

4. Peace negotiations in Asia and the Pacific

- In Asia and the Pacific there were 12 negotiation processes, 23% of the total cases in the world.
- Different armed groups in Myanmar held negotiations with the military junta due to pressure from China to de-escalate the armed conflict.
- The new South Korean president took some conciliatory measures and offered to resume unconditional dialogue based on ‘peaceful coexistence’.
- The US and North Korean governments highlighted the good personal relationship between the leaders of both countries and expressed their willingness to resume dialogue under certain conditions.
- In the Philippines, the body monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement warned that trust between the government and the MILF was at its lowest point since the agreement was signed and that the negotiating process was at a dangerous juncture.
- Faced with the outbreak of the most serious border armed conflict in decades, Cambodia and Thailand signed several truces with the assistance of third parties such as ASEAN, the US and China.
- The governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville signed the Melanesian Agreement, a roadmap to complete the peace process begun in the 1990s and determine the political status of Bougainville Island.

This chapter provides an analysis of the main peace processes and negotiations in Asia and the Pacific in 2025, both the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each case on the continent throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. In addition, at the beginning of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Asia and the Pacific that hosted peace negotiations during 2025.

Table 4.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia and the Pacific in 2025

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Afghanistan – Pakistan	Afghanistan, Pakistan	Qatar, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia
India (Nagaland)	Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF	--
India – China	India, China	--
Myanmar	Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups that have not signed the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/ SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA and MNDAA	China, ASEAN
North Korea – South Korea	North Korea, South Korea	--
North Korea – USA	North Korea, USA	--
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	Government, Autonomous Bougainville Government	United Nations, Jerry Mateparae
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF, Interim Government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	Malaysia, Third Party Monitoring Team, Independent Decommissioning Body, International Contact Group
Philippines (MNLF)	Government, MNLF (factions led by Nur Misuari and Muslimin Sema)	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
Philippines (NDF)	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of various communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Thailand (south)	Government, BRN	Malaysia
Thailand – Cambodia	Thailand, Cambodia	ASEAN, USA, China

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

4.1 Negotiations in 2025: regional trends

There were 12 peace negotiations in Asia and the Pacific in 2025, the same number as in 2024. However, there were also two new cases, Thailand-Cambodia and Afghanistan-Pakistan, and two others ceased to be considered negotiating processes: China (Tibet) and India (Assam). Following the deadliest border clashes in recent decades, Thailand and Cambodia met on several occasions throughout the year with the facilitation of third parties to try to lower levels of violence in the disputed border regions. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the escalation of violence between both countries prompted the start of talks aimed at easing tensions, with the facilitation of several countries. With regard to the cases that ceased to be analysed as negotiating processes, in China there was no public record of meetings or approaches between the Chinese government and the Tibetan government-in-exile. In the Indian region of Assam, the dissolution of the armed group ULFA-PTF as a result of the 2023 peace agreement shifted the negotiations to the ordinary political channels of the state of Assam.

In March 2025, the presidents of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan signed a historic border demarcation and delimitation agreement, following decades of tension and several violent crises in 2021 and 2022. The agreement, ratified by both parliaments, includes the exchange of territory and the shared management and use of water resources and infrastructure, as well as a commitment that no heavy military equipment or auxiliary forces will be stationed along the border, nor will drones be flown. The two countries resumed flights and reopened the two border crossings that had been closed since 2021. Some analyses highlighted the historic opportunity presented by the agreement, but also the lack of transparency and participation of civil society from communities in the border areas during the negotiations.¹ Moreover, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed a trilateral border delimitation agreement in March for the intersection zone of all

three states, which covers the Fergana Valley. In January 2025, China and the Philippines resumed formal dialogue through the Tenth Meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM), held in the Chinese city of Xiamen, in Fujian province. At the meeting, both countries agreed to resolve their political differences and maritime incidents peacefully, and to boost their cooperation in science, marine technology and environmental protection. China and the Philippines also reiterated the importance of cooperating with other ASEAN members to achieve a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, several Southeast Asian member nations of ASEAN continued negotiations on the aforementioned Code of Conduct. In the case of China and Tibet, the head of the Central Tibetan Administration, Penpa Tsering, stated that informal communication channels to send messages between the parties were still being maintained, whilst also admitting that indirect, confidential and sporadic talks with China had not led to any progress in recent years.

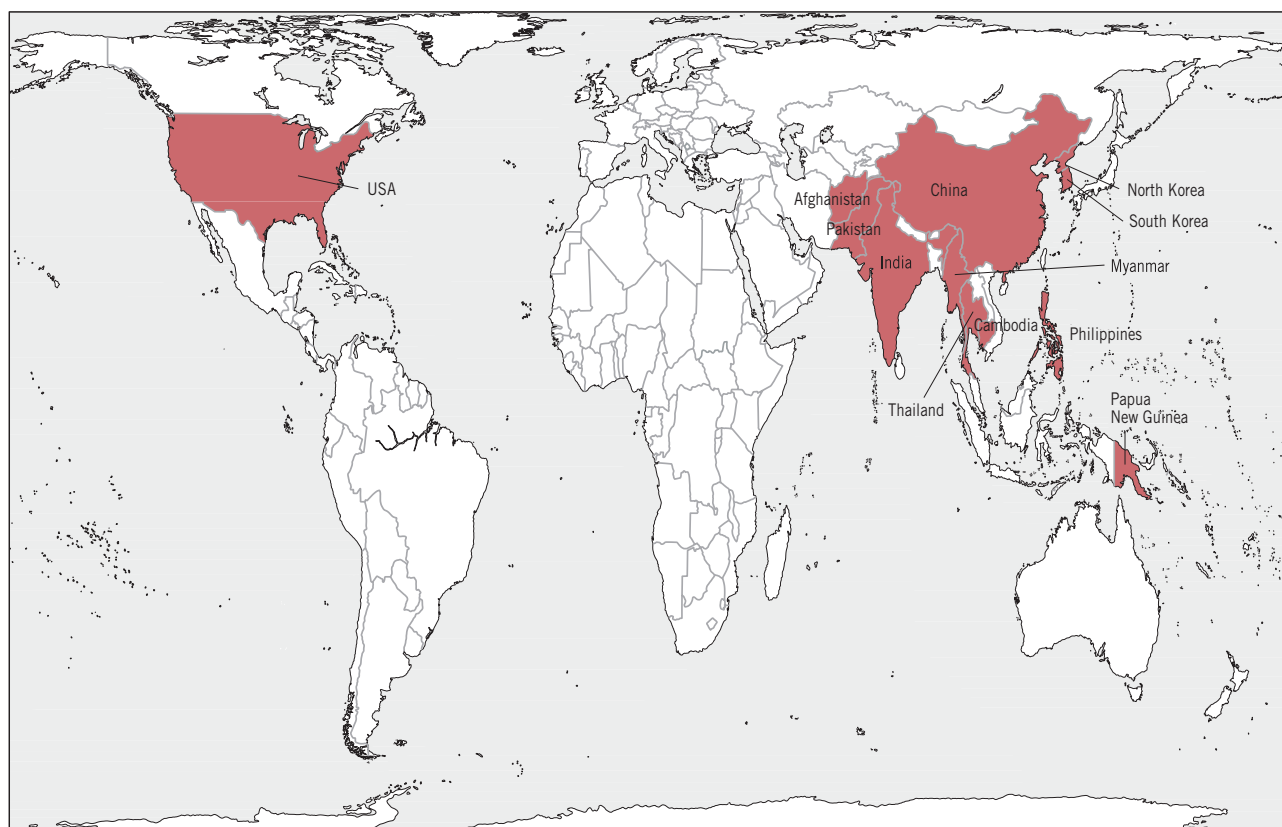
By **region**, half of the negotiations in Asia took place in Southeast Asia: the Philippines (MILF, MNLF and NDF), Myanmar, Thailand (South) and Thailand-Cambodia. Three were held in South Asia: Afghanistan-Pakistan, India (Nagaland) and India-China. Two occurred in East Asia: China (Tibet), North Korea-South Korea and North Korea-US. Finally, one was held in the Pacific region: Papua New Guinea (Bougainville). Half of the negotiations were linked to active armed conflicts (the Philippines (NDF, MILF and MNLF), Myanmar, Thailand (South) and Thailand-Cambodia), whereas the other half involved internal sociopolitical crises (India (Nagaland), Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), Afghanistan-Pakistan, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US and India-China).

With regard to the **type** of the negotiations, five of the 12 negotiating processes were **interstate**: Afghanistan-Pakistan, North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US and India-China. The remaining seven cases were **internal**. Although the Asia and the Pacific region had

Twelve negotiating processes were reported in 2025 in Asia and the Pacific, the same number as in 2024

1. Turgunbaeva, Aigerim, "Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Resolve Final Border Dispute: A Historic but Fragile Peace", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 15 May 2025; Human Rights Watch, "Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan: Put Rights at Center of Border Deal", HRW, 28 de mayo de 2025.

