

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Nineteen peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2025, accounting for nearly 36% of the 53 worldwide. Most of them deteriorated, however.
- National dialogues were launched in both Mozambique and South Africa during the year, seeking to incorporate reforms and ease social and political tensions.
- The resolution of the various internal conflicts and regional crises facing Ethiopia was stalled by multiple endogenous and exogenous factors.
- The government of Senegal and a faction of the MFDC reaffirmed their commitment to peace in Casamance.
- The Qatari-US diplomatic initiative between the DRC and Rwanda failed whilst the M23/Rwanda offensive persisted, along with the progressive involvement of Burundi, which could lead to a regional escalation of the conflict.
- The peace agreement in South Sudan teetered on the brink of collapse following the arrest of former Vice President Riek Machar.

This chapter analyses the peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2025. 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 2025.

Table 2.1. **Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Africa in 2025**

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
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
Chad¹	The 18 armed groups that did not sign the Doha Agreement (2022) and that did not participate in the Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue (DNIS) formed the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR), including FACT and CCSMR. Government and Miski Self-Defense Committee	Community of Sant'Egidio
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	Eritrea, Ethiopia	United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, USA
Ethiopia	Government, political parties, political and social opposition, citizens	UNDP, EU, Germany, Norway, Berghof Foundation
Ethiopia (Amhara)	Ethiopia, Fano militia faction (Amhara Fano Popular Organization, AFPO)	Amhara Peace Council, AU, IGAD
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

1. In the case of Chad, there are two processes: firstly, a consultation process involving the faction of the insurgency that did not sign the 2022 Doha Agreement, facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio; and secondly, the negotiations and peace agreement in Miski (Tibesti region) between the Government and the Miski Self-Defence Committee.

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
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)
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia elHamra 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, social and political opposition	Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD)
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 (COSPAC)
Somalia	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political military movement Ahlu Sunna WalJama'a, clan and sub-clan leaders, Somaliland	UN, IGAD, Türkiye, AU
Somalia – Somaliland	Federal Government of Somalia, Republic of Somaliland	Türkiye, Norway
South Africa	Government, social and political opposition	--
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 Kitwang faction led by Simon Gatwech Dual and the faction headed by General Johnson Olony. Peace talks in Rome-Nairobi (Tumaini Initiative): Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NS-SSOG, 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-Nairobi negotiations: Kenya, Community of Sant'Egidio
Sudan	Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	'Quad' Mechanism or Quartet (USA, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and UAE), Trilateral Mechanism (UN, AU and the IGAD (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda), Switzerland, Türkiye, 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

*Those in bold are analysed in chapter 2.1.

2.1 Negotiations in 2025: regional trends

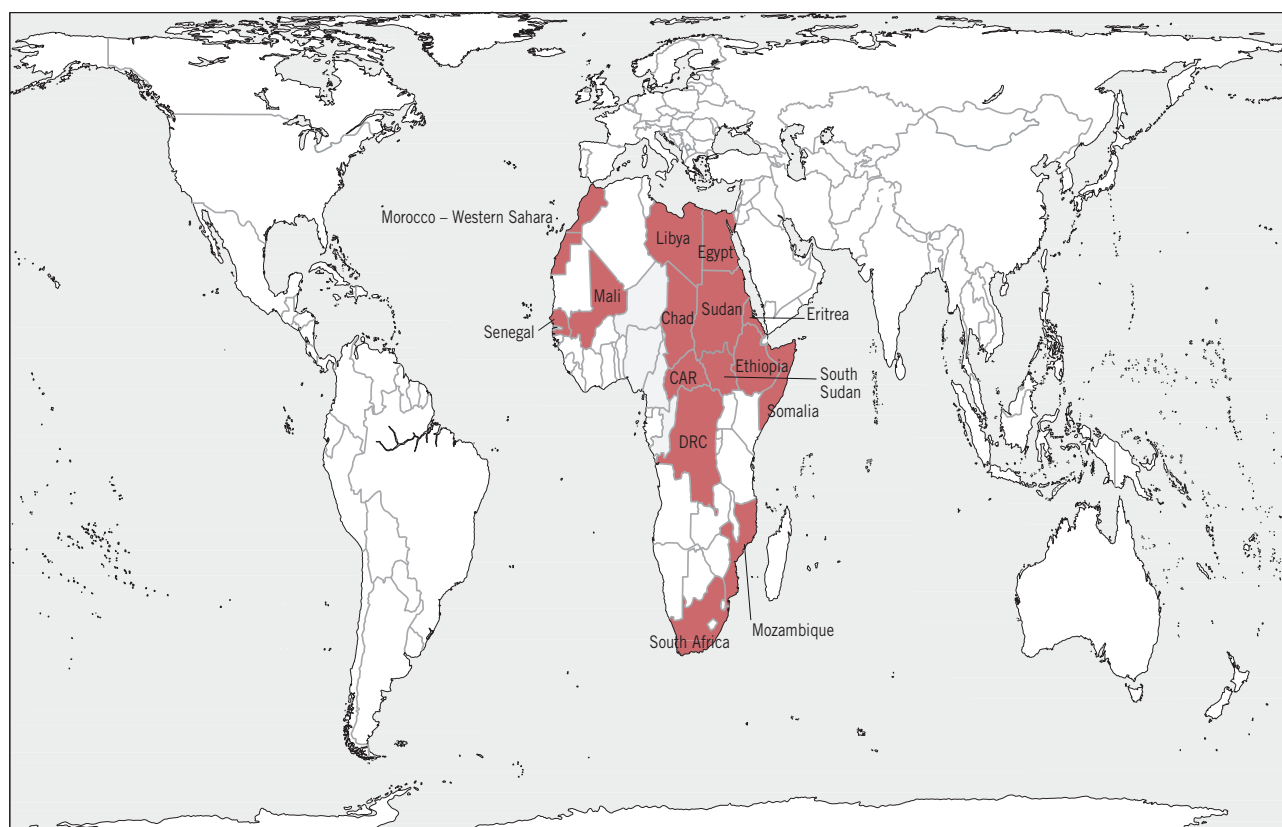
Throughout 2025, there were **19 peace processes and negotiations in Africa**, accounting for 36% of the 53 peace processes identified worldwide. This figure is similar to the one in previous years (20 peace processes and negotiations in 2024, 18 peace processes and negotiations in 2023, 15 in 2022, 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 (Amhara), 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), one in

West Africa (Senegal (Casamance)), two in North Africa (Libya and Morocco-Western Sahara) and the remaining two in southern Africa, in Mozambique and South Africa. **Three cases ceased to be analysed in 2025 compared to 2024 as a consequence of the lack of contacts and negotiations during the year: Mali, Cameroon and the Ethiopian region of Oromia.**³ Firstly, the **2015 Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (known as the Algiers Accords) was not reactivated**. It had been suspended by the Malian military junta in early 2024 following the resumption of armed clashes in late 2023 between the Malian Armed Forces, supported by Wagner Group paramilitaries, and the Arab-Tuareg

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.

3. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa in 2025



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2025

armed groups that had signed it. Furthermore, no negotiations of any kind took place with the armed movements of northern Mali and the security situation actually deteriorated. Secondly, **no progress was made**

towards reopening a negotiating process between the government of Cameroon and the separatist political-military movements of the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions since the end of the Swiss track (2019-2022) and Canadian facilitation (2022-2023). The Cameroonian government maintained its approach focused on a security-based response and the limited application of decentralisation measures, without resuming exploratory contacts similar to those promoted between 2022 and 2023. Furthermore, the political context was marked by tensions arising from the presidential election in October 2025, which made Paul Biya the longest-serving head of state in the world, in power since 1982. Thirdly, the **Ethiopian region of Oromia** remained mired in conflict and violence, marked by the **lack of negotiations** between the federal government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). The year was dominated by counterinsurgency operations, episodes of irregular violence and inter-communal conflicts, and no formal dialogue process comparable to the exploratory contacts held in Tanzania in 2023 was relaunched. There was no structured peace initiative mediated by third parties involving the OLA

as a whole. Instead, the federal government opted for a **dual strategy of military pressure and selective co-optation**, aimed at exploiting internal divisions within the insurgency. In this regard, in December 2025 the Ethiopian authorities announced the **surrender of over 200 OLA armed combatants in the East Wollega zone, following negotiations with regional and federal authorities**. This event was presented as a success of the government's strategy of combining military pressure with incentives for dialogue.⁴ Furthermore, a fourth case ceased to be analysed due to the **completion of the formal implementation of the 2019 peace agreement in Mozambique**, in relation to the armed conflict with RENAMO. In June 2023, the process was formally completed with the disarmament and demobilisation of the last group of former combatants and the closure of the last military base and its headquarters in Vunduzi, in Sofala province. Nevertheless, some aspects of the peace agreement remained pending, such as the decentralisation process and national reconciliation initiatives, as demonstrated by the post-electoral conflict of 2024 and the dialogue and negotiation initiatives arising from it, which are analysed in the chapter.

Seven of these 19 peace negotiations were linked to armed conflicts: Ethiopia (Amhara), Libya, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The other twelve negotiating processes took place in contexts

4. Kedir, Sadik, *Ethiopian army says over 200 armed fighters surrender in western Oromia*, Anadolu, 21 December 2025.

of socio-political crisis, which in some cases had also suffered episodes of war: Chad, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Ethiopia-Somalia (Somaliland), Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, Senegal (Casamance), Somalia-Somaliland, South Africa and Sudan-South Sudan. Some of the peace processes corresponded to conflicts that began in the last decade –Sudan (2023)–, 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 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 2025 only four 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 the agreement between the Ethiopian federal government and one of the Fano militia factions in the Amhara region; the CAR, between the government and the armed groups that did not abandon the peace process in December 2020, as well as the groups that did abandon it in 2020 and have gradually signed it in recent years; and Senegal, between the government and a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC).

Meanwhile, five of the other 19 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 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. Furthermore, national dialogue processes continued to grow between political and social actors in different countries, such as Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa.

All the peace processes and negotiations studied in Africa enjoyed third-party involvement and support.

These third parties included international organisations, regional organisations, states, religious and mediation- and facilitation-specialised organisations, with the exception of the national dialogue in South Africa. All these processes and negotiations had more than one actor performing mediation and facilitation tasks, with the UN and the AU playing the predominant role.

States also continued to play a prominent role as third parties in Africa, leading or supporting most of the peace processes and negotiations analysed.

In 2025, Türkiye played a notable role in the peace negotiations between Ethiopia and Somalia. Saudi Arabia, the US, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland, amongst other states, were involved in the negotiating process between the Sudanese Army and the RSF. Saudi Arabia also assisted the negotiations over the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Organisations specialised in mediation and facilitation were also important, especially the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which has played a major role in negotiations in Ethiopia, Libya, the CAR and Senegal in recent years. The same was true of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which worked to support negotiations in Chad, the CAR and South Sudan, just as it has done previously in Mozambique.

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 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

Three cases ceased to be analysed as negotiating processes in 2025 (Mali, Cameroon and Oromia) due to the lack of contacts and negotiations, whilst Mozambique completed the formal implementation of its 2019 peace agreement

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 Amhara 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. In many of these contexts, **amnesties and pardons** for crimes committed by armed groups and security forces during the conflicts formed part of the negotiating processes and the agreements reached. 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 Ethiopia, 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 2025, with some lacking any dialogue at all. The only initiative that trended positively during the year took place in Senegal, where the government and a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) reaffirmed their commitment to peace in the Casamance region. In February, both parties, under the auspices of Guinea-Bissau, the guarantor of the process, and with facilitation from the Centre for

Humanitarian Dialogue, held a meeting in which they renewed their commitment to disarmament, agreed on a presidential pardon for imprisoned rebels, amnesty for combatants and a reintegration programme. However, this commitment only involves one faction of the rebel group, which is also least powerful than the other two, and excludes the more radical faction led by Salif Sadio.

Some cases reported progress, although major challenges and difficulties persisted, such as the signing of some peace agreements with insurgent factions in the Ethiopian region of Amhara and in Chad. Nevertheless, the overall picture in both contexts was one of stagnation, paralysis and persistent violence and instability. There were also open challenges and problems in the national dialogue processes in **Ethiopia, South Africa and Mozambique**. In Ethiopia, the national dialogue made no substantive progress and remained in a prolonged deadlock, despite the formal continuity of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC). The national dialogue remained marginalised amid an agenda dominated by security-based responses, active armed conflicts and intense political polarisation. However, as early as the beginning of 2025, the dialogue was burdened by structural limitations, including deep distrust among the actors, the exclusion of key armed groups, a lack of minimum security conditions and the widespread perception of a lack of political independence. In March, the government of **Mozambique** and the leaders of the opposition political parties with seats in Parliament agreed to launch a **constitutional reform process by opening a National Dialogue**. Nevertheless, the configuration and format of the National Commission for Dialogue and Reform, the body implementing the dialogue, became the main focus of controversy, due to the lack of transparency in its selection of civil society representatives (three of its 21 members) and owing to the exclusion of central opposition figure Venâncio Mondlane. In fact, Mondlane had been behind the main political force (PODEMOS) staging the popular protests, but due to his subsequent departure from the party, he had no parliamentary representation when the Commission was formed and was not included. Though excluded for the time being, the new party created by Mondlane, ANAMOLA, submitted proposals to the Technical Commission that included revising the Constitution and the electoral body, as well as ensuring its formal inclusion in the process. The government of **South Africa** launched a National Dialogue to seek collective solutions to the social, political, economic and security crisis gripping the country. However, the process was weakened by significant absences, such as that of the Democratic Alliance, the second-largest party in the unity government, as well as criticism that the ANC was attempting to control the Dialogue and use it as a campaign platform ahead of the 2026 local elections. Finally, although the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** experienced one of the most critical years of the last decade, with the intensification of the

armed conflict in the east, notable diplomatic progress was made at the interstate level, with the signing of the **June and December peace agreements between the DRC and Rwanda**. This did not translate into a sustained reduction in violence, however, and a wide gap opened between diplomatic commitments and the reality on the ground due to the exclusion of the M23 from the interstate agreements and the complete lack of commitment to their implementation. Overall, **events in 2025 confirmed the exhaustion of African mediation frameworks (Luanda and Nairobi)** and the displacement of the diplomatic centre of gravity towards non-African third parties, especially Qatar and the US. Furthermore, the centrality in the agreements of economic interests linked to minerals and the persistence of structural causes, such as weak governance, territorial militarisation and armed fragmentation, severely limited the prospects for credible peace processes.

