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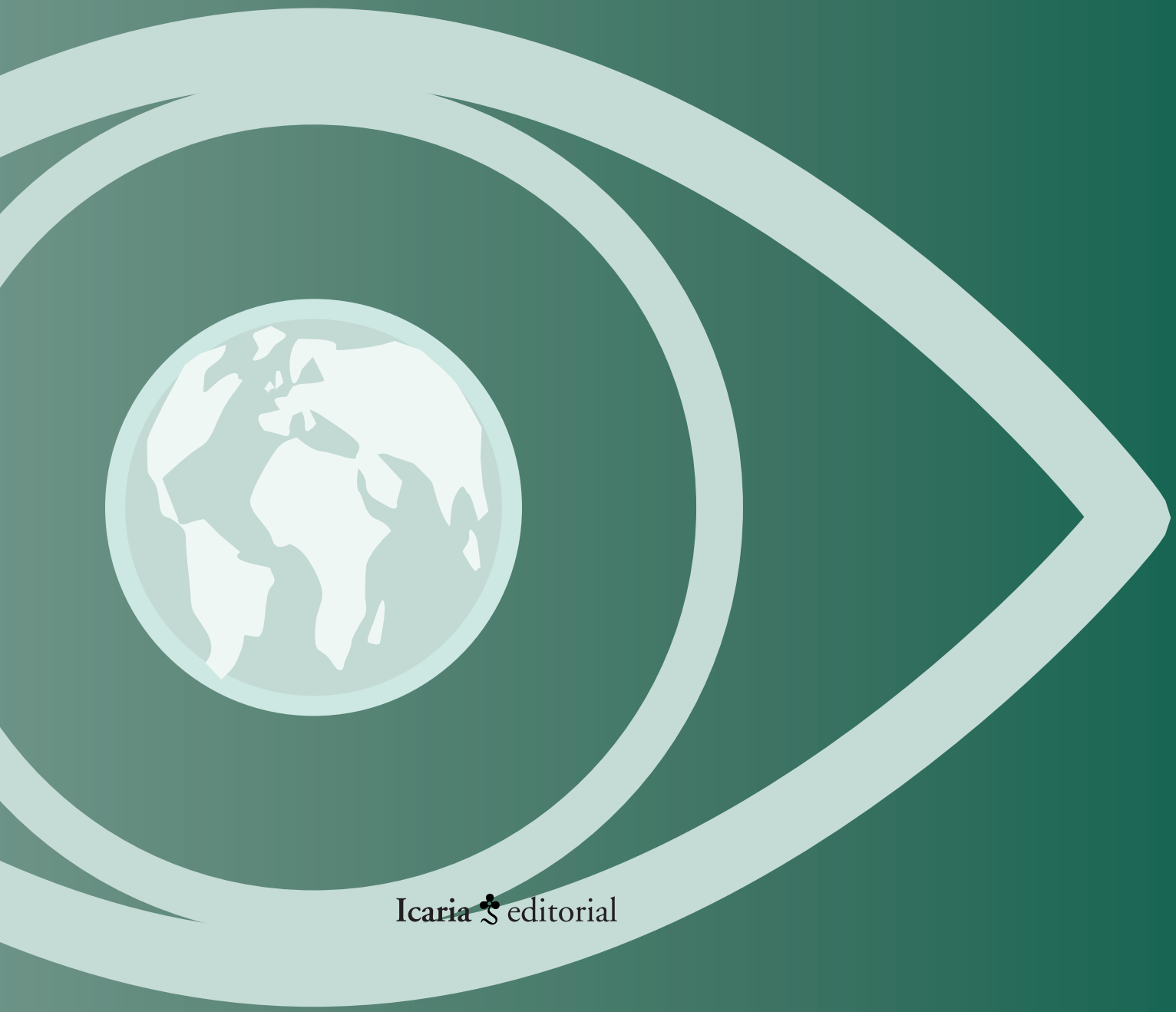
alert 2025!

Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding



Icaria editorial

Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding

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Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding

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Executive Summary

Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding is an annual report analyzing the state of the world in terms of conflict and peacebuilding based on three main axes: armed conflict, tensions, gender and peace and security. The analysis of the most relevant events in 2024 and the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main scenarios of armed conflict and social and political tension around the world allows for a regional comparative vision and also allows identifying global trends and elements of risk and preventive warnings for the future. Furthermore, the report also identifies peacebuilding opportunities or opportunities to scale down, prevent or resolve conflicts. In both cases, one of the main objectives in this report is to make available all the information, analyses and identification of warning factors and peace opportunities for decision-makers, those intervening for the peaceful resolution to conflicts, or those giving a greater political, media or academic visibility to the many situations of political and social violence in the world.

As for the methodology, the contents of this report mainly draw on a qualitative analysis of studies and information made available by many sources –the United Nations, international organizations, research centres, communication media or NGOs, among others– as well as on field research in conflict-affected countries.

Some of the most relevant conclusions and information in the *Alert 2025!* report are listed below:

- In 2024, 37 armed conflicts were recorded, a higher number than in 2023 (36 cases) and the highest figure in the last 12 years.
- Most armed conflicts were located in Africa (17), with the rest distributed between Asia and the Pacific (10), the Middle East (six), Europe (two) and America (two).
- In 2024, the dynamics of violence led to two new contexts being considered as armed conflicts: Haiti and Indonesia (West Papua). In the Middle East, at the end of the year, the case of Egypt (Sinai) ceased to be considered an active armed conflict.
- More than half of the armed conflicts in 2024 (57%) were high-intensity, with serious death tolls and great impacts on human security.
- 60% of the armed conflicts witnessed higher levels of violence in 2024, a much higher proportion than in previous years (42% in 2023 and 30% in 2022).
- 27 of the 37 armed conflicts (73%) were primarily caused by the rejection of the state's political, economic, social or ideological system and/or the domestic or international policies of the respective governments.
- According to United Nations records made public in 2024, in 2023 there was a 22% increase compared to 2022 in the number of civilians killed in armed conflicts.
- According to the UNHCR the forcibly displaced population during the first half of the year exceeded 122 million. Forced displacement levels have risen incessantly in the last 12 years.
- The IDMC estimated that by the end of the year, the number of displaced people amounted to 83.4 million, more than double a decade ago, of which 73.5 million were displaced due to conflicts and violence (10% more than in 2023).
- 116 socio-political crises were reported around the world in 2024, two more than in 2023.
- Most socio-political crises took place in Africa (38) and Asia and the Pacific (31), whilst the rest were distributed between America (20), Europe (15) and the Middle East (12).
- 38% of tensions (44 cases) worsened compared to 2023, which would confirm a trend in recent years in which the number of cases that escalate is clearly higher than the number of cases in which tension is reduced.
- International crises rose from 23% in 2023 to 27% in 2024 and almost half the high-intensity crises (14 out of 32) were international in nature: Chad-Sudan; Eritrea-Ethiopia; DRC-Rwanda; Rwanda-Burundi; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-US, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; Iran (nuclear programme); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, US, UK.
- 22 of the 37 armed conflicts in the world in 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality. 79% of the high-intensity conflicts occurred in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality.
- In 2024, the United Nations reported a record number of cases of sexual violence in 2023, with a 50% increase over the previous year.
- 16 of the 21 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2023 (94% of cases) occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.

- United Nations noted that based on an analysis of more than 50 peace processes in 2023, women accounted for 9.6% of the negotiators, 13.7% of the mediators and 26.6% of the signatories of peace and ceasefire agreements.

- *Alert 2025!* report identifies five opportunities for peace in DRC-Rwanda; Bangladesh; Bouganville island in Papua New Guinea; Türkiye and Syria.

- The report highlights four risk scenarios in Sudan; India-Pakistan; China-Taiwan; and the consequences of the militaristic escalation in the EU.

Structure

The report has five chapters. The first two look at conflicts globally –causes, types, dynamics, evolution and actors in situations of armed conflict or tension. The third chapter looks at the gender impacts in conflicts and tensions, as well as the initiatives being carried out within the United Nations and other local and international organizations and movements with regards to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. Chapter four identifies peace opportunities, scenarios where there is a context that is favourable to resolution of conflicts or to progress towards or consolidate peace initiatives. The final chapter studies risk scenarios in the future. Besides these five chapters, the report also includes a foldable map identifying the scenarios of armed conflict and social-political crises.

Armed conflicts

The first chapter (Armed conflicts)[1] describes the evolution, type, causes and dynamics in active conflicts during the year; global and regional trends in armed conflicts in 2023 are analyzed, as well as the impacts of such conflicts on the civilian population.