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia and the Pacific in 2025



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Asia and the Pacific in 2025

the second-highest number of active negotiations in the world, in some cases they were based on **exploratory talks or initiatives to bring positions closer together or build confidence**, sometimes with no public record of direct meetings between the parties during the year (North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US, Philippines (NDF)). Furthermore, several negotiations hinged mainly on the follow-up to diplomatic agreements (India-China) or the implementation of peace agreements reached previously, such as the Philippines (MILF and MNLF), India (Nagaland) and Papua New Guinea (Bougainville). However, the negotiations over Bougainville's political status are a consequence of one of the main points of the 2001 peace agreement (a self-determination referendum, which was already held in 2019).

The **actors** involved in all the different negotiating processes included their respective governments. In some cases, the negotiations were held **directly with armed groups**, such as the NSCN-IM in Nagaland, the BRN in Thailand and the MNDAA or TNLA, amongst other groups, in Myanmar, as well as with **political organisations representing insurgent groups**, as in the case of the Philippines, where Manila negotiates with the National Democratic Front (NDF) on behalf of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA. On other occasions, **the negotiations were held between**

governments and armed groups that, though not fully disarmed or demobilised, no longer maintain regular and sustained armed activity, such as the MILF and MNLF in the Philippines, and the Naga armed groups in Nagaland (India). In Myanmar, the government also maintained dialogue with umbrella armed organisations, such as the Three Brotherhood Alliance, composed of the MNDAA, the TNLA and the AA. Other talks took place between

central and regional governments, as was the case with the negotiations between the Philippine government and the regional government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and the dialogue between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Although it was the Indian central government that led talks with various armed and political groups in Nagaland, the state government was also involved to some extent in a negotiated solution to the conflict, urging New Delhi to accelerate the negotiating process.

Finally, there were talks and initiatives to bring positions closer together **between governments of various states**, such as North Korea and South Korea, North Korea and the US, India and China, Thailand and Cambodia and Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In half of the negotiations, the **main topics** on the substantive agenda of the dialogue were related to issues such as **autonomy, self-determination, independence,**

Half of the negotiations in the region were related to issues such as autonomy, self-determination, independence and recognition of the identity of national minorities

territorial integration and recognition of the identity of different regions and/or national minorities, as in the cases of India (Nagaland), the Philippines (MILF, MNLF), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Thailand (South). Another important item on substantive agendas in a significant number of negotiations in Asia and the Pacific during the year was the **reduction of tensions and levels of violence, including ceasefires**. In fact, virtually all interstate negotiations during the year pivoted mainly on this issue. Thailand and Cambodia met on repeated occasions with the assistance of third parties, such as ASEAN, the US, Malaysia and China, in attempts to reduce violence in the border regions, achieving ceasefire agreements twice during the year. India and China maintained contacts to try to follow up on the 2024 border patrol agreement, which lowered conflict levels and led to a certain normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Afghanistan and Pakistan initiated negotiations during the year to address the escalation of violence that has occurred between both countries since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, which entailed strengthening the relationship between the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistani Taliban. South Korea made some unilateral and unreciprocated gestures to reduce conflict between the two countries. Some internal negotiations also focused their efforts on violence reduction initiatives. The Burmese government reached several ceasefire agreements with different insurgent armed groups and announced a widespread ceasefire following the earthquake that took place on 28 March. In Thailand, both parties held several meetings to achieve a ceasefire agreement during Ramadan and devoted much of the year to addressing one of the main points of the negotiating framework agreed by the parties (the Joint Comprehensive Plan towards Peace): an end to the violence. Several meetings held by both the governments of the Philippines and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, as well as the peace implementation panels of Manila and the MILF, focused on reducing violence in the region. Some of the issues addressed in these negotiations included the neutralisation of armed groups opposed to the peace process and criminal gangs operating in the BARMM, as well as the reduction of weapons circulating in the region.

Another issue in several negotiating processes was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. In the Philippines, the MILF and the government negotiated the implementation of the final phase of the disarmament and demobilisation process of 40,000 former MILF combatants, as provided for in the 2014 peace agreement. As part of the commitments that it assumed in the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF, Manila promoted reintegration programmes for former MNLF combatants and socioeconomic development for their communities of origin in several regions of Mindanao. As part of the reintegration of combatants, in 2025 Manila promoted the programme granting amnesty to thousands of former NPA combatants and, to a lesser extent, to MILF and MNLF combatants.

Finally, **certain procedural aspects in Asia and the Pacific linked more to the design and methodology of the negotiating processes than to their substantive issues gained importance during 2025.** In Nagaland, several organisations signed the Ungma Declaration, in which, amongst other issues, they called for unity among all Naga groups to promote a shared political vision of their political and historical rights. Along the same lines, both the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Philippine government continued to promote the convergence and rapprochement of positions between the two main MNLF factions, as well as the harmonisation between the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF and the 2014 peace agreement between Manila and the MILF. Also in the Philippines, the government and the NDF remained committed to very different negotiating frameworks. The NDF repeated that the only way to end the conflict is through negotiations with international facilitation (specifically, by Norway), in accordance with the roadmap jointly agreed by both parties in 1992. Manila insisted on offering incentives for surrender, amnesty and subsequent reintegration of combatants, and on promoting Local Peace Engagements, which involve NPA combatants and Communist Party of the Philippines cadres at the local and community level. On the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang indicated its willingness to resume dialogue with Washington, but under certain conditions: an end to the demand for total denuclearisation and recognition of North Korea as a nuclear state. Given Pyongyang's rejection of the offer of dialogue and confidence-building measures extended by the new government in Seoul, the South Korean president urged US President Trump to act as mediator between both countries. In Thailand, the BRN lamented Bangkok's lack of political will to channel the conflict through dialogue, criticising the government for not even having designated a negotiating panel. Bangkok insisted on the need for members of the BRN negotiating panel to be able to make decisions on the group's armed operations. Finally, the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville province signed the Melanesian Agreement, urging both parliaments to decide jointly on the methodology for legislative deliberation and voting on Bougainville's political status, with one of the main elements of dispute being whether the decision should be approved by simple majority or by a qualified two-thirds majority.

In comparative terms, Asia and the Pacific was the region with the least third-party participation in dialogue facilitation. One third of the negotiations were directly bilateral with no support or external facilitation. Specifically, the cases in which the parties held direct talks without external facilitation were North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-US, the Indian state of Nagaland, the Philippines (MNLF) and China-India. Furthermore, compared with other regions of the world, mediation in Asia and the Pacific was relatively straightforward and characterised by one or few third parties. The cases with greater complexity in terms of third parties were the Philippines and Afghanistan-Pakistan. In addition to the negotiations between

the Philippine government and MILF panels with facilitation from Malaysia and the interactions between Manila and the Bangsamoro autonomous government, the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement is supported by the Third Party Monitoring Team, tasked with overseeing the implementation of agreements signed between the MILF and the government, the International Decommissioning Body, which oversees the demobilisation of 40,000 former MILF combatants, and the International Contact Group, which is composed of four states and four NGOs. In the case of Afghanistan-Pakistan, three countries (Qatar, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia), facilitated several dialogue initiatives aimed at reducing violence between the two countries, sometimes through parallel channels, which crystallised in a ceasefire agreement in October.

In comparative terms, Asia and the Pacific was the region with the least third-party participation in dialogue facilitation

Most of the **third parties** in Asia and the Pacific were states. The two most active countries in the region were Malaysia, which for years has facilitated negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF and between the Thai government and the BRN in southern Thailand, and China, which participated in the ceasefire agreement between the Burmese government and the Kokang armed group Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). Malaysia was also involved in the negotiations between Thailand and Cambodia. As mentioned above, Qatar, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia facilitated dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan, whilst Norway has facilitated negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF for decades. Finally, the US government and president played a major role in the negotiations between Thailand and Cambodia. In line with the scarce involvement of third parties in facilitating or supporting dialogue in Asia, the role of **international or regional organisations** was also minor, and far lower than in other regions. The United Nations supported Jerry Mateparae's mediation in the negotiations between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to determine Bougainville's political status. In recent years, ASEAN has been promoting a way out of the political crisis in Myanmar following the 2021 coup. In 2025, the organisation was very active in facilitating dialogue between Thailand and Cambodia and in overseeing the ceasefire agreements that both countries signed at various points during the year. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation also played a supporting role in negotiations between the Philippine government and the MNLF, as well as in relations between that group and the MILF.

With regard to the **trend** of the peace negotiations in Asia and the Pacific, progress was noted in some areas. In several cases (Afghanistan-Pakistan, Thailand-Cambodia and Myanmar), agreements were signed to

reduce violence, which in some instances included ceasefires, demilitarisation measures and confidence-building initiatives. Although such agreements eased tensions, high levels of violence were reported in all three cases in 2025 and the security situation remained

volatile and uncertain at the end of the year. Significant steps were also reported in other negotiating processes. Following an impasse lasting nearly a year and a half in the negotiations in Thailand (south), they officially resumed in December and the BRN revealed its political plan to resolve the armed conflict for the first time since talks started in 2013. The Melanesian Agreement was signed in June, which provides greater clarity on how the national Parliament of Papua New Guinea will take the final decision on Bougainville's political status, including the possibility of secession. The Philippine government and the MNLF expressed satisfaction with progress in the reintegration and socioeconomic support programme for thousands of former MNLF combatants, as well as their families and communities. The Indian government's authorisation for Naga leader Thuingaleng Muivah to return to his home village in Nagaland for the first time in 60 years was interpreted as an attempt at rapprochement. The US president and the leader of North Korea expressed their willingness to resume diplomatic relations and even negotiations under certain conditions. Although dialogue between North Korea and South Korea remained interrupted and relations between the two countries experienced one of the most complex moments in recent years, the new South Korean president took some conciliatory steps and extended confidence-building measures, saying that pragmatic and unconditional dialogue could resume based on 'peaceful coexistence'.

