movement in support of peace in Sudan.³¹

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

Summary:

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

The escalation of the armed conflict in Sudan and political uncertainty in South Sudan³² hampered progress in the negotiations between the two countries, particularly those related to resolving the dispute over the Abyei region and border issues, though some headway was made in resolving inter-communal disputes. According to the UN Secretary-General's 2024 reports on the situation in Abyei, the first covering the period from 4 October 2023 to 15 April 2024 and the second from 16 April to 1 October 2024, the situation in Abyei remained highly tense, marked by political instability, inter-communal clashes and a lack of substantial progress in resolving the conflict. Internally, the situation in Abyei was dominated by inter-communal violence, especially between members of the Ngok and Twik Dinka communities, mostly related to cattle rustling, kidnappings and disputes over access to pastures and other resources. However, clashes between members of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities decreased significantly compared to previous periods thanks to mediation efforts.

Various efforts at mediation and inter-communal reconciliation were made to **reduce inter-communal tensions** in southern and central Abyei. In January, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir met in Juba with the Juba-appointed chief administrator of Abyei and the governors of the South Sudanese states of Warrap, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Unity to discuss rising inter-communal tensions between the Ngok and Twik Dinka communities. As a result, Kiir issued a decree calling for a cessation of hostilities, more dialogue for peace and accountability for those inciting violence. The United Nations also continued to work to reduce inter-communal violence through the United Nations Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA). UNISFA facilitated several peace conferences, such as the one organised between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in December 2023, which resulted in a peace agreement on peaceful transhumance, the protection of natural resources and access to healthcare services. However, despite these advances, challenges in implementing the agreement persisted during 2024, and no consensus was reached on the consequences for those who breached the agreements. Another important effort was an UNISFA-backed conference held in January 2024 between the Ngok and Twik Dinka communities, facilitated by the Church Mission Society-Africa. Though no significant progress was made in easing the tensions, the event provided a platform for discussion and mutual understanding between the warring parties. In May, a conference was held between the Dinka, Ngok and Misseriya communities in which the parties agreed to coordinate the entry of livestock into grazing areas, promote peaceful trade, maintain peaceful agricultural and grazing activities and increase the participation

31 African Union, "Sudan Women's Peace Dialogue Concludes with a Powerful Call for Inclusive Peace and Security in Sudan", AU, 3 and 4 July 2024.
 32 See the summaries on Sudan and South Sudan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

of young people and women in peace processes, in addition to other agreements.

No progress was made during the year on several provisions to **implement the 2011 agreements between Sudan and South Sudan on the status of Abyei**, most notably the establishment of the Abyei Police Force, which should have helped to ensure security and justice in the region. This impasse in the political process also hindered the creation of a coherent and effective criminal justice system, further stoking local tensions. Moreover, despite diplomatic and mediation efforts, the deployment of South Sudanese security forces in Abyei remained a contentious issue. In late March and early April, additional troops were deployed to southern Abyei, bringing the total strength to 1,700 South Sudanese security personnel, although this had been reduced to around 400 by the end of the year. The presence of these forces violated agreements made between Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 that prohibit the deployment of national troops in Abyei. The implementation of the mandate of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) also continued to be affected by the armed conflict in Sudan. As a result, Sudanese airspace has been closed since April 2023, rendering any aerial surveillance operations impossible. Nevertheless, the JBVMM reported that it has continued to conduct ground surveillance missions and reconnaissance patrols.

Finally, at the end of the year, on 27 December, the Abyei Legislative Council ratified the results of the referendum held in 2013, which was not recognised by either country. In this referendum, the Ngok Dinka community voted overwhelmingly (with 99.9% in favour) for the border region to be administered by South Sudan instead of by its northern neighbour. The referendum was boycotted by the Misseriya Arab community, which also refused to recognise the results. Local analysts argued that the Abyei Legislative Council's ratification of the referendum, which seeks to have South Sudan and the AU take charge of the status of Abyei, is South Sudan's final attempt to revive the forgotten issue of Abyei in the hope that Sudan will move on.³³

Gender, peace and security

Whilst some progress was noted in boosting women's participation in reconciliation and mediation efforts, with more women in peace conferences and committees, they remained significantly less involved than men. Activities to promote women's participation resulted in the conference held in Noong in May 2024 between the Dinka, Ngok and Misseriya communities. With 137 participants, including 41 women, many more women were involved than in the previous conference in

November 2023, which had 118 participants, including 22 women. One of the sessions of the conference addressed gender concerns in transhumance, highlighting the challenges and risks faced by different groups and the importance of women's participation in decision-making. At the end of the year, 181 of the 1,223 total members of the community protection committees were women, a higher proportion than the previous year, but far from achieving parity.

Horn of Africa

Eritrea – Ethiopia	
Negotiating actors	Government of Eritrea and government of Ethiopia
Third parties	United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, USA
Relevant agreements	Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (Algiers, 2000), Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia or December Agreement (Algiers, 2000), Decision on Delimitation of the Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, EEBC (2002), Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation (2018)

Summary:

Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993, although the border between both countries was not clearly defined, causing them to face off between 1998 and 2000 in a war that cost over 100,000 lives. In June 2000 they signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, the UN Security Council established the UNMEE mission to monitor it and they signed the Algiers peace agreement in December. This agreement established that both would submit to the ruling issued by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which is in charge of delimiting and demarcating the border based on the relevant colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and on international law. The EEBC announced its opinion in April 2002, assigning the disputed border village of Badme (the epicentre of the war, currently administered by Ethiopia) to Eritrea, though Ethiopia rejected the decision. Frustrated by the lack of progress in implementing the EEBC's ruling due to insufficient pressure on Ethiopia to comply, Eritrea decided to restrict UNMEE operations in late 2005, forcing its withdrawal in 2008. A year earlier, the EEBC had ended its work without being able to implement its mandate due to obstructions in Ethiopia. Tensions have remained high since then, with thousands of soldiers on the common border, sporadic clashes and belligerent rhetoric. In 2018, a historic agreement was reached between both governments, beginning the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, with flights resuming and their borders reopening. However, the initial optimism soon faded, and a few months later the border was closed again and many issues remained unresolved. The war between Ethiopia and the political and military authorities of Tigray from 2020 to 2022 brought the former enemies together in an alliance to fight the TPLF, but old grievances and new disputes could threaten to renew the conflict between them.

33 Atem Simón Mabior "Tensión entre Sudán del Sur y Sudán aflora de nuevo por región rica en petróleo de Abyei", *SWI*, 11 January 2025

The implementation of the peace agreement reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018, which ended a more than 20-year dispute that even brought the two countries into military conflict in the late 2000s, remained at a complete standstill. Tensions between the two countries simmered throughout the year. The slow implementation of the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the leadership of the Tigray region also did nothing to defuse the crisis and advance the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region involved the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from the Ethiopian region of Tigray, which was not completed during the year. Eritrea had fought as Ethiopia's ally in the Tigray War. The crisis in the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia became evident in early September with the closure of the airline connecting their respective capitals, Asmara and Addis Ababa.³⁴ The airline had been by Ethiopian Airlines (EA) in 2018 after the peace agreement had been signed. As the first commercial line connecting Eritrea and Ethiopia in 20 years, at the time it was considered a prime example of the beginning of reconciliation between the two countries. In July, the Eritrean government announced that it would not allow EA to operate in Eritrea in the coming months. EA decided to suspend the airline on 3 September, citing "difficult operating conditions" beyond its control.

In October, the presidents of Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia agreed to boost cooperation to enable the Somali Armed Forces to counter "terrorism" and thereby protect the country's land and sea borders, according to a joint statement that some analysts believe leaves Ethiopia even more isolated in the region. The security agreement³⁵ could destabilise Ethiopia, which has thousands of troops in neighbouring Somalia fighting the al-Shabaab insurgency, but has clashed with Mogadishu over its plans to build a port in the breakaway region of Somaliland.³⁶ In December, Ethiopia's state-run media outlet Fana TV openly criticised Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki for the first time since the 2018 agreement.³⁷ This happened after an interview with the Eritrean president in late November in which he criticised Ethiopia's constitution and defended the October agreement between Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia. **Activities and meetings related to the regional phase of**

Ethiopia	
Negotiating actors	Government, political parties, political and social opposition, citizens
Third parties	UNDP, EU, Germany, Norway, Berghof Foundation
Relevant agreements	

34 Bekit, Teklemariam, "Horn of Africa airlink, once symbolic of peace, suspended", *BBC*, 3 September 2024.

35 Reuters, "Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia agree to boost security cooperation", *Reuters*, 10 October 2024.

36 See the summary on Ethiopia-Somalia (Somaliland) in this chapter.

37 Plaut, Martin, "Ethiopian state television mounts its most direct critique of Eritrea's President Isaias", *martinplaut.com*, 10 December 2024.