Thirty-seven armed conflicts were counted throughout 2024, compared to the 36 reported in 2023, the 33 in 2022 and the 32 in 2021. This is the highest figure since 2012, meaning the highest in 12 years according to Escola de Cultura de Pau's data. The number of armed conflicts in recent years has risen alongside a significant increase in the number of socio -political crises worldwide, which reached a total of 116 in 2024 (see chapter 2).

37 armed conflicts were recorded in 2024, the highest figure since 2012

In 2024, the dynamics of violence led to two new contexts being considered as armed conflicts. In America, there was the case of Haiti, which witnessed an alarming rise in violence and a seriously deteriorating humanitarian situation alongside a political crisis that only got worse. In Asia and the Pacific, the escalation of fighting between Indonesian security forces and the armed wing of the Free Papua Organisation (PLO), attacks against civilians and intercommunity violence also led us to reclassify the case of Indonesia (West Papua) as an armed conflict. At the end of the year, the case of Egypt (Sinai) in the Middle East ceased to be considered an active armed conflict due to the significant reduction in hostilities that in recent years had pitted fighters from the Islamic State branch in the region against the Egyptian Army, supported by tribal militias. However, several different challenges remained, linked to the return of displaced populations and accountability for war crimes and human rights violations committed during the conflict.

As in previous years, the largest number of conflicts worldwide were once again in Africa, which accounted for almost half (17 conflicts, representing 46%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (10 conflicts, equivalent to 27%), the Middle East (six, accounting for 16% of the total) and America and Europe (with two conflicts each, representing 5.5%, respectively).

Escola de Cultura de Pau identifies three types of armed conflicts to describe the relationship between the actors involved in the conflicts and the setting of the hostilities: internal, internationalised internal and international. In 2024, the distribution of cases according to these categories was very similar to the previous year. Seven (19%) conflicts were internal in nature (one more than in 2023), and they were distributed between Africa (three) and Asia and the Pacific (four): Ethiopia (Oromia), the DRC (west), Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo), India (CPI-M), the Philippines (NPA), Thailand (south) and Indonesia (West Papua), which was added as an armed conflict in 2024. Thus, Asia and the Pacific was once again the part of the world with the highest number of predominantly internal conflicts. The number of international armed conflicts remained stable compared to 2023, at five, which was 13% of the total. These were distributed between Africa (two), Europe (one) and the Middle East (two). They included the armed conflicts in the Western Sahel region, in the DRC (east)—considered international due to Rwanda's direct involvement in the

1 An armed conflict is any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence a) causes a minimum of 100 battle-related deaths in a year and/or a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructures or of natural resources) and human security (e.g. wounded or displaced population, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or disruption of basic services) and b) aims to achieve objectives that are different than those of common delinquency and are normally linked to:
-demands for self-determination and self-government or identity issues;
-the opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of the government, which in both cases leads to fighting to seize or erode power;
-control over the resources or the territory.

Armed conflicts in 2024*

AFRICA (17)	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (10)	MIDDLE EAST (6)
Burundi -2015-	Afghanistan -2001-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014-**
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) -2018-	India (CPI-M) -1967-	Iraq -2003-
CAR -2006-	India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Israel-Hezbollah –2023-
DRC (east) -1998-	Indonesia (West Papua) -2024-	Israel-Palestine -2000-
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Myanmar -1948-	Syria -2011-
DRC (west) -2023-	Pakistan -2001-	Yemen -2004-
Ethiopia (Amhara) -2023-	Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	**EUROPE (2)**
Ethiopia (Oromia) -2022-	Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Russia – Ukraine -2022-
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) -2011-	Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Türkiye (PKK) -1984-
Libya -2011-	Thailand (south) -2004-	**AMERICA (2)**
Mali -2012-		Colombia -1964-
Mozambique (north) -2017-		Haiti -2024-
Somalia -1988-		
Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) -2023-		
Sudan -2023-		
South Sudan -2009-		
Western Sahel Region -2018-		

* The start date of the armed conflict is shown between hyphens.
** Armed conflict finalized in 2024.

hostilities—and Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Hezbollah and Israel-Palestine. The remaining armed conflicts (25 of the 37, representing 68%) were internationalised internal in nature. This proportion follows the trend observed in 2023 (69%), but it is also smaller compared to previous years, in which 80% of the conflicts were of this type. Even though some of the dynamics of internationalised internal armed conflicts are internal, they are characterised by the fact that some of the conflicting parties are foreign, the armed actors to the conflict have bases or launch attacks from abroad and/or the conflict has spilled into neighbouring countries. In many conflicts, this internationalisation factor has taken the form of the involvement of third parties as conflicting parties, including international missions, ad hoc regional and international military coalitions, states, armed groups that mount cross-border attacks, international private security companies and other actors.

The multi-causal nature of the armed conflicts was confirmed in 2024. In keeping with the trend observed in previous years, most of the conflicts (27 of the 37, equivalent to 73%) were primarily caused in part by the rejection of the state's political, economic, social or ideological system and/or the domestic or international policies of the respective governments. As in recent years, the causal factor linked to disputes about the system was significant in 2024, as it was found in 18 conflicts (46%). In most of them, it was related to actors with political agendas who claim an alleged jihadist inspiration based on their particular interpretation of Islamic precepts. These groups include Boko Haram factions (JAS and ISWAP) in the Lake Chad region, the Pakistani Taliban militias of the TTP and various groups that have claimed to be branches and/or "provinces" of ISIS beyond their areas of origin in Iraq and Syria, in contexts such as the Lake Chad region, Somalia, Libya, Egypt (Sinai), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), the Philippines (Mindanao) and Yemen. In some of these contexts, such as Libya, Afghanistan, the Philippines (Mindanao), Egypt (Sinai) and Yemen, these groups have reduced their activities compared to previous years. In contrast, groups with jihadist agendas have gained prominence in African armed conflicts, mainly in the Western Sahel region. These include groups such as the Jama'at Nusra al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) coalition—linked to the al-Qaeda network—and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). In other cases, such as Colombia, the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), challenges to the system were associated with other types of insurgents ideologically linked to Marxism and Maoism. Furthermore, armed conflicts motivated by the domestic or international policies of the respective governments, which resulted in struggles to erode or gain power (and in some cases, to the establishment of rival government structures) were found in 13 of the 37 cases (38%). These include Burundi, Libya, the CAR, Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Hezbollah, Yemen and Syria. In Syria, a concerted offensive by rebel forces toppled Bashar Assad's government 14 years after the start of uprisings against it in the country.

Another main cause of the armed conflicts were disputes about identity-related issues and/or demands for self-government, which were found in 22 of the 37 armed conflicts in 2024, or 59% (in every region except America). Following the trend of previous years, the most relevant factor among these motivations was associated with identity-related issues, which were present in 22 cases (59%). In many cases, identity-related issues were closely linked to demands for self-government (15 of the 37 conflicts, or 41%). Identity-related issues and/or demands for self-governance are motivations for some long-standing conflicts, such as Türkiye (PKK), India (Jammu and Kashmir) and Myanmar, but also for some crises that have escalated into armed conflicts more recently (within the last five years), such as Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Amhara), Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) and Indonesia (West Papua). The conflict in Indonesia (West Papua) is considered an armed conflict from 2024 onwards, partly due to the intensification of fighting between the Indonesian government and the armed wing of the secessionist group Free Papua Organisation (PLO).

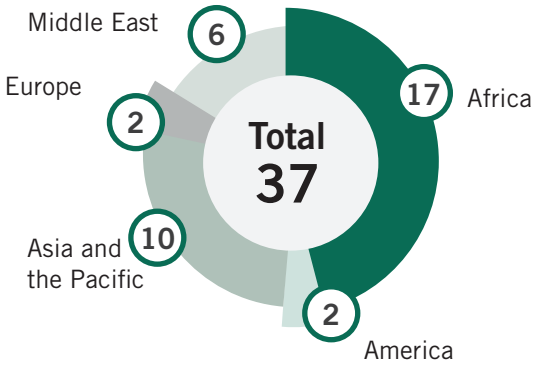
Finally, many armed conflicts were primarily caused in part by control of territory and/or resources. These factors were identified in 17 of the 37 armed conflicts, equivalent to 46%. Disputes over resources were particularly prominent, as they were found in 14 of the 37 cases (38%) in 2024. Most of the armed conflicts involving disputes over resources were in Africa, in line with what was observed in previous years, though they were also indirect factors in many others in other regions, perpetuating violence through war economies.