With regard to the trend of the peace negotiations in Asia and the Pacific, several contexts experienced stagnation, paralysis and even setbacks

Despite these signs of progress, several negotiating processes suffered **stagnation**, paralysis and even setbacks. Perhaps the most obvious example were the negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF on the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement, which went through serious difficulties to the point that the body overseeing the implementation of the agreement warned that trust between the parties had hit its lowest point since 2014 and that the negotiating process

had reached a dangerous juncture. As a consequence of the tension and growing distrust between the parties, in middle of the year the MILF ordered the suspension of the process to demobilise around 14,000 combatants until the government complied with several provisions of the peace agreement, such as the provision of socioeconomic assistance to the 26,000 combatants that had already begun the disarmament process. In other cases, dialogue remained paralysed or experienced significant difficulties, as in Thailand (south), India (Nagaland), the Philippines (NDF), Papua

New Guinea and the Korean peninsula. Ten years after the Framework Agreement was signed between the Indian government and the NSCN-IM, the negotiations in Nagaland remained at an impasse on the points that have prevented progress over the last decade, mainly the issue of a separate constitution and flag for Nagaland. The talks between the Philippine government and the NDF remained stalled, with no public record of formal meetings or contacts between the parties, and with Manila claiming a ‘strategic victory’ over the communist movement and prioritising Local Peace Engagements and reintegration and amnesty projects for former combatants over peace negotiations with the NDF. The president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government accused the central government of Papua New Guinea of a lack of political will in recognising the results of the 2019 self-determination referendum, in which an overwhelming majority voted for independence. On several occasions, he declared his intention to declare Bougainville’s independence on 1 September 2027 if no progress was made in the negotiating process. Finally, no meetings or official contacts were reported between North Korea and the US on the one hand and between North Korea and South Korea on the other.

Finally, no significant progress was made in the implementation of the **gender, peace and security agenda**, with nearly zero female participation in negotiating processes. One of the few exceptions was in the Philippines, where some women held key positions in the negotiating process between the government and the NDF, such as the facilitator of the dialogue and the head of the NDF negotiating panel. However, some initiatives related to the women, peace and security agenda were carried out in 2025. In Bougainville, the first Women, Peace and Security Summit was held, during which women’s organisations submitted a document demanding that Bougainville’s future constitution guarantee 50% representation of women at all decision-making levels. The Philippine government guaranteed that the women, peace and security agenda will remain one of ASEAN’s main priorities while the Philippines assumes its presidency in 2026 and announced the strengthening of the Philippine WPS Centre of Excellence, the first in the country and second in Southeast Asia. Progress was also made in the Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which aims to institutionalise gender-responsive governance to guarantee the protection and empowerment of all women and girls in Bangsamoro. Along the same lines, alongside the approval of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, the Thai government and UN Women announced the establishment of Women’s Networks, Focal Points and Empowerment Centres in Thailand’s border provinces with Malaysia for the purpose of strengthening women’s leadership in governance and peacebuilding.

4.2 Case study analysis

4.2.1. Asia

East Asia

DPR Korea – USA	
Negotiating actors	North Korea, USA
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Singapore Statement (June 2018)

Summary:

The US and other countries of the international community began to express their concern about the North Korean nuclear programme in the early 1980s, but the tensions that it produced were mainly channelled through several bilateral or multilateral agreements: in 1985, Korea North ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; in 1991 the US announced the withdrawal of about 100 South Korean warheads under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START); and in 1992 North Korea and South Korea signed the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, in which both countries pledged not to produce, store, test or deploy nuclear weapons and to allow verification through inspections. Nevertheless, there was a major diplomatic crisis in 1993 due to Pyongyang’s decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, though it eventually stayed its hand after the talks it held with the United States and the United Nations. After a trip to the Korean peninsula by former President Jimmy Carter in 1994, in which he met with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung to resolve diplomatic tensions and seek rapprochement, the US and North Korean governments signed an agreement in Geneva (known as the Agreed Framework) in which, among other things, Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for aid and the relaxation of international sanctions. George W. Bush’s inauguration as president of the United States led to a change in policy towards North Korea. Shortly after it was included in the so-called “Axis of Evil”, Pyongyang expelled several IAEA inspectors, withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and announced that it already possessed nuclear weapons. In light of this new situation, six-party multilateral talks between North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia began in 2003. Though they led to some important agreements in 2005 and 2008, this negotiating format came to an end in 2009. Despite direct contact between North Korea and the US since then, including an agreement reached in 2012 in which Pyongyang committed to a moratorium on ballistic and nuclear tests, the tension between both countries rose after Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011 and the North Korean weapons programme intensified. In mid-2018, Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump held a historic summit in Singapore where they addressed the normalisation of relations between both countries and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Although no direct negotiations were reported between the two countries, both Washington and Pyongyang highlighted the good personal relationship between their respective leaders and expressed their willingness to resume diplomatic relations and even negotiations under certain conditions. In February, shortly after

taking office as the new US president, Donald Trump announced his intention to build diplomatic relations with North Korea and declared that he had a good personal relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, with whom he met three times during his first term (2017-2021), in Singapore, Hanoi (Vietnam) and the Demilitarised Zone between the two Koreas. Later, at a joint press conference with the South Korean prime minister at the White House, **Trump stated that he would like to hold a meeting with Kim Jong-un before the end of 2025.** Kim Jong-un also publicly declared that he had fond memories of President Trump and even expressed his willingness to resume dialogue with Washington in a speech to Parliament in September, but under certain conditions. Firstly, he demanded that the US abandon its requirement for total denuclearisation and that negotiations instead focus on arms control. Secondly, he urged the recognition of North Korea as a nuclear state in exchange for peaceful coexistence. Before delivering that speech, in July, Kim Jong-un's sister and senior regime official, Kim Yo-jong, said that while the relationship between her brother and Trump was 'not bad', any attempt to use their personal relationship to promote the country's denuclearisation would be interpreted as 'mockery'. Kim Yo-jong also called on the US not to repeat past mistakes, to abandon its pretension of achieving the country's denuclearisation and instead accept North Korea's 'irreversible' status as a nuclear state. **Kim Yo-jong argued that any eventual rapprochement or dialogue between the two countries in the future should be based on the recognition that both Pyongyang's capabilities and the geopolitical environment had changed radically in recent years.** These statements came after an anonymous White House official claimed that Trump was willing to talk with Kim Jong-un to achieve a 'fully denuclearised' North Korea.

In this vein, some media outlets highlighted that Trump had publicly referred to North Korea as a 'nuclear power' or 'a kind of nuclear power', and that some US strategic documents had omitted concepts such as 'denuclearisation', denoting a certain shift from the historical US position towards Pyongyang. Other media outlets noted that the US government had unsuccessfully attempted to arrange a meeting between Trump and Kim Jong-un during a trip by Trump in late October. According to these sources, North Korea's refusal to hold such a meeting demonstrates its greater confidence in its own weapons capabilities and its much stronger international position thanks to its strategic alliance with Russia. According to some analysts, US acceptance of Pyongyang's conditions for dialogue, to include recognising North Korea as a nuclear power, ending the goal of achieving its complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearisation and focusing instead on arms control or moratoriums on nuclear or ballistic tests, could have regional implications, such as discrediting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, incentivising other countries to begin their own nuclear programmes or

strengthen the ones already in existence, or triggering an arms race in the region by countries that might feel threatened by the North Korean nuclear arsenal, such as South Korea or Japan.