38 See the website of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.

Summary:

The Ethiopian administration that has governed since 1991 is facing a series of opposition movements that demand advances in the democracy and governability of the country, as well as a greater degree of self-government. The government coalition EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) is controlled by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party, of the Tigrayan minority, that rules the country between 1991 and 2019 with growing authoritarianism with the consent of the Amhara elite. There is discontent in the country with the ethnic federal regime implemented by the EPRDF which has not resolved the national issue and has led to the consolidation of a strong political and social opposition. Along with the demands for the democratization of the institutions, there are political-military sectors that believe that ethnic federalism does not meet their nationalist demands and other groups that consider ethnic federalism to be a deterrent to the consolidation of the Nation-State. The changes and territorial expansion of Addis Ababa introduced by the Addis Ababa Master Plan in 2014 were the catalyst for some of these issues, triggering major protests and deadly repression in the country, particularly in the Oromia region. Social protests contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in early 2018 and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed, who undertook a series of reforms that at easing ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. The changes brought about by Abiy Ahmed's government have helped grievances to emerge, as well as some of the shortcomings and challenges in terms of governance, which have increased instability and exacerbated simmering conflicts and new cycles of violence, such as the war in Tigray and escalating violence in Oromia and Amhara. One prominent such reform is national dialogue. In 2021, the Ethiopian Parliament approved the mandate of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC).³⁸ The ENDC began its work in 2022 with a three-year mandate, promoting a process in different phases that will culminate in a national dialogue. The mandate sets out three general objectives: to build a national consensus on the most fundamental national issues, to build trust among ethnic groups and between them and the state and to pave the way for a culture of dialogue. The process has been hindered by many difficulties.

the national dialogue continued in 2024, despite the difficulties and the context of general instability. The basic design of the national dialogue had envisaged a three-stage process: first, events would be held in the 769 districts (woredas); then in the twelve federated states and the two federal cities (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa); and finally, the actual nationwide dialogue would take place. The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) was supported by an advisory committee and a secretariat, as well as by experts on constitutional issues. The district-level hearings followed a standardised pattern. Thus, in 2024 the ENDC claimed to have held regional dialogues with 100,000 people participating (originally 1.5 million had been planned, as highlighted in 2023). With the exception of Amhara and Tigray, all federated states were represented. According to

the Ethiopian government, 12,294 participants from 679 districts had been nominated for the regional conferences by 2024. These rounds of local and regional talks were intended to compile agenda items and nominate representatives of socio-economic groups for the actual nationwide dialogue. The basic idea is that only issues that cannot be addressed at the district or regional level should be brought to the national level. The ENDC also facilitated the participation of members of the Ethiopian diaspora, who held meetings between December 2023 and February 2024. The first event of the regional phase of the national dialogue, focused on the federated states and municipal administrations, concluded in Addis Ababa on 4 June. The aim of the entire process is to identify the most pressing problems affecting the country, determine possible solutions and appoint representatives for the final nationwide rounds of talks. The event in Addis Ababa alone was attended by over 2,000 people who had been delegates in previous local meetings in the capital. Similar events were held in the other federal states in the following months.

The ENDC identified the 10 most important issues of the regional dialogue in Addis Ababa. These included federalism, the national flag, disputes over territorial claims and the constitutional status of the federal capital. However, various analysts asserted that conditions for a trust-building dialogue were not yet in place, given the armed uprisings in the two most populous states, Amhara and Oromia; restrictions on media independence and the freedom of expression; and the dominance of the ruling party in the Ethiopian Parliament and society.³⁹ These analysts argued that more structured dialogue between the most important political actors could remedy one of the main weaknesses of the process: the absence of the country's main political parties and movements. Problems in filtering and grouping the many issues arising in each regional dialogue were also described, as highlighted by ENDC Chief Commissioner Mesfin Araya. Others said that external actors supporting the process, mainly Germany, Norway, the UNDP and the EU, should limit their participation to avoid legitimising the positions of the government and the ruling party, the Prosperity Party (PP). Other countries, such as Japan, have made significant financial contributions to the UNDP for the process to proceed.

Various analysts predicted that the national dialogue had little hope of achieving its objectives, as it does not currently enjoy widespread support from the population or political elites. Moreover, despite high levels of

Various analysts predicted that the Ethiopian national dialogue had little hope of achieving its objectives, since it currently lacks the support of the main political forces and the insurgent groups in the country

participation, it was far from inclusive and transparent and the ENDC is not perceived as impartial. According to analysts, the “bottom-up” dialogue process actually seemed more geared towards using grassroots initiatives to boost the government’s agenda and manipulate it for its own ends, which threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the entire process and deprive Ethiopians of the opportunity to raise discussions that could peacefully challenge the government.⁴⁰ The dialogue was also discredited by the absence of influential political forces during 2024, including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Oromo Federalist Congress and the TPLF. Nevertheless, the ENDC has tried to bring some of the issues disputed by the TPLF and the armed group OLA into the dialogue. In general, most of the opposition parties, which are often very small, are cooperating with the ENDC in one way or another, but others are boycotting it. In May 2024, a coalition of 11 opposition parties accused the ENDC of being used for “political purposes”. The ruling party (PP) plays a significant role in the dialogue, so it is also accused of capitalising on it and of co-opting the participants. The fact that the main political movements and actors refused to participate in the ongoing dialogue led research centres such as the ISS to propose a temporary pause to review it.⁴¹

Gender, peace and security

Various analysts noted that civil society has been heavily involved in the different phases of the dialogue at the local level, though less than the ENDC had initially expected. However, many observers have questioned the impartiality of the ENDC and criticised the procedure used to appoint the commissioners. Although nominations for these positions could be submitted to the Ethiopian Parliament, the requirement that they hold an academic degree excluded local and religious leaders, young people and many women from the start. The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, a regional women’s rights organisation, noted this shortcoming and raised the need to change the requirements to make the process inclusive.

Ethiopia (Oromia)	
Negotiating actors	Federal government, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)
Third parties	IGAD, Kenya, Norway and Tanzania
Relevant agreements	Peace agreement between the federal government and the OLF (2018)

39 Kurtz, Gerrit, “The Narrow Limits of Ethiopia’s National Dialogue”, *SWP*, 5 August 2024.

40 Heinrich Böll Stiftung, “Ethiopia’s National Dialogue: Issues and Potential Scenarios”, July 2024.

41 Yared, Tegbaru, “Ethiopia’s national dialogue needs a reset”, *ISS*, 11 July 2024.

Summary:

Attempts to accommodate the Oromo community within the Ethiopian federal state after the extensive demonstrations that began in 2014 led to the appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, a member of the Oromo community, and the political reforms he pushed to promote national unity and reconciliation. This resulted in a peace agreement in 2018 with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), a rebel group that emerged in 1973, which facilitated the return of its members from exile.⁴² However, this did not lead to greater autonomy for the region, as Oromo nationalists hoped. Abiy Ahmed centralised the government further, instead of deepening ethnic federalism. Furthermore, although the OLF became a political party, its military wing, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), rejected the agreement and started a new rebellion, leading the government to list it as a terrorist group in May 2021. Since then, violence has been on the rise. Supported by the Amhara Fano militias, the federal government launched a military operation to dismantle the OLA in April 2022. The escalating clashes during the second half of 2022 coincided with negotiations that culminated in the peace agreement in November 2022 between the federal government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region. Since then, there have been contacts between the government and the OLA to promote a peace agreement.

Attempts to explore dialogue between the government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the military wing of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which took place in Tanzania in 2023, did not resume during the year. On the contrary, the Ethiopian federal authorities continued to clash with the OLA, which had previously reached a peace agreement with the Ethiopian federal government in 2018. The Ethiopian government also tried to weaken the OLA during the year by calling for its fighters to surrender or reintegrate to exploit divisions within the OLA leadership.

On 10 October, Ethiopian government efforts to capitalise on divisions within the OLA leadership prompted the president of the Oromia region, Shimelis Abdisa, to mention the possibility of holding talks with an OLA splinter faction led by Jaal Sagni Negasa that had broken away from the OLA in late September. These contacts were successful and the Ethiopian federal government announced an agreement with this splinter faction on 3 December, though the details were not disclosed. On the same day, a ceremony was held in the region in which Oromia President Shimelis Abdisa met with Sagni Negasa, who had been a member of the central command of the OLA.⁴³

Ethiopia (Tigray)

Negotiating actors	Federal Government, political-military authorities of the Ethiopian region of Tigray (Tigray People's Liberation Front)
Third parties	AU, USA, IGAD
Relevant agreements	Agreement for a Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (Pretoria, 2022), Executive Declaration on the Modalities of Implementation of the Agreement for a Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities (Nairobi, 2022)

Summary:

The region of Tigray (a state in northern Ethiopia, bordering Ethiopia and with a Tigray -majority population) has been the scene of an armed conflict and attempts at dialogue initiatives since 2020. The inauguration of Abiy Ahmed as the new prime minister of Ethiopia in early 2018 brought about important and positive changes internally and regionally in Ethiopia. However, since his rise to power, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party and the leadership of the Tigray community, once the solid core of the ruling coalition (EPRDF), have seen their government decision-making powers evaporate. Furthermore, the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia between 1998 and 2000 had its origin in border disputes between the two countries. As a border state where decisions related to the agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia must be implemented, such as the border demarcation and status of the town of Badme, Tigray was marginalised from the peace process between both governments. Added to this was the gradual marginalisation of the TPLF from central power, contributing to growing tension that culminated in the outbreak of an armed conflict between the Ethiopian security forces and the security forces of the Tigray region. The crisis took on regional dimensions due to the involvement of Eritrea, as well as militias and security forces from the neighbouring Ethiopian region of Amhara. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in November 2020, the international community, and especially the AU, have tried to promote peace negotiations between the parties, which the Federal Government of Ethiopia rejected. Between March and August 2022, a humanitarian truce was in force, after which there was a new escalation of violence. In late October 2022, peace negotiations were formalised in Pretoria (South Africa) under the auspices of the AU, which led to the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement in November. The peace agreement has been implemented since then, though not without difficulties.