Most armed conflicts (60%) evolved negatively in 2024 towards higher levels of violence, a much higher proportion than in previous years

The analysis of the trend of the armed conflicts in 2024 offers one of the most significant conclusions of the year. More than half the cases (22 of the 37, or 60%) evolved towards higher levels of violence and instability, a significantly higher proportion than in previous years (42% in 2023 and 30% in 2022). The armed conflicts that witnessed a rise in violence and hostilities, with greater impacts in 2024, were most cases in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mozambique (north), the CAR, the DRC (east), Sudan and South Sudan); both conflicts in America (Colombia and Haiti); most cases in Asia and the Pacific (Afghanistan, India (CPI-M), Indonesia (West Papua), Myanmar, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Thailand (south)); one of the two conflicts in Europe (Russia-Ukraine); and half the cases in the Middle East (Israel-Hezbollah, Israel-Palestine and Syria). Nine of the 37 armed conflicts (24%) showed levels of violence similar to those of the previous year, whilst only seven (19%) had less fighting and violence.

UN reports have verified a significant rise in the number of verified cases of sexual violence in armed conflicts

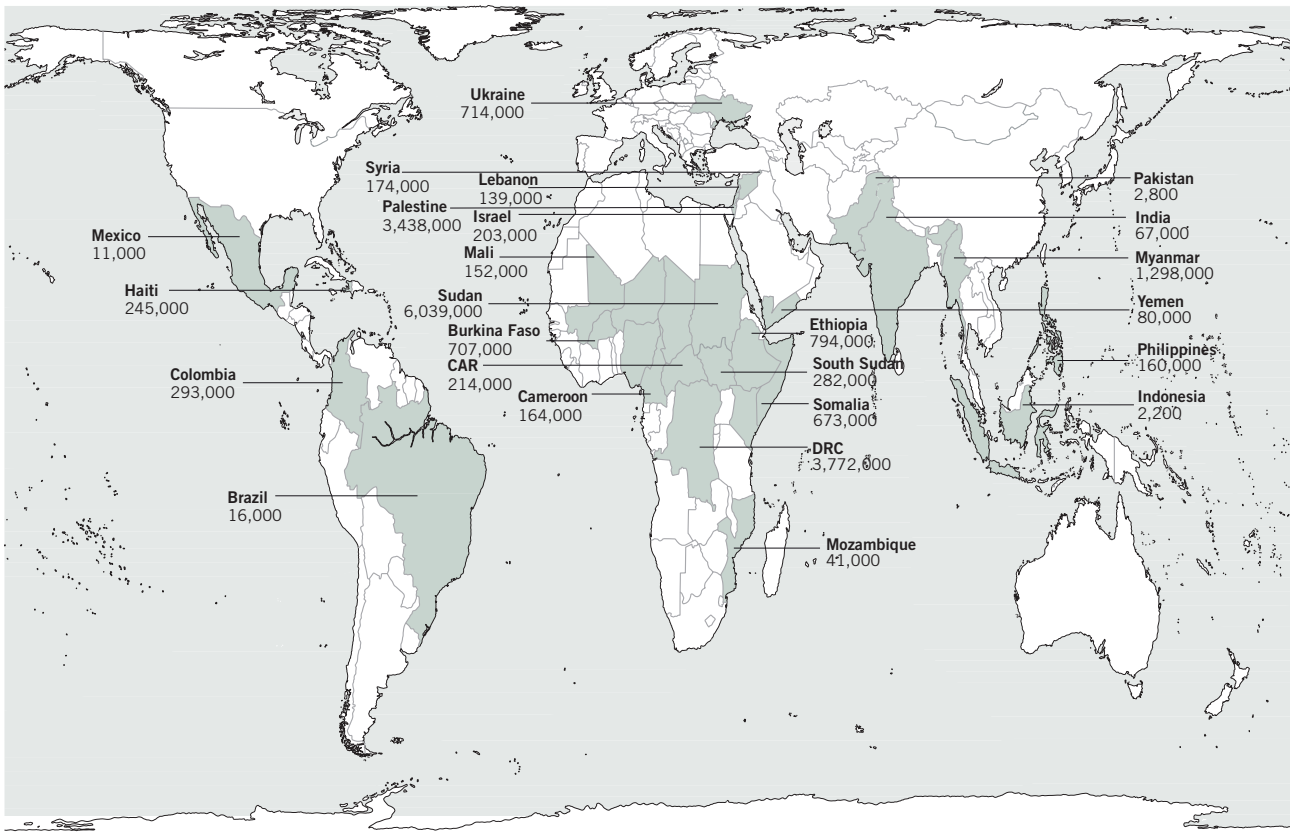
Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2024



Various dynamics drove changes towards a decrease in hostilities. In some cases, it was related to the reduction in activity and/or apparent weakening of some of the armed actors involved in the conflict. This was the case in Egypt (Sinai), which, as mentioned, ceased to be considered an armed conflict at the end of 2024 due to the sustained decrease in hostilities in recent years. This was also true in Iraq, which, despite continuing to be the scene of a high-intensity armed conflict, has seen less fatalities associated with armed violence in recent years. In Somalia (Somaliland), a decline in hostilities was also observed in 2024, though fighting increased again towards the end of the year. Two other examples occurred in the Philippines. In the armed conflict affecting the Muslim-majority areas in southern Mindanao, violence significantly decreased, and the government announced the "neutralisation" of two of the region's most important armed organisations. At the same time, the conflict between Philippine government forces and the NPA also saw a drop in hostilities, which the Philippine authorities attributed to the weakening of the armed group. In other contexts, reductions in violence were at least partially related to the impact of ongoing negotiating processes. In the conflict between Türkiye and the PKK, there was a decrease in hostilities and fatalities alongside exploratory contacts between both parties, which at the time indicated the possible establishment of a new negotiating process. In some cases that evolved similarly to the previous year, the stabilisation in levels of violence can also be attributed to the formal and/or de facto validity of ceasefire agreements, at least in part, as exemplified in Libya and Yemen.

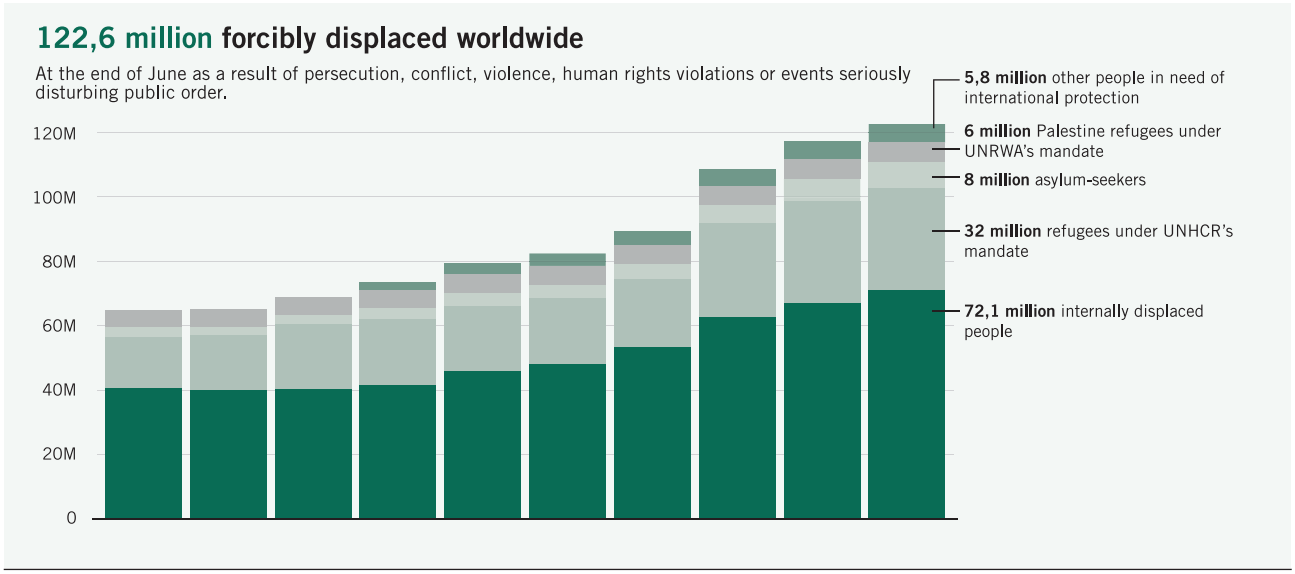
The serious armed conflicts greatly intensified in 2024, confirming the trend observed in recent years

Countries with the highest numbers of internal displacements due to conflict and violence in 2024



Source: Map prepared by the authors on the basis of the data provided in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025*, 13 May, 2025.