North Korea – South Korea	
Negotiating actors	North Korea, South Korea
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Panmunjom Declaration (April 2018)

Summary:

Alongside rising tensions between the governments of North Korea and South Korea, not only did they fail to hold any meetings or negotiations, but their diplomatic relations and dialogue on possible reunification and other issues were suspended in 2023. In fact, in his end-of-year speech, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared that the relationship between the two Koreas had become one of two hostile and belligerent countries, so his government would no longer seek any kind of dialogue about reunification and reconciliation. Along the same lines, Kim Jong-un said that it made no sense to pursue talks with a country (referring to South Korea) that treated its neighbour as its main enemy and only seeks its collapse and what he called "unification by reabsorption". In the same speech, Kim Jong-un said that the North Korean Armed Forces would totally annihilate the US and South Korea if Pyongyang were provoked. A few days after his speech, Kim Jong-un also asked the legislative assembly to rewrite North Korea's Constitution to eliminate the idea of a shared state between two countries divided by war, to define South Korea as North Korea's "main enemy" and to specify that North Korea will seek to "occupy, subjugate and claim" South Korea as part of North Korean territory if another war breaks out in the Korean Peninsula. Kim Jong-un also ordered the elimination of symbols of inter-Korean reconciliation. For example, he demanded the removal of a monument in honour of the quest for reunification in Pyongyang and the abolition of concepts such as "reunification", "reconciliation" and "compatriots" from the nation's history. Along the same lines, North Korea also cut off cross-border railways and abolished government agencies managing relations and dialogue with South Korea, such as the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, the main body for inter-Korean affairs since its creation in 1961, and the National Economic Cooperation Bureau and the Kumgangsan International Tourism Administration, which were responsible for managing joint economic and tourism projects, such as a joint industrial park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern about the reduction in contacts and relations between both countries and said that dialogue and diplomatic engagement remained the only possible path to sustainable peace and complete and verifiable denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula.

In 2025, no official meetings or contacts were recorded between the two countries, but the rise to power of Lee Jae-myung as the new president of South Korea in June brought a substantial change in the policy of the previous South Korean government. After taking office, Lee Jae-myung took some conciliatory or confidence-building measures and offered to resume pragmatic and unconditional dialogue based on 'peaceful coexistence',

but Pyongyang firmly rejected any rapprochement with South Korea. In June, for example, Lee Jae-myung issued an order to finally halt the broadcasting of news, propaganda or songs via loudspeakers from the border, something that had historically been criticised by Pyongyang. Later, in August, the South Korean Army physically dismantled such loudspeakers as a ‘gesture of goodwill’ to try to restore trust and dialogue. Along the same lines, in December, after it was revealed that the previous government of Yoon Suk-yeol had allegedly covertly sent drones and leaflets to provoke a reaction from North Korea and thereby justify emergency action, Lee issued an order to prosecute those who launched balloons carrying propaganda leaflets, and the National Assembly amended a law to grant the police legal authority to block such launches.

Throughout 2025, Lee Jae-myung continued to explain and develop his policy of peaceful coexistence with North Korea. In August, during his Liberation Day speech, he set out the three guiding principles of his foreign policy towards North Korea: recognition of and respect for North Korea as a legitimate political system; an explicit renunciation of any attempt to absorb North Korea in a hostile or forced manner; and a commitment to cease provocations and hostile acts (such as propaganda via loudspeakers or leaflet launches). In mid-September, during the UN General Assembly, Lee further detailed his political objectives with respect to North Korea and revealed the END initiative, an acronym for its three fundamental pillars: Exchange, Normalisation and Denuclearisation. The initiative seeks the gradual expansion of economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation and exchanges to restore trust; active support for the normalisation of North Korea’s relations with the international community, including the US; and denuclearisation through a three-stage roadmap: suspension or freezing, reduction and complete dismantlement of the North Korean nuclear programme. However, the reunification of the Korean peninsula remains one of the cornerstones of the South Korean Constitution, which stipulates that the Republic of Korea encompasses the entire Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile, the North Korean government categorically rejected any rapprochement with South Korea and expressed that it had no interest in meeting or talking with Seoul. Kim Yo-jong, the sister of the North Korean leader and a senior official in his administration, said that Lee’s policies were no different from those of his predecessor, criticised the persistence of joint military exercises with the US and described Seoul’s conciliatory measures as a deceptive ‘farce’. Faced with Pyongyang’s refusal, at a meeting at the White House in late August, Lee urged US President Trump to act as a mediator on the Korean peninsula, arguing that he was the only person capable of making progress on North Korean denuclearisation.

South Asia

Afghanistan – Pakistan	
Negotiating actors	Afganistán, Pakistán
Third parties	Qatar, Türkiye y Arabia Saudit
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

Afghanistan and Pakistan began a negotiating process in 2025 facilitated by Qatar, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia to address the tense and violent situation between both countries. The violence had escalated after the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021 as a consequence of the strengthening of relations between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. Since 2021, the Pakistani Taliban armed group TTP has intensified its armed activity in the Pakistani tribal areas and established bases in the neighbouring country. Pakistan accused Afghanistan of providing logistical and political support to the Pakistani Taliban insurgency, causing the relations between both countries to deteriorate and triggering more violence, particularly after 2024. Since the peace negotiations between the Pakistani government and the Pakistani Taliban insurgency broke down in 2023 and tensions rose between Afghanistan and Pakistan, both countries had maintained contacts aimed at improving bilateral relations, but these efforts failed, leading the situation to escalate. The talks initiated in 2025 aimed to reduce violence and restore diplomatic relations between them.

Afghanistan and Pakistan carried out several dialogue initiatives during 2025 aimed at reducing tension between them and ending the violence, which increased markedly during the year.²

The talks, which were facilitated by Qatar, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, achieved a ceasefire agreement in October between the parties, which was maintained with great difficulty and with some episodes of violence that highlighted the fragility of the pact, but no progress was made towards a broader settlement that would end hostilities between both countries for good. The escalation that took place in October, which claimed the lives of dozens of soldiers, with Pakistani airstrikes in Paktika province that also reached Kabul, and to which Afghanistan responded, was followed by a ceasefire announced by both countries on 15 October. Initially planned to last 48 hours, the ceasefire led to a first meeting in Doha with mediation from Türkiye and Qatar on 19 October. At this meeting, it was agreed to continue the ceasefire and the dialogue process to ensure its sustainability. This first meeting in Doha was followed by a second meeting in Istanbul, which took place between 25 and 30 October and was aimed at consolidating the ceasefire agreement. Afghanistan and Pakistan announced that they had also agreed on the establishment of a monitoring and verification mechanism that would impose penalties on any party that violated the agreement. The details of the mechanism were to be agreed at a subsequent meeting,

2. See the summary on Afghanistan – Pakistan in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2026! Report on Conflicts, Human Rights and Peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2026.

and it was noted that follow-up meetings would take place.³ Despite the mediation and rapprochement efforts, no agreement beyond the initial ceasefire was achieved. After a third meeting on 6 November, Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that the talks had ended for the time being and accused Afghanistan of having come to the meeting with no agenda or willingness to sign any written agreement. Asif stated that the Afghan delegation claimed they would only respect verbal agreements, which Pakistan refused to accept, so the talks were concluded. Asif reassured that the ceasefire agreement remained in place, but he also insisted that Pakistan would respond if Afghanistan violated it. Furthermore, he reiterated that Pakistan's sole demand was an end to attacks launched from Afghan soil. From the start of the talks, Pakistan had said that for any agreement to succeed, it was essential for Afghanistan to dismantle TTP bases in Afghanistan and terminate its support for the Pakistani Taliban insurgent group. In the November round, various modalities for the verification and monitoring mechanism were scheduled to be discussed. Several analysts highlighted the importance of Türkiye's mediation, given its closeness to Pakistan and the fact that it is one of the few countries that maintains diplomatic ties with Afghanistan, even though Türkiye does not formally recognise it. Afghanistan upgraded its representative in Türkiye to ambassador in June.

A meeting took place in Saudi Arabia in December alongside those facilitated by Türkiye and Qatar. It was reportedly attended by delegations very similar to those that met in Doha and Istanbul. Pakistan rejected Riyadh's proposal to reopen cross-border trade alongside continued negotiations on cross-border terrorism. Trade between the two countries has been paralysed since October, and border crossings remain closed. The discussions were held behind closed doors and ended with no progress made towards rapprochement between both countries. Thus, the year ended with a fragile ceasefire in place and multiple warnings about the possibility of a return to hostilities.

India (Nagaland)	
Negotiating actors	Indian government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, ZUF
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Framework agreement (2015)
Summary: The Indian state of Nagaland has suffered armed conflict and a socio-political crisis since the 1950s as a result of much of the Naga population's unfulfilled aspiration to win independence and create a sovereign state. There have been different attempts at negotiation since the 1960s,	

but it was not until 1997 that a ceasefire agreement was reached with the NSCN-IM group, one of the main actors in the conflict. Although the agreement has remained in force to date, the negotiations have not made significant progress on the central issues. In 2012, however, the peace process received a boost from greater involvement from the Naga government and state MPs. Alongside the negotiations with the NSCN-IM, in 2001 the government reached another ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K insurgent organisation. However, these negotiations have also failed to make significant progress. In 2015, the Government and the NSCN-IM reached a framework pre-agreement, considered a preamble to the final resolution of the conflict. However, that same year, the ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K was broken, and violent clashes began again.