The situation in Tigray remained fragile throughout the year. The implementation of the Pretoria peace agreement of November 2022 was slow and even stalled for much of the year alongside rising tension within the TPLF leadership, which also hindered the process. In February, TPLF leaders met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed amid increasing strain due

42 Al-Jazeera, Ethiopia signs deal with Oromo rebels to end hostilities, 7 August 2018.

43 Tunbridge, Gisa, "Ethiopia signs peace deal with Oromo Liberation Army splinter group", *The Africa Report*, 3 December 2024.

to the slow implementation of the peace agreement. The main challenges related to key points of the agreement were the lack of progress in the disputed territories, the unregistered status of the TPLF party and the delay in the demobilisation, demilitarisation and reintegration (DDR) process. These unresolved issues stoked tensions between the parties and cast doubt on whether local elections would be held, as established in the agreement. On 10 February, Tigray's interim President Getachew Reda acknowledged the persistent mistrust between Addis Ababa and its administration. On the eve of the African Union's strategic review of the agreement, the Tigray administration said that it would only engage with the federal government through the AU to discuss the peace process.

The first strategic review of the agreement took place on 11 March, held under the auspices of the AU in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government and the TPLF leadership voiced their commitment to the 2022 Pretoria peace agreement. The AU highlighted the progress made since the agreement was signed, including the immediate cessation of hostilities, the handover of heavy and medium weapons, the resumption of essential services and the reopening of schools and economic activities in most of the Tigray region. Headway was also made with the establishment of the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray (IRA) and the National Rehabilitation Commission, with the AU supporting the transitional justice working group. However, the AU stressed that the political dialogue, transitional justice and DDR required urgent attention from the parties.⁴⁴ Various analysts described the delay in disarming and demobilising Tigray combatants, the need to protect civilians and returnees in disputed territories in western and northern Tigray and the importance of restoring essential infrastructure in the region.⁴⁵ The Ethiopian government was also required to ensure the smooth delivery of humanitarian aid, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Tigray and the representation of the TPLF in the federal government. On 13 March, the TPLF said it was concerned about growing mistrust due to the slow implementation of the agreement, including the resolution of the land dispute between the Tigray and Amhara regions and the withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara troops from the area.

The TPLF faced a growing internal rift that started in the party, then spread to the regional government, with consequences for the implementation of the agreement. According to the self-proclaimed reformist faction, the

Ethiopia's Tigray region revealed meetings between its representatives and representatives of Eritrea facilitated by the UAE, with the approval of the Ethiopian government

crisis owed to an attempt to democratise the TPLF, among other things.⁴⁶ Some analysts argue that this split is related to the war, as the mass mobilisation of Tigrayan youth in support of the Tigray defence forces (which include the TPLF's military wing, composed of regular corps, but also other actors) weakened the party's control over the security forces.

In late July, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed threatened to resume the armed conflict if the TPLF did not register with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), as stipulated in the peace agreement. If the TPLF did not register, it would not be able to participate in the general elections scheduled for 2026

or form a government.⁴⁷ Finally, the NEBE registered the TPLF as a new party on 9 August, though it raised special conditions, asserting that it should hold a general assembly within six months and elect new leaders to finalise the registration. The TPLF faction led by hardline IRA Chairman Debretsion Gebremichael rejected the decision and insisted on restoring the party's old legal status; in contrast, the self-proclaimed reformist faction led by the IRA chief administrator and head of the second faction, Getachew Reda, called for

closer ties with the federal government and the NEBE. Debretsion's faction held a party congress from 13 to 19 August, despite warnings of non-compliance by the NEBE. The congress ended with the election of new leaders that excluded Reda and his allies, who boycotted the congress and held their own, triggering a split in the TPLF. Military leaders of the TPLF's armed wing warned that they would not tolerate any action that undermined peace. Debretsion subsequently expelled 16 senior TPLF leaders on 17 September for allegedly engaging in illicit activities, including IRA Chief Administrator Getachew Reda. The split stalled the dismantling of Amhara-established administrations in western Tigray and the repatriation of displaced Tigrayans in the area (part of Addis Ababa's plan to resolve the Tigray-Amhara territorial dispute). Tigrayan security forces (composed of the TPLF military wing and non-regular forces) publicly maintained neutrality and called for dialogue. This split was made worse in October, when the TPLF faction led by Debretsion expelled 13 senior officials from the IRA, including Chief Administrator Getachew Reda. On the same day, the IRA accused Debretsion of destabilising the region, whilst Tigray security forces, which had remained publicly neutral, threatened to take action against those who disturbed the peace. On 9 October, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with Debretsion and expressed his disapproval, but took

44 African Union, Statement of the Chairperson of the AUC H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat on the occasion of the 1st Strategic Reflection on the Implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, 11 March 2024.

45 Joshi, Madhav and Halkano Boru, "Lasting peace in Ethiopia? More needs to be done to stop Tigray conflict from flaring up again", *The Conversation*, 29 September 2024.

46 The Africa Report, Ethiopia: Tigray People's Liberation Front is in turmoil – is it losing its grip on the region?, 25 October 2024.

47 Addis Standard, "Ethiopia: PM Abiy says war may break out unless TPLF registers with NEBE", *Addis Standard*, 25 July.

no steps to resolve the conflict beyond urging dialogue between the parties.⁴⁸ The repatriation of displaced Tigrayans to western Tigray and the demobilisation of Tigray fighters remained on hold due to the split. On a positive note, the DDR process for Tigray fighters finally began on 21 November after several delays.

Furthermore, Ethiopia was aware that meetings were held between representatives of Tigray and Eritrean leaders. In September, TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael revealed that several rounds of non-public meetings between representatives of Tigray and Eritrean leaders had begun six months earlier in Dubai, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The meetings specifically involved IRA Chief Administrator Getachew Reda and had received the blessing of the TPLF Executive Committee. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had also been aware of these meetings, though they were not confirmed by the Eritrean or Ethiopian governments.⁴⁹

Gender, peace and security

The implementation of the November 2022 peace agreement continued to highlight the exclusion of women from the peace process, as noted by several analysts.⁵⁰ No women were included in the Tigray negotiating delegation. Requests from women leaders and academics to be included in these negotiations were ignored, reflecting the entrenched patriarchal norms that dominate the region's political culture, according to analysts. Notably, however, the Interim Regional Administration (IRA) has included eight women out of 27 cabinet members, although these women are relegated to roles with little substantive power. However, the gendered impacts of the war remained unaddressed. Various analysts noted that approximately 40% of the Tigray region remained under occupation, where women continued to face conflict-related sexual violence and other human rights violations. In liberated areas, women faced gender-based violence in the form of intimate partner violence, rape, murder and abduction. According to various analysts, women in Tigray joined armed resistance and contributed to the war efforts of the wider population. They were also at the forefront of campaigns to prevent conflict, end the war and seek justice for the atrocities suffered. Despite their leadership roles during the war, Tigray women were systematically excluded from political and diplomatic circles, denying them the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the recovery and future of their region and to building a lasting peace in Tigray.

Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan ⁵¹	
Negotiating actors	Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan
Third parties	AU, World Bank (WB), UAE, EU and USA
Relevant agreements	Anglo-Egyptian Treaty (1929) and its amended version, the Agreement between the Republic of Sudan and the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) for the utilisation of the Nile waters (Cairo, 8 November 1959); Nile Basin Initiative that opens the Cooperative Framework Agreement process (1999, signed by seven countries and ratified by four of them, as of December 2023); Cooperative Framework Agreement (Entebbe, 14 May 2010); Khartoum Declaration (also called the Nile Agreement; Khartoum, 23 March 2015).

Summary:

The Nile, the longest river in Africa and the second longest in the world, has been at the centre of disputes for decades. At the heart of the conflict are Egypt and Ethiopia, the two main regional actors. The construction since 2011 of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile, a tributary of the Nile in Ethiopian soil, has exacerbated tensions between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan. Egypt depends on the Nile for virtually its entire water supply, so its control is strategic. Its main tributary, the Blue Nile, runs from Lake Tana in Ethiopia and joins the White Nile in Sudan, where it provides around 85% of the water of the main Nile. Thirty-two per cent of Ethiopia's territory is located in the Nile basin, where about 40% of Ethiopia's population resides. The Nile runs throughout Sudan from south to north and provides around 77% of the country's fresh water. The agreements of the colonial period, which favoured Egypt and Sudan, ignored the needs of the rest of the coastal countries, including Ethiopia. There have been constant attempts to build a multilateral management framework and in 1999 the 11 countries of the basin created the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), whose objective was to establish a multilateral treaty. Egypt and Sudan participated in the process, but they rejected the agreement. In the last decade, different initiatives have been promoted, such as in 2015, when the three countries signed the GERD Declaration of Principles, though it has yielded no results to date. In 2019, the World Bank promoted meetings with US observers and between 2020 and 2021 it facilitated EU-supported tripartite talks, which stalled. The reservoir then began to get filled, precipitating the escalation of militarised tension. Cairo announced that the GERD posed a threat to its security and warned that a conflict could break out if the UN did not intervene to prevent it. The UAE facilitated peace talks in Abu Dhabi in August 2022, though they were not met with success.

No progress was made during the year in the talks between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan to reach an agreement on the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

48 Borkena, "Debretsion meeting with Abiy Ahmed bear no fruit", *Borkena*, 10 October 2024.
 49 Atsbeha, Mulugeta and Eskinder Firew, "Tigray leader reports talks with archrival Eritrea", *VOA*, 10 September 2024.
 50 Gebremedhin, Meaza, "Op-ed: The Unfinished Peace: Why women's inclusion is key to Tigray's recovery", *Addis Standard*, 3 December 2024.
 51 See "The Nile Basin: cooperation or conflict?" in chapter 5 (Risk scenarios) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

(GERD). On the contrary, the rise in regional tension resulting from the agreement between Ethiopia and the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland in January 2024 led Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia to strengthen their relationships to gain influence over Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether the agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somalia regarding Somaliland in December may indirectly help to ease the tense relations between Ethiopia and Egypt.