Evolution of forced displacement worldwide (2015-2024)



Source: UNHCR.

in this type of scenario. High-intensity armed conflicts, characterised by great deadliness (more than one thousand deaths annually) and severe impacts in terms of population displacement, infrastructure destruction and territorial consequences, accounted for 57% of the armed conflicts in 2024. This proportion is significantly higher than the 47% reported in 2023 and the highest reported in the last 15 years, according to data from Escola de Cultura de Pau. As shown in the graph, high-intensity armed conflicts used to account for less than one third of all cases worldwide, but they have reached around half since 2020.

In 2024, civilians continued to suffer grave consequences from armed conflicts, whose effects were often interrelated with other crises such as the climate emergency, inequalities and situations of food insecurity that aggravated the violations of rights in these contexts. In his yearly report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, published in May 2024 and referring to the events that occurred in 2023, the UN Secretary-General warned of a "resoundingly grim" situation. In 2024, the year of the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions (1949) and 25 years since the first session of the UN Security Council that addressed the protection of the civilian population in conflicts, the scenario was bleak due to the serious and extensive aggression against civilians and the systematic breach of international humanitarian law and human rights. António Guterres highlighted the consequences for civilians in Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, the DRC, the Sahel region, Somalia and Ukraine. The UN report stressed that hundreds of thousands of civilians had died or been wounded in deliberate or indiscriminate attacks in 2023. According to the United Nations' records, at least 33,443 civilians died in armed conflicts in 2023, a 22% increase over 2022. Also compared to 2022, the proportion of dead women due to the violence of armed conflicts doubled in 2023, whilst that of deceased girls and boys in such circumstances tripled. Seven out of 10 civilian deaths occurred as part of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the vast majority of them in Gaza. Therefore, this conflict was the deadliest for civilians in 2023. The year 2023 was also the most lethal for the Palestinian population of the West Bank and East Jerusalem since victims began to be counted in 2005.

United Nations research has also identified a significant and widespread increase in sexual violence in armed conflicts. According to the data of the Secretary-General published in April 2024 and covering the year 2023, there were 50% more verified cases of sexual violence related to armed conflicts than in 2022. The report reiterated that the proliferation and widespread availability of small and light weapons were key to creating the conditions for committing sexual violence with impunity. The use of small and light weapons was identified in between 70% and 90% of the incidents committed in the areas for which data were available. Sexual violence was present again in many conflicts in 2024, including Somalia, the CAR, the DRC (east), Sudan, Haiti, Israel-Palestine and Yemen.

One of the most notorious impacts of armed conflicts continued to be forced population displacement. According to the UNHCR report published in October 2024, based on data collected during the first half of the year, the forcibly displaced population exceeded 122 million, including both refugees and the internally displaced. This number is much higher than the population of Spain (48 million) and equivalent to the population of countries such as Japan (124 million) and Mexico (128 million). Forced displacement levels have risen incessantly in the last 12 years. As indicated by graph 1.6, the number of people displaced by situations of conflict, violence and persecution has more than doubled since 2015, when it exceeded the number for people forcibly displaced during the Second World War. Considering that the UNHCR report collects only the data related to the first half of 2024, figures for the entire year were expected to be higher due to the intensification of some crises stemming from armed conflicts in the second half of the year.

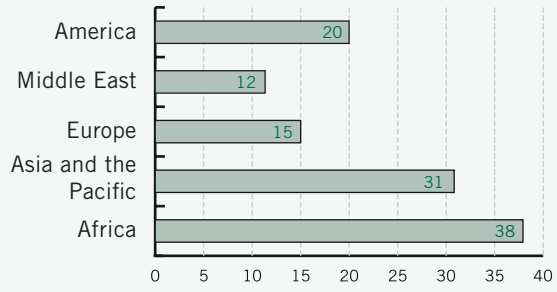
Socio-political crises

The second chapter (Socio-political crises)[2] looks at the most relevant events regarding social and political tensions recorded during the year and compares global and regional trends. 116 socio-political crises were identified worldwide in 2024, two more than in 2023, confirming the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises reported in recent years (33 more since 2018). Africa and Asia and the Pacific were the regions with the most crises (38 and 31, respectively), followed by America (20), Europe (15) and the Middle East (12). Twelve new crises were identified, whilst another 10 were no longer considered as such. The new cases were distributed fairly evenly across all regions of the world: in Chad-Sudan and South Africa in Africa; in Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands in America; in Indonesia, South Korea and China-South Korea in Asia and the Pacific; in Georgia and Serbia in Europe; and in Israel-Iran, Israel-Syria and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, US and UK in the Middle East. Two of the 10 crises that were no longer classified as such escalated to armed conflicts: Haiti and Indonesia (West Papua). The remaining eight became less intense: Madagascar and Sierra Leone in Africa; Panama in America; Fiji, Indonesia (Sulawesi), Thailand and China (Hong Kong) in Asia and the Pacific; and Iraq (Kurdistan) in the Middle East.

116 socio-political crises were identified in 2024: 38 in Africa, 31 in Asia and the Pacific, 20 in America, 15 in Europe and 12 in the Middle East

2 A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by different actors leads to high levels of political, social or military mobilisation and/or the use of violence with a level of intensity that does not reach that of an armed conflict and that may include clashes, repression, coups d'état and bombings or attacks of other kinds, and whose escalation may degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control of resources or territory.

Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2024



Regarding intensity, 42% of the crises were of low intensity, 30% were of medium intensity and 28% were of high intensity. The high-intensity crises grew in number, from 31 in 2023 to 32 in 2024. These proportions are similar to those of the previous year, with a slight decrease in medium-intensity crises and a small increase in low-intensity and high-intensity crises. Africa was the region with the largest number of high-intensity crises (12), but the region with the highest proportion of such cases was the Middle East (42%).

With regard to the evolution of the cases, 21% of the crises (24) experienced a reduction in tension compared to the previous year, 41% (48) did not experience any significant change and 38% (44) got worse compared to 2023. Although the proportion of cases in which tensions escalated in 2024 (38%) was significantly lower than in 2023 (49%), the data seem to confirm a trend observed in recent years in which the number of escalating crises has clearly been higher than the number of cases in which tensions have eased. In Europe in particular, 73% of the crises worsened in 2024, compared to 85% in 2023. The East Asian subregion of the Asia and the Pacific region also experienced a clear rise in conflict, especially along the geographic continuum between the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Military tensions also mounted significantly in the Middle East, especially between Israel and other countries in the region (such as Syria, Iran and Yemen), with Iran also playing a prominent role. Conversely, tensions in almost half the socio-political crises in America (specifically, 45%) decreased compared to 2023, with a significant drop in the homicide rate in countries affected by dynamics linked to organised crime groups, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador and Jamaica, and due to the decrease in mass demonstrations in Argentina, Peru, Chile and Paraguay. However, some high-intensity crises also got worse in 2024. Asia and the Pacific was the region with the highest number of such cases, followed by America.

Thirty-eight per cent of the crises identified in 2024 worsened compared to the previous year and tensions only eased in 21% of them

The socio-political crises continued to be predominantly multi-causal, as evidenced by the fact that two or more causes were behind 62% of them. Challenging the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state and/or the domestic or international policies of the respective governments was a cause of 89 of the 116 crises (77%). Thirty-six crises (31%) had identity-related and/or self-government issues as one of their main causes, whilst the control of territory and/or resources was a relevant causal factor in 41 crises (35%). In a more detailed analysis of factors, ordered from highest to lowest prevalence, opposition to domestic or international government policies was again the most prevalent and was found in 70% of the 116 socio-political crises, a slightly higher proportion than the previous year. This causal factor varied clearly between regions, as it was present in 95% and 79% of the crises in the Americas and Africa, respectively, but in only 45% of the crises in Asia and the Pacific. The second most prevalent factor was the assertion of identity-based aspirations (30%), though at a smaller proportion than in 2023 (33%). This factor was especially significant in Europe (52%). In the Americas, however, it was only found in 10% of the crises. Competition for control of resources was as prevalent as identity and was an explanatory factor in 30% of all cases, a notable increase over the previous year (24%). Here, significant fluctuations were also observed between regions, as this factor was present in 60% of the crises in the Americas (a region where many organised crime groups operate and cause high homicide rates) and in only one crisis in the Middle East.