Peace negotiations in Nagaland remained stalled in 2025, 10 years after the Framework Agreement was signed between the Indian government and the NSCN-I,

the impasse persisted on the same points that have blocked progress on the agreement for the past decade: the issue of a constitution and a flag for Nagaland, a non-negotiable point for the Naga insurgency and one on which New Delhi has never shown any willingness to soften its stance. Nevertheless, new rounds of negotiations took place during the year between the Indian government and various political and armed actors in Nagaland, including the NSCN-I and the Naga political groups (NNPG). The latter insisted on distinguishing the 2015 Framework Agreement from the 2017 Agreed Position, reached by six armed groups, which points out that the Naga history of struggle for recognition is much longer than what is reflected in the Framework Agreement. **Several other events significant to the peace process occurred during the year.** In August, a meeting of dozens of Naga social and tribal groups took place, including 16 Naga political groups, 34 Naga tribal *hohos* (the tribes' internal coordinating bodies) from Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, and the Naga Reconciliation Forum. At the meeting, the participating organisations signed the Ungma Declaration, which, among other things, called for unity among all Naga groups to promote a shared political vision of their political and historical rights. October saw a historic event with the first visit in 60 years by the NSCN-IM Secretary General and chief negotiator, 91-year-old Thuingaleng Muivah, to his home village of Somdal in Manipur, from which Muivah had left to join the Naga opposition. The Indian government's decision to allow Muivah's return was interpreted as a gesture of rapprochement as it had previously blocked his return. The Naga leader was greeted by thousands of people with Naga anthems and flags, demonstrating the enduring influence of his people. During the welcoming ceremony, Muivah reiterated that Naga sovereignty and its symbols are inalienable. Meanwhile, the Political Affairs Committee of the Nagaland government called on New Delhi to appoint a political interlocutor with ministerial rank for high-level negotiations, with the aim of boosting and accelerating the peace process.

3. Joint Statement on the Talks Between Afghanistan and Pakistan Through the Mediation of Türkiye and Qatar, 30 October 2025.

South East Asia

Myanmar	
Negotiating actors	Government; armed groups that have signed the ceasefire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU; armed groups that have not signed the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/ SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA and MNDAA
Third parties	China, ASEAN
Relevant agreements	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (October 2015)
Summary: Since the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of Myanmar and ethnic-based insurgent groups began in 1948, several negotiations have taken place in an attempt to end the violence. Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have reached ceasefire agreements with the Burmese Government. Although definitive peace agreements were never reached, violence did decrease significantly as a result of these pacts. In 2011 there was a change in the Administration as a result of the 2010 elections and the new Government made several overtures to the armed insurgency that brought about the start of peace negotiations and the signing of agreements with most of the armed groups operating in different parts of the country. By mid-2012 the Government had signed a ceasefire agreement with 12 insurgent organizations. In 2013, talks began with different insurgent groups aimed at reaching a nationwide ceasefire agreement and promoting political talks. In 2015, the government and eight armed opposition groups signed a ceasefire agreement (NCA), taking the first steps towards political dialogue. In 2016, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which brought the government together with the armed opposition groups, beginning a new phase in the peace process. The conference has been convened several times in subsequent years.	

The armed conflict in Myanmar continued to rage with very high levels of violence. However, the Burmese government reached several ceasefire agreements with different insurgent armed groups during the year and announced a widespread ceasefire following the earthquake that took place on 28 March. In January, the Burmese government and the Kokang armed group Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) signed a ceasefire agreement, which was due to take effect on 18 January and was facilitated by China. The agreement came after seven rounds of negotiations, which took place in the Chinese city of Kunming. In March, after the devastating earthquake that devastated the Sagaing region in the centre of the country, the National Unity Government (NUG) announced that the People's Defence Force (PDF) would begin to observe ceasefires to facilitate the rescue of victims and humanitarian efforts. Shortly afterwards, the Three Brotherhood Alliance (comprising the MNDAA, the TNLA and the AA) followed suit with

another ceasefire. These announcements made by the armed opposition received a response on 2 April, when the Burmese government also announced a ceasefire aimed at facilitating reconstruction tasks, initially until 22 April and later extended until 30 April. However, the opposition denounced continuous violations of the agreement, and airstrikes by the military junta were reported between 19 and 20 April, which killed over 40 people in several parts of the country. According to some reports, between 28 March and 24 April, the Burmese Armed Forces conducted 207 attacks, including 140 airstrikes. Some analysts suggested that the government was taking advantage of the earthquake to improve its image abroad and regain military control over areas lost in recent years.⁴

In October, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) announced a ceasefire agreement in Shan State that had been promoted by China. The agreement came ahead of elections scheduled for December 2025 and January 2026 amid the constant bombing of TNLA positions. The agreement provided for an end to the airstrikes in exchange for the handover of two cities that the armed group had seized: Mogoke, the epicentre of ruby mining in Mandalay region, and Mong Hsat. Following Operation 1027, the armed groups took control of significant areas of Shan State, including the trade routes with China, which pushed the neighbouring country to promote negotiations between the Burmese government and the armed groups to prevent them from expanding their areas of operation and control. Early in the year, the TNLA had stated that it would continue to battle against the government, despite having made a ceasefire offer in November 2024 under pressure from China. Nevertheless, the group indicated that the offer still stood. The military advances that various armed groups had made since the start of Operation 1027 were significantly slowed down by the pressure that China exerted on the insurgents to negotiate ceasefire agreements.

No significant progress was made on the talks between ASEAN and the Burmese government on the return of democracy to the country after the 2021 coup. During the 47th ASEAN Summit in October, the regional organisation refused to support the elections scheduled for December, and there was speculation about the possibility of appointing a special envoy for the country with a longer-term mandate, which would implicitly constitute a recognition of the failure of the annual rotation system. ASEAN also expressed concern about the lack of progress on the Five-Point Consensus: an end to violence, inclusive dialogue, humanitarian access, the appointment of a special envoy and meetings between that envoy and all parties.

4. Tharaphi Than, *Myanmar military's 'ceasefire' follows a pattern of ruling generals exploiting disasters to shore up control*, The Conversation, 4 April 2025.

Gender, peace and security

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, the women's organisation Women's League of Burma (WLB) blasted the exclusion of women from peace negotiations and issued a call to action. Among other issues, it called on UN member states and the UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions and a global arms embargo on the junta, to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC), to guarantee civil society briefings during UN Security Council meetings and to strengthen the integration of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into all mandates. Furthermore, it demanded that ASEAN and neighbouring countries recognise refugees and facilitate safe and voluntary returns, deliver humanitarian aid independently without channelling it through the military junta and cooperate with legitimate local and ethnic organisations rather than with the junta. It demanded that the international community condemn the military coup and refuse to recognise the junta's authority; support efforts to restore democracy and legitimate representation; urge the ICC to investigate and prosecute junta leaders for crimes against humanity and war crimes; and ensure that women's rights organisations and civil society are meaningfully included in all decision-making processes. The WLB made all these demands in compliance with the provisions of Resolution 1325.

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

Summary:

Peace negotiations between the Government and the MILF, an MNLF splinter group, started in 1997, just months after Fidel Ramos's Administration had signed a peace agreement with the MNLF. Since then, the negotiating process has been interrupted three times (in 2000, 2003 and 2008) by outbreaks of high intensity violence. Despite this, in the over 30 rounds of talks that have taken place since the late 1990s some agreements on security and development have been reached, as well as a ceasefire agreement that has been upheld, for the most part. In October 2012 both parties signed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and in March 2014 the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which plans to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with a new public body (called

Bangsamoro) with a larger territorial scope and broader self-government competences. Since 2014, the peace process has been focused on the drafting and congressional approval of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which incorporates the main contents of the two aforementioned peace agreements and was approved by Congress in 2018. Following its ratification in a plebiscite in early 2019, the peace process has hinged on the implementation of the peace agreements, the institutional development of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (governed temporarily by the leader of the MILF) and the disarmament of the MILF.

The negotiating process between the Philippine government and the MILF on the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement faced serious difficulties during the year, to the point that the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT), which monitors the implementation of the agreement, warned that trust between the parties was at its lowest level since the agreement was signed and that the negotiating process was at a dangerous juncture. Some of the causes of the erosion of trust and the mounting tensions between the government and the MILF, identified by both the TPMT and other analysts, included President Ferdinand Marcos' unilateral proclamation in March of a senior MILF leader, Abdulrauf Macacua (the MILF military chief and governor of Maguindanao del Norte), as Interim Chief Minister of Bangsamoro, replacing historical MILF leader Ebrahim Murad. Marcos also appointed only 35 of the 41 names proposed by the MILF for the renewing the Bangsamoro Parliament, losing the assembly majority stipulated in the 2014 peace agreement. The MILF condemned both decisions as taken unilaterally and without prior consultation, as a form of interference in the MILF's internal affairs and as a violation of both the 2014 peace agreement and the Bangsamoro Organic Law. In addition to increasing mistrust between Manila and the MILF, this decision created some distance between Murad and Macacua and fuelled the risk of factionalism within the armed group, with some commanders expelled for failing to obey the directives of the group's Central Committee.

The second factor hindering progress in the peace process was related to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the 40,000 combatants provided for in the 2014 peace agreement. In July, the MILF ordered the suspension of the demobilisation process for around 14,000 combatants until the government complied with several provisions of the peace agreement, such as the one giving socio-economic assistance to the 26,000 combatants who had already begun the disarmament process. Later, in August, the MILF prohibited its members from participating in any demobilisation-related activity organised by the government without prior authorisation from Murad Ebrahim.