No progress was made in the rest of the dialogue and negotiation initiatives, including those in Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Ethiopia-Somalia, Libya, Morocco-Western Sahara, CAR, Somalia, Somalia-Somaliland, Sudan, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan. On the contrary, they were marked by paralysis and impasse, and in some cases teetered on the brink of collapse. In this regard, it is worth noting the interrelationships between different negotiating dynamics in Africa and how the negative trend of some processes shaped or influenced the course of others. The serious crisis between Eritrea and Ethiopia harmed the implementation of the 2022 peace agreement in the Ethiopian region of Tigray, a process that was on the verge of falling apart. The deadlock affecting the negotiating process initiated in 2018 between **Eritrea and Ethiopia** reached its most critical point, which triggered initiatives by various countries to promote the reactivation of dialogue between the parties, principally Saudi Arabia and the United States. Riyadh initiated a new mediation process between the two countries to prevent a new conflagration. The peace process in the **Ethiopian region of Tigray reached its most fragile point** since the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed in November 2022. The year was marked by a combination of incomplete implementation of the agreement, growing internal political and military fragmentation in Tigray and a deterioration in relations between Mekelle and Addis Ababa. From a formal perspective, the Pretoria Peace Agreement remained the framework of reference, but some of the most sensitive structural issues remained unimplemented: the territorial dispute over Western Tigray, the return of displaced persons, the complete withdrawal of non-federal forces, transitional justice and the full political reintegration of the TPLF. Furthermore,

Most peace processes in Africa in 2025 were marked by deterioration, stagnation, impasse and, ultimately, a lack of dialogue

the rivalry between the president of the Interim Regional Administration of the Tigray region at the time, Getachew Reda (appointed by the federal government), and TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael, culminated in Reda's dismissal in April and his replacement by Lieutenant General Tadesse Werede, a key figure and commander of the Tigrayan forces. This replacement was validated by the federal government. At the end of the year, tension between Mekelle and Addis Ababa seemed to be close to breaking the agreement and restarting hostilities. Meanwhile, **diplomatic confrontation and negotiating deadlock** persisted between **Egypt and Sudan on one side and Ethiopia on the other** regarding the management of the Nile River and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in particular. The tripartite dialogue process was not relaunched and the year was marked by unilateral actions and the growing internationalisation of the dispute.

With regard to the diplomatic tension between **Ethiopia and Somalia**, the signing on 11 December 2024 of the Ankara Declaration,⁵ mediated by Türkiye, put an end to the serious crisis caused by the memorandum of understanding previously signed between Ethiopia and the secessionist region of Somaliland in early 2024. Nevertheless, although some technical meetings were held during the first part of the year, by mid-year various analysts noted that the process had stalled despite Türkiye's efforts to relaunch it. Meanwhile, the crisis between **Somalia and Somaliland** resulting from the aforementioned memorandum of understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland remained open and dialogue remained completely interrupted; the Ankara Declaration, which did not involve Somaliland, widened the rift between Somalia and Somaliland. The creation of an **inclusive national dialogue platform** was announced in **Somalia**, conceived to align political leaders, clans and civil society against al-Shabaab and to strengthen the state's internal cohesion. The initiative received explicit backing from international partners, including the UN, the EU and the US, which considered it a necessary complement to military pressure. However, it did not translate into a sustained process, nor did it incorporate insurgent armed actors, limiting its impact. Furthermore, the lack of dialogue regarding al-Shabaab persisted, as did tensions around the electoral model, which part of the opposition and several federal states, especially Puntland and Jubaland, viewed as a unilateral attempt by President Mohamud to recentralise power, spiking tension and even causing sporadic clashes to break out in Jubaland between the federal government and regional authorities.

With regard to negotiations in North Africa, the political and institutional fracture in **Libya** persisted alongside acts of violence. Despite being low-intensity since the

5. Republic of Türkiye – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ankara Declaration by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia facilitated by the Republic of Türkiye*, 11 December 2024.

2020 ceasefire, this violence underscored the fragility of the situation and the challenges in addressing the political and armed conflict. The various initiatives promoted mainly by the UN during 2025 failed to unblock the Libyan process, despite the population's growing frustration with the status quo. The dialogue between **Morocco and the POLISARIO Front** aimed at trying to reactivate negotiations on Western Sahara remained deadlocked and the main development of the period was the more forceful international support for Moroccan arguments, backed by various countries and leading to the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2797, which in October expressly recognised Rabat's autonomy plan as the basis for negotiations to address the dispute.

In Central Africa, the **Central African Republic (CAR)** continued to experience chronic violence and a stalled peace process. The government maintained an official discourse of commitment to peace, though in practice it prioritised a strategy of military control and authoritarian centralisation supported by external security alliances. Sporadic progress on DDR and the reintegration of some armed groups into the peace agreement coexisted with insurgent fragmentation, the weakness of transitional justice and the prioritisation of coercive control over reconciliation. **The peace initiatives in Sudan were unsuccessful once again and failed to contain violence in the country during a year characterised by its de facto split into two areas of influence.** Following the Sudanese Armed Forces' (SAF) recapture of the capital, Khartoum, in March, which had been held by the paramilitary RSF since the beginning of the conflict, the SAF controlled the central, northern and eastern parts of the country. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) controlled the southern and western parts of the country following the capture of El Fasher, the capital of Darfur and the SAF's last bastion in the west, in October. This division was deepened by the formation of two parallel governments: one led by the SAF, internationally recognised and based in Port Sudan, and another headed by the RSF in Nyala, South Darfur.⁶ In this scenario, the peace initiatives failed to make progress during the year. **The severe political and military crisis in neighbouring South Sudan threatened to definitively collapse the fragile Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).** The agreement, which establishes a transitional government of national unity based on power-sharing between President Salva Kiir (SPLM) and First Vice President Riek Machar (SPLA-IO), had managed to maintain relative stability since it was signed, but the fragile balance broke in 2025. The crisis crystallised around three converging dynamics: Kiir's unilateral reshuffling of government positions, armed violence in Upper Nile state and, as a direct consequence, Machar's detention in March.

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, civil society organisations and especially women's organisations expended notable efforts to try to reverse this situation, as did UN Women and other UN agencies and missions on the ground. These groups remained active in promoting the women, peace, and security agenda in different contexts, demanding women's participation in negotiations and inclusive dialogue between the opposing parties. Some of the processes stand out, including those that took place in **Libya, Mozambique, Somalia and South Africa regarding women's participation in negotiating teams and consultation forums supporting negotiating processes.** In **Libya**, women achieved 35% representation in the initiatives promoted during the year by the UN, the Advisory Committee and the Structured Dialogue, conceived as advisory and consultation forums to attempt to unblock the country's peace negotiations. The 40 women participants out of the 120 members of the Structured Dialogue organised themselves into a group they called the Libyan Women Caucus to ensure that that women's perspectives, priorities and demands were substantively incorporated. In Mozambique, 240 women were trained as part of the 'Peace Sentinels' project of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiative, implemented by UN Women and its partners, with financial support from the government of Norway.⁷ The 'Peace Sentinels' are women volunteers who act as mediators, community leaders and human rights defenders in their own communities. Their work is fundamental in areas affected by armed conflict, such as Cabo Delgado, and climate disasters. UN agencies and international partners in **Somalia** supported inclusive consultations in Mogadishu and in several federal states to involve women leaders, including Ubaa Ugaas (in Galmudug state) and Hamdi Adani Amin (in Hirshabelle state), who are members of the Somali Women Peace Network, civil society organisations such as Bilan Media and minorities in discussions on the electoral model and constitutional reform, although these initiatives were limited by the boycott of some regional actors and by insecurity. At the local level, **networks of women mediators and peacebuilders** were consolidated, primarily the Somali Women Peace Network, which facilitated community conflict resolution and support for victims of gender-based violence in approximately 17 districts across the country. Finally, the Department of Social Development in **South Africa** pledged to ensure the equitable representation of women in all structures that support and guide the National Dialogue, incorporating young and older women, women living in urban and rural areas, women from different ethnic and linguistic communities, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ women and women expressing sexual diversity.

6. See the summary on Sudan in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026.

7. UN Women Africa, "Local Women Lead Peacebuilding and Recovery Efforts in Mozambique", 7 July 2025.

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),

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.

During the year, the Central African Republic (CAR) experienced chronic violence and a stalled peace process. The 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR) and the 2021 Luanda Roadmap continued to be the formal frameworks of the process, but their effective implementation remained deeply eroded. The government maintained an official discourse of commitment to peace, though in practice it prioritised a strategy of military control and authoritarian centralisation, supported by external security alliances, which reduced the incentives for inclusive negotiation. Sporadic progress on DDR and the reintegration of some armed groups coexisted with insurgent fragmentation, the weakness of transitional justice and the prioritisation of coercive control over inclusive reconciliation. In this regard, inter-communal clashes, violence linked to transhumance and attacks against civilians persisted,⁸ especially in the northwestern, eastern and southeastern parts of the country. The spillover effects of the conflict in Sudan aggravated insecurity in Vakaga and Haut-Mbomou. Joint military operations conducted by the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and their Russian allies managed to contain armed groups in large urban centres but did not eliminate their capacity to attack in rural areas.

In the first half of the year, **significant progress was made with the formal reintegration of the armed groups 3R (Return, Recovery and Rehabilitation) and UPC (Unity for Peace in the Central African Republic)** into the APPR, following an agreement signed in April in N'Djamena with Chadian mediation. These are two of the most significant insurgencies that had not yet signed the peace agreement. Both leaders, Oumar Abdelkader (3R) and Ali Darassa (UPC), announced the cessation of hostilities and the symbolic dissolution of their movements, which allowed the start of disarmament and demobilisation operations with the support of MINUSCA.⁹ However, this progress had limited reach, as thousands of combatants remained armed and violent incidents occurred involving dissident factions, especially in mining zones and transhumance corridors.¹⁰ One of the main obstacles in 2025 was the **fragmentation of the armed groups**. The Coalition of

8. ACLED, *Central African Republic: Deadly attacks against ethnic Fulani increase*, 7 March 2025.

9. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the CAR*, United Nations, S/2025/383, 13 June 2025.

10. Ibid.

Patriots for Change (CPC) ceased to operate as a cohesive structure, giving way to local factions with their own economic agendas and little coordination capacity. At the same time, new armed alliances emerged, such as the Military Coalition for the Salvation of the People and Recovery (CMSPR), led by Armel Sayo, which integrated former combatants from both Séléka and anti-balaka, evidencing the fluidity and volatility of the insurgent landscape.¹¹ This fragmentation hindered any relaunch of meaningful negotiations and favoured a system of informal local agreements and individual co-optation.

On the political front, **dialogue initiatives between the government and the political opposition were subordinated to the electoral calendar**. During 2025, the government advanced preparations for the presidential, legislative, regional and municipal elections scheduled for 28 December, whilst the opposition, grouped in the Republican Bloc for the Defence of the 2016 Constitution (BRDC), condemned the lack of equitable conditions and demanded prior political dialogue. Although a dialogue between the government and the BRDC formally began in September, it quickly stalled due to disagreements over modalities, mediation and the reform of electoral institutions.¹² The electoral process advanced without resolving these disagreements, reinforcing a climate of authoritarian stability.

Gender, peace and security

In 2025, **the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the CAR continued to face significant limitations**, despite some progress at the local level. No female negotiator participation was reported in the main formal spaces of the peace process, nor was there systematic integration of a gender perspective in the implementation of the APPR or in the agreements with armed groups. However, women played a significant role in local reconciliation and social cohesion initiatives, especially in community contexts affected by inter-communal violence and transhumance. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), UNDP, UN Women and MINUSCA, local peace and reconciliation committees with female representation were strengthened in the northwestern and southeastern regions of the country. According to the UN, since 2021 these structures have helped to reduce community violence by approximately 40% in the intervention zones, addressing conflicts related to land, traditional chiefdoms and displacement. In 2025, the 11 ‘peace circles’ were also

consolidated. These are forums for dialogue that support women’s leadership in community mediation. In March, the president signed a decree appointing 11 new members to the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, including four women.¹³ Nevertheless, **sexual and gender-based violence remained serious and widespread**, especially in areas affected by the presence of armed groups, military operations and forced displacement.

Chad ¹⁴	
Negotiating actors	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 Government, Miski Self-Defense Committee
Third parties	Community of Sant’Egidio
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.¹⁵ 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. 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.

11. Corbeau News, *Centrafrique : création d’une nouvelle coalition des groupes armés... la CMSPR*, 19 November 2024.
 12. RFI, *Centrafrique: le BRDC dénonce un «double-jeu» du gouvernement sur l’accord du dialogue politique*, 22 September 2025.
 13. UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the CAR. Op. cit.
 14. In the case of Chad, there are two processes: firstly, a consultation process involving the faction of the insurgency that did not sign the 2022 Doha Agreement, facilitated by the Community of Sant’Egidio; and secondly, the negotiations and peace agreement in Miski (Tibesti region) between the Government and the Miski Self-Defence Committee.
 15. The 2022 Doha Process involved the Transitional Military Council and 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)). The 18 armed groups that did not sign the Doha agreement formed the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR), including FACT and CCSMR. The Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue (DNIS) involved the Transitional Military Council, civil society organizations, and 34 of the 52 armed groups that had signed the Doha Process.

In December 2023, a constitutional referendum was held that allowed Déby to run in the 2024 election and to win it, putting an end to the political transition that began in 2021.

During the year, peace and dialogue initiatives in Chad unfolded in a context of growing political closure, authoritarian consolidation of power by President Mahamat Idriss Déby and reconfiguration of the armed insurgencies following the formal end of the transitional period in 2024. Far from advancing towards an inclusive national reconciliation, the year confirmed the absence of a comprehensive peace process in Chad with the various insurgencies. Instead, a dynamic of fragmented peace took hold, based on occasional local agreements and security-based management of the political and armed opposition. In this regard, **dialogue with the insurgent armed groups that did not sign the 2022 Doha Agreement remained blocked and no progress was made in the negotiations with the political and social opposition** (stemming from the 2022 national dialogue). The only achievement was a local agreement in the Tibesti region.