Next in line, with very similar proportions, were issues related to opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the state as a whole (22%), control of territory (21%) and demands for self-determination and self-government (18%). Opposition to the system, a factor that slightly increased compared to the previous year, was found in 11 crises in Asia, especially in East Asia, and was a proportionally very prevalent cause of the crises in the Middle East (42%). Control of territory was present in almost half the crises in Asia and the Pacific, but in only one in America (Venezuela-Guyana). Finally, the relative importance of demands for self-determination and self-government decreased significantly compared to the previous year, when they were present in 22% of all crises. Whilst this cause was significant in nearly half the European crises, especially in the Caucasus and the Balkans, it was found in only 10% of the crises in America.

Although most socio-political crises worldwide were internal in nature (40%), the proportion was significantly lower than the previous year (49%). Sixty per cent of the crises in Asia and the Pacific were internal in nature, but only 13% were internal in Europe. Furthermore, one third of all crises worldwide were internationalised internal, meaning that one of the main actors was foreign and/or

the crisis had spilled over into neighbouring countries. This was a significant increase over the previous year (28%). Finally, international crises rose from 23% in 2023 to 27% in 2024. In addition to the increase in the number of international crises, a good portion of them were among the most serious in the world. In fact, almost half the high-intensity crises (14 out of 32) were international in nature: Chad-Sudan; Eritrea-Ethiopia; DRC-Rwanda; Rwanda-Burundi; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-US, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; Iran (nuclear programme); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, US, UK.

Gender, peace and security

Chapter three (Gender, peace and security) studies the gender-based impacts in conflicts and tensions, as well as the different initiatives launched by the United Nations and other local and international organizations and movements with regards to peacebuilding from a gender perspective.[3] This perspective brings to light the differential impacts that armed conflicts have on women and men, but also to what extent and how one and other participate in peacebuilding and what are the contributions made by women in this process. The chapter is structured into three main parts: the first looks at the global situation with regards to gender inequalities by taking a look at the Gender Development Index; the second part studies the gender dimension in terms of the impact of armed conflicts and social-political crises; and the last part is on peacebuilding from a gender perspective. At the start of the chapter there is a map showing the countries with severe gender inequalities based on the Gender Development Index. The chapter monitors the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which was established following the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in the year 2000.

22 of the 37 armed conflicts active throughout 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality

22 of the 37 armed conflicts active throughout 2024 took place in countries with low levels of gender equality (Mali, the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), the DRC (west), Somalia, Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo), Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen) and medium-low gender equality (Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), Ethiopia (Amhara) and Ethiopia (Oromia). There are no data on the CAR and South Sudan, both countries in which an armed conflict is taking place. Fifteen of the 19 armed conflicts with high-intensity violence in 2024 (79%) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality and there were no GDI data for South Sudan. In eight other countries with one or more armed conflicts, levels of discrimination were lower, in some cases with high levels of equality (Libya, Colombia, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Israel) or medium levels of equality (Burundi, Mozambique, the Philippines, Myanmar and Türkiye), according to the GDI. Forty-eight of the 116 socio-political crises active during 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality.

As in previous years, during 2024 sexual violence was present in a large number of active armed conflicts. Its use, which in some cases was part of the deliberate war strategies of the armed actors, was documented in different reports, as well as by local and international media.

In April, the UN Security Council held its yearly open debate on sexual violence in armed conflict and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, noted in 2024 that a record number of cases of sexual violence verified by the United Nations had been reported in 2023 (3,688 cases, a 50% increase over the previous year). Women and girls accounted for 95% of the verified cases. Patten noted that whilst military spending figures continued to rise, budgets for humanitarian aid and victim support had been cut drastically.

In his 2024 report, which covered the period between January and December 2023, the UN Secretary-General warned that the outbreak of new conflicts during the year and the intensification of previously active conflicts, aggravated by the proliferation of weapons and growing militarisation, significantly increased civilians' exposure to sexual violence in situations of conflict. Both state and non-state armed actors perpetrated rapes, gang rapes and abductions of civilians amid historic levels of internal and international displacement. The UN Secretary-General noted that sexual violence profoundly affected women's livelihoods and hindered girls' access to education. At the same time, it generated illicit profits for armed groups and violent extremist organisations, which engaged in human trafficking for the purposes

3 As an analytical category, gender makes it clear that inequalities between men and women are the product of social norms rather than a result of nature, and sets out to underline this social and cultural construction to distinguish it from the biological differences of the sexes. The gender perspective aims to highlight the social construction of sexual difference and the sexual division of work and power. It also attempts to show that the differences between men and women are a social construction resulting from unequal power relations that have historically been established in the patriarchal system. The goal of gender as an analytical category is to demonstrate the historical and situated nature of sexual differences. This approach must be accompanied by an intersectional analysis that relates gender to other factors that structure power in a society, such as social class, race, ethnicity, age, or sexuality, among other aspects that generate inequalities, discrimination and privileges.

Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Burkina Faso** Sahel Region **Chad** Lake Chad Region **Egypt** Egypt (Sinai) **Iraq** **India (2)** India (Jammu and Kashmir) India (CPI-M)	**Mali (2)** Mali Western Sahel Region **Niger (2)** Lake Chad Region Western Sahel Region **Nigeria** Lake Chad Region **Palestine** Israel – Palestine **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan)	**DRC (3)** DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) DRC (west) **Syria** **Somalia (2)** Somalia Somalia (Somaliland-SCC Khamuto) **Sudan** **Yemen**
Medium-low level of equality		
Cameroon (2) Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest) Lake Chad Region	**Ethiopia (2)** Ethiopia (Amhara) Ethiopia (Oromia)	

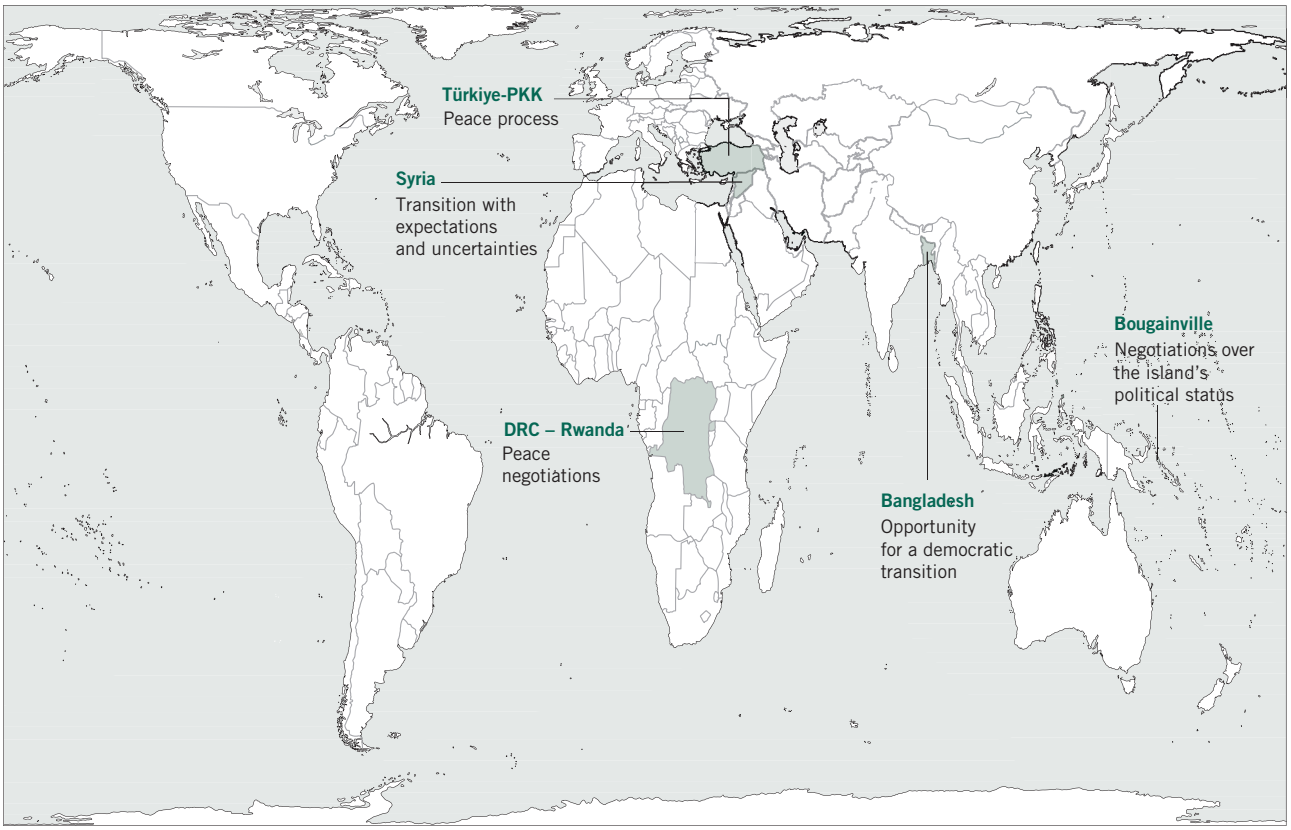
Countries affected by socio-political crises with a medium-low or low level of gender equality