The third factor fuelling difficulties in the peace process were the national and local elections held in May, due to high levels of electoral violence and the decision made

by some MILF members not to contest the elections under the MILF-backed party, the UBJP. Furthermore, the delay of the first elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which should have ended the BARMM transition period, also strained relations between Manila and the MILF. These elections should have been held in the first half of 2022, but have been postponed four times for various reasons, the most recent being the Supreme Court's decision to exclude Sulu province from the BARMM on the grounds that the majority of the province's population had voted against forming part of the BARMM in the 2018 plebiscite approving the Bangsamoro Organic Law. As a result of this ruling, the seats corresponding to Sulu province in the Bangsamoro Parliament were left vacant, requiring the necessary legislative adjustments to be made.

Despite these difficulties, both the negotiations between the government and MILF peace implementation panels and the meetings between the central government and the Bangsamoro government continued to take place with a certain degree of institutional normality. Furthermore, both parties continued to maintain regular contact with the official dialogue facilitator, representing the government of Malaysia, as well as with some of the national and international actors supporting the process, such as the Third Party Monitoring Team, the International Monitoring Team, the International Decommissioning Body and the International Contact Group. In 2025, the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement was negotiated within the Intergovernmental Relations Body, which is responsible for coordinating government and legislative action between the Philippine government and the BARMM, and the peace implementation panels of the Philippine government and the MILF. Some of the progress reported in negotiating rounds 36 and 37, held in January and December, respectively, included the possible reactivation of the International Monitoring Team, greater proactivity shown by the International Contact Group (with more active participation in the negotiations), the acceleration of amnesty applications by former MILF combatants, the implementation of programmes for the reduction of small arms and light weapons and for the destruction and deactivation of those already handed over, the approval of the structure and composition of the Joint Security Assessment regarding the redeployment of the Philippine Armed Forces in the BARMM, the approval of the Framework for the Transition Plan of the Joint Peace and Security Teams (joint teams between state security forces and former MILF combatants) and, especially, the approval of the Roadmap on Transitional Justice and Reconciliation. Based on the principles of the right to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, this roadmap describes the action to be taken by the national and Bangsamoro governments, civil society and other actors to address human rights violations and the historical grievances of the Moro people, such as land dispossession. One of the main

objectives of this roadmap is the creation in the Philippine Parliament of the National Commission on Transitional Justice and Reconciliation for Bangsamoro.

Gender, peace and security

In October, around 600 people, including representatives of the Philippine government, civil society, international organisations and ASEAN, participated in the Philippine Conference on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), organised by the government and the Philippine Commission on Women, with the support of UNDP and UN Women. At the conference, the government guaranteed that the Women, Peace and Security agenda would remain one of ASEAN's top priorities whilst the Philippines holds its presidency in 2026, recognised the fundamental role of Filipino women in resolving armed conflicts and local disputes and announced the strengthening of the Philippine WPS Centre of Excellence, the first in the country and second in Southeast Asia. A side event was also held during the conference in which the chairperson of the Bangsamoro Women's Commission outlined the BARMM government's policies for localising the global Women, Peace and Security agenda through its Regional Action Plan and reiterated its commitment to inclusive peacebuilding and gender-responsive governance.

Philippines (MNLF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MNLF (factions led by Nur Misuari and Muslimin Sema)
Third parties	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
Relevant agreements	1996 Final Peace Agreement

Summary:

After five years of high intensity armed hostilities between the Government and the MNLF, both parties signed a peace agreement in 1976 in Tripoli under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which, shortly before, had recognized the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Moro people. However, the unilateral implementation of this agreement by the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos caused the armed conflict to re-ignite. After the fall of Marcos and the recovery of democracy in 1986, peace negotiations resumed and in 1996 a new peace agreement was reached for the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli agreement. Nevertheless, both the MNLF and the OIC considered there were substantial elements of the new peace agreement that had not been implemented, so since the year 2007 a tripartite process to revise the peace agreement started. Despite the advances achieved with that process (the so-called '42 points of consensus'), the attack launched by the MNLF on the town of Zamboanga in September 2013, the search and arrest warrant against the founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, the criticism by the MNLF of the peace agreement signed by the Government and the MILF in March 2014 and the differing interpretations between the Government and the MNLF on the conclusion or not of the revision of the agreement led the peace negotiations to a standstill at the end of 2013.

With Rodrigo Duterte arriving in power in mid 2016, the conversations resumed with Nur Misuari, who was granted a temporary judicial permit for this purpose. Nevertheless, the majority faction of the MNLF decided to include the main demands of the MNLF in the peace process with the MILF, which led to three of its representatives being included into the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, in charge of drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law (a new political entity foreseen in the 2014 peace agreement with the MILF and which should replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao).

Notable progress was made in the negotiations between the Philippine government and the MNLF in 2025, with frequent meetings between the negotiating panels of both parties, greater unity of action among the different MNLF factions, intensified involvement shown by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in supporting the process and the approval of a roadmap for 2026-2028 concerning the main object of the peace negotiations, the MNLF Transformation Programme. Officially launched in 2023, this programme aims to achieve the full reintegration and socio-economic support of thousands of former MNLF combatants and their families and communities. Of the 7,000 former combatants that the programme aims to cover, by mid-2025 it was estimated that the profiling of approximately 2,500 had been processed. Under the 1996 peace agreement, around 5,750 MNLF combatants should have been integrated into the Philippine Armed Forces and another 250 into auxiliary units. The agreement also provided for the possible integration of the maximum number of remaining MNLF forces into the Special Regional Security Force. The MNLF Transformation Programme runs in parallel to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process for around 40,000 MILF combatants, as provided for in the 2014 peace agreement between Manila and the armed organisation.

Throughout several meetings during the year between the Philippine government and MNLF Management Committees and Peace Implementation Committees, a roadmap was agreed for the MNLF Transformation Programme for the next two years, including four main dimensions: security (validation and verification of combatants, as well as documentation and monitoring of their firearms); socio-economic (financial assistance, health insurance, university scholarships, employment training and civil registration assistance); confidence-building (peace education and the government's amnesty programme); and reconciliation (psychosocial support for communities affected by decades of conflict). Only 646 of the 16,000 applications received by the National Amnesty Commission by early 2026 had been submitted by MNLF members. Although the period for MNLF members to submit their applications expired on 4 March 2026, President Marcos extended the period by two years, until 2028. The roadmap for the MNLF Transformation Programme agreed by both parties until 2028 is not solely focused on individual former MNLF

combatants, but it also has a community and 'second generation' dimension. For example, the plan includes educational scholarships for more than 6,000 children of former combatants for the 2025-2026 school year. At the community level, in 2025, 158 projects were implemented in 55 MNLF communities, including the construction of rural roads and bridges, drinking water systems and electrification.

On a more political note, there was greater unity of action between the MNLF factions led by Muslimin Sema and Nur Misuari. Although both factions formally maintain separate negotiating and dialogue structures, in 2024 they agreed to jointly manage the implementation of the outstanding points of the 1996 peace agreement and the Tripartite Review Process between the Philippine government, the MNLF and the OIC (2007-2016), leading to the '42 consensus points' that have guided the negotiations between Manila and the MNLF in recent years. Furthermore, the OIC was more proactive in its support for the negotiating process in 2015. During the 51st Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Istanbul in June, the organisation issued a resolution reaffirming its full support for the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement and urging the MNLF and the MILF to settle their differences to ensure the success of Bangsamoro autonomy. Also in 2025, several meetings were held between the Philippine government, the MNLF and the OIC to activate the Tripartite Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the outstanding points of the peace agreement, and the Bangsamoro Development Assistance Fund, which aims to finance socio-economic projects in MNLF communities.

Gender, peace and security

In April, women leaders from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and representatives of the national government of the Philippines attended the Bangsamoro Women Leaders' Forum, an event organised by UN Women and the Bangsamoro Women's Commission with the aim of advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The chairperson of the Bangsamoro Women's Commission, former MNLF leader Hadja Bainon Karon, highlighted the progress made by the Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, especially with regard to the Bangsamoro Gender and Development Code (BGAD), which she described as a crucial step towards institutionalising gender-responsive governance to ensure the protection and empowerment of all women and girls in Bangsamoro. The draft law, which underwent public consultations in 2024 and 2025, is based on Islamic principles and national laws and covers women's rights in education, healthcare, employment and protection from gender-based violence.

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

Summary:

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

In 2025, the negotiating process between the Philippine government and the NDF remained stalled, with no public reports of formal meetings or contacts between the parties. On several occasions, Manila stated that, in compliance with the 2018 executive order institutionalising the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ECLAC), it continued to prioritise conducting counterinsurgency operations against the NPA, offering incentives for the surrender, amnesty and subsequent reintegration of combatants and promoting Local Peace Engagements, which consist of local and community-level dialogue with NPA combatants and cadres of the Communist Party of the Philippines. During his State of the Nation address in July, President Ferdinand Marcos declared that all guerrilla groups in the country had been dismantled, adding that the NPA's 89 fronts had been taken apart or weakened and that the NPA had only around 780 active members, far from the 25,000 it had in the 1980s. Moreover, these fewer members were dispersed in remote areas with no capacity for centralised planning or territorial control. Along the same lines, in early January 2026, the Philippine Armed Forces declared that it had neutralised 2,018 NPA members in 2025 alone, of whom 127 were killed in military operations, 93 were arrested and 1,798 surrendered or gave themselves up.