The Tibesti peace agreement was an important local step forward, but it was accompanied by armed fragmentation and deep distrust of the Chadian state

The main progress related to peace initiatives was the **agreement signed in April 2025 between the government and the Miski Self-Defence Committee**,¹⁶ in the northern region of Tibesti, which has historically been conflict-ridden due to struggles to control gold resources, involving local figures such as former minister Adoum Younousmi and the government's official mediator and former opposition figure, Saleh Kebzabo. The agreement included an amnesty for combatants and security forces, the temporary suspension of mining activities and a commitment to review the distribution of gold revenue. However, the process was accompanied by deterrent military manoeuvres, the dismissal of senior officials critical of resource management and the later adherence of new smaller armed groups, which fuelled a widespread perception of fragmentation rather than the establishment of peace.¹⁷

In contrast to the Tibesti agreement, **no progress was made in dialogue with the main Chadian insurgencies that did not sign the 2022 Doha Agreement**, in particular the Front pour l'Alternance et la Concorde au Tchad (FACT), the Conseil de Commandement Militaire pour le Salut de la République (CCMSR), and the Mouvement pour la Paix, la Reconstruction et le Développement (MPRD). During 2025, these groups remained openly hostile to the government and ruled out negotiations, condemning

the failure to implement the Doha Agreement and the exclusionary nature of the political process.¹⁸ In October, FACT organised a strategic political meeting in France with representatives from around 20 rebel and civil society organisations, with the aim of advancing towards a common platform against the Déby regime. At the same time, the CCMSR and MPRD announced a north-south alliance, unusual in Chad's rebel history, presented as a symbolic attempt to overcome regional and ethnic divisions, albeit with limited military and territorial capabilities.¹⁹ Chadian analysts, such as Remadji Hoinathy,²⁰ emphasised that these dynamics reflect both the persistence of armed opposition and the structural difficulties of rebel movements in constituting a unified threat. Furthermore, Chad has been militarily reinforced in recent years with support from the UAE. Unlike in previous years, **there were no new mediation initiatives promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio** or other actors between the government and the main insurgencies in 2025. No exploratory meetings were reported in Rome nor were any public contacts made with the excluded insurgencies, amid growing mutual distrust and the closure of the internal political space. This absence of mediation contrasted with the regrouping of rebel actors abroad and reinforced the perception of a structural blockage of the national peace process.

On the domestic front, the year was marked by the **deterioration of political dialogue with the civilian opposition**. The arrest of opposition figure Succès Masra in May and his conviction to 20 years in prison in August symbolised the regime's hardening and the criminalisation of political dissent. The legislative elections, held in late 2024 and early 2025, consolidated the ruling party's control and did not generate spaces for political consultation, which could increase the risk that opposition may take on violent forms.

Gender, peace and security

In 2025, **progress on the women, peace and security agenda in Chad remained very limited**. The scant inclusion of women in previous dialogue processes (Doha and the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue) was not rectified and female representation in the institutions resulting from the elections remained below the 30% target. Although women's and youth organisations continued to play an active role in local social cohesion and conflict prevention initiatives, their

16. The Miski Self-Defense Committee is a community self-defense militia, originally formed as a local surveillance group, which eventually became an armed movement. It is composed of residents of the town of Miski, in northern Chad (Tibesti region), most of whom belong to the Toubou/Teda ethnic group.

17. Ben Mahfoudh, Nadia, 'Tchad: de nouveaux groupes rejoignent l'accord de paix de Miski dans le Tibesti', *RFI*, 26 September 2025.

18. International Crisis Group, *Chad: Averting the Risk of Posttransition Instability*, ICG, 3 May 2024.

19. RFI, Tchad: réunis en conclave en France, des groupes rebelles poursuivent leur rapprochement, 27 October 2025.

20. RFI, Tchad: deux mouvements rebelles se rapprochent pour combattre un pouvoir accusé de corruption et pillage, 25 October 2025.

contributions did not translate into political reforms or formal peace mechanisms, in a context of restricted freedoms and the weakening of civil society.²¹

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.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) experienced one of the most critical years of the last decade, including the intensification of the armed conflict in the east, the proliferation of parallel diplomatic initiatives and the growing involvement of regional and international actors. Although notable diplomatic progress was made at the interstate level, especially between the DRC and Rwanda, this did not lead to a sustained reduction in violence, and a deep rift opened between diplomatic commitments and the reality on the ground. Overall, **African mediation frameworks (Luanda and Nairobi) were confirmed as exhausted during 2025** and the diplomatic centre of gravity was displaced towards non-African actors, especially Qatar and the US. However, the exclusion of the M23 from the interstate agreements, the centrality of economic interests linked to minerals and the persistence of structural causes, such as weak governance, the militarisation of territory and armed fragmentation, severely limited the prospects for a credible peace process.

The military capture of Goma and Bukavu in early 2025 by the M23, with Rwandan support, exposed **the failure of previous regional diplomatic initiatives to end the conflict** (promoted by the AU and the EAC). Both diplomatic initiatives were accompanied by regional military operations in support of the Congolese Armed Forces (the EAC Regional Force and SAMIDRC, the SADC Regional Force) alongside the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in attempts to promote a ceasefire and separate the warring forces. The failure of these two military operations, together with the structural discrediting of MONUSCO, which is carrying out a phased withdrawal agreed since early 2024, and has already left South Kivu, contributed to the power vacuum that the M23 and Rwanda exploited to expand their territorial control. Faced with this situation, **Qatar and the US initiated conversations and opened channels of dialogue between Rwanda, the DRC and the M23 with a view to halting hostilities.** On 18 March 2025, mediated by the Emir of Qatar, Presidents Félix Tshisekedi and Paul Kagame signed a joint declaration in Doha calling for an immediate ceasefire, constituting the first direct contact between both leaders in three years. This marked a symbolic turning point following months of military escalation by the M23, which was backed by Rwanda, and opened the door to greater involvement of extra-African actors in mediating the conflict.

Shortly thereafter, on 25 April, the foreign ministers of both countries signed a 'declaration of principles' in Washington under the auspices of the US, committing to reach a peace agreement before 2 May. However, the deadline expired without concrete results, whilst clashes, mass population displacement and sexual violence continued in North Kivu and South Kivu. This sequence once again demonstrated the fragility of diplomatic commitments in the absence of

21. Peacebuilding Fund, *Partner visit to Chad, United Nations*, October 2025.

effective verification mechanisms and the inclusion of relevant armed actors. Finally, on 27 June, the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the DRC signed an agreement in Washington before US President Donald Trump. The pact included three main pillars: 1) the gradual withdrawal of Rwandan troops from Congolese territory; 2) security cooperation, through the creation of a joint security coordination mechanism within 30 days; and 3) the establishment of regional economic integration mechanisms within 90 days, closely linked to the exploitation and marketing of strategic minerals, with direct participation of US companies. Within this framework, the DRC was supposed to facilitate the dismantling of the FDLR, whilst Rwanda committed to withdrawing its troops and ending its support for the M23. However, the agreement did not directly include the M23 or the FDLR, which severely limited its scope and effectiveness.

In July, **the Congolese government and the M23 signed a declaration of principles for a ceasefire in Doha** under Qatari mediation. Despite this progress, violence continued to rage, and subsequent talks in August and October produced no substantive advances. On 7 November, the US announced that Kinshasa and Kigali had begun to develop the regional economic integration framework agreement, but its implementation was blocked by the lack of prior activation of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS),²² agreed in Luanda in October 2024 and considered an indispensable condition for the effective withdrawal of forces and the neutralisation of the FDLR.

Finally, on 4 December, President Tshisekedi and President Kagame met in Washington with President Trump to ratify the June agreement, thereafter known as the Washington Agreement. However, this political gesture coincided with a serious military escalation in South Kivu, demonstrating the disconnect between diplomacy and conflict. Days after the agreement was ratified, hundreds of thousands of people fled intense fighting in South Kivu, especially in Kamanyola and subsequently in Uvira, a strategic city near the triple border between the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, which

eventually fell into the hands of the M23. Although the group announced its withdrawal from Uvira following the intervention of US mediation, fighting continued in surrounding areas. Approximately 100,000 people fled to Burundi, according to UNHCR. In this regard, various analysts agreed that the conflict was becoming increasingly regionalised as a consequence of Burundi's gradual military involvement in support of the DRC.

The initiatives promoted by Qatar and US in the DRC failed due to the mistrust between the parties, non-existent implementation mechanisms, sustained pressure and the exclusion of the M23

Gender, peace and security

In 2025, **the women, peace and security agenda in the DRC advanced in a highly uneven manner**, with a persistent gap between the political recognition of women's roles and their effective inclusion in peace processes. At the diplomatic and negotiating level, no significant female participation as negotiators was reported in the Doha process, in the DRC-Rwanda talks under US auspices or in contacts with the M23, reproducing a structural exclusion observed in previous years. In 2024, President Tshisekedi's appointment of Judith Suminwa Tuluka as prime minister, presented as a milestone on the path to gender equality, did not lead to the integration of a gender perspective in ongoing negotiations or in security policy, and its real impact on the gender dimension of the conflict remained limited.²³ In this regard, conflict-related sexual violence reached alarming levels, especially in North Kivu and South Kivu, amid mass displacement, territorial occupations by the M23 and clashes between multiple armed actors.²⁴ Women and minors continued to be used as instruments of war, coercion and territorial control.

At the regional level, significant initiatives promoted by the AU and the UN continued, such as the follow-up to the Swakopmund process and the regional women's forums of the Great Lakes region, which continued to advocate for the inclusion of women in track one processes. However, these initiatives had no direct impact on the key negotiations of 2025. Notably, a **continental summit was held in October in Namibia to commemorate the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, where the Windhoek+25 Declaration was adopted**, reaffirming previous commitments of the Swakopmund process.²⁵

22. US State Department, *Concept of Operations (CONOPS)*, 27 June 2025.

23. Journalists for Human Rights, *KINSHASA: Civil society and media call for women's inclusion in DRC peace processes*, 18 June 2025.

24. UN Women, *Press briefing by UN Women on the situation of women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 4 February 2025.

25. African Union, *Windhoek+25 Declaration: '25 Years of 1325, Honoring the Legacy, Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'*, 24 October 2025.

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-Nairobi (Tumaini Initiative): 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. Peace talks in Rome-Nairobi: Community of Sant'Egidio, Kenya
Relevant agreements	Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018)

Summary:

After years of armed conflict between the Central Government of Sudan and the south of the country, led by the SPLM/A guerrilla, South Sudan became an independent State in 2011, after holding the referendum that was planned in the 2005 peace agreement (Comprehensive Peace Agreement –CPA–) facilitated by the mediation of the IGAD. The Peace between Sudan and South Sudan and achieving independence was not achieved, however, were not enough to end the conflict and violence. South Sudan has remained immersed in a series of internal conflicts promoted by disputes to control the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neopatrimonial practices and corruption in the Government, all of which has impeded stability and the consolidation of peace. As part of the peace negotiations promoted in April 2013, the President offered an amnesty for six commanders of the rebel groups, but this was not successful initially. 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-in Opposition (SPLA-IO), which gave way to a new escalation of violence in several of the country's regions. In January 2014, with the mediation of the IGAD, the Government and the SPLA-IO launched peace conversations in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Diplomatic efforts were found against many obstacles to achieve effective ceasefire agreements, after signing nine different commitments to the cessation of hostilities and transitory measures between December 2013 and August 2015, which were systematically violated and have rendered it impossible to lay the foundations for a political solution to the conflict. On 17 August 2015, after

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

The year 2025 was marked by a severe political and military crisis that threatened to definitively collapse the fragile Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The agreement, which establishes a transitional government of national unity based on power-sharing between President Salva Kiir (SPLM) and First Vice President Riek Machar (SPLM-IO), had managed to remain relatively stable since it was signed, but in 2025 the fragile balance broke. The crisis crystallised around three converging dynamics: Kiir's unilateral reshuffling of his government, armed violence in Upper Nile state, and, as a direct consequence, Machar's arrest in March.

The year began with some diplomatic hope. **On 20 January, the Tumaini Initiative resumed in Nairobi**, consisting of Kenyan-mediated peace talks aimed at bringing non-signatory opposition groups into the peace agreement. However, the talks were suspended on 20 February with no progress made, at the South Sudanese government's request. Simultaneously, President Salva Kiir continued his pattern of reshuffling the government unilaterally, dismissing two vice presidents, the head of intelligence and several SPLM-IO members, all without consulting Machar, which strained the government coalition. Tensions continued to mount, and on 4 March, a Nuer ethnic militia known as the White Army, linked to Machar's SPLM-IO, seized a South Sudanese Army post in Nasir (Upper Nile). More than 30 soldiers were killed, including a general. In response, Kiir's forces launched retaliatory airstrikes with support from Ugandan troops. Violence spread to the states of Unity, Jonglei and Central Equatoria, as well as to the outskirts of the capital, Juba, displacing at least 50,000 people. The peak of the tension came on 26 March, when **Kiir ordered the house arrest of Machar and his wife, Interior Minister Angelina Teny, in addition to other senior SPLM-IO officials.** Machar's party declared their detention unconstitutional and said that the Revitalised Agreement had been 'abrogated'. The international community also reacted, with UNMISS warning that the conflict could resume and with the IGAD cautioning of the possibility of a full-scale war. The African Union Panel of the Wise (PoW) visited Juba with the intention of mediating in April, but Kiir refused to allow them to meet with Machar. The EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa also failed to gain access. Meanwhile,

the SPLM-IO suffered a wave of defections: more than 3,000 fighters switched to Kiir's side following joint offensives by the South Sudanese Army and Ugandan troops in Central Equatoria. A group of SPLM-IO members appointed Stephen Par Kuol as the interim party president, causing a split that the government used to legitimise its new composition.

In May, the IGAD held an extraordinary summit on South Sudan with AU involvement, but without South Sudanese participation. The body created a ministerial subcommittee to assess pathways for inclusive dialogue. That same month, the UN Security Council extended the arms embargo on South Sudan for an additional year. In June, Kiir reconstituted the high-level special committee for the implementation of the peace agreement, excluding Machar's faction and incorporating only the Par Kuol splinter group, which the SPLM-IO described as illegitimate. In the following months, Kiir continued to purge officials loyal to Machar: in July he dismissed the army chief, the deputy head of security and other senior officials, and in August he expelled a number of SPLM-IO MPs from Parliament, including the interim first vice president of the movement, Oyet Nathaniel Pierino. In response, the SPLM-IO declared that 'the final nail had been hammered into the coffin' of the Revitalised Agreement.