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Afghanistan - Pakistan** **Argelia** **Benin** **Burkina Faso** **Chad (2)** Chad Chad – Sudan **Côte d'Ivoire** **Djibouti** **DRC (2)** DRC DRC – Rwanda **Egypt (2)** Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan **Guinea** **Guinea Bissau**	**India (4)** India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan **Iran (5)** Iran Iran (northwest) Iran (Sistan Balochistan) Iran (nuclear programme) Iran – Israel **Mali** **Morocco** Morocco – Western Sahara **Niger** **Nigeria (3)** Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta)	**Palestine** **Pakistan (3)** Pakistan Afghanistan – Pakistan India – Pakistan **Syria** Israel – Syria **Sudan** Sudan – South Sudan **Togo** **Uganda** **Yemen** Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom
Medium-low level of equality		
Bangladesh **Ethiopia (5)** Ethiopia Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Somalia Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia **Laos**	**Rwanda (3)** Rwanda Rwanda – Burundi RDC – Rwanda **Tajikistan (3)** Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)	**Uzbekistan (2)** Uzbekistan Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)

of sexual exploitation, among other practices, in the context of these conflicts.

The report also noted the impact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and ammunition had on acts of sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Sudan and South Sudan, which directly contributed to their increase. The indiscriminate circulation of weapons helped to keep armed conflicts active and created conditions conducive to the commission of acts of sexual violence with a high degree of impunity. The UN Secretary-General cited United Nations research conducted in areas with available data,

Opportunities for peace



which certified that approximately 70% to 90% of all incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involved the use of small arms or light weapons. He also highlighted the significant role that sexual violence played in the political economy of war, providing economic profits to armed groups through human trafficking for sexual exploitation and increasingly through kidnappings, in which threats or acts of sexual violence were used to demand larger ransoms

Opportunities for Peace and Risk Scenarios

Chapter four of the report **(Opportunities for Peace)** identifies and analyzes five scenarios that are favourable for positive steps to be taken in terms of peacebuilding for the future. The opportunities identified in 2024 refer to different regions and topics:

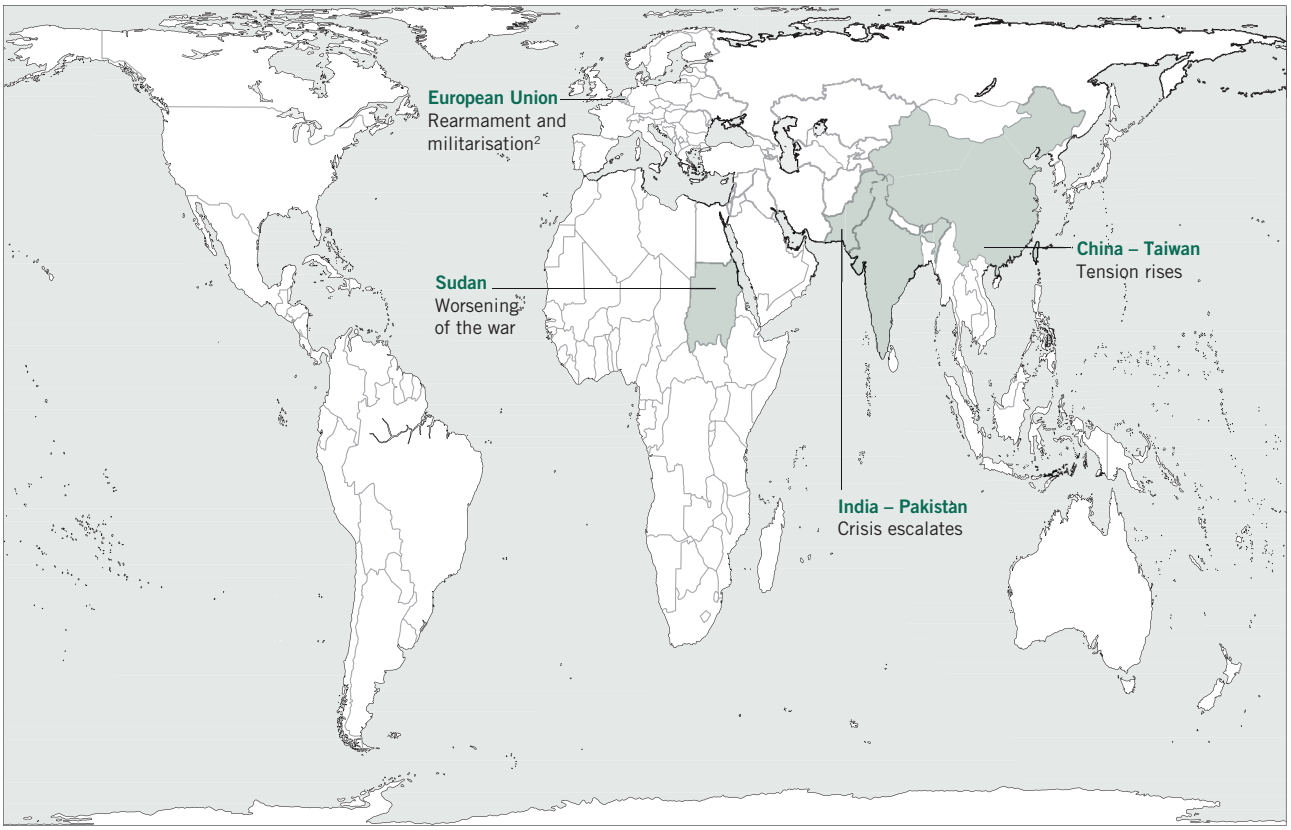
The report identifies and analyzes five scenarios that are favourable for positive steps to be taken in terms of peacebuilding

- **DRC – Rwanda:** Recent negotiations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in Doha and Washington have opened a window of opportunity that could transform the longstanding conflict in the eastern DRC. Although fighting on the ground continues and the parties involved have repeatedly violated previous truces, these steps provide fresh impetus to resolve one of Africa's longest-running and most devastating conflicts. However, this new opportunity also runs considerable risks, notably due to the deep lack of trust between both sides.

- **Bangladesh:** The political crisis that gripped the country in July 2024, giving rise to the largest social protests in recent decades, led by the student movement, caused a government crisis and the resignation of Prime Minister Sheik Hasina. More than 1,400 people died in the protests amid massive police crackdowns. The formation of an interim government headed by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus provided a solution to the crisis and opened an opportunity for transition, culminating in elections to be held between December 2025 and June 2026.

- **Bougainville:** In 2024 and early 2025, the appointment of an independent moderator, in addition to the upcoming elections and a favourable regional context, indicated a possible acceleration of the negotiating process between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to determine the political status of

Risk scenarios



Bougainville. However, some analysts have also stressed the difficulties facing this process. The most important of these is undoubtedly the firm disagreement on the island's political status. However, despite the problems in reaching a final agreement in the short term, the outlook is more optimistic than ever.

- **Türkiye-PKK:** A new peace process began in 2024 to address the armed conflict that has pitted the Turkish government against the Kurdish armed movement PKK since 1984. There are several aspects of opportunity, such as the accumulated lessons learned from previous experiences, the willingness of the parties to negotiate and early results in ending the armed struggle. However, there are also internal and regional risks amid repression in Türkiye and volatility in the Middle East. Overall, it remains to be seen what scope the peace process will take to tackle the root causes of the conflict and achieve rights and freedoms for the Kurdish population.

- **Syria:** The new post-Assad era has its share of risks and threats, but it has also raised hopes among broad swathes of the Syrian population who aspire to write a different chapter in the country after years of violence and devastation. The prospects for positive change will be determined by various factors, including the development of the political transition and its degree of inclusiveness; the activation of accountability, transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms; and the prospects for economic recovery.

Chapter five of the report **(Risk Scenarios)**, identifies and analyzes four scenarios of armed conflict and tension that, given their condition, may worsen and become sources of more severe instability and violence.