The government attributed its 'strategic victory' over the communist movement to several factors, including the focus on Local Peace Engagements; support projects for former combatants, their families and communities; and amnesty programmes for combatants. Manila noted that the vast majority of amnesty applicants by the end of 2025 (5,755 out of 7,171) were former NPA members. In May, the government publicly unveiled the National Action Plan on Peace, Unity and Development 2025-2028, which emphasises ending the communist insurgency and accelerating amnesty for former combatants.

The NDF expressed its willingness to resume peace talks through both negotiating panels, but complained that the government lacks the political will to address the root and structural causes of the conflict and firmly opposed the Local Peace Engagement approach, arguing that it is a counterinsurgency strategy that does not seek to resolve the conflict but rather to force the surrender of its combatants and to divide and weaken the communist movement. The NDF reiterated that the only way to achieve a negotiated end to the conflict is with international facilitation, in this case provided by Norway, in accordance with the roadmap and substantive negotiating agenda to which both parties jointly agreed in 1992 and with the agreements that the government and the NDF have signed to date.

Faced with the paralysis of the dialogue and mutual accusations between the parties, during the year some civil society organisations, such as the Council of Leaders for Peace Initiatives (CLPI) and the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform, staged demonstrations and pursued activities in favour of resuming the negotiations, whilst condemning the standstill since the Oslo Joint Declaration was signed in November 2023, which itself broke a previous six-year impasse. The declaration committed both parties to resolve the conflict through a dialogue facilitated by a third party that would address the social, economic, political and environmental causes of the conflict to achieve a just and lasting peace.

Gender, peace and security

Juliet de Lima is the current interim chair of the NDF negotiating panel, which includes another female negotiator, Coni Ledesma. Furthermore, Kristina Lie Revheim is Oslo's special envoy to the peace process, as it is facilitated by Norway.

Thailand (south)	
Negotiating actors	Government, BRN
Third parties	Malaysia
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

Since 2004, the year when the armed conflict in the south of Thailand reignited, several discreet and exploratory informal conversations have taken place between the Thai government and the insurgent group. Some of these dialogue initiatives have been led by non-government organizations, by the Indonesian government or by former senior officials of the Thai State. After around one year of exploratory contacts between the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and some insurgent groups, at the start of 2013, formal and public conversations started between the Government and the armed group BRN, facilitated by the Government of Malaysia. These negotiations were interrupted by the coup d'état in March 2014, but the military government in power since then resumed its contacts with several insurgent groups towards the second half of the year. In 2015 negotiations between the Government and MARA Patani –an organization grouping the main insurgent groups in the south of the country– were made public. Although the insurgency wanted to discuss measures that might resolve the central points of the conflict (such as recognizing the distinct identity of the Patani people or granting some level of self-government to the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat), the main point discussed during the initial stages of the process was the establishment of several security areas to reduce the level of violence and thus determine the level of representativeness of MARA Patani and the commitment of insurgent groups (especially the BRN) with the process of dialogue.

After an impasse lasting nearly a year and a half in the negotiating process, the talks officially resumed in December. Then, for the first time since the process began in 2013, the BRN publicly revealed its political proposal to resolve the armed conflict in southern Thailand. However, the dissolution of Parliament in mid-December and the subsequent calling of new elections for early 2026 cast uncertainty over the scope and continuity of the negotiating process. During the first 10 months of the year, virtually no significant progress was made. At the beginning of the year, some expectations were revived that the negotiations would resume after the government lifted the state of emergency in one of the districts of Yala province and after Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra visited Yala and Narathiwat provinces, including an Islamic traditional school known as a *pondok*. Some analysts thought that this visit carried significant symbolic weight, since part of the conflict since the early 20th century has been linked to successive Thai governments' attempts to impose an education system to the detriment of the centrality and importance historically held by these Islamic schools. Furthermore, the visit came just weeks after the BRN issued a statement questioning the state's political will to resolve the conflict and anticipating the possibility of withdrawing from the peace process. Along the same lines, in late February, shortly after an informal meeting in Malaysia between BRN chief negotiator Ustaz Anas Abdulrahman and the Secretary-General of the National Security Council and former head of the government negotiating panel, Chatchai Bangchud, the government issued a statement that several analysts interpreted as a unilateral ceasefire declaration during Ramadan to create an atmosphere conducive to peace.

The BRN presented its proposal for a cessation of hostilities during Ramadan, which included demands for the release of some prisoners, a reduction in the number of days in the truce to 15, the appointment of a team of international experts to monitor the truce and authorisation for some local NGOs to participate in this initiative. However, faced with the government's rejection of the proposal, in early March the BRN carried out a major attack in Sungai Kolok district and stepped up its attacks. In the following months, both parties expressed their willingness to resume dialogue on several occasions, but both set conditions or expressed criticism at the same time. The BRN lamented Bangkok's lack of political will and concrete measures to resolve the conflict through dialogue, complaining that the government had not even appointed a negotiating panel. Meanwhile, Bangkok insisted on a reduction in violence by the BRN and on the need for members of the negotiating panel to have decision-making power over the group's armed operations, whilst making it clear that the independence of the Patani region was completely off the table in the negotiations.

The dialogue between both parties resumed after new Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul took office in early September as a result of the political crisis that ended with the dismissal of Paetongtarn Shinawatra. In October, the Thai government appointed a negotiating panel headed by General Somsak Rungsita and later announced the establishment of peace committees in each province. Meanwhile, the new prime minister (the seventh since 2023) visited the southern Muslim-majority provinces and expressed his willingness to resume the talks. In mid-November, at a meeting in Kuala Lumpur facilitated by the Malaysian government, which is facilitating the dialogue, the BRN and the government committed to resuming official negotiations in December.

The eighth round of official negotiations took place on 8 December, under the auspices of the Malaysian facilitator, Datuk Mohd Rabin Basir, and with the support of an international expert. During this round, the parties pledged to keep negotiating under the principles of the framework on which they had agreed (Joint Comprehensive Plan towards Peace), including the end of violence, public consultations and participation and political resolution of the conflict. One of the main new developments was the inclusion of cross-border drug trafficking on the dialogue agenda, which came at Bangkok's proposal. The government and BRN negotiating panels were headed by General Somsak Rungsita and Ustaz Anas Abdulrahman, respectively. Three days later, the BRN issued a statement via YouTube advocating for a model of self-government in legislative, administrative and judicial matters, including the application of Sharia law in matters relevant to the Muslim population of the region; legislative autonomy in fiscal, cultural and linguistic matters; and a government structure and education

system aligned with the distinctive cultural identity of the Patani people. The fact that the BRN explicitly specified its political objectives for the first time was well received by the Thai government and generated certain expectations, but just hours later the prime minister dissolved Parliament and called early elections for February 2026 amid a political crisis triggered by the loss of the government's parliamentary majority and the possibility of a no-confidence motion against him, in addition to escalating violence with Cambodia. Although the BRN did not comment on the situation, at the end of the year various analysts expressed scepticism about the future of the peace talks under such circumstances.

Gender, peace and security

Alongside the Thai government's approval of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, UN Women and Bangkok announced the establishment of Women, Peace and Security Networks and Focal Points and Women's Empowerment Centres in Thailand's provinces bordering Malaysia. The objective of these structures and platforms is to strengthen women's leadership in governance and peacebuilding and to support coordination among female leaders, civil society organisations and local governments in implementing and monitoring the aforementioned NAP. By the end of 2025, four regional Women, Peace and Security Networks and nine Women's Empowerment Centres had been established in the country's border regions. More specifically regarding the situation in the southern Muslim-majority provinces, during the year, Pattani Governor Patimoh Sadiyamu, the first Muslim female governor in Thailand, expressed her commitment to advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. According to some, the new NAP and the networks and focal points established in southern Thailand could lead to greater participation of women in peace negotiations between Bangkok and insurgent groups in the southern part of the country, where such participation has been almost non-existent to date.