Tension increased further on 11 September, when Kiir's government filed **formal charges of treason, murder and crimes against humanity** against Machar and seven other opposition officials, all members of the Nuer community. The SPLM-IO declared the government illegitimate and promised to seek regime change, urging its forces to mobilise for war. The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), tasked with monitoring compliance with the peace agreement, warned that the R-ARCSS was at risk of total collapse. In October, South African Vice President Paul Mashatile visited Juba in an attempt to reactivate the peace process but achieved no concrete results. In November, Kiir dismissed his own apparent successor, Benjamin Bol Mel, and placed him under house arrest, adding a new layer of volatility to national politics. Finally, in December, **the government announced its intention to hold elections before December 2026**, despite the lack of progress on fundamental requirements: the drafting of a new constitution and the conduct of a national census. Again the SPLM-IO faction loyal to Machar rejected the announcement. The year ended with all attempts by mediators to meet with Machar blocked by Kiir. The AU Peace and Security Council also repeatedly demanded the immediate and unconditional release of Machar and other detainees, though without success.

The South Sudan peace agreement teetered on the brink of collapse

Gender, peace and security

Despite the overall deterioration, UNMISS and civil society organisations continued to work on the ground in support of the gender, peace and security agenda. Among the most notable initiatives, UNMISS reported that a stakeholders' conference was held in May to move forward the nomination of representatives to the future Truth, Reconciliation and Regeneration Commission, with women activists and human rights organisations participating. In late October, the civil society organisation Community Empowerment for Progress Organization provided training on conflict analysis and mediation to 21 women mediators representing signatory parties to the Revitalised Agreement. This effort was supported by UN Women, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and UNMISS. In November, UNMISS organised a high-level dialogue chaired by Vice President Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, which brought together women leaders from signatory parties and civil society, who expressed their concern about the escalation of fighting in Upper Nile and Western Equatoria, conflict-related sexual violence, Machar's trial, the stalemate in the peace process and the lack of political will to implement the 35% quota for female participation provided for in the peace agreement.²⁶

Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF)
Third parties	'Quad' Mechanism or Quartet (USA, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and UAE), Trilateral Mechanism (UN, AU and the IGAD (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda), Switzerland, Türkiye, EU
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

26. UN Security Council, "The situation in South Sudan. Report of the Secretary-General", S/2026/58, 2 February 2026.

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.

Peace initiatives were once again unsuccessful and failed to contain violence in the country during a year characterised by the de facto split of the country into two parts. On one hand, following their recapture of the capital, Khartoum, in March, which had been held by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since the beginning of the conflict, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) seized control of the central, northern and eastern parts of the country. On the other hand, the RSF held sway over the southern and western parts of the country following their capture of El Fasher, the capital of Darfur and the SAF's last bastion in the west, in October. The outcome of both moves was a de facto division of the country, which was deepened by the formation of two parallel governments: one internationally recognised, led by the SAF and based in Port Sudan, and another headed by the RSF in Darfur.²⁷ In this scenario, the year began with worrying signs with regard to the performance of peace initiatives. In January, groups aligned with the RSF held consultations in Nairobi on the possible creation of a parallel government, fuelling fears of state fragmentation. On

***The women's network
SIHA condemned
the state of conflict-
related sexual
violence in Sudan***

22 February, more than 300 representatives signed a constitutive charter in Nairobi, including political parties, civil society organisations and the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), Abdelaziz al-Hilu, which laid the foundations for a rival administration in RSF-controlled territories. The move was harshly criticised by the UN, the African Union (AU), the US, Saudi Arabia and other actors, which considered it a step towards the balkanisation of the country. Subsequently, in March, whilst the SAF consolidated control of the capital, the RSF and their allies signed a constitutional document paving the way for the formation of parallel governments in their territories. The AU Peace and Security Council blasted the move, warning of the risk of a definitive partition of the country. On 15 April, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the AU and the EU convened a broad diplomatic conference in London to try to unify the peace efforts. However, disputes erupted over the draft joint communiqué between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which support the SAF, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which backs the RSF, preventing any agreement from being reached. The conference laid bare the size of the rift among external mediators and the nature of the regional proxy war that the conflict had acquired. Later, in May, the US imposed economic sanctions on the SAF-led government over the alleged use of chemical weapons. Simultaneously, the SAF appointed the civilian Kamil Idriss as prime minister in a move aimed at gaining legitimacy before the AU. The RSF, in contrast, rejected him. In June, Idriss announced a 22-member cabinet. At the same time, the Tasees civilian coalition, aligned with the RSF, continued negotiations to constitute its own alternative government, which was finally formed on 26 July, headed by RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, commonly known as 'Hemedti', who was appointed prime minister. On 30 August, Hemedti was sworn in as head of the parallel government in Nyala, South Darfur, bringing Sudan closer to de facto partition. Meanwhile, US special advisor Massad Boulos, the father of Donald Trump's son-in-law, held separate talks with both parties in Switzerland in mid-August in an attempt to open a discreet diplomatic channel, though it was ultimately unsuccessful. On 12 September, the US, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE, also known as the 'Quad', announced a joint roadmap including a three-month humanitarian truce, followed by a permanent ceasefire and a nine-month transition to a civilian government. This was the most substantial diplomatic advance of the year, but the escalation of fighting in El Fasher made its viability impossible. On 19 November, US President Donald Trump publicly committed to working to stop atrocities in Sudan following a meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince. The announcement raised hopes of greater US diplomatic pressure. However,

27. See the summary on Sudan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026.

General al-Burhan rejected the US truce proposal on 23 November, calling it biased in favour of the RSF. The following day, the RSF unilaterally declared a three-month ceasefire, which they immediately broke with new attacks around Babanusa. At the end of the year, tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE heightened, hindering ceasefire efforts. The year ended with al-Burhan travelling to Egypt and Saudi Arabia to shore up regional support and to meet with the envoy Boulos, but without managing to stop the violence.

Gender, peace and security

No significant developments related to gender, peace and security were noted in the ongoing negotiations during the year. However, it was reported that the perpetration of violence against the civilian population (women, girls, men and boys) remains a defining feature of the ongoing atrocity campaign in Sudan. In its report ‘More Than Numbers’, the network Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) condemned the state of conflict-related sexual violence in Sudan from the outbreak of war in April 2023 to 2025.²⁸ SIHA documented over 1,294 cases of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls, of which 77% involved rape, and cases where information on the perpetrator was available (808) were attributed primarily to RSF combatants. It was also reported that thousands of women and girls are being abducted and forcibly disappeared into hidden RSF detention centres across the country, where they are subjected to sexual slavery. Furthermore, more than 840 cases were documented of women detained by the SAF accused of collaborating with the RSF.

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.

No progress was made on the joint political mechanisms between Sudan and South Sudan during the year, but some agreements were reported at the inter-community level. The dialogue channel opened years ago between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan was shaped by the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan and the severe internal political instability in South Sudan resulting from the arrest of Vice President Riek Machar. These events meant that no meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) or of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) were held throughout the year, interrupting formal channels of bilateral dialogue. The Joint Border Commission (JBC) also failed to meet, paralysing progress on territorial demarcation and cross-border corridors.

However, and in contrast to the high-level political impasse, **progress was made on inter-community dialogues**, mainly between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, which both live in Abyei. The UN mission in Abyei, UNISFA, reported that the Joint Community Peace Committee (JCPC) held 16 ordinary and three special sessions in the first period of the year and 14 ordinary and three special sessions in the second, addressing inter-community coexistence, compensation for losses, the presence of the RSF²⁹ and management of the Amiet market. On 20 May, UNISFA facilitated a meeting between the supreme Ngok Dinka chief and the deputy supreme Misseriya chief in Todach, where they committed to coexisting in peace and agreed on mechanisms for compensation for outstanding cases. Subsequently, from 30 May to 2 June, 165 delegates from both communities met in Todach, concluding with the signing of an agreement on reverse migration procedures. On 26 July, a new dialogue in Todach with 42 participants, including the supreme chiefs of both communities, agreed on early warning mechanisms and periodic follow-up meetings in response to the attack in the Amiet market on 21 and 22 July. Furthermore, from 9 to 12 April, 60 youth leaders of the Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities met in Wau (South Sudan) with facilitation from UNISFA, UNMISS and other partners, signing a peaceful coexistence agreement that included

28. SIHA Network, “More than numbers. Report on the State of Violence Against Women and Girls in Sudan - 2023-2025”, December 2025.

29. See UN Security Council reports, “The situation in Abyei: Report of the Secretary-General”, S/2025/269, 1 May 2025; “The situation in Abyei Report of the Secretary-General”, S/2026/649, 15 October 2025; “The situation in Abyei Report of the Secretary-General”, S/2025/58, 2 February 2026.

a cessation of hostilities, the reopening of routes and the fight against disinformation.

Finally, the UN mission in South Sudan, UNMISS, reported that between 7 and 14 November, the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Sudan and South Sudan took place in Malakal, in the state of Upper Nile, making it the first meeting of bishops from both countries. At the meeting, religious leaders pledged to strengthen dialogue, trust and cooperation between different ethnic groups and political trends.³⁰

Gender, peace and security

Some progress was made in inter-community dialogues on gender, peace and security during the year. From 3 to 5 June, UNISFA organised a joint conference of Misseriya and Ngok Dinka women in Todach, bringing together 132 women to discuss their participation in peace and security mechanisms and the rule of law. The result was the creation of a joint women's committee, with a joint communiqué signed by the participants. Likewise, on 26 and 27 June, UNISFA and UNMISS organised a civil society meeting in Wau that brought together 40 Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka women, who also created a joint women's committee for peace as part of the reconciliation process between the two communities.³¹ However, and in contrast to these initiatives, formal forums for political dialogue had very low female participation: the Joint Community Peace Committee had only two women out of 28 representatives, and the meeting of leaders on 20 May in Todach was composed exclusively of men.

Horn of Africa

Eritrea – Ethiopia	
Negotiating actors	Eritrea, 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, facilitated by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, with the support of the United States, 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.

The deadlock in the negotiating process between Eritrea and Ethiopia that began in 2018 reached its most critical point during 2025, which triggered initiatives by various countries to reactivate it, primarily by Saudi Arabia and the United States. The year was marked by a sustained escalation of political, military and rhetorical tension, particularly around two lines: the Ethiopian aspiration for access to the Red Sea and the development of the political and security crisis in Tigray.

The tactical alliance that both countries had maintained during the Tigray War (2020–2022) unravelled following the Pretoria Peace Agreement (2022), from which Eritrea was excluded. From that moment on, a structural distrust was reinstated, which in 2025 escalated into mutual accusations, military mobilisation and a complete absence of political consultation mechanisms.³² Nevertheless, **diplomatic activity aimed at avoiding an open military escalation and at reopening channels of dialogue between both countries was undertaken during 2025, primarily by Saudi Arabia**

30. UN Security Council, "The situation in South Sudan. Report of the Secretary-General", S/2026/58, 2 February 2026.

31. UN Security Council, "The situation in Abyei. Report of the Secretary-General", S/2025/649, 15 October 2025.

32. See the summary on Eritrea-Ethiopia in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Icaria: Barcelona, 2026.

and the United States. In this regard, Saudi Arabia is reported to have initiated a mediation process between the two countries.³³ Notable in this context were separate meetings in late July between Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan and his Eritrean and Ethiopian counterparts, Osman Salih and Gideon Timothewos. Furthermore, delegations from Ethiopia and Eritrea are reported to have held two rounds of talks in Saudi Arabia in July. Neither party made any official statement on this ongoing Saudi mediation effort.³⁴

Secondly, key international actors, particularly Washington, maintained parallel contacts with Asmara and Addis Ababa. In June 2025, the Ethiopian ambassador to the United States met with US President Donald Trump.³⁵ In September 2025, US Advisor for Africa Massad Boulos met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Ethiopia and with the Eritrean Foreign Minister during the UN General Assembly, though no public announcements or verifiable commitments resulted from these meetings. In October, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed requested international mediation with Eritrea regarding access to the sea, insisting on an ‘irreversible’ claim to the coastline amid rising tensions between neighbouring countries in the Horn of Africa, and announced that he had held discussions on the issue with the US, Russia, China, the AU and the EU.³⁶

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

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).³⁷ 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.

During 2025, the national dialogue in Ethiopia **made no substantial progress** and remained in a **prolonged impasse**, despite the formal continuity of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC). Various independents sources, such as think tanks, academic analysts, members of civil society and specialised media outlets, agreed that the national dialogue **failed to evolve towards a deliberative or decision-making phase**, nor did it play a significant role in managing the country’s main political and armed conflicts. The ENDC **played a limited and predominantly technical role** and was unable to articulate an effective national political process. The national dialogue remained marginalised amid an agenda dominated by security-based responses, active armed conflicts and profound political polarisation.³⁸ Created in 2021 as one of the flagship reforms of the government of Abiy Ahmed, the ENDC was charged with facilitating an inclusive process to address the ‘fundamental national issues’ dividing the country. However, in early 2025, the dialogue was already burdened by structural limitations, including deep distrust amongst actors, the exclusion of key armed groups, a lack of minimum security conditions and the widespread perception of a lack of political independence.³⁹

33. NewsAddis, *Saudi FM Contacts Ethiopian & Eritrean FMs to Resolve Conflict*, 26 July 2025.
 34. Ibid.
 35. The Ethiopian Herald, *Ethiopia, U.S. Eye Closer Ties in High-Level Meeting*, 19 June 2025.
 36. ArabNews, *Ethiopia calls for international mediation with Eritrea over sea access*, 28 October 2025.
 37. See the website of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.
 38. Desalegn Gedebo, Amanuel, ‘Rethinking Ethiopia’s National Dialogue. Navigating Conflict and Growing Repression Ahead of 2026 Elections’, Clingendael, 1 July 2025.
 39. See the summary on Ethiopia in *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Icaria: Barcelona, 2025.