In recent years, there have been many different initiatives to lower tensions between the three countries, but AU-facilitated tripartite talks have remained deadlocked since 2021 and the Abu Dhabi initiative in 2022 also failed. During 2023, on the sidelines of the Summit of Neighbouring States of Sudan held in Cairo on 12-13 July, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met for the first time since the 2019 Sochi summit. At that time they issued a joint statement agreeing to restart talks on the GERD to reach a final agreement on filling and managing the dam in four months.⁵² However, in the four negotiating rounds held since then between August and December of this year, the parties failed without making progress in the talks.

After a new period of suspended contacts during the first half of 2024, the dispute between the three countries resurged in September with Ethiopia's announcement that it would begin a fifth filling of the reservoir, as it has been doing unilaterally in recent years. After Egypt sent a new letter of protest to the UN Security Council, Ethiopia dismissed its concerns as unfounded accusations. In recent years, Ethiopia argues, the reservoir has been filled without any water being drawn downstream, and various analyses bear this out.⁵³ Ethiopia claimed that Egypt was holding back progress and taking harsh and unreasonable positions, accusing it of solely being interested in perpetuating its self-proclaimed monopoly over the Nile River. These accusations came amid rising regional tension and alongside strengthening ties between Egypt, Eritrea and Somalia to gain leverage over Ethiopia.⁵⁴

A treaty promoted by the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI),⁵⁵ the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), entered into force on 13 October. The CFA promotes equitable and sustainable management of the Nile waters as an alternative to the bilateral agreements between Egypt and Sudan and the United Kingdom, which date back to the colonial period and completely ignored the needs

of the other riparian countries, including Ethiopia.⁵⁶ In 2010, four countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia) signed and ratified the CFA following a negotiating process between all the riparian countries, including Egypt and Sudan, which ultimately rejected the agreement because it did not respond to their interests. Six countries needed to ratify or sign the CFA for it to enter into force, which came to pass with its ratification by South Sudan and the DRC on 13 October. Egypt and Sudan rejected its validity. The NBI repeated in a statement that the intent of the CFA is to establish principles, rights and obligations to ensure the long-term, sustainable management and development of the shared waters of the Nile.

Ethiopia – Somalia (Somaliland)	
Negotiating actors	Ethiopia, Somalia
Third parties	Türkiye, Qatar
Relevant agreements	Ankara Declaration (11 December 2024)
Summary:	
The conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia dates back to the 14th century, when the rulers of the Christian highlands of Ethiopia carried out military expeditions in the coast where Islam dominated, particularly in what is now northern Somalia, to open commercial routes giving them access to the sea. Later, in the late 19th century, Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II conquered the Somali city of Harar and announced an ambitious expansion programme in 1891. After the First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896), in which it defeated colonial Italy, Ethiopia won recognition of its independence from the colonial powers. In response to Menelik's expansionist threat, many clans in what became British Somaliland accepted British protection. After Ethiopia's defeat in the Second Italo-Ethiopian War by Mussolini's Italy and due to Ethiopian positioning in the Second World War, in the late 1940s Ethiopia arranged for the British Empire to give it the Somali region of Ogaden, to the dismay of the Somalis. After Somalia's independence in 1960, both countries fought several wars (1964, 1977-1978, 1982) in which Somalia was defeated. The Somali Civil War of the late 1980s and the collapse of Somalia in 1991 put Ethiopia at a clear military and economic advantage and made Somalia a national security issue for Ethiopia. As such, Addis Abeba intervened in Somali internal affairs to promote peace and security in Somalia in defence of its own interests, which do not always align with Somali interests. Ethiopia supported some political and military actors at the expense of others, upheld a permanent unilateral and non-public military presence and later participated in multilateral frameworks (AMISOM and currently ATMIS), which the Somali armed group al-Shabaab has used to partly justify its armed campaign.	

52 Joint Statement on Ethiopia – Egypt Relation, “Ethiopia, Egypt agree to finalize GERD filling, rules of operations agreement in four months”, Addis Standard, 13 July 2023.

53 Muller, Mike, *Egypt’s fears about Ethiopia’s mega-dam haven’t come to pass: moving on from historical concerns would benefit the whole región*, *The Conversation*, 24 September.

54 See the summary on Ethiopia-Somalia in this chapter.

55 Nile Basin Initiative, *Agreement on the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework*, 13 October 2024.

56 Attempts to build a multilateral framework for the cooperative and sustainable management of the Nile waters have been ongoing, and in 1999 the basin countries created the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), aimed at establishing a forum to promote collaborative development and management of the Nile waters, including the drafting of a multilateral treaty. See “The Nile Basin: cooperation or conflict?” in chapter 5 (Risk scenarios) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.

The dialogue and rapprochement that took place during the year between Somalia and Ethiopia to resolve the crisis arising from the agreement signed between Addis Ababa and the secessionist Somali region of Somaliland to grant Ethiopia access to the Red Sea in January 2024 culminated with an agreement between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa in December. On 11 December, Somalia and Ethiopia pledged to reach an agreement to resolve the crisis following separate meetings between Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Ankara, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan acting as respective mediators. Both countries reached an agreement known as the Ankara Declaration, which addressed their main demands. Somalia achieved Ethiopian recognition of its territorial integrity and Ethiopia was granted access to the Somali coast from and to the sea.⁵⁷ The African Union and the European Union hailed the agreement. The EU repeated its support for the unity, sovereignty and integrity of both countries and said it was ready to back further efforts and continue its involvement in mediation efforts. There were no reports of contacts with Somaliland during the dialogue between the two countries and the agreement's implications for the Somali region are unknown.

Somalia and Ethiopia agreed “to leave behind differences of opinion and contentious issues and resolutely move forward in cooperation towards common prosperity”, according to the joint statement released by the Somali government on 12 December. They also acknowledged “the numerous potential advantages that could arise from Ethiopia’s secure access to and from the sea while respecting the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia”. The two countries also agreed to reach mutually beneficial trade arrangements through bilateral agreements, including contracts, leases and similar arrangements, to enable Ethiopia to enjoy reliable, secure and sustainable access to and from the sea, under the sovereign authority of Somalia.⁵⁸ They also decided to begin technical negotiations towards these objectives no later than the end of February 2025, facilitated by Türkiye, to be concluded within four months.

The agreement was preceded by increasing tension throughout the year. Türkiye’s efforts to resolve the dispute began after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited Ankara in May and asked it to intervene, according to a Turkish diplomatic source. Türkiye maintains close ties with Ethiopia and Somalia, training and providing assistance to Somali security forces in exchange for a foothold on a major global shipping route. In June, Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani made separate calls to Somali President Mohamud and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to discuss his willingness to facilitate dialogue between both

countries. These efforts culminated in several rounds of negotiations facilitated by Türkiye in Ankara. The first and second rounds of indirect contacts were held in July and August between Somali Foreign Minister Ahmed Moalim Fiqi and his Ethiopian counterpart Taye Atske Selassie. Though progress was reported, the discussions ended without agreement, as both Somalia and Ethiopia stuck to their positions regarding the latter’s January agreement with Somaliland. The parties agreed to a third round starting on 17 September, which was eventually postponed indefinitely due to overlapping conflicts with the UN General Assembly. Meanwhile, Somalia stepped up diplomatic initiatives to rally support for its cause while putting pressure on Ethiopia.

In August, Egypt and Somalia signed a defence cooperation agreement after which various sources indicated that military officers and weapons had been sent to Somalia for the first time in 40 years. Egypt is in an open dispute with Ethiopia over the unilateral construction of the GERD mega-dam on the Blue Nile. According to the terms of the agreement, Egypt also promised to provide troops to the new AU Support Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), which was planned to be created in 2025 and would replace the current AU mission to support the country in its fight against the insurgency. Various sources put Egypt’s contribution at around 10,000 soldiers. In addition to the agreement with Egypt, Somalia signed an agreement with Türkiye to help it to develop a navy. Eritrea and Djibouti expressed their support for Somalia in the dispute, as did the US, the EU and the Arab League. Meanwhile, there were reports of a possible military agreement between Eritrea and Egypt and a high-level summit between Eritrea, Egypt and Somalia was held alongside the UN General Assembly. This rapprochement between Egypt and Somalia raised concerns in Ethiopia that the supply of arms could undermine the fragile security in the country and that the weapons could end up in the hands of the insurgents. Somalia opposed any participation of Ethiopian troops in the new mission if Ethiopia and Somaliland did not terminate their agreement.

Somalia	
Negotiating actors	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama’a, clan leaders and sub-clans, Somaliland
Third parties	UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others
Relevant agreements	Road map to end the transition (2011), Kampala Accord (2011), Provisional Federal Constitution (2012), Mogadishu Declaration of the National Consultative Forum (2015), Electoral Agreement on Somalia (27 May 2021)

57 Soylu, Ragip, “Inside the Turkey-backed Somalia-Ethiopia deal”, *Middle East Eye*, 12 December 2024.
58 EFE, “Somalia y Etiopía acuerdan «negociaciones técnicas» para zanjar la crisis por Somalilandia”, *Swissinfo*, 12 December 2024.