Thailand – Cambodia	
Negotiating actors	Thailand, Cambodia
Third parties	ASEAN, US, China
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:
Attempts to resolve the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia since the early 20th century have been pursued primarily before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), with rulings in 1962 and 2013 concerning the sovereignty of the Preah Vihear temple and its surroundings, as well as through bilateral negotiations on border demarcation as a whole, which took place from the late 1990s until 2012 and were formally resumed in 2025. In the first ruling, in 1962, the ICJ determined that the Preah Vihear temple was situated in

territory under Cambodian sovereignty and ordered Thailand to withdraw all its forces from the temple. In a further interpretative judgment in 2013, the ICJ awarded Cambodia sovereignty over all the territory surrounding the temple. Bilateral negotiations on border demarcation began in 1997 and led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Recognition and Demarcation of the Land Border, by which both countries agreed not to make any physical alterations in disputed border areas until the official boundaries had been fully defined by technical experts. To this end, the Joint Border Commission was established, which met regularly between 2000 and 2012. However, differing interpretations of early 20th-century maps, the high number of anti-personnel mines on both sides of the border and increased political and military tension after Cambodia entered the Preah Vihear temple into the World Heritage List in 2008 hampered negotiations between both countries. Following an escalation of violence in 2011 and Cambodia's formal complaint to the United Nations against Thailand for 'armed aggression', the UN Security Council urged both parties to exercise maximum self-restraint and formally delegated mediation to ASEAN, endorsing its facilitation efforts. Under the rotating presidency of Indonesia in 2011, ASEAN attempted to actively mediate in an armed conflict between two of its members for the first time. However, both attempts to reach common ground between Thailand and Cambodia on border demarcation and to deploy ASEAN military observers to the border ultimately failed. In the meantime, UNESCO sent special good offices missions to try to persuade both countries to decouple the border dispute from the preservation of cultural heritage. Neither ASEAN's nor UNESCO's intervention prevented clashes between Thailand and Cambodia from continuing to occur in subsequent years.

Faced with the outbreak of the most serious armed conflict on the border in decades, Cambodia and Thailand held several negotiations in 2025 with the assistance of third parties such as ASEAN, the US, Malaysia and China. In late July, after several days of intense fighting on the border in which dozens of people were killed and hundreds of thousands more were forced to flee their homes, both parties signed the Putrajaya Agreement in Malaysia, which included an immediate and unconditional ceasefire on the border, accompanied by the creation of a 72-hour humanitarian corridor to evacuate trapped civilians, a commitment to hold military meetings to coordinate the de-escalation of the situation and the gradual reopening of closed border crossings. Furthermore, in Putrajaya, the foundations were also laid for the creation of an ASEAN Observation Team, coordinated by Malaysia and tasked with verifying compliance with the ceasefire and assisting both parties, specifically the General Border Committee (GBC) and the Regional Border Committee (RBC), in maintaining open communication channels.

Then, in late October, as part of the 47th ASEAN Summit in Malaysia, the prime ministers of Cambodia (Hun Manet) and Thailand (Anutin Charnvirakul) signed the Kuala Lumpur Peace Agreement, a declaration of 13 commitments that sought to consolidate the cessation of hostilities in July. In this agreement, both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to peace and security, repeated their promise to refrain from the threat or use

of force and pledged to seek to resolve their disputes peacefully. The agreement also stipulated the withdrawal of heavy weapons from border areas, the carrying out of joint demining operations, the restoration of diplomatic relations and the promotion of confidence-building measures such as the release of prisoners of war by Thailand. The signing ceremony for the declaration was attended by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and US President Donald Trump. Although this declaration was described as historic, just weeks later, on 10 November, Thailand suspended the agreement after two Thai soldiers were injured by a mine explosion while patrolling the common border.

Following the large-scale resumption of border fighting in December, ASEAN again facilitated talks between Thailand and Cambodia, which culminated in a new ceasefire agreement on 27 December as part of a special meeting of the General Border Committee (GBC). In addition to the cessation of hostilities against civilians, infrastructure and military targets on both sides of the border, both armies committed to maintaining their positions without engaging in new troop movements or reinforcements. Thailand also agreed to repatriate 18 Cambodian soldiers who had been captured during the clashes in July 2025.

Faced with persisting tension and mistrust between the parties following the signing of the truce, the Chinese government sponsored new meetings in Yunnan province, which culminated on 29 December in the signing of the Fuxian Consensus, an agreement aimed at consolidating the ceasefire, restoring communication and trust between the parties, in addition to outlining a roadmap towards lasting peace. In addition to facilitating these negotiations, China committed to providing financial support for the ASEAN observation mission, as well as for demining tasks and humanitarian assistance for people displaced by the conflict.

4.2.2. The Pacific

Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Papua New Guinea, government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville
Third parties	United Nations, Jerry Mateparae
Relevant agreements	Bougainville Peace Agreement (2001)
Summary: The armed conflict between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (1988-1998), which some sources consider to have been the deadliest in Oceania since the Second World War, ended with a cessation of hostilities in 1998 and the signing of a peace agreement in 2001 in Arawa (the largest city in Bougainville). Among other matters, the agreement provided for the establishment of the Autonomous Region of	

Bougainville (ARB), the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants and the holding of a non-binding independence referendum within a maximum period of 15 years after the election of the first ARB government, which finally took place in 2005. After several years of negotiations between the national and regional governments, in 2018 the Agreement's Joint Supervisory Body created the Post-Referendum Planning Working Group and former Irish President Bertie Ahern was elected chair of the Bougainville Referendum Commission, making him responsible for preparing the census and other logistical preparations for the referendum. After several delays, the referendum was finally held between 23 November and 7 December 2019, with a binary question in which voters could choose between greater autonomy or independence for the region.

During 2025, some progress was made in the negotiations between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to determine the political status of the island of Bougainville.

The Melanesian Agreement was signed in June 2025, a kind of roadmap for the culmination of the peace process begun in the 1990s. Facilitated by the dialogue mediator, Jerry Mateparae, and supported by the United Nations, the agreement was ratified after several days of closed-door negotiations in Burnham, New Zealand, a location described by both parties as the spiritual cradle of the peace process, as it had hosted some of the negotiations that led to the signing of the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement. According to the Melanesian Agreement, both parties recognise the legitimacy of the results of the 2019 referendum and commit to accepting the decision on Bougainville's political status by the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, as specified in the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement and the Constitution. Regardless of Parliament's final decision and Bougainville's ultimate political status, the Melanesian Agreement commits both parties to jointly explore the creation of a framework for relations based on a close, peaceful and lasting relationship. The agreement states that the legislative bodies of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville must jointly decide on the methodology for deliberation and voting within Parliament, with one of the main points of dispute hinging on whether the decision should be approved by a simple majority or a qualified two-thirds majority. In December 2025, following a meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body, the main negotiating forum between the parties, convened to begin the implementation of the Melanesian Agreement, Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape announced that the session in which Parliament should decide on Bougainville's political status would take place before the end of the first half of 2026. Also in December, the National Bicameral Committee on Bougainville concluded the national consultation process on the content of the negotiations with Mateparae's assistance. This was one of the key requirements for the process to move forward.

Alongside the signing and implementation of the Melanesian Agreement, another important development for the future prospects of the peace process in 2025 was the sweeping victory of Bougainville President Ishmael Toroama in the elections held in September. According to several media outlets, his victory legitimises the objectives and strategy of the Bougainville government in the negotiations. A former BRA combatant, Toroama has maintained that independence means separation from Papua New Guinea and the establishment of a new state recognised by the United Nations since the 2019 referendum, ruling out any other possibilities such as increased levels of self-government or the establishment of a free association model. Toroama has stated on several occasions that he intends to declare Bougainville's independence on 1 September 2027, and some close to him have speculated about the possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence if Parliament does not ratify the island's secession. Given this prospect, in 2025 the Autonomous Bougainville Government continued to prepare for the transition to full sovereignty, including the formation of a Bougainville Constituent Assembly after several years of a consultative and participatory process and the promotion of a Nation-Building Strategy until 2052.

Finally, the peace process is receiving notable International support. In September, UN Secretary-General António Guterres travelled to Papua New Guinea and met with Marape and Toroama, praising the Bougainville dialogue process as a model for peace negotiations for other countries. Guterres was the first UN Secretary-General to travel to Papua New Guinea. He emphasised the United Nations' continued support since the end of the armed conflict, including for the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants, the establishment of an autonomous government in Bougainville, the organisation and supervision of the self-determination referendum, the facilitation of dialogue between both governments since 2019 and support for Mateparae's mediation work, whilst also guaranteeing continued support for the dialogue process. Along the same lines, in 2025 the two main intergovernmental

organisations in the Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), showed greater willingness to become involved in resolving the Bougainville conflict than in the past, when they had been reluctant to interfere in the internal affairs of their member states. In April, PIF Secretary-General Baron Waqa declared that the organisation would address conflict resolution if formally requested by official bodies in Bougainville. Around the same time, MSG Director-General Ilan Kiloe also said he was willing to provide assistance to Bougainville and noted that the reason that the MSG was initially established was to promote the collective interests of Melanesian countries and to support them in their goal of becoming independent nations.

Gender, peace and security

In May, the first Bougainville Women, Peace and Security Summit was held in the town of Arawa. Involving more than 200 women, it was aimed at promoting women's leadership and advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Bougainville. Some of the topics addressed at the summit were gender-based violence, conflict resolution and the role that women have played in ending the conflict in 1997, in negotiating the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement, in the subsequent maintenance and consolidation of peace in the region and in the negotiations on Bougainville's political status that began after the self-determination referendum was held in 2019. During the summit, several women's organisations presented a document demanding that the future constitution of Bougainville guarantee 50% representation of women at all levels of decision-making, surpassing the current situation, in which three seats (out of a total of 40) are reserved for women. The summit was organised by the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government, the Bougainville National Council of Women, the Bougainville Women's Federation (BWF) and other women's civil society groups, with the support of UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR and the Peacebuilding Fund.