- **Sudan:** The civil war in Sudan, which began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has unleashed a severe humanitarian crisis, with over 12 million people displaced and 25 million facing food insecurity. Despite international mediation efforts, peace remains elusive due to political fragmentation, foreign intervention and the parties' lack of will. The conflict threatens a de facto partition of the country and continues to escalate, with multiple allegations of war crimes. The prospects for any resolution in the short term are extremely limited.

- **India-Pakistan:** India and Pakistan were on the brink of a full-scale armed conflict. India's military response to the April 2025 attack in Kashmir, which killed 26 people, caused a significant

escalation of tension between both countries. India and Pakistan launched attacks against each other's military installations, including close to equipment linked to Pakistan's military arsenal. Though a ceasefire agreement was reached, de-escalating the military confrontation and reducing the diplomatic friction, the underlying risk of new conflict remains, particularly if triggered by future crises.

- **China-Taiwan:** Political and military tensions between China and Taiwan rose significantly in 2024 and the first half of 2025, as did the confrontation between China and the US over the latter's stance towards Taiwan. China increased air and naval incursions around the island and repeatedly repeated its intention to achieve reunification, without ruling out the use of force. The US intensified its rhetoric against China, expressed support for Taiwan and repeated the need to increase the ability to deter Beijing from making any attempt to unilaterally and forcibly alter the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

The report identifies and analyzes four scenarios of armed conflict and tension that, given their condition, may worsen

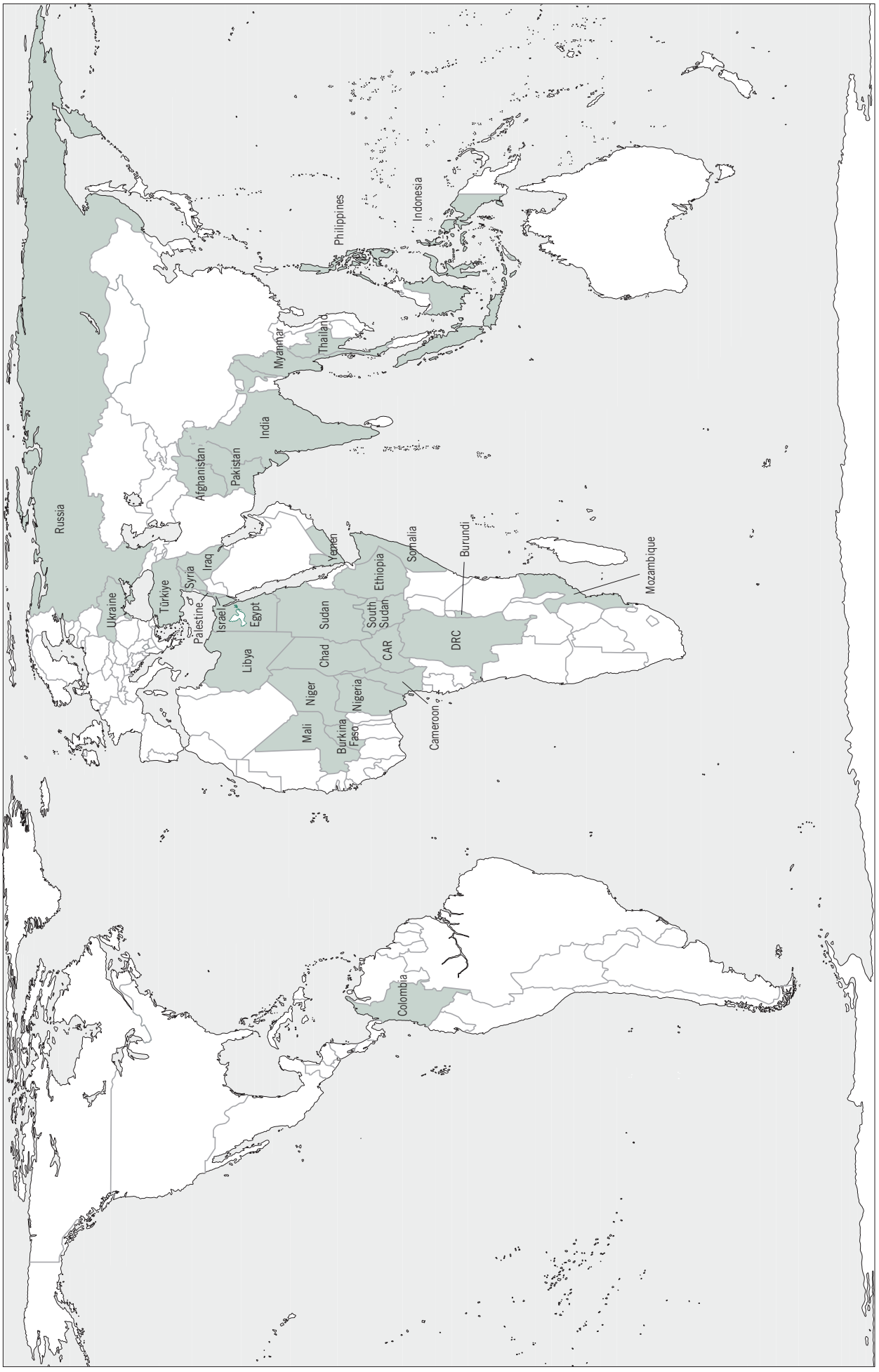
- **EU/rearmament:** The EU and its member state governments are promoting a massive rearmament plan with measures to spend €800 billion over four years, primarily coming from state public budgets. The plan appears to consider militarism as the only or even the primary possible path forward in the current geopolitical context, compared to the range of non-military avenues for addressing security challenges. The plan comes amid a global context of record military spending and NATO's pressure on its member states to increase spending. Critical analyses have highlighted the arms industry's influence on the EU's path to militarisation.

Conflict overview 2024

Continent	Armed conflict			Socio-political crises			TOTAL
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	
Africa	*Cameroon (Ambazonia/ Northwest/ Southwest)* *DRC (East)* DRC (East-ADF) Ethiopia (Amhara) *Ethiopia (Oromia)* Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) *Mali* *Somalia* *South Sudan* *Sudan* West Sahel Region	Mozambique (North) *RCA*	Burundi DRC (West) *Libya* Somalia (Somaliland – SSC Khatumo)	*Chad* Chad – Sudan DRC *DRC – Rwanda* *Eritrea – Ethiopia* *Ethiopia* Kenya *Mozambique* Niger Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Rwanda – Burundi	Benin Burkina Faso Côte d'Ivoire *Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan* Guinea *Mali* *Morocco – Western Sahara.* *Sudan – Sudan del Sur* Tunisia Uganda	Algeria Djibouti Eritrea *Ethiopia - Somalia* Ethiopia – Sudan Gabon Guinea Bissau Guinea Equatorial Nigeria (Delta Níger) Rwanda Senegal *Senegal (Casamance)* South Africa Tanzania Togo Zimbabwe	
SUBTOTAL	**11**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**10**	**16**	**55**
America	*Colombia* *Haiti*			Bolivia Brazil Ecuador Mexico Perú *Venezuela* *Venezuela -Guyana*	Chile Guatemala Honduras Nicaragua	Argentina Colombia Cuba EEUU El Salvador Turks and Caicos Islands Jamaica Paraguay Trinidad and Tobago	
SUBTOTAL	**2**			**7**	**4**	**9**	**22**
Asia and the Pacific	*Myanmar* Pakistan	Afghanistan India (CPI-M) Pakistan (Balochistan)	India (Jammu y Kashmir) Indonesia (Western Papua) *Philippines (Mindanao)* *Philippines (NPA)* *Thailand (South)*	Afghanistan – Pakistan Bangladesh China – Philippines China – Japan China – Taiwan *North Korea – USA, Japan, South Korea* *North Korea – South Korea* *Papua New Guinea*	China – USA India (Manipur) *India – China* India – Pakistan South China Sea South Korea Pakistan Tajikistan	*China (Tibet)* China (Xinjiang) China – South Korea *India (Nagaland)* Indonesia Japan – Rusia (Kuril Islands) Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan Laos North Korea Sri Lanka Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) Uzbekistan Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)	
SUBTOTAL	**2**	**3**	**5**	**8**	**8**	**15**	**41**
Europe	*Russia – Ukraine*		*Türkiye (PKK)*	*Russia*	*Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)* Belarus Bosnia and Herzegovina Georgia *Moldova (Transnistria)* Russia (North Caucasus) Russia – USA, OTAN, EU *Serbia – Kosovo* Türkiye	*Georgia (Abkhazia)* *Georgia (South Ossetia)* Moldova Serbia *Türkiye – Greece, Cyprus*	
SUBTOTAL	**1**		**1**	**1**	**9**	**5**	**17**
Middle East	Iraq *Israel – Hezbollah* *Israel – Palestina* *Siria* *Yemen*		Egypt (Sinai)*	Iran *Iran (nuclear programme)* Israel – Iran Israel – Siria Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom	Egypt Iran (Northwest) Iran (Sistan Balochistan)	Bahrain Lebanon *Palestine* Saudi Arabia	
SUBTOTAL	**5**		**1**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**18**
TOTAL	**21**	**5**	**11**	**33**	**34**	**49**	**153**

Armed conflicts and socio-political crises with ongoing peace negotiations, whether exploratory or formal, are identified in italics.
*This case ceased to be considered as armed conflict in 2024.