These weaknesses became even more evident throughout the year. Whilst the **ENDC remained institutionally active**, organising meetings and consultations, including contacts with groups in Tigray and with the diaspora, **the process did not advance beyond the preparatory phase**, even after more than three years of operations. A study published by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in August indicated that the Ethiopian national dialogue ‘has stalled’, emphasising that the Commission remained trapped in gathering inputs without having initiated meaningful national deliberation. According to the ISS, persistent insecurity and armed conflicts in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray had prevented the participation of key actors, whilst the withdrawal or non-inclusion of opposition parties and influential groups has seriously eroded the credibility of the process. The ISS itself questioned the viability of completing a credible dialogue even after the extension of the ENDC’s mandate until 2026.⁴⁰ Ethiopian civil society has levelled similar criticism, as illustrated by a report⁴¹ on the ENDC’s activities that identifies persistent problems of inclusion, representativeness and legitimacy. The report emphasises that the national dialogue does not respond to the immediate priorities of many communities affected by violence, nor does it have any impact on the political and security situations they face.

Gender, peace and security

Despite the deadlock and paralysis of the ENDC, women’s organisations in the country continued to promote forums and initiatives for dialogue to overcome it. In this regard, International Women’s Day brought together key actors to highlight the progress made by the feminist movement and to demand greater political action. The event noted that changes are required for society to function, with greater involvement of those who hold power. The debate was attended by Nechte Felate, the Director of Women’s, Children’s and Youth Affairs of the Ethiopian Parliament, and Zemdena Abebe, the National Coordinator of the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), as well as other representatives of women’s rights organisations and activists from across the country. Zemdena said that SIHA had played a crucial role in integrating a gender perspective into Ethiopia’s national dialogue process. As part of a local civil society organisation called TIMRAN, SIHA has worked to ensure adequate representation of women in decision-making positions through the national dialogue process and has published policy recommendations to ensure that it is inclusive and free of political influence. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, UN Women Ethiopia organised intergenerational dialogues for women to share visions on gender equality and discuss women’s leadership in

humanitarian action. In September, it delivered training on preventing violence against women in political processes, in cooperation with the Network of Ethiopian Women’s Associations (NEWA). UN Women Ethiopia also published its 2026-2030 strategy, setting out its roadmap for achieving gender equality in the country.

Ethiopia (Amhara)	
Negotiating actors	Ethiopia, Fano militia faction (Amhara Fano Popular Organization, AFPO)
Third parties	Amhara Peace Council, AU, IGAD
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:
During the demonstrations between 2015 and 2018 that brought Abiy Ahmed to power, there was a resurgence of nationalism among the Amhara, groups within it denounced their marginalisation during this stage of the country’s transformation and lives mostly in the Amhara region. The escalation of violence and repression in 2023 dates back to the peace agreement signed in 2022 by the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) to end the war (2020-2022). The agreement raised concerns among the Amhara community, which had been excluded from the talks even though the nationalist Fano militias and the Amhara special forces (a paramilitary group linked to the regional government) fought on the side of the Ethiopian Army, as did Eritrea, which was also shut out of the agreement. All the actors involved committed crimes against humanity against the population of the Tigray community during the conflict in Tigray. Perceptions of betrayal spread throughout the Amhara region, especially after Abiy announced plans to dismantle the special forces in each of Ethiopia’s 11 ethnic regions. The prime minister proposed integrating the special forces combatants into the Ethiopian Army and police to promote interethnic unity and prevent regional forces from being used as political tools and from getting drawn into conflicts, as was the case in Tigray. However, many Amhara regarded his plan with alarm, arguing that it would leave them vulnerable to attacks from neighbouring Tigray, their historical rivals in Ethiopia, as well as from the Oromo community, Ethiopia’s largest ethnic group, followed by the Amhara. The Oromo armed group OLA has also been accused of committing widespread atrocities against Amhara people in Oromia, raising fears that it wants to drive them out of the region. Although some Amhara special force soldiers did agree to join the Ethiopian Army and police, many deserted and joined the Fano militias. Furthermore, this Amhara nationalist movement took advantage of the war in the Tigray region, using these paramilitary militias to regain and occupy two historically disputed territories that are part of Tigray (Western and Southern Tigray, called Welkait-Tsegede and Raya by Amhara nationalists, respectively), where a provisional Amhara administration was established that the federal government of Ethiopia banned after the conflict ended. In 2024, a council of community elders, religious leaders, and the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia convened to facilitate dialogue between the warring parties and the international community. They held a peace conference in Bahir Dar (the Amhara capital), which led to the creation of the Amhara Peace Council. This body has

40. Simie Meteka, Tadesse, ‘Ethiopia’s National Dialogue needs time and an interim report’, ISS, 27 August 2025.
 41. Bekele, Girma, ‘Ethiopia’s National Dialogue Commission: Last Chance for Peace or Another Lost Cause?’, ReligionUnplugged, 9 October 2025.

since been calling on the AU and IGAD to facilitate peace negotiations. The main Fano platforms demanded a review of the Pretoria Agreement (2022), constitutional guarantees regarding disputed territories (Welkait, Raya, Metekel), and collective protection mechanisms for the Amhara population. Meanwhile, the federal position was limited to a DDR process and the recognition of the state's monopoly on the use of force.

During 2025, an **agreement was reached between the regional government and a Fano militia faction**. Nevertheless, **the armed conflict in the Ethiopian region of Amhara devolved into a chronic and fragmented insurgency**, characterised by periodic spikes of violence, an intensification of the state's use of drones and serious abuses against the civilian population. In this regard, on 4 December **a peace agreement was signed between the Amhara regional government and a Fano militia faction**, the Amhara Fano Popular Organization (AFPO), which was mediated by the AU and the IGAD.⁴² Through AU Commission Deputy Chairperson Selma Malika Haddadi, the AU declared that the agreement was not only positive for Ethiopia, but also an example for all of Africa. The IGAD was represented by Deputy Executive Secretary Mohamed Abdi Ware. Officially announced by the authorities, this agreement was presented as a historic milestone. It included formal commitments to a cessation of hostilities, the reintegration of combatants into official security structures under certain conditions and the opening of channels for political dialogue. However, the agreement did not constitute a definitive solution for all actors or for all Fano militia factions, because there is no unified chain of command. On the contrary, other commanders were sceptical of the agreement and said that they would only agree to negotiate with international support.⁴³ Various analysts noted that its impact will be limited unless Addis Ababa addresses the full range of grievances that triggered the conflict.

Gender, peace and security

In 2025, the gender, peace and security agenda in the Amhara region was marked by **the intensification of the armed conflict alongside the emergence of local resilience initiatives led by women**. The prolongation of the Fano militia factions' insurgency and the state's counterinsurgency operations exposed women and children to high levels of violence, including displacement, food insecurity and gender-based violence. In this context, the issue of protection continued to dominate the agenda, though no women were included in the incipient negotiating processes. Nevertheless, grassroots organisations and programmes driven by

international actors continued to give impetus to activities at the local level. Initiatives supported by UN Women and Ethiopian organisations such as Progynist have promoted women's community leadership in situations of crisis, building capacities in community mediation, conflict management and responses to gender-based violence. These experiences have helped to articulate informal forums for dialogue and social cohesion, though they have had no effect on the formal processes linked to the partial agreement reached in December 2025.⁴⁴ More structurally, various analysts indicated that **women remain persistently excluded from formal negotiations in Ethiopia**, despite their active role in community-focused peacebuilding.⁴⁵ In Amhara, this gap revealed a fragmented women, peace and security (WPS) agenda that was dynamic and expanding at the local level, but still marginal at the formal political level.

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

42. FANA, Ethiopia's Amhara Regional Gov't, Amhara Fano Popular Organization Sign Permanent Peace Deal, 4 December 2025.

43. The Africa Report, Ethiopia's Amhara region, Fano faction sign breakthrough agreement, 5 December 2025.

44. Progynist, Impactful Collaboration for Women's Empowerment in Amhara Region!, 21 May 2025.

45. Anonymous, Confronting the Exclusion of Women in Ethiopia's Peace Processes: A Background Paper, European Institute of Peace, 2025.

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.

During 2025, the peace process in the Ethiopian region of Tigray reached **its most fragile moment since the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement** in November 2022. Although full-scale war did not resume, the year was marked by **a combination of incomplete implementation of the agreement, growing internal political and military fragmentation in Tigray and a deterioration in relations between Mekelle and Addis Ababa**. From a formal perspective, the Pretoria Peace Agreement remained the framework of reference for the peace process. Some of its core elements were maintained, such as the large-scale cessation of hostilities and the partial integration of Tigray into federal structures. However, the most sensitive structural issues remained unimplemented: the territorial dispute over Western Tigray, the return of displaced persons, the complete withdrawal of non-federal forces, transitional justice and the full political reintegration of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

One of the most significant issues of 2025 was the **acute internal political crisis in Tigray**. The rivalry between the President of the Interim Regional Administration at the time, Getachew Reda, and TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael, culminated in Reda's dismissal in April and his replacement by Lieutenant General Tadesse Werede. This power struggle weakened regional institutional authority, paralysed governance and eroded the capacity for coherent dialogue with the federal government, thereby affecting the peace process.⁴⁶ At the same time, the cancellation of the TPLF's legal status by the National Election Commission in May was a negative turning point. This decision de facto excluded Tigray's main political actor from the elections scheduled for 2026 and revived fears of a repeat of the political cycle that had preceded the 2020 war. Various analysts warned that the cancellation undermined the principle of inclusivity in the peace process and aggravated distrust between Tigray and the federal government.⁴⁷

On the security front, 2025 was marked by new dynamics of internal instability. The **Tigray Peace Force (TPF) emerged and consolidated** as an armed faction composed of former combatants disaffected with the TPLF and perceived by Mekelle as close to Addis Ababa. Clashes between the TPF and Tigrayan forces, as well as incidents on the border with Afar, revealed a dangerous drift towards conflicts within Tigray's political and military opposition that the Pretoria Peace Agreement had neither foreseen nor contained, and which could undermine it.⁴⁸ Another key element was the **persistence of the territorial conflict in Western Tigray**. The refusal of the Amhara authorities to withdraw, and the absence of a clear mechanism to resolve the dispute, left tens of thousands of displaced persons in a prolonged limbo. Reports from late 2025 documented deaths from starvation in displacement camps, underscoring the direct link between political blockage, territorial insecurity and the humanitarian crisis.⁴⁹ Finally, various analysts warned that developments in Tigray during 2025 had broader implications for Ethiopian and regional stability. The growing tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea, partly linked to Tigrayan dynamics and alleged TPLF realignments, increased the risk of an indirect escalation that could overflow the framework of the peace process.

The Ethiopian region of Tigray reached its most fragile moment since the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement in November 2022

Gender, peace and security

During 2025, the gender, peace and security agenda in Tigray reflected the **contradictions of an incomplete post-conflict scenario**, where the partial implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement coexisted with high levels of structural violence and political exclusion.

Women remained one of the groups most affected by the legacy of the conflict, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, whose massive prevalence during the war continued to shape transitional justice and reconciliation processes.⁵⁰ In this context, the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda was primarily linked to the pillars of **justice, reparations and social reconstruction**, with a central role played by women-led organisations in providing services to survivors and rebuilding the community fabric. Nevertheless, these initiatives operate in an environment characterised by **institutional constraints, a lack of funding and limited inclusion in formal decision-making frameworks**.

At the same time, the internal political crisis in Tigray (2025) and the exclusion of the TPLF from the elections strengthened a dynamic of **political closure that also affects women's participation**, reducing spaces for

46. See the summary on Ethiopia (Tigray) in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Icaria: Barcelona, 2026.

47. Plaut, Martin, The TPLF statement on the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, 16 April 2025.

48. ADF-Magazine, *New Rebel Group Threatens Ethiopia's Fragile Peace*, 9 December 2025.

49. Warecho, *Tigray Post-War Recovery Progresses Slowly Three Years After Peace*, 18 August 2025.

50. GIWPS, *Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker: November Updates-Spotlight: Ethiopia*, 26 November 2025.

inclusive dialogue. In the meantime, despite previous gains in women's political representation, reports revealed that the conflict has significantly reversed these achievements. For example, after reaching a historic 50% level of representation in the regional parliament, there is now only one woman in the 27-member transitional cabinet.⁵¹

Thus, in 2025 the gender agenda in Tigray was characterised by women's leadership in social recovery, but had little impact on the political architecture of the peace process. More structurally, various analysts emphasised that **the exclusion of women from formal negotiations remains a persistent feature in Ethiopia**, despite their active role in peacebuilding at the community level.⁵²

Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan ⁵³	
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.⁵⁴ 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.

During 2025, relations between **Egypt and Sudan** on one side and **Ethiopia** on the other regarding the management of the Nile River and particularly the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)** remained dominated by diplomatic confrontation and negotiating deadlock, with no relaunch of the tripartite dialogue process. Far from opening a dynamic of détente, the year consolidated a situation of unresolved political conflict, marked by harsh rhetoric, unilateral actions and growing internationalisation of the dispute.

Throughout the year, **Egypt and Sudan strengthened their bilateral coordination**, articulated through mechanisms such as the '2+2' format between foreign and irrigation ministers. In September 2025, both countries issued joint statements condemning unilateral operation of the dam and reaffirming that their water security is 'indivisible'. However, **this common front did not lead to formal contacts with Ethiopia**, but rather to a strategy aimed at increasing external diplomatic pressure.⁵⁵ In this regard, 2025 was marked by an **intense internationalisation of the conflict**. Egypt repeatedly brought the matter to the UN Security Council and sought support in Arab and African forums. Cairo attempted to reframe the dispute as a threat to regional stability, especially following episodes of flooding in Egypt and Sudan in October, which caused destruction and inundation of crops in both countries, as well as the displacement of 1,200 families in Sudan, all of which both states blamed on Ethiopia's mismanagement of the GERD. Ethiopia rejected these claims, arguing instead that exceptional monsoon rains were the cause.⁵⁶ Ethiopia also rejected any resumption of negotiations under external pressure and argued that the GERD should be governed by the principles of equitable use. Analysts underscored that Addis Ababa focused on consolidating regional

51. Shenkut, Manyingerew, *Breaking Barriers: Women's Participation in Peace and Decision-Making Across Ethiopia*, IGAD, 12 December 2025.
 52. Anonymous, *Confronting the Exclusion of Women in Ethiopia's Peace Processes: A Background Paper*, European Institute of Peace, 2025.
 53. 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.
 54. Nile Basin Initiative. Accessed December 10, 2024.
 55. Egypt Today, *Egypt, Sudan say Ethiopia's unilateral filling, operation of GERD violates international law*, 3 September 2025.
 56. Sakr, Dina and Ezz, Mohamed, 'Surging Nile waters inundate Egypt and Sudan, revive dispute over Ethiopian mega-dam', *Reuters*, 6 October 2025.

support and on presenting the conflict as a technical, not political, issue, thereby minimising incentives for substantive tripartite dialogue in 2025.⁵⁷

This escalation of the situation coincided with a new diplomatic shift. In an interview in October, Massad Boulos, senior advisor to US President Donald Trump for African, Arab and Middle Eastern affairs, and the father of Trump’s son-in-law, said that Washington would now support a technical approach to the dispute, not through political pressure, a position indicating a reorientation of US engagement that would prioritise data transparency, operational coordination and joint risk mitigation, rather than coercive diplomacy.⁵⁸ Subsequently, President Trump sent a letter to his Egyptian counterpart on 16 January 2026 thanking him for his role in the Gaza dispute and offering to mediate in the Nile River dispute.