Summary:

The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. Since 1991, more than 15 peace processes with different types of proposals were attempted to establish a central authority. Of note were the Addis Ababa (1993), Arta (2000) and Mbagathi (2002-2004) processes. The centrality of the Somali state had led to a high degree of authoritarianism during Barre's rule, and the different proposals intended to establish a State that did not hold all of the power, a formula widely rejected by Somali society. However, some clans and warlords rejected the federal or decentralized model because it represented a threat to their power. The resolution of the conflict has been complicated by several issues: the power of some warlords who have turned conflict into a way of life; the issue of representation and the balance of power used to establish the future government between the different stakeholders and clans that make up the Somali social structure in conflict for years during Siad Barre's dictatorship; interference by Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the erratic stance of the international community. The rise of political Islam as a possible governing option through the Islamic courts, and the internationalization of the conflict with the arrival of foreign fighters in the armed wing of the courts, al-Shabaab, as well as the Ethiopian invasion and the U.S. role in the fight against terrorism, have all contributed to making the situation more difficult. The Transitional Federal Government, which emerged from the Mbagathi peace process (2004), came to an end in 2012 and gave way to the Federal Government. However, the actions of the federal government and Parliament, marked by their inefficiency and corruption, and their re-election, have been the cause of dispute and successive negotiations between the federated states and opposition groups within the respective states as well as between the different clans that make up the social structure of the country.

The various forums for negotiation and dialogue in Somalia remained blocked or beset by many difficulties. Firstly, there were no contacts or initiatives for dialogue between the Somali federal government and the armed group al-Shabaab. In addition, relations between the federal government and some federated states deteriorated. In particular, the state of Jubaland ended up in military conflict with the federal government in December despite attempts at mediation. Meanwhile, tensions spiked between Somalia and Ethiopia over an agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somaliland in January 2024. These tensions affected Ethiopia's future role in the AU mission and led to regional strain and alignments around both countries. This tension did not subside until December, when both countries signed an agreement facilitated by Türkiye.⁵⁹ There was also a climate of uncertainty surrounding the future mission that was to replace ATMIS in January 2025 (AUSSOM) due to disagreements over funding and troop-contributing countries.

Relations between the Somali federal government and some federal states deteriorated, in particular between the government and the state of Jubaland, which ended up in military conflict despite attempts at mediation

The main negotiating process in the country continued to involve the Somali government, the different political actors and the federated states in defining and structuring a federal republic. In July, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud opened the fifth session of the Federal Parliament. In a joint session of the Lower House and the Senate, the President commended the Federal Parliament for having succeeded in completing the examination of the first four chapters of the Interim Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia. He also indicated that the priority of the next session of Parliament would be to deal with laws relating to the democratisation of Somalia, namely on elections, political parties, human rights and the judiciary. He also repeated his government's commitment to hold direct and free elections. Several laws were approved in the following months, including the draft law on elections, political parties and organisations and the creation of an independent electoral commission, for which he had UNSOM's support.⁶⁰ These discussions in the Somali Parliament created a climate of tension as a result of Mohamud's attempt to increase presidential power, so a meeting was held in April between the president and former President Sheikh Sharif in Kenya, where no agreement was reached. Later, Sheikh Sharif held a meeting with other Somali opposition actors in Kenya to form an opposition coalition to the government.

Some of these laws under discussion in the Somali Parliament had to be transposed to all member states of the federation, which stoked tensions between the federal government and the states, according to the United Nations. This dialogue between administrations took place as part of the National Consultative Council (NCC), which brings together the federal government and the member states, except the state of Puntland, which withdrew from it in 2023. At the opening of the session of Puntland's regional legislative body in June, the president of Puntland said that the region was willing to engage in direct dialogue with the federal government on issues related to Somalia's national strategic priorities, such as fiscal federalism, the national security structure, the sharing of resources and power and the national justice model. President Mohamud had also expressed a desire to engage in dialogue with Puntland.

Apart from the strain between the Somali federal government and Puntland, tensions have increased between Mogadishu and other member states, such as South West and Jubaland. In September, Prime Minister Barre travelled to Baidoa, the capital of the state of South West, to meet with regional President Lafta-Gareen in a bid to prevent tensions from rising, but both

⁵⁹ See the summary on Ethiopia-Somalia in this chapter.

⁶⁰ UN Security Council, *La situación en Somalia. Informe del Secretario General*, United Nations, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024.

sides mobilised their troops in response to the threat of confrontation. The state of Jubaland also amended its Constitution to abolish presidential term limits and make it easier for its president, Ahmed Madobe, to run in future state elections, raising concerns within the federal government. A meeting of the NCC was held on 2 October but was cut short on 7 October when the president of Jubaland walked out in disagreement about holding regional elections. Discussions resumed on 27 October without Madobe and on 30 October the remaining NCC members agreed to postpone the elections until September 2025. These growing tensions and disagreements between Mogadishu and the member states centred around the centralisation of power by the federal government. In November, these tensions were aggravated by the breakdown of relations between Jubaland and Mogadishu. While the federal government had proposed postponing regional elections to September 2025 under the one-person-one-vote model, Jubaland unilaterally decided to hold elections under an indirect election model and suspended cooperation with Mogadishu. On 25 November, Ahmed Madobe was re-elected as the state's president. **The federal government declared this illegal and despite Kenya's attempts at mediation, both sides mobilised their respective armies. In December, clashes broke out, resulting in at least 75 deaths** in the town of Ras Kamboni and the defeat and subsequent withdrawal of federal soldiers from the Lower Juba region. At the end of the year, fighting continued in the Gedo region, where more federal troops were sent.⁶¹

The UN continued to provide technical, financial and logistical support for inter-state and sub-regional reconciliation. These included facilitating a meeting between the governments of Puntland and Galmudug to resolve inter-clan conflicts, supporting efforts by the Galmudug State Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation to strengthen the ceasefire between the Sacad and Leelkase sub-clans by promoting dialogue. Moreover, a committee was set up to facilitate dialogue and build consensus on disputed lands through partnership agreements with the UN and the state of Galmudug and to respond to the escalation of inter-clan conflict and related communal tensions in the Gedo region, among other issues. With the support of UNSOM and UNDP, the Jubaland authorities sent a high-level government delegation to Luuq District to facilitate reconciliation and restore peace and stability in the region.

Gender, peace and security

Little progress was made in implementing the women, peace and security agenda and gender-based violence remained serious. The UN continued to provide support

to achieve the goal of a 30 per cent quota for women in the Somali federal government. UNSOM organised workshops on the electoral system and in particular on consolidating the minimum 30 per cent quota, targeting representatives of civil society organisations and representatives of the minority Bantu community. UNSOM and UNDP supported national consultations at the federal, state and district levels to review the Interim Constitution, with representatives of institutions at different levels of government, civil society, women, youth and communities from the states of Jubaland, South West, Hirshabelle and Galmudug and from the Banaadir Regional Administration. Furthermore, with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), a project was created to establish women's networks in 17 districts, made up of around 250 female leaders from various sectors, including civil society.⁶² Each network includes about 15 women community leaders from different backgrounds who oversee and support referrals of victims of gender-based violence and work together with traditional elders and peace committees to resolve conflicts. Through a joint programme, 300 women leaders, local advisors, police officers, military personnel and members of civil society organisations (50 from each of the federal member states and from Banaadir) received early warning training to prevent conflict and sexual and gender-based violence.

Somalia – Somaliland	
Negotiating actors	Federal government of Somalia, Republic of Somaliland
Third parties	Türkiye, Norway
Relevant agreements	
Summary:	The territory of the current self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland received its name when the British Empire took control of the Egyptian administration in 1884. After signing successive treaties with the ruling Somali sultans in the region, it established a protectorate called British Somaliland. In 1960, when the protectorate became independent from Britain, it was called the State of Somaliland. Four days later, on 1 July 1960, Somaliland joined Italian Somalia, forming the State of Somalia. In the mid-1980s, resistance movements supported by Ethiopia emerged throughout the country. Notable among these was the Somali National Movement (SNM), which rose up in Somaliland, leading to the Somaliland War of Independence, which toppled the Siad Barre regime and started the Somali Civil War in 1991, which continues to this day. On 18 May 1991, the northern clans proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Somaliland, comprising the administrative regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag and Sool. Somaliland is not internationally recognised, but it has its own Constitution (2001), currency and government, as well as greater political stability than Somalia, helped by the influence of the dominant Isaaq

61 See chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola d Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025.! Report on armed conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Icaria: Barcelona, 2025.

62 UN Peacebuilding Commission, “Growing Momentum for Women’s Leadership in Somalia’s Peace Efforts”, *ONU*, June 2024.

clan (80% of the population). The multiparty elections of 2005 were internationally observed and represented a push for international recognition as a sovereign state, though it remains limited. Somaliland's independence has not been officially recognised by any UN member state or international organisation, ceding leadership to the AU in the decision. The AU has been considering Somaliland's application for membership in the bloc and its approach as an "exceptional case", although the AU itself has expressed fear that formal recognition of Somaliland would encourage other secessionist movements in Africa. Over 15 peace processes have been held in Somalia, including the Somaliland dispute. At the 2012 London International Conference, actors from the international community proposed to hold negotiations to resolve the dispute between Somalia and Somaliland. Since then, six rounds of negotiations have been held (in London, Dubai, Ankara, Djibouti and twice in Istanbul). The seventh (Istanbul III) failed in January 2015 and the process was interrupted. Turkey has been encouraging attempts at rapprochement between the sides since then.