One of the most notable milestones of the year was Ethiopia’s official opening of the GERD on 9 September 2025. Though this event was not attended by Egypt or Sudan, it did receive representatives of neighbouring countries, including the presidents of Somalia and Kenya. Amid great celebration, Addis Ababa presented the dam as a sovereign project and a driver of regional development, whilst Cairo and Khartoum blasted the ‘unilateral’ nature of the decision and considered it a violation of international law. The opening did not trigger direct contacts to de-escalate the situation; on the contrary, it **accentuated diplomatic polarisation**. Notably, Pietro Salini, the CEO of the Italian company Webuild, responsible for the dam’s construction, remarked that he understood Egypt’s concern but emphasised that water regulation from the dam would generate additional benefits for Ethiopia’s neighbours.⁵⁹ In this regard, Abdullah Abderrahman, the administrator of the Sudanese Roseires Dam, located a few dozen kilometres from the GERD, noted that the new dam has helped to control the overflow of water at Roseires, which had been extremely high before it was built. He also said that there has been a significant reduction in the amounts of silt and trees that the rainy season used to bring to Roseires, which frequently reduced Roseires’ storage capacity by one third.⁶⁰

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, ATMIS and currently AUSSOM), which the Somali armed group al-Shabaab has used to partly justify its armed campaign. Following the crisis between the two countries resulting from the agreement signed in January 2024 between Addis Ababa and the secessionist Somali region of Somaliland regarding Ethiopian access to the Red Sea, a process of dialogue and rapprochement between Somalia and Ethiopia took place during the year, culminating in December 2024 with the achievement of an agreement between the two countries mediated by Türkiye, which is pending implementation.

The year 2025 was marked by a **reduction in diplomatic tension** between Ethiopia and Somalia following the signing of the Ankara Declaration on 11 December 2024.⁶¹ Mediated by Türkiye, this document put an end to the serious crisis caused by the memorandum of understanding previously signed between Ethiopia and

57. Melcangi, Alessia, ‘The Nile at a crossroads: Navigating the GERD dispute as Egypt’s floodwaters rise’, *Atlantic Council*, 10 November 2025.
 58. Ekanem, Solomon, ‘Ethiopia’s mega dam wins U.S. backing for a technical fix amid tensions with Egypt’, *Business Insider Africa*, 20 October 2025.
 59. Located 14 km from the Sudanese border, the dam is 1.8 km wide and 145 metres high. Its construction began in 2011 and has cost 5 billion USD (borne mostly by the public treasury, but part of its financing has come from small contributions from millions of Ethiopians, through donations and loans) and will produce 6,000 MW of electricity. *Al-Jazeera*, Ethiopia inaugurates GERD dam amid downstream tensions with Egypt, Sudan, 9 September 2025, and Ali, Faisal, ‘From Haile Selassie to crowdfunding, how Ethiopia’s GERD dam was born’, *Al-Jazeera*, 9 September 2025.
 60. Ibid.
 61. Republic of Türkiye – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ankara Declaration by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia facilitated by the Republic of Türkiye*, 11 December 2024.

the secessionist region of Somaliland in early 2024. However, despite the formal restoration of bilateral relations, **a fully operational peace process did not come together in 2025**. Instead, a **phase of conflict containment** took place, with limited progress made in implementing the agreement and many unresolved questions. The Ankara Declaration was based on a delicate balance: Somalia obtained Ethiopia's explicit commitment to its territorial integrity, whilst Addis Ababa obtained recognition of the principle of secured access to the sea under Somali sovereignty, through future commercial agreements, leases or similar formulae. The parties agreed to open technical negotiations before the end of February 2025, with Turkish facilitation and a four-month deadline to achieve concrete results.

During the first few months of 2025, significant but essentially symbolic political gestures were observed. In January, the two countries announced the **full restoration of diplomatic relations**, and their leaders maintained bilateral contacts, including meetings related to the coordination of Ethiopian troops in the new African Union mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), which formally began on 1 January 2025. Nevertheless, **material implementation of the agreement advanced slowly**. Although technical channels were confirmed as open, **no concrete progress was made public** regarding Ethiopian access to the sea or alternative port projects to replace the initial agreement with Somaliland.⁶² As early as December 2024, some analysts had warned that the agreement deliberately left the practical mechanisms ambiguous, postponing the most sensitive decisions to avoid a premature collapse of the understanding.⁶³ Other analysts noted in July that the process was stalled, as no meetings had been held since April. According to reports in Somali media, the issue of recognition of Somaliland also arose during earlier conversations, although Ethiopia had neither publicly endorsed nor rejected the idea.⁶⁴ A **key element was the exclusion of Somaliland from the process**. There were no official contacts with the authorities in Hargeisa either during the 2024 negotiations or throughout 2025. This omission persisted throughout the year and produced latent tensions, especially following Israel's recognition of Somaliland in late 2025, which both Somalia and Eritrea criticised harshly. The lack of a channel of dialogue with Somaliland means that the agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia **did not resolve the political core of the dispute**, but merely froze it temporarily.

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, Türkiye, AU
Relevant agreements	Road map to end the transition (2011), Kampala Accord (2011), Provisional Federal Constitution (2012), Mogadishu Declaration of the National Consultative Forum (2015), Electoral Agreement on Somalia (27 May 2021)

Summary:

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

During 2025, **peace and dialogue initiatives in Somalia unfolded in a particularly adverse context**, marked by the military reactivation of al-Shabaab, the start of the new African Union mission (AUSSOM) and intense internal political polarisation surrounding reform of the electoral system.

President Mohamud nevertheless launched a broader political initiative. In March 2025, he announced the

62. Arab News, Ethiopia and Somalia hold a first round of technical talks in Türkiye toward resolving their dispute, 18 February 2025.
 63. Soylyu, Ragip, 'Inside the Turkey-backed Somalia-Ethiopia deal', *Middle East Eye*, 12 December 2024.
 64. Horn Daily, Ethiopia-Somalia Sea Access Talks Collapse as Regional Tensions Resurface, 1 August 2025.

creation of an **inclusive national dialogue platform**, conceived to align political leaders, clans and civil society against al-Shabaab and to strengthen the state's internal cohesion. The initiative received explicit backing from international partners, including the UN, the EU and the US, which considered it a necessary complement to military pressure.⁶⁵ However, the initiative did not translate into a sustained process or incorporate insurgent armed actors, limiting its impact.

The main arena for dialogue initiatives in Somalia during 2025 was the political conflict over the electoral model. The federal government pushed for a transition towards the principle of 'one person, one vote' as a step prior to national elections scheduled for 2026. This agenda was perceived by a significant part of the opposition and by several federal states, especially Puntland and Jubaland, as a unilateral attempt to recentralise power. Throughout the year, intermittent attempts at dialogue took place between Mogadishu, the opposition organised in the Somali Salvation Forum, and regional governments. In April, voter registration was formally launched in the capital, which the government presented as a milestone towards democratisation. However, doing so deepened the mistrust of critical actors, who complained of the lack of prior consensus and boycotted several dialogue sessions. The government attempted to remedy the situation by convening the **National Dialogue Forum** scheduled for June 2025. The forum was significantly diminished when Puntland, Jubaland and part of the opposition refused to attend, reducing its political reach and exposing its limits.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the persistence of armed clashes between federal and regional forces, particularly in Jubaland, demonstrated the failure of dialogue.

Despite the deadlock, **partial agreements were reached** in the second half of the year. In August 2025, President Mohamud reached an understanding with a group of dissident opposition leaders from the Somali Salvation Forum on key aspects of the electoral process, moderating some of the most controversial reforms, such as the direct election of the president. Although this agreement was presented as a step forward, it failed to rebuild national consensus, as the main dissident actors remained on the sidelines. Important opposition figures within the Somali Salvation Forum, not party to the agreement, continued to reject the reforms or boycott

the process, citing security and political reasons and thereby leaving Somalia's transition to a 'one person, one vote' system incomplete.⁶⁷

Furthermore, there were no direct or indirect negotiations between the federal government of Somalia and al-Shabaab in 2025, as in previous years. The authorities consistently maintained a policy of explicitly rejecting any dialogue with the group, which they continued to refer to as 'Khawarij',⁶⁸ and prioritised a military solution. Analysts agree that, despite occasional calls for deradicalisation, no credible political channels involving factions of the insurgent movement existed. Nevertheless, during a conference in Oslo in June 2024, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud emphasised his willingness to engage in dialogue, and countries such as Qatar and Türkiye have repeatedly offered to provide such a space.⁶⁹

Gender, peace and security

In 2025, **modest and uneven progress was made in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Somalia** amid the intensification of insecurity, political polarisation around the elections and the persistence of very high levels of gender-based violence. The implementation of the **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023-2027)** continued to receive support from the United Nations, and specifically from the UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS)⁷⁰ and UN Women, particularly to promote the effective participation of women in governance and constitutional review processes, though female representation remained below the 30% target established in electoral legislation and reaffirmed during the political reform process of 2024-2025. Despite being a significant step forward, its implementation continued to face barriers such as persistent insecurity, forced displacement and conservative social norms that limit women's autonomy.⁷¹ On the political front, UN agencies and international partners supported inclusive consultations in Mogadishu and in several federal states to involve women leaders, including Ubax Ugaas (in Galmudug state) and Hamdi Adani Amin (in Hirshabelle state), who are members of the Somali Women Peace Network,⁷² civil society organisations such as Bilan Media and minorities in discussions on the electoral model and

65. Hiraan Online, *International partners back Somali president's push for national dialogue against al-Shabaab*, 7 April 2025.

66. European Union Agency for Asylum, 'COI QUERY – Somalia – Major political, security, and humanitarian developments', *EUAA*, 13 August 2025, p. 2.

67. International IDEA, 'Somalia reaches deal with opposition defectors on electoral model', August 2025.

68. This concept is a historical and Islamic term that is nowadays used in a political and delegitimizing way in contexts such as Somalia. It would refer to a heretical and extremist actor, with whom negotiating would be theologically and politically unacceptable, as they are considered outside the true Islam.

69. Cok, Corrado, 'React, rinse, repeat: How Europe can help break Somalia's cycle of conflict', *ECFR*, 2 May 2025.

70. UNSOM completed its mandate on 31 October 2024 and was replaced by the UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS), with an initial mandate of two years.

71. UNTMIS, *Somalia / Women Inclusion*, United Nations, 31 October 2025.

72. UNDP Somalia, *Women trailblazers redefining peace & protection in Somalia*, 7 September 2025.

constitutional reform, although these initiatives were limited by the boycott of some regional actors and by insecurity, according to various analysts.⁷³

At the local level, **networks of women mediators and peacebuilders** were consolidated, principally the Somali Women Peace Network, including alliances supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and by joint programmes of UNDP and UN Women, which facilitated community conflict resolution and support for victims of gender-based violence in approximately 17 districts across the country. Nevertheless, the situation of sexual and gender-based violence remained extremely serious, especially among internally displaced women and girls.

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 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. Türkiye has been encouraging attempts at rapprochement between the sides since then. However, in January 2024 Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a memorandum of understanding that included international recognition of Somaliland in exchange for facilitating Ethiopian access to the sea via Somaliland, amongst other issues, which blocked dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland and aggravated the relationship between them.

During 2025, the dialogue between **Somalia** and **Somaliland** not only **experienced no significant progress** but entered a **phase of regression and breakdown**, shaped by adverse regional dynamics and by growing political and territorial confrontation in northern Somalia. The Turkish-mediated agreement reached on 11 December 2024 between Ethiopia and Somalia in Ankara constituted a turning point for Somaliland, which found itself formally excluded from the pact despite being the actor directly implicated in the origin of the crisis. The authorities of Somaliland reacted with open hostility to the Ankara Declaration. Hargeisa interpreted the joint declaration between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu as an explicit way to delegitimise Somaliland as its own entity, as Ethiopia reaffirmed respect for the ‘unity and territorial integrity of Somalia’ without making any mention of Somaliland. Analysts and spokespersons of the Somaliland government complained that the agreement sought to resolve a crisis created at its expense without involving it, strengthening the narrative that Mogadishu uses regional dialogue to block Somaliland's aspirations for international recognition.⁷⁴ Throughout 2025, Somaliland simultaneously reinforced its sovereigntist rhetoric and its strategic rapprochement with Ethiopia, emphasising that the memorandum of understanding signed in January 2024 between Ethiopia and Somaliland remained valid from its perspective, regardless of the subsequent understanding between Ethiopia and Somalia. This position helped to consolidate the perception that the Ankara Declaration further hardened Somaliland's position, whilst de-escalating the confrontation between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

On the bilateral front, 2025 was marked by the **formal rupture of the few existing dialogue channels**. In April 2025, the Somaliland government **officially suspended all dialogue with the federal government of Somalia**, following the historic visit in April of Somali Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre to **Las Anod**, a disputed territory in the Sool region and the epicentre of the 2023-2024 clashes. Hargeisa described the visit as

73. UN Women, *Somalia Country Brief on Women Peace and Security (2025) Based on the Report of the Secretary-General on Women Peace and Security (S/2025/556)*, United Nations, 2025.
74. Tyson, Kathryn and Karr, Liam, ‘Ankara Declaration Reduces Ethiopia-Somalia Tensions but Leaves Unresolved Gaps’, *AEI*, 18 December 2024; and Walaaleeye, Maxamuud, ‘Somaliland Accuses Somalia of Undermining Dialogue Principles, Signals Stronger Ties with Ethiopia’, *The Horn Tribune*, 10 July 2025.

a form of ‘provocation’ and a direct violation of its sovereignty, claiming that it nullified the minimum basis for any future negotiation.⁷⁵ This decision resulted in the de facto **complete freezing of the Somalia-Somaliland dialogue process**, which had already been operating intermittently for years without substantive progress. The conflict in Las Anod and Mogadishu’s recognition of the SSC-Khaatumo administration as a new federal entity aggravated the rupture, which Somaliland perceived as a deliberate strategy to undermine its territorial control and its negotiating position.⁷⁶ Unlike previous stages, there were no international initiatives to relaunch talks between Somalia and Somaliland in 2025 and no clear prospects to reactivate them in the short term. Turkish mediation concentrated exclusively on the Addis Ababa-Mogadishu relationship, intensifying Somaliland’s sense of political isolation.