The exploratory dialogue between Somalia and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland was put on hold following the agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somaliland on 1 January 2024. This dialogue explored the possible incorporation of Somaliland into the federation and culminated in a meeting between the presidents of Somalia and Somaliland in Djibouti on 28 and 29 December 2023. Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh has made many attempts to use his good offices and facilitate dialogue between the parties over the past two decades. **Ethiopia and Somaliland announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding,⁶³ which triggered a serious diplomatic crisis between both administrations and Somalia.** This agreement would give landlocked Ethiopia the opportunity to obtain a permanent naval base and commercial maritime service in the Gulf of Aden by leasing a 20-kilometre stretch of coastline for a period of 50 years, as detailed by the Ethiopian and Somaliland governments. In exchange, according to Somaliland's President Muse Bihi Abdi, Ethiopia would internationally recognise the region as an independent country. Addis Abeba clarified that it still had to evaluate the request and promised "an in-depth evaluation to adopt a position regarding Somaliland's efforts to win official recognition".⁶⁴ The deal revolves around the port of Berbera, which was recently expanded by UAE-based port logistics company DP World. Ethiopia has historically sought to diversify its access to the sea, as 95% of its trade is conducted through Djibouti. The deal also included leasing land in Somaliland to build a naval base. In exchange, Somaliland would receive the equivalent value of shares in Ethiopian Airlines. This announcement triggered a new diplomatic crisis between Somalia, Somaliland and Ethiopia that took on regional dimensions due to the regional alliances of Ethiopia and Somalia. Somalia declared the agreement

void and even threatened Ethiopia with war if necessary to preserve its national sovereignty, as Somalia continues to view Somaliland as part of Somalia, despite its de facto independence in 1991, which lacks international recognition. As a result, there was an increase in tension and hostile rhetoric between Ethiopia and Somalia in 2024, which prompted Türkiye to intervene to promote dialogue between both countries. Ankara's efforts bore fruit in December 2024, with the agreement reached between both countries.⁶⁵

Maghreb – North Africa

Libya	
Negotiating actors	Government of National Unity (GNU), Government of National Stability (GNS), Presidential Council, High State Council (HSC), House of Representatives (HoR), LNA/ALAF
Third parties	UN; Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Germany, France, Italy, UK, USA, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Türkiye, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia (Berlin Process)
Relevant agreements	Libyan Political Agreement or Skhirat Agreement (2015), Ceasefire agreement (2020)

Summary:

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

63 Faisal Ali, *Ethiopia and Somaliland reach agreement over access to ports*, The Guardian, 1 January 2024.

64 David Ehl, *Polémico acuerdo: salida al mar a cambio de reconocimiento*, DW, 4 January 2024.

65 See the summary on Ethiopia-Somalila in this chapter.

government and provided for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in December 2021. The elections were not held in a context of divisions and power struggles that led to the reformation of two parallel governments, opening a new stage of uncertainty in the country.

Three years after the presidential and legislative elections were postponed indefinitely, **diplomatic efforts failed to unblock the impasse in Libya and the political and institutional fracture continued into 2024.** The dispute continued between the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), recognised by the UN and headed by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah, with the support of the High Council of State, and the Tobruk-based Government of National Stability (GNS), led by Prime Minister Osama Hamad and backed by the House of Representatives and the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA or ALAF) led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. The United Nations and several international actors attempted to mediate the conflict, but at the end of the year disagreements persisted on key issues related to the electoral laws that would regulate future elections, whether or not a unity government would be formed before the vote, how to ensure an inclusive process and other issues. At the same time, the ceasefire in force since 2020 was generally upheld and the levels of violence fell well below those reported in the period prior to the cessation of hostilities agreement. However, persistent political tensions and some specific episodes raised alarms about the risk of escalation and violent confrontation in the country.⁶⁶

In the opening months of the year, the UN Special Representative for Libya and leader of the UN mission in the country (UNSMIL) continued his efforts to try to unblock the political process. Given the lack of progress in reaching a consensus on electoral rules, in November 2023 Abdoulaye Bathily had attempted to promote a new format of dialogue between key institutional actors on both sides, with the exception of the Tobruk government (not recognised by the UN). This yielded no results and led to **Bathily's resignation in May after 18 months in office. The Senegalese diplomat criticised the Libyan leaders' resistance and lack of political will and warned against delays to maintain a status quo at the expense of the Libyan population.**⁶⁷ Meanwhile, during the first half of the year, there were reports of some initiatives and attempts at facilitation by other third parties (the Arab League and Morocco) that also ultimately failed. Following Bathily's departure, the acting UN special representative, US diplomat Stephanie Koury, took on the role of mediator and held meetings with various

political, social and international actors during 2024. In the middle of the year, alongside other crises (such as the divisions within the High Council of State), the rival governments' dispute over the Central Bank escalated significantly and forces mobilised on both sides. **The crisis over the Central Bank**, which concentrates public reserves and is one of the few institutions that serves both administrations, **was diffused following the intervention of the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Koury facilitated the negotiations between the parties, which reached an agreement on the candidates to lead the Central Bank in late September.** In the midst of this crisis, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary di Carlo also visited Libya and met with several actors in Tripoli, Benghazi and Qubba and urged an end to the political deadlock and progress in the reconciliation process in the country. Di Carlo also held several meetings with diplomatic representatives in Tripoli and Tunis in June to explore ways to break the impasse in Libya.

Despite the nationwide political and institutional deadlock, elections were held in 58 municipalities in November. These were the first elections to be held simultaneously in both eastern and western Libya since 2014. The vote, which had a 77% turnout and would be held in another 60 municipalities starting in January 2025, was hailed as proof of the potential for a peaceful transition in the country. However, the UN Secretary-General stressed that these elections could not replace the necessary presidential and parliamentary elections in the country. In this context, **in mid-December, Koury announced a new UNSMIL plan aimed at moving forward on a political agreement and on holding elections.**⁶⁸ According to Koury, the process, which takes a flexible and progressive approach, will be structured in two stages. In the first, UNSMIL will convene a technical committee made up of Libyan experts who will be responsible for seeking alternatives to overcome the disputed issues surrounding the electoral laws and thus hold elections in the shortest possible time, with guarantees that they will take place within the planned timeline. In the second stage, the mission aims to facilitate a national dialogue to expand consensus and address the root causes of the conflict. Since then, Koury (as well as DiCarlo in New York) has been in contact with Libyan institutional actors to address this facilitation process. During the second half of the year, discussions continued about who would occupy the position of UN special representative in Libya. The renewal of the UNSMIL mandate also highlighted the tensions between various international actors with interests in and/or who support actors on different sides in Libya. In October, the UN Security

66 See the summary on Libya in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

67 UNSMIL, *SRSB Abdoulaye Bathily's Remarks to the Security Council Meeting on Libya*, 16 April 2024.

68 UNSMIL, *DSRSB Koury's remarks to the UN Security Council*, 16 December 2024.

Council passed Resolution 2755, which extended the mission's mandate for just three months, with an automatic additional nine-month extension conditional on an agreement on the appointment of a new special representative by 31 January 2025.⁶⁹

In addition to the intra-Libyan negotiations, **the activities of the international monitoring committee and the working groups established as part of the Berlin process also continued throughout 2024**, with various actors involved.⁷⁰ The security working group held its first plenary meeting since July 2023 in Sirte in October, with the participation of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission. The meeting stressed the need to unify military institutions and reorganise the different armed groups operating in Libya, as well as to expedite the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from the country. In June, the economic working group met for the first time since October 2023 and discussed Libya's efforts to develop a unified budget and push for economic reforms. The working group on IHL and human rights promoted activities to support the rights of free association and peaceful assembly.

Gender, peace and security

In a rare dynamic, mediation efforts on behalf of the United Nations were led by two senior women for most of 2024, Stephanie Koury and Rosemary Di Carlo, and they were expected to be joined by the new female special representative appointed in early 2025. **Libyan women continued to press their demands for a greater role in decision-making over Libya's political future.** In October, Hala Bugaighis, representing the Libyan Women, Peace and Security Advisory Group, laid out the challenges faced by Libyan women in achieving substantive participation before the UN Security Council. These include limitations on movement, restrictions on civil society organisations and the persecution of human rights activists and defenders, particularly in virtual spaces. Bugaighis called for greater engagement by the international community to end attacks and intimidation affecting Libyan women and asked UNSMIL to step up its monitoring of violations against women activists in the country. During the second half of the year, UNSMIL also conducted a study on the challenges facing women to participate in elections. Forty-one women had registered as candidates for the elections due to be held in 2021. The study identified challenges regarding cultural norms, financial barriers and bureaucratic obstacles and recommended the establishment of platforms to connect women involved in public affairs. Challenges facing women in local governance were also discussed in meetings with Koury.

Morocco – Western Sahara

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

Summary:

The attempts to mediate and find a negotiated solution to the Western Sahara conflict led to a cease-fire agreement in 1991. Since then, and despite the existence of a formal negotiations framework under the auspices of the UN, the Western Sahara peace process has failed. The successive proposals and the many rounds of negotiations has not led to an agreement between the parties, all of which maintain their red lines: Morocco insists on its territorial claims and is only willing to accept a status of autonomy, whereas the POLISARIO Front claims there is a need to hold a referendum that includes the option of independence. Negotiations on Western Sahara –recognised as a territory which is yet to be decolonised- have been determined by the large asymmetry between the actors in dispute, the inability of the UN to set up a consultation on the future of this territory, and regional rivalry between Morocco and Algeria –a key support for the POLISARIO front- and by the support given to Rabat by some key international actors, such as the USA or France. This, in real terms, has meant a prevalence of the Moroccan thesis when approaching the conflict. In late 2020, following incidents with Morocco in Guerguerat area, the POLISARIO Front terminated the ceasefire agreement.