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 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.

During 2025, the political and institutional fracture in **Libya** persisted alongside acts of violence. Despite being low-intensity since the 2020 ceasefire, this violence still underscored the fragility of the situation and the challenges in addressing the political and armed conflict.⁷⁷ The main poles of power continued to revolve around the internationally recognised Government of National Unity (GNU) in the west, led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Mohamed Dbeibah, and the Government of National Stability (GNS) in the east, led by Prime Minister Osama Hamad and supported by Commander Khalifa Haftar, the leader of the armed group Libyan National Army. The United Nations remained the actor that played the most prominent role in mediation initiatives, primarily through the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the UN Secretary-General’s representative for Libya. In January 2025, this position was assumed by former Ghanaian Foreign Minister **Hanna Tetteh, who promoted a series of initiatives to try to unblock the political process**, affected, among other factors, by the indefinite postponement of general elections since 2021. **Despite the range of processes launched in 2025, the deadlock persisted at the end of the year.**

In December 2024, UNSMIL, led at the time by the acting UN Secretary-General’s representative, US diplomat Stephanie Koury, announced that a technical committee of Libyan experts would be set up to identify alternatives for addressing some of the main disputed issues. The purpose was to overcome obstacles and make headway on a political agreement. Thus, in February 2025, the formation of an Advisory Committee was announced whose members were selected for their knowledge of constitutional, legal and electoral matters, their ability to reach compromises and their understanding of Libya’s challenges, among other criteria. UNSMIL emphasised that the establishment of the committee was necessary given the scenario of

75. Hiiraan, Prime Minister Barre launches eight major development projects in Las Anod town, 14 April 2025; Somaliland, Tensions Soar as Somaliland Suspends Dialogue with Somalia, 17 April 2025.
76. See chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026; e International Crisis Group, *Somalia-Somaliland: A Halting Embrace of Dialogue*, 6 August 2020.
77. See the summary on Libya in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on conflicts human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026.

deep division and political paralysis and the growing popular dissatisfaction with the status quo, which was aggravated by deteriorating economic conditions.

Composed of 20 personalities, including 35% women,⁷⁸ the Advisory Committee held many working meetings over the following three months, including with other actors that had been involved in previous talks to address the electoral issue, such as the 6+6 committee, composed of representatives of the two main poles of power in the country. In May, **the Advisory Committee completed its mandate and presented its recommendations in a report that identified and analysed four possible scenarios for ending the transition phase:** (1) holding presidential and legislative elections simultaneously; (2) holding legislative elections first, followed by the adoption of a permanent Constitution; (3) adopting a permanent Constitution before any elections; (4) or establishing a political dialogue committee, based on the Libyan Political Agreement (2017) to finalise electoral laws, executive authority and the text of the Constitution.⁷⁹ The process received some criticism, including complaints that all the options considered the participation of discredited institutions, such as Parliament (elected in 2014) and the High Council of State (elected in 2012), revealing a certain distrust that the UN could manage to drive a substantive process after so many years of trying.⁸⁰

The Advisory Committee's report led to a series of contacts with various actors from Libyan society. In the meantime, UNSMIL and Germany promoted **a new meeting of the International Follow-Up Committee of the Berlin Process** to try to coordinate external actors involved in the Libyan process. Held in Berlin in June, the meeting was the first plenary session since 2021 and brought together 19 states and three regional organisations, which repeated their commitment to supporting the political process in the North African country.⁸¹ The decision by foreign governments to engage with one or both Libyan sides and to prioritise their own interests over collective diplomacy has helped to entrench the status quo, dimming prospects for a political solution to the crisis. In this context, and building on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and dialogue on the proposal with other actors, **UNSMIL and Tetteh presented a new roadmap to be implemented within a period of 12 to 18 months.** The initiative was structured around three pillars: the adoption of a viable electoral framework to hold presidential and parliamentary elections, the unification of institutions under a new unity government and a structured dialogue to facilitate broad participation and

address critical issues. The roadmap was received with scepticism by sectors of Libyan society and questioned by some power actors, such as General Haftar, who chose to discredit the UN initiative and promote the search for alternative solutions to address the crisis in the country.

By the end of the year, no progress had been made on the first two pillars of the roadmap. The parties remained divided over the legal framework to be applied to the elections and the commission responsible for organising them, as well as over the formation of a unified government. Additionally, Libyan political institutions presented alternative plans to that of the UN, contributing to a sense of confusion. Nevertheless, **in mid-December it was decided to advance the third pillar of the roadmap, and the first session of the 'Structured Dialogue' was convened.** Composed of 120 people (40 of them women, equivalent to 35% of the total), it was conceived as an inclusive forum for consultation, and not as a decision-making body, to build consensus on four key areas (governance, security, economy and reconciliation and human rights) and to pave the way for elections.⁸² The fact that it was a forum for dialogue held inside Libya was praised by some analysts, despite scepticism from other quarters. Some sceptics stressed that Libya's political transition has been repeatedly hindered by elites, militias and other actors that benefit from the status quo.

In October, the UN Security Council renewed UNSMIL's mandate for another year following a report presented by the UN Secretary-General that conducted a strategic review of the mission. Amongst the recommendations were that UNSMIL should prioritise support for a political solution in Libya, and that it should lead and support the working groups established under the Berlin Process, the negotiating framework that led to the current ceasefire. Another recommendation was to streamline the mission's involvement in the security sphere, moving from ceasefire implementation to confidence-building and the reunification of military and security institutions. Türkiye also mediated in response to several episodes of violence between rival groups in Tripoli to prevent escalation during the year.

Gender, peace and security

As mentioned above, **Libyan women enjoyed 35% representation in the initiatives promoted during the year by the UN.** This was the case in the Advisory Committee and later in the Structured Dialogue. The 40

78. UNSMIL, *UNSMIL announces the establishment of the Advisory Committee*, Press Release, 4 February 2025; Libya Herald, *UNSMIL'S Advisory Committee completes its mandate and submits final report*, 7 May 2025.

79. UNSMIL, *UNSMIL shares Advisory Committee recommendations, prepares for public consultation*, Press Release, 20 May 2025.

80. Mustafa Fetoury, *Is the UN helping or hindering a solution to the Libyan crisis?*, The New Arab, 28 May 2025; Lawyers for Justice in Libya, *New plan, same mistakes? Four priorities for UNSMIL's Advisory Committee to advance elections*, 24 February 2025.

81. Security Council Report, *Libya: August 2025 Monthly Forecast*, 30 July 2025.

82. UNSMIL, *Structured Dialogue*.

women participants in the latter organised themselves into a group they called the Libyan Women Caucus, with the intention of ensuring that women's perspectives, priorities and demands were substantively incorporated. In the months prior to the launch of the Structured Dialogue, Libyan women from various regions, as well as some living outside the country, participated in consultations facilitated by UNSMIL to identify some of their priorities, which were compiled in the 'Libyan Women's Charter' (December 2025).⁸³ The text reflects thinking and action identified in previous documents and processes, including those from Libyan women who participated in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF). Among other demands, the Libyan Women's Charter calls for the establishment of mechanisms to ensure meaningful female participation in political and executive positions, elections and security institutions, with a minimum representation of 35%, among other areas, as well as the establishment of a new unified government and a constitutional review. In 2025, UNSMIL's leaders were all women, and three women in senior UN diplomatic positions (Hanna Tetteh, Stephanie Koury and Rosemary DiCarlo, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) played a prominent role in supporting the Libyan process.

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, 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.

Diplomatic initiatives continued in an attempt to reactivate negotiations on Western Sahara in 2025, though without succeeding in re-establishing a dialogue between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. The main development was the more forceful international support for the Moroccan position, which materialised in various countries' support and in the approval of a UN resolution in October that expressly recognised Rabat's autonomy plan as the basis for negotiations to address the dispute. As in previous years, the UN played a prominent role in mediation efforts. **Coinciding with 50 years since the beginning of the conflict and in a scenario of low-intensity hostilities, the activity of the UN Special Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, concentrated in the first months of the year on trying to reactivate negotiations for a political solution and restore the ceasefire** (in force between 1991-2020). The diplomat carried out new rounds of travel to the region and met with key actors in March and September. At the same time, the US became more actively involved in addressing the conflict, from a position openly aligned with Morocco's interests. US President Donald Trump, who during his first term (2017-2021) recognised Western Sahara as Moroccan territory, publicly reiterated his support for the Moroccan autonomy plan. **Washington also intensified its political and diplomatic activities, increasing pressure on Algeria to convince the POLISARIO Front to accept the Moroccan plan and insisting on the need to reduce both the contingent and the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).** Some in both the US and Morocco called for the complete dismantling of the mission and for the POLISARIO Front to be declared a terrorist group. In mid-2025, a bill was introduced in the US House of Representatives with the aim of criminalising the POLISARIO Front through its designation as a 'Foreign Terrorist Organization' (FTO).

An international environment more favourable to Morocco's interests was demonstrated throughout the year by the explicit support of new countries, including the United Kingdom, Kenya, Portugal and Guatemala, for the autonomy plan presented by Rabat in April 2007, which excludes the Sahrawi independence option advocated by the POLISARIO Front. These states' support for Rabat's plan therefore joined that of major European countries in recent years, such as France, which declared that the Moroccan autonomy plan was 'the only way' to achieve a political solution to the Western Sahara conflict in 2024; Spain, which described Rabat's initiative as 'the most serious, credible and realistic option' for resolving the dispute in 2022; and Germany, which also backed the plan in 2022. In practice, four of the five countries that make up the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (the US, Spain, France and the United Kingdom) have openly aligned themselves with Morocco's positions, with the exception of Russia.

83. UNSMIL, *Libyan Women's Charter*, December 2025.

In this scenario, **the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2797 marked a new milestone in the history of the conflict.** The text of the resolution was drafted by the US and approved by 11 votes in favour and none against, with China, Pakistan and Russia abstaining, and with the absence of Algeria, the main international backer of the POLISARIO Front, which did not participate in the vote. The draft resolution presented by Washington had initially proposed extending MINURSO's mandate for only three months and demanded that the UN develop recommendations to transform or terminate the mission. Finally, after intense negotiations, the usual one-year extension of MINURSO was approved. However, the most innovative and significant element of Resolution 2797 is that it explicitly **urges the parties to enter into negotiations on the future of Western Sahara 'on the basis of Morocco's autonomy proposal, with a view to achieving a definitive and acceptable solution'.** Additionally, the text recognises that **'genuine autonomy could be the most feasible outcome'**.⁸⁴ The express reference to the plan presented by Rabat nearly 20 years ago stood in contrast to the omission of the positions defended by the POLISARIO Front, which had presented a revised and expanded proposal in October. According to reports, this new initiative by the Sahrawi group proposed including an autonomy plan similar to that presented by Morocco as one of the alternatives in a referendum in which the Sahrawi population would also have the option to choose independence.

Algeria, which participated in negotiations on the draft resolution, declared that the text did not reflect the legitimate aspirations of the Sahrawi people. Some analysts said that Algeria had decided to abstain because voting in favour of the resolution would have been interpreted as an endorsement of the autonomy plan and voting against it would be seen as a rejection of the extension of MINURSO's mandate, which entails the possibility of a referendum. Voting openly against the resolution would also have pitted Algeria against the US, which promoted the text, jeopardising Rabat's relative rapprochement in bilateral relations with Washington since Donald Trump's return to power.⁸⁵

In the months that followed, the UN Special Envoy stressed that the Moroccan plan was just a framework and did not necessarily anticipate the outcome of the negotiations. In this context, the UN and the US both urged the parties to return to dialogue and resume the negotiations. Morocco announced that it was updating and expanding its proposal, and it emerged that Rabat

was taking the Spanish system of autonomous regions as a reference, among other models. By the end of the year, no details of this expanded proposal had been made public. The King of Morocco publicly thanked the countries that supported his approach and said that the resolution represented a turning point in the consolidation of the Moroccan identity of the Sahara. At the same time, Morocco continued to strengthen its diplomatic, economic and military relations with Washington, including with multimillion-dollar contracts for the purchase of weaponry. Both before and especially after the adoption of UN Resolution 2797, internal differences and debates were reported within the POLISARIO Front over the strategy to follow. The Sahrawi group faced the dilemma between being accused of spoiler behaviour or accepting to negotiate despite the new terms established, in a context of growing international isolation. Formally, the group welcomed the extension of MINURSO and repeated that it was willing to participate constructively in an UN-led process but rejected participation in a political process that would legitimise the Moroccan military occupation of Western Sahara and deprive the Sahrawi population of its inalienable right to self-determination.

In November, groups in favour of discontinuing the negotiations met in the Tindouf refugee camp and demanded a change of leadership. Some analysts also warned of growing frustration among some

Sahrawi refugee youth, who in the current scenario have called for an intensification of the armed struggle.⁸⁶ From a human rights and international law perspective, UNSC Resolution 2797 was criticised for supporting a plan that does not lay out an option of independence, provide for reparations or guarantee that the Sahrawi population can freely decide on its political status. Organisations such as Human Rights Watch highlighted these aspects and recalled that an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN's main judicial organ, reaffirmed the right to the self-determination of the Sahrawi population as far back as 1975.⁸⁷

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2797 marked a turning point by recognising Morocco's autonomy plan as the basis for negotiations on the future of Western Sahara, whilst Algeria abstained from the vote and the POLISARIO Front faced internal divisions over whether to accept the new framework for dialogue

84. UN Security Council, *Resolution 2797 of the Security Council of the United Nations*, S/RES/2795(2025), Paragraph 3.

85. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, *What Next for the Western Sahara? The Repercussions of Security Council Resolution 2797*, Series: Situation Assessment, 13 November 2025.

86. International Crisis Group, *A Window for Diplomacy in Western Sahara*, Briefing no. 96, Middle East & North Africa, 20 October 2026.