The impasse persisted throughout 2024 and negotiations to address the Western Sahara issue were not resumed, though the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy continued to try to revive the process with various diplomatic efforts. Throughout the year, Staffan de Mistura was in contact with both sides (the government of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front), as well as with Algeria, Mauritania, member countries of the UN Security Council, states comprising the Group of Friends of Western Sahara and other actors interested in the dispute. The situation on the ground continued to be characterised by low-intensity hostilities between the forces of Rabat and the POLISARIO Front in a context further marked by persistent regional tension between Morocco and Algeria. Faced with this scenario, and considering the suspension of the ceasefire agreement that had been in force since 1991 (the POLISARIO Front withdrew from it in late 2020), **Staffan de Mistura proposed a cessation of hostilities for the occasion of Ramadan in February. However, the proposal yielded no results.** Morocco responded that it remained committed to the ceasefire agreement but also claimed the right to act in self-defence. Meanwhile, the POLISARIO Front said that calling for a truce without addressing

⁶⁹ Ghanaian diplomat Hanna Serwaa Tetteh was named to the position (24 January 2025).

⁷⁰ The security working group is co-led by France, Italy, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the AU; the political working group is co-led by the UN, Algeria, Germany and the Arab League; the IHL and human rights working group is co-led by the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UN; and the economic working group is co-led by Egypt, the US, the EU and the UN.

the underlying causes that led to the suspension of the 1991 agreement and without a genuine peace process was tantamount to ignoring the reality on the ground.

In their contacts with Staffan de Mistura and in their public statements, the parties maintained their positions. The POLISARIO Front insisted that the matter of Western Sahara requires a peaceful, fair and lasting solution that respects the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people. Morocco repeated that its autonomy plan (presented in 2007) was the only way to address the dispute and persisted in its international campaign to gain support for it and its claims to sovereignty over Western Sahara. In this regard, **Morocco's position was bolstered after France explicitly supported its plan.** On 30 July, in a letter addressed to King Mohammed VI, French President Emmanuelle Macron declared that the autonomy plan was “the only way” to reach a political solution to the conflict over Western Sahara. France has always been aligned with Morocco's interests in this dispute, but until then it had described the plan as a “serious and credible basis” for discussion and had not formally endorsed it. The language of the French president's letter was considered even more forceful than Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's words in March 2022 when, in a change of the Spanish position, he described the Moroccan plan as “the most serious, credible and realistic option” to resolve the dispute.⁷¹ Macron's letter was preceded by statements from senior French officials expressing their interest in supporting major investments in Western Sahara. The French position was condemned by the POLISARIO Front and criticised as support for Morocco's expansionist policies. It was also rejected by Algeria, which described the decision as untimely and counterproductive and recalled its ambassador to France.

Disagreements also persisted over the format in which negotiations should eventually resume throughout the year. Morocco insisted that the only possible format was a round table, with Algeria and Mauritania involved, as promoted by the previous UN special envoy, Horst Köhler. The POLISARIO Front repeated that only bilateral dialogue was acceptable. In the same vein, Algeria ruled out the round table format because it suggests that the dispute is a regional conflict. Amidst this deadlock and as part of closed-door talks in the UN Security Council on renewing the UN mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), **Staffan de Mistura reportedly raised the idea of partitioning the territory** in October. Both Rabat and the POLISARIO Front rejected the idea, which envisaged the creation of an independent state in southern Western Sahara and the absorption of the rest of it by Morocco.

The debate on the resolution to renew MINURSO once again brought to light tensions surrounding the Western Sahara issue. The mandate has not been renewed unanimously since 2017, but this was the first time since Algeria, a key supporter of the POLISARIO Front, participated in drafting the text as a member of the UN Security Council (after joining as a non-permanent member in July). Algeria diplomatically disputed parts of the text with the US, which was responsible for the draft resolution. It proposed that the preamble should refer to the fact that the OHCHR had not been able to visit Western Sahara in the previous nine years, as cited in a report by the UN Secretary-General in July.⁷² Algeria also suggested that the Security Council should expand the mission's mandate to monitor violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. However, these changes were not approved and were not incorporated into the text of Resolution 2765, which renewed the mission's mandate until October 2025.⁷³ Algeria objected to this and did not vote. On the legal front, **the Court of Justice of the European Union confirmed the annulment of the association agreements between the EU and Morocco for including Western Sahara in October.** At the end of the year, some analysts warned of contextual factors that added risks to the dispute over Western Sahara, including the tension between Morocco and Algeria, which has triggered an arms race, pressure from Sahrawi groups on the POLISARIO Front to take a more belligerent approach and the possible repercussions of Donald Trump's new administration in the US, taking into account that he had taken an openly pro-Moroccan stance in his first administration by saying that he recognised Rabat's sovereignty over Western Sahara.⁷⁴

Gender, peace and security

The UN continued to call for progress in the search for a peaceful solution to the Western Sahara issue in 2024, with the full and meaningful participation of women. Female MINURSO observers accounted for 25% of the deployed force (57 of the 229 personnel in the military component) during the year, above the 20% target set in the gender parity strategy for uniformed personnel in UN missions for the period 2018–2028.

71 See the summary on Morocco-Western Sahara in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

72 UN General Assembly, *Informe del secretario general: Cuestión del Sáhara Occidental*, A/79/229, 24 July 2024.

73 Security Council Report, “Western Sahara: Vote on a draft resolution renewing MINURSO's mandate”, *What's in Blue*, 31 October 2024.

74 International Crisis Group, *Managing tensions between Algeria and Morocco*, Middle East and North Africa Report no.247, 29 November 2024.

Western Africa

Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)

Negotiating actors	Government of Cameroon; four interim governments (IGs) proclaiming themselves representative of the people of Ambazonia: IG Sisiku (Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, first President of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, and Vice President Dabney Yerima); the other three IGs are derived from IG Sisiku, each created after the previous IG refused to give up power: IG Sako (Samuel Sako); IG Marianta (Iya Marianta Njomia); IG Chris Anu (ally of Leke Olivier Fongunueh's Red Dragons armed group); the Ambazonia Governing Council coalition (AGovC, led by Cho Ayaba, armed wing Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF); other political, military and social movements, and religious groups: Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT), which includes APLM/SOCADEF, FSCW, MoRISC, SCARM, SCAPO, SCNC (North America faction) and RoAN; Southern Cameroons Stakeholder Platform (SCSP), which includes political movements, civil society, armed groups, religious groups: IG Sisiku, SCNC (except the North America faction), Consortium, Global Takumbeng, SCAWOL, SCEW, SNWOT, SCCOP, AIPC, AYC, SCYC, SCCAF, WCA, DAC, CHRDA, CHRI, Reach Out, prisoners organisations, displaced population and refugee organisations, traditional leaders and others.
Third parties	Church, civil society organisations, USIP, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN), Vatican, Canada
Relevant agreements	Buea Declaration (1993, AAC1), ACC2 Declaration (1994), National Dialogue (30th September-4th October, 2019)

Summary:

After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern British Cameroon (20% of the country's population) to feel politically and economically marginalised by state institutions, which are controlled by the French-speaking majority. These movements demand a return to the federal model that existed between 1961 and 1972. In 1972, a referendum was held in which a new Constitution was adopted that replaced the federal state with a unitary one and granted more powers to the president, so the southern part of British Cameroon (known as Southern Cameroons) lost its autonomy and was transformed into the two

current provinces of North West and South West. In 1993, representatives of the English-speaking groups held the All Anglophone Conference (AAC1) in Buea, which resulted in the Buea Declaration (which demanded constitutional amendments to restore the federation of 1961). The AAC2 was held in Bamenda in 1994, which concluded that if the federal state were not restored, Southern Cameroons would declare independence. Begun over sectoral issues in 2016, the conflict worsened in late 2017, with the declaration of independence on 1 October 2017 and the subsequent government repression to quell the secessionist movement, there was an escalation of insurgent activity. Attempts at negotiation have been affected by divisions in the government and by the complexity and fragmentation of the secessionist movement, whose political leaders are imprisoned, such as the first president of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, as well as in the diaspora, which reduces its influence on armed groups on the ground. Meanwhile, the proliferation of armed groups, which in some cases do not respond to political leadership, makes resolving the conflict even more difficult. None of the initiatives to date, notably the All Anglophone Conference (AAC3) pending since 2018, the HD-facilitated Swiss track⁷⁵ that began in 2019 and the Grand National Dialogue promoted by Paul Biya's government in 2019 have achieved substantive progress. In 2022, Cameroon certified the completion of the Swiss track and contacts began with Canadian facilitation, which were publicised in early 2023 and were immediately denied by the government of Cameroon.

No new meetings were made public in 2024 after the failure of those held between late 2022 and early 2023.

The exploratory meetings begun in late 2022 and early 2023 between the political and military opposition in the English-speaking regions and the Cameroonian government, facilitated by Canada and announced by Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly on 20 January 2023, were denied by the Cameroonian government three days later and there has been no record of any new contact ever since. This standoff occurred amid growing tension resulting from the upcoming presidential election in October 2025, in which current President Paul Biya will run. Biya is 92 years old. Furthermore, violence and fighting continued in the English-speaking regions, whilst the armed conflict expanded into the area around Lake Chad in Cameroon's Far North region. Separatist political and military movements in the English-speaking regions remained divided over the strategy to be pursued to achieve their objectives.