87. Human Rights Watch, *UN: Western Sahara Peoples' Self-Determination at Risk*, HRW Report, 25 March 2026.

Southern Africa

Mozambique	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD)
Relevant agreements	Political Commitment Law for an Inclusive National Dialogue (2025)

Summary:

The 1974 coup d'état against the Portuguese dictatorship and the guerrilla war waged by the Marxist-Leninist insurgency Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) led Mozambique to gain independence from Portugal in 1975. Thereafter, Mozambique was shaken by a civil war that pitted the FRELIMO government against the armed group Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), which was supported by the ruling white minorities in former Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) and apartheid South Africa, within the context of the Cold War. The parties reached a peace agreement in 1992, seen as an example of reconciliation, mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio, which ended 16 years of a war that caused one million deaths and forcibly displaced five million people. The agreement ushered in a period of political stability and economic development, albeit with high levels of inequality. Armed clashes with RENAMO resumed in the centre of the country in April 2013 and a new peace agreement was signed in August 2019. In late 2017, a new armed conflict emerged in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, which continues to the present day. At the same time, mounting allegations of fraud and irregularities in successive elections, some corroborated by international observers, have been accompanied by growing authoritarianism and repression of the opposition, as well as FRELIMO'S capture of the state, the media and the economy. The controversial general elections of October 2024 resulted in the official victory of the ruling FRELIMO party's candidate, Daniel Chapo, but were plagued by allegations of fraud and violent crackdowns that left hundreds dead and thousands injured and detained. In their wake, the country has attempted to channel discontent through the creation of what it calls the Inclusive National Dialogue.

The Inclusive National Dialogue process began during the year, which sought deep constitutional reform following the social and political crisis the country suffered as a result of the October 2024 general elections. The year began with Daniel Chapo assuming the presidency of the republic in January, putting an end to the turbulent electoral period that had taken a tragic toll of hundreds of people dead and thousands detained by late 2024, as well as a new breakdown of trust between citizens and state institutions. Chapo presented himself with a message of renewal, committed to launching reforms to stabilise the country facing the challenge of mediating between civil society's demands for openness and the pressures of the hardline factions within his own party, FRELIMO, which have been reluctant to cede power or allow genuine accountability for the violence carried out during the protests.

In March, the government and the leaders of opposition parties with representation in Parliament agreed to launch a constitutional reform process by opening a national dialogue. One month later, the Assembly of the Republic unanimously approved the Political Commitment for an Inclusive National Dialogue, focusing on state reform, justice and electoral systems.⁸⁸ This legal instrument seeks to establish a roadmap for social peace based on three fundamental pillars: (a) the creation of an Inclusive National Dialogue and Reform Commission, (b) a review of the Mozambican Constitution to adapt the political system to new realities and demands for decentralisation and transparency and (c) transparency and accountability measures aimed at investigating the abuses committed and providing a response to the victims.

The Commission will supervise the work of 10 thematic subgroups, formed by political parties and members of different state institutions, which are focused on various issues, including constitutional reform, fiscal reform, political system reform and reconciliation. The decisions of the thematic subgroups will be reviewed by the Commission and subsequently presented to the Assembly of the Republic and the country's executive branch. Despite the progress made, the format of the Commission quickly became the main focus of controversy. The law stipulated that it would be composed of 21 members: 18 representing political parties with parliamentary or municipal representation (two per party) and three representing civil society. However, the composition was harshly criticised due to the lack of transparency in the selection of civil society representatives and because of the exclusion of Venâncio Mondlane, the country's central opposition figure. In fact, Mondlane had driven the main political force (PODEMOS) of the public protests, but due to his subsequent departure from the party, he had no parliamentary representation when the Commission was formed and was not included. Thus, on 10 September, the Inclusive National Dialogue process formally began in the country, which in principle is scheduled to continue until November 2026.⁸⁹ The registration could allow the eventual participation of ANAMOLA and, consequently, of Mondlane, in the reform proposals. Even whilst excluded for the time being, ANAMOLA submitted proposals to the Technical Commission, including the revision of the Constitution and the electoral body, as well as its formal inclusion in the same.⁹⁰

Furthermore, whilst different Mozambican governments had previously refused to engage in peace talks with the insurgency in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, in September President Chapo and other officials spoke for the first time of a possible dialogue to complement military efforts to resolve the conflict. Along the same lines, Valige Tauabo, the governor of Cabo Delgado,

88. *Ley de Compromiso Político para un Diálogo Nacional Inclusivo*, 2 April 2025. Published in the Boletim da República, 11 April 2025.

89. Alberto Massango, "ANAMOLA officially launched", Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 22 September 2025.

90. ANAMOLA, "As Propostas do Partido ANAMOLA para a Reforma Constitucional e Eleitoral em Moçambique", 25 November 2025.

went further and invited the jihadist insurgents to express their grievances through the Inclusive National Dialogue, which includes nationwide consultations with civil society representatives. Former President Armando Guebuza has also insisted that the spirit of the national dialogue must be extended to the insurgency in the north to achieve complete peace in the country.⁹¹

Gender, peace and security

As part of the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, in October UN Women joined forces with the government of Mozambique, backed with funding from Norway, to officially launch the project ‘She Leads Peace: Strengthening the Meaningful Participation and Leadership of Women and Girls in Peace, Security and Recovery (2025-2027)’. The project seeks to strengthen the leadership and participation of women and girls in peace, security and recovery processes in 14 districts of the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Manica and Sofala.⁹² Earlier, in July, UN Women reported that 240 women from the ‘Peace Sentinels’ project received training as part of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) project, implemented by UN Women and its partners, with financial support from the government of Norway.⁹³ Furthermore, UN Women Mozambique reported that on 11 November a webinar was held with female representatives from the justice system and civil society to promote an inclusive and urgent dialogue on how to achieve a more accessible and effective justice system that better responds to women’s needs.⁹⁴

South Africa	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	--
Summary: More than three decades after the end of apartheid (1948–1994), South Africa faces high levels of poverty and inequality, crime and corruption, as well as one of the highest unemployment rates in the world at 33.2%. In addition, the historically important African National Congress (ANC) lost its absolute majority for the first time in the May 2024 elections and was forced to make a deal with 10 other political parties. In this context, President Cyril Ramaphosa convened a National Dialogue to address various themes	

(employment, social cohesion, governance, gender-based violence, agrarian reform and economic transformation) and forge a new social pact to underpin a 30-year National Development Plan, though it faces criticism for its lack of inclusiveness and controversial financing.

The South African government launched a National Dialogue process to seek collective solutions to the social, political, economic and security crisis affecting the country. On 10 June, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the convening of the National Dialogue, which aims to foster unity and find collective solutions to the country’s many challenges by addressing the following themes: poverty, inequality and hunger; economic transformation and job creation; social cohesion and nation-building; gender-based violence and security; governance, accountability and participatory democracy; and agrarian reform and food security.⁹⁵

The National Dialogue was structured through several bodies: an Eminent Persons Group to provide high-level guidance; an Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the deputy chair to coordinate the government’s role; a Steering Committee to oversee the programme of action; and a Secretariat to manage daily operations. Similarly, a Preparatory Task Team was created for the National Dialogue, tasked with mobilising civil society and establishing several working committees. The preparatory committee reported that approximately 700 million rand (approximately 39 million USD) would be needed to finance the process, which sparked criticism from some opposition parties. In this regard, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana reported that he had included the National Dialogue as one of six unfunded spending priorities.⁹⁶

The dialogue initiative, which has been under discussion for years, seeks to involve a wide variety of social groups. Finally, on 15 August, it began with a two-day convention at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, which brought together approximately 1,000 representatives from the government, most political parties, civil society organisations and the public at large. Whilst Ramaphosa described the dialogue as a ‘nation-building’ effort, it was weakened by significant absences, such as that of the Democratic Alliance, the second-largest party in the unity government, and accusations that the ANC was attempting to control the dialogue and use it as a campaign platform ahead of the 2026 local elections. As a result of the First Convention,

91. DW África, “Cabo Delgado: Insurgentes convidados ao diálogo político”, DW, October 10, 2025.
92. ONU Mulheres Moçambique, 30 October 2025. Post Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1231758012328311&set=a.555566466614139>
93. UN Women Africa, “Local Women Lead Peacebuilding and Recovery Efforts in Mozambique”, July 7, 2025.
94. ONU Mulheres Moçambique, 10 November 2025. Post Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1240913101412802&set=a.555566466614139>
95. Republic of South Africa, “State of the Nation 2026. National Dialogue”.
96. Mthobisi Nozulela, “R770 million National Dialogue bill sparks uproar: final say lies with finance minister”, *IOL*.

and following review by the Eminent Persons Group, in December 2025 President Ramaphosa confirmed the nominations of representatives from 33 social groups to form the Steering Committee of the National Dialogue, thereby formalising what had been agreed in August. Later, in early 2026, UNISA hosted the formation of the Steering Committee.⁹⁷ A second National Convention, scheduled for March 2026, will consolidate proposals from the various commitments into a national vision and an implementation programme. The agenda will extend over eight months across various spaces in the country (schools, community centres, places of worship, media outlets and digital platforms)⁹⁸ with the aim of forging a new social pact to drive a 30-year National Development Plan.⁹⁹

Gender, peace and security

The South African government's Department of Social Development pledged to ensure the equitable representation of women in all structures that support and guide the National Dialogue, incorporating the mobilisation of young and older women, women living in urban and rural areas, women from different ethnic and linguistic communities and women with disabilities, in addition to including LGBTIQ+ sexual diversity. This commitment stems from one of the points addressed in the 2024 Pre-National Dialogue of South African Women, convened by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, which emphasised that the National Dialogue process must focus on all issues affecting women and that all South African women's diverse perspectives and priorities must be reflected. Similarly, the government promised to ensure the integration of a gender perspective and approach in the proposals and solutions that the Dialogue implements.¹⁰⁰

West Africa

Senegal (Casamance)	
Negotiating actors	Government, factions of the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)
Third parties	ECOWAS, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sub-regional Coordinator for Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Casamance (COSPAC)
Relevant agreements	General Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Senegal and the MFDC (Ziguinchor Agreement) (2004)

Summary:

Casamance is a southern Senegalese region geographically separated from the rest of the country by the Gambia River, which is surrounded by the nation of The Gambia. The Casamance region has a distinct culture and language because it was under Portuguese administration during part of the colonial period. Since 1982, the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) has demanded its independence. Clashes between the Senegalese Armed Forces and the MFDC became most violent during the 1990s, concluding in 2004 with the signing of peace agreements by the MFDC's top leader, Diamacoune Senghor. Following Senghor's death in January 2007, the MFDC split into three main armed factions, led by Salif Sadio, César Badiate and Mamadou Niantang Diatta, respectively. Since then, low-intensity fighting has continued between the different factions that do not recognise the agreement reached with the government and are vying to increase their control over the territory. In the meantime, efforts are under way to conduct peace negotiations with these actors to put an end to the violence.

The government of Senegal and a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) reaffirmed their commitment to peace in the Casamance region.

On 21 and 22 February, a delegation of the government of Senegal, represented by the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in Casamance, met in Bissau with a delegation of the Provisional Committee of the Unified Political and Combat Wings of the MFDC. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the guarantor of the process, and facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which has supported the Casamance peace process between the government and the three MFDC factions since 2014. This new round of negotiations was based on previous talks between Dakar and the faction led by César Atoute Badiate, which culminated in the signing of a Declaration of Mutual Commitment on the Terms of Disarmament on 4 August 2022 in Bissau. Following two days of intense negotiations, focused mainly on security, justice and political demands, both delegations reaffirmed their commitment to disarmament, though the practical modalities remain to be defined.¹⁰¹ The renewed commitment to peace, which according to local media would include a presidential pardon for imprisoned rebels, amnesty for combatants and a reintegration programme, was signed in Bissau on 23 February in the presence of Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Embaló and Senegalese Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, who hailed the agreement as 'a major step towards lasting peace in Casamance', underscoring the priority that Dakar places on resolving the conflict. As an additional sign of Senegal's commitment to the region, last year President Bassirou Diomaye Faye presented

97. University of South Africa, "The National Dialogue Steering Committee entrusted with helping to reimagine South Africa's future", 19 January 2026.
 98. For more information see official website: <https://nationaldialogue.co.za/>
 99. Jakie Cilliers, "South Africa's National Dialogue: putting the cart before the horse", *ISS*, ISS Today, 24 June 2025.
 100. Department of Social Development, "The National Dialogue must be a place for women to raise their voices", 11 August 2025.
 101. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, "The State of Senegal and the Provisional Committee of the Unified Political and Combat Wings of the MFDC Take a Major Step in the Casamance Peace Process", 28 February 2025.

a plan to invest 53 billion CFA francs (approximately 88 million USD) in clearing landmines from the area and supporting economic development. According to the government, the plan is an important step in peacebuilding, seeking to restore the state's presence in Casamance through the construction of schools, health centres and government offices.¹⁰² Whilst the agreement signed with the Badiate faction represents an important step towards peace, analysts noted that it involves only one faction of the rebel group, and the least powerful of the three, and excludes the more radical faction led by Salif Sadio.¹⁰³

The government of Senegal and an MFDC faction reaffirmed their commitment to peace in Casamance

held a meeting in Ziguinchor on 21 September, the International Day of Peace, in which two central themes were analysed: 1) security challenges and problems for peacebuilding in Casamance and 2) the empowerment of women in the context of the return of displaced populations. The PFPC also reported that to mark the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, an interregional exchange took place on 21 November on the theme 'Women and Peacebuilding'. Organised jointly by the embassies of Ireland and Colombia in Dakar, and in collaboration with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the national office of UN Women for Senegal, women from Ireland, Colombia and Senegal drew on their first-hand experiences in their countries' peace processes to hold an interactive discussion on the legacy of UNSC Resolution 1325 and how to advocate for its implementation.¹⁰⁴

Gender, peace and security

The Women's Platform for Peace in Casamance (PFPC) reported on its social media accounts that it

102. ADF, "Peace Agreement Offers Hope in Senegal's Casamance Region", *ADF*, 18 March 2025.

103. Babacar Dione and Baba Ahmed, "Senegal has signed a deal with separatist rebels. But will it end one of Africa's longest conflicts?", *Independent*, 28 February 2025.

104. Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance, Post published on September 21 and November 21, 2025 on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pfpcsenegal/>