Various actors in the international community have attempted to draw attention to the gravity of the situation in the English-speaking regions. At the 10 June session of the UN Security Council, Japan and Russia voiced concern about the ongoing violence in the region, France urged dialogue between the parties and South Korea called for the launch of a Cameroon-led conflict resolution initiative. In an attempt to restart dialogue between the parties, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk met with Prime Minister Joseph Dion

⁷⁵ The Swiss track was an initiative promoted by Switzerland with the support and facilitation of the organisation HD. Established in 2019, its activities were certified as finalised by the government of Cameroon in 2022. It had the support of the Friends of the Swiss Contact Group (European Union, United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom).

Ngute and other key ministers on 5, 6 and 7 August, complaining of violations by both the separatists and the Cameroonian Army. He also cited a lack of accountability and called for improved humanitarian access and dialogue. The political and military movements in the Northwest and Southwest regions criticised Türk for not having visited the English-speaking regions.⁷⁶ In May, Daniel Capo called for a cessation of hostilities and the pursuit of self-determination for the English-speaking regions through peaceful means.⁷⁷ Capo is the former leader of the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) coalition in exile in Hong Kong, which is currently led by Ayaba Cho Lucas, who is also the commander of the armed wing of the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF). Capo had been deputy commander and spokesperson of the ADF until 2023, when he split from the group and became president of the political movement Ambazonia People's Rights Advocacy Group and founded the armed group Ambazonia Dark Forces, becoming critical of the AGovC coalition's strategy. However, it is not known how Capo's call might influence the separatist movement as a whole and whether the Ambazonia Dark Forces may have renounced violence. The government dismissed the announcement and the ADF called him a traitor. Later, on 24 September, Norwegian police arrested Ayaba Cho Lucas, the head of the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) and commander-in-chief of the group's armed wing, the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF), for allegedly inciting others to commit crimes against humanity in the Northwest and Southwest regions. On the same day, there were reports of raids on the homes of AGovC/ADF affiliates in the US, although no arrests were made. At the same time, the AGovC political-military coalition reaffirmed its alliance with Nigerian separatists at the Biafran Government in Exile conference in Finland, held from 28 November to 2 December 2024, thereby extending their October 2023 agreement.

Gender, peace and security

Cameroonian civil society remained active in promoting the women, peace and security agenda in the country, as well as in calling for inclusive dialogue between the warring parties, especially through women's organisations. These included the National Women's Convention for Peace in Cameroon (created in 2021 and bringing together 80 organisations and networks from all regions of the country, which had called for peace in 2021), the SW/NW Women's Task Force coalition (involved in developing a women's manual for peacebuilding in support of grassroots initiatives) and

the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM). The National Women's Convention for Peace welcomed Daniel Capo's call for a ceasefire in May.⁷⁸ Various government bodies made similar efforts. A workshop was held in Yaoundé in June, bringing together 1,229 women from civil society organisations involved in DDR initiatives in the Lake Chad Basin countries (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger), organised by the National Committee for DDR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and UN Women, in collaboration with the Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes (ALVF-EN) and the Local Youth Corner (LOYOC). In September, IOM⁷⁹ drew attention to this momentum by highlighting the national commitments and pending challenges that the Gender Strategy of the National Committee for DDR in Cameroon had outlined for the period 2021-2025.⁸⁰ This strategy included action to integrate gender perspectives into various policies, stating that ensuring women's active participation in peace processes not only improves their effectiveness, but also addresses the specific needs of women in conflict-affected areas.

Mali	
Negotiating actors	Government, Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD) that brings together Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) –MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA
Third parties	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, civil society organisations, Mauritania, Carter Center (Independent Observer of the Peace Agreement)
Relevant agreements	Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2015)

Summary:

The armed conflict affecting Mali since early 2012 resulted in an institutional crisis –which materialized in a military coup– and Tuareg and jihadist groups progressively taking control of the northern part of the country. Since the conflict started, several international actors, including ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, have promoted initiatives leading to re-establishing the constitutional order and recovering Mali's territorial integrity. In parallel with the militarist approaches to face the crisis, exploratory contacts were held with some armed groups (MNLA and Ansar Dine) to find a negotiated way out of the crisis. Despite the announcement of a commitment to the cessation of hostilities from these insurgent groups, at the start of 2013 an offensive by Ansar

76 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Cameroon", *OHCHR*, 7 August 2024.

77 Atangana, David, "Daniel Capo dumps Ambazonia armed struggle, embraces diplomacy", *Mimi Mefo Info*, 6 May 2024.

78 National Women's Convention for Peace in Cameroon, *Responding to Daniel Capo's Statement*, National Women's Convention for Peace in Cameroon, 23 July 2024.

79 IOM, "Women, Peace, and Security in Cameroon: Bridging gaps for lasting change", *IOM*, 27 September 2024.

80 Comité National de Désarmement, de Démobilisation et de Réintégration, "Stratégie Genre du Comité National de Désarmement, de Démobilisation et de Réintégration du Cameroun (2021-2025)", *République du Cameroun*, 2021.

Dine precipitated an international military intervention led by France. In May 2014 a new negotiation process was started, led by Algeria, where the Mali Government negotiated on both sides with the two coalitions created by the armed groups: the Coordination of Azawad Movements (groups favourable to a federalist/secessionist formula), and the Platform (groups supporting the Government). In July 2015 the signing of a peace agreement was made possible between the Government, the CMA and the Platform, in Algiers. The jihadist groups were left aside in the negotiation table, which kept alive the hostilities from these groups in the new context of implementing the clauses present in the peace agreement. After the coup d'état in May 2021, the CMA and Platform, which had been rival groups thus far, joined together in the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD) coalition.

Mali remained embroiled in an atmosphere of rising insecurity and political tension, which hampered the progress of the peace negotiations and domestic dialogue in the country. The year began with the Malian military junta announcing the end of the 2015 Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, known as the Algiers Agreement, and the start of a new national dialogue for peace and reconciliation. On 25 January 2024, the military junta officially and **immediately terminated the Algiers Agreement**, describing it as “absolutely inapplicable” after the resumption of armed clashes in late 2023 that pitted the Malian Armed Forces, supported by the paramilitary Wagner Group, against the Tuareg Arab armed groups that signed the agreement, and the deterioration of the security situation in northern Mali. The military junta also accused Algeria, which has acted as mediator, of interfering in its internal affairs. A day later, the military junta issued a decree to establish a committee to organise new nationwide peace and reconciliation talks without setting a timetable or determining which actors would participate in them. This decree was linked to the announcement made in early 2023 by Colonel Assimi Goïta, the leader of the junta, establishing direct dialogue between Malians to “prioritise national ownership of the peace process”. Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, the spokesman for the rebel coalition Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP), which brings together the groups that signed the 2015 peace agreement, blasted the new initiative as a “staged event” involving groups that are already aligned with the government. Ramadane also acknowledged the termination of the 2015 peace agreement and asked its members to update their objectives in light of the new situation.

Later, on 10 April, the Malian military junta announced a series of decisions that underscored its growing authoritarian turn, increasing tensions in the country.

In January, the military junta declared the “immediate termination” of the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement

For instance, it announced that the presidential election would be postponed until the country regained political stability and issued a decree suspending all political activities of politically oriented parties and associations until further notice, supposedly for reasons of security and to maintain public order. In response, many parties and civil society groups filed an appeal with the Supreme Court and said they would boycott the national dialogue. In this growing climate of tension and repression against the opposition, the first stage of the **Malian national dialogue** was held between 13 and 15 April, without the participation of the separatist armed groups of the CSP, the jihadist groups and other key political actors who boycotted it, claiming that it would only be used by the military to seek legitimacy and maintain power. The final stage of the national dialogue took place in the capital, Bamako, from 6 to 10 May, and included a recommendation to extend the transition period from two to five years (until 2027), as well as to allow Colonel Assimi Goïta, the current transitional president and head of the military junta, to run for president when the election is finally held. It also recommended opening a dialogue with the jihadist armed groups. However, various opposition groups, including the CSP, described the dialogue as a “grotesque political trap”. Weeks later in Geneva, exiled Malian politicians signed a declaration forming a transitional government in exile and appointed exiled magistrate Mohamed Cherif Koné as the prime minister and minister of defence.

Later, on 17 August, the head of the High Islamic Council called for dialogue with armed groups to open a future window to resume peace talks, though no progress was made for the rest of the year. In October, the separatist coalition CSP announced the creation of a new coalition to guarantee the political and legal status of the territory of Azawad, called the Permanent Strategic Framework for the Defence of the People of Azawad (CSP-DPA), led by prominent separatist Bilal Ag Acherif.

The year ended with a significant deterioration of the security situation in the country, mainly in the north and centre. Separatist and jihadist armed groups were reluctant to cease hostilities whilst the military junta, backed by Russian paramilitaries, remained firmly opposed to any type of significant concession in any type of future negotiation.

Gender, peace and security

According to the Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker,⁸¹ the growing insecurity in the country was having significant impacts on women’s physical safety,

81 Georgetown Institute for Women, *Peace and Security, Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker* [Viewed on 10 February 2025].

with the number of attacks on civilians rising and repression increasing. Jihadist groups such as JNIM have demanded that women cover themselves completely and have beaten women who refuse to do so. As a result of the violence, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have named Mali as one of 22 countries that

will experience an increase in acute food insecurity by 2025, with more than 1.3 million people at risk, most of them women. In this regard, UN agencies reported that many women and children are already facing dire conditions due to months of blockades that prohibit the entry of international aid to their communities.