Map 1.1. **Armed conflicts**



1. Armed conflicts

- In 2024, 37 armed conflicts were recorded, a higher number than in 2023 (36 cases) and the highest figure in the last 12 years.
- Most armed conflicts were located in Africa (17), with the rest distributed between Asia and the Pacific (10), the Middle East (six), Europe (two) and America (two).
- More than half of the armed conflicts in 2024 (57%) were high-intensity, with serious death tolls and great impacts on human security.
- Fifty-nine per cent 59% of the armed conflicts witnessed higher levels of violence in 2024, a much higher proportion than in previous years (42% in 2023 and 30% in 2022).
- The Liptako-Gourma region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) became the epicentre of violence committed by groups with jihadist agendas across Africa.
- The armed conflict in the Ethiopian region of Amhara was complex and escalated in 2024, becoming one of the most serious in Africa.
- The M23 and Rwanda launched a serious offensive in the DRC whilst the AU was unable to achieve a ceasefire agreement.
- The war in Sudan caused the largest forced displacement and hunger crisis in the world in 2024.
- The humanitarian situation and violence worsened seriously in Haiti whilst the armed bands controlling a large part of the country increasingly coordinated their activities.
- The security situation in Pakistan was greatly aggravated with intensified violence, both in the conflict against the Taliban insurgents and in the province of Balochistan.
- The levels of violence in Mindanao fell significantly and the Philippine government announced that two of the most important armed organisations in the region had dissolved.
- The total number of civilians who died and were wounded in the Russia-Ukraine war in 2024 was 30% higher than in 2023, reaching 11,154.
- The impacts of the Israeli military campaign on Gaza continued to get worse, with extreme levels of deadliness and increasing allegations of genocide brought against Israel.
- The overthrow of Bashar Assad's regime in December opened a new period in Syria, with uncertainties about how the conflict would develop and about the political process in the country.

The present chapter analyses the armed conflicts that occurred in 2024. It is organised into three sections. The first section offers a definition of armed conflict and its characteristics. The second section provides an analysis of the trends of conflicts in 2024, including global and regional trends and other issues related to international conflicts. The third section is devoted to describing the development and key events of the year in the various contexts. Furthermore, a map is included at the start of chapter that indicates the conflicts active in 2024.

Table 1.1. **Summary of armed conflicts in 2024**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties[3]	Intensity[4] / Trend[5]
AFRICA			
Burundi -2015-	Internationalised internal	Government, Imbonerakure Youth branch, political party CNDD-FDD, political party CNL, armed groups RED-Tabara, FPB (previously FOREBU), FNL	1
	Government		↑
Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West and South West) -2018-	Internationalised internal	Government of Cameroon, government of Nigeria, political-military secessionist movement including the opposition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako, to which the armed groups Lebialem Red Dragons and SOCADEF belong) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku, whose armed wing is the Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF), different militias and smaller armed groups	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
CAR -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups that are members of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC, made up of anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, 3R, FPRC, MPC and UPC), Siriri ethnic armed opposition coalition AAKG, other local and foreign armed groups, France, MINUSCA, Rwanda, Russia, Africa Corps (formerly Wagner Group)	2
	Government, Resources		↑
DRC (east) -1998-	International	DRC; Angola; Burundi; MONUSCO; EAC Regional Force (Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan); SAMIDRC (SADC Regional Force composed by South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania); pro-government militias Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP, known as Wazalendo, composed of dozens of former Mai Mai militias and other armed groups from North Kivu and South Kivu, like APCLS, PARECO-FF, Nyatura, Raïa Mutomboki); FDLR; FDLR splinter groups (CNRD-Ubwiyunge, RUD-Urunana); private security companies (Agemira RDC and Congo Protection); March 23 Movement (M23); Twirwaneho; Rwanda; other armed groups not part of Wazalendo; Burundian armed groups; Ugandan armed group LRA; Ituri groups and community militias (including CODECO/URDPC, FPIC, FRPI, MAPI, Zaïre-FPAC), AFC Coalition and allies	3
	Government, Identity, Resources		↑
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Internationalised internal	DRC, Uganda, Mai-Mai militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO	3
	System, Resources		=

1 This column includes the states in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict.

2 This report classifies and analyses armed conflicts using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following main causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or the struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). In respect of the second type, the armed conflicts may be of an internal, Internationalised internal or international nature. An internal armed conflict is defined as a conflict involving armed actors from the same state who operate exclusively within the territory of this state. Secondly, an internationalised internal armed conflict is defined as that in which at least one of the parties involved is foreign and/or in which the tension spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Another factor taken into account in order to consider an armed conflict as internationalised internal is the existence of military bases of armed groups in neighbouring countries (in connivance with these countries) from which attacks are launched. Finally, an international conflict is one in which state and non-state parties from two or more countries confront each other. It should also be taken into account that most current armed conflicts have a significant regional or international dimension and influence due, among other factors, to flows of refugees, the arms trade, economic or political interests (such as legal or illegal exploitation of resources) that the neighbouring countries have in the conflict, the participation of foreign combatants or the logistical and military support provided by other states.

3 This column shows the actors that intervene directly in the hostilities. The main actors who participate directly in the conflicts are made up of a mixture of regular or irregular armed parties. The conflicts usually involve the government, or its armed forces, fighting against one or several armed opposition groups, but can also involve other irregular groups such as clans, guerrillas, warlords, armed groups in opposition to each other or militias from ethnic or religious communities. Although they most frequently use conventional weapons, and more specifically small arms (which cause most deaths in conflicts), in many cases other methods are employed, such as suicide attacks, bombings and sexual violence and even hunger as a weapon of war. There are also other actors who do not directly participate in the armed activities but who nevertheless have a significant influence on the conflict.

4 The intensity of an armed conflict (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation of violence, reduction of violence, unchanged) are evaluated mainly on the basis of how deadly it is (number of fatalities) and according to its impact on the population and the territory. Moreover, there are other aspects worthy of consideration, such as the systematisation and frequency of the violence or the complexity of the military struggle (complexity is normally related to the number and fragmentation of the actors involved, to the level of institutionalisation and capacity of the state, and to the degree of internationalisation of the conflict, as well as to the flexibility of objectives and to the political will of the parties to reach agreements). As such, high-intensity armed conflicts are usually defined as those that cause over 1,000 fatalities per year, as well as affecting a significant proportion of the territory and population, and involving several actors (who forge alliances, confront each other or establish a tactical coexistence). Medium and low intensity conflicts, with over 100 fatalities per year, have the aforementioned characteristics but with a more limited presence and scope. An armed conflict is considered ended when a significant and sustained reduction in armed hostilities occurs, whether due to a military victory, an agreement between the actors in conflict, demobilisation by one of the parties, or because one of the parties abandons or significantly scales down the armed struggle as a strategy to achieve certain objectives. None of these options necessarily mean that the underlying causes of the armed conflict have been overcome. Nor do they exclude the possibility of new outbreaks of violence. The temporary cessation of hostilities, whether formal or tacit, does not necessarily imply the end of the armed conflict.

5 This column compares the trend of the events of 2024 with those that of 2023. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2024 has been more serious than in the previous year; the reduction of violence symbol (↓) indicates an improvement in the situation; and the unchanged (=) symbol indicates that no significant changes have taken place.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
DRC (west) -2023-	Internal	DRC, Teke community militias, Yaka community militias (including the armed group Mobondo) and other allied community militias	1
	Identity, Resources, Territory		=
Ethiopia (Amhara) -2023-	Internationalised internal	Government of Ethiopia, government of Amhara Region, Amharic Fano militia	3
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Ethiopia (Oromia) -2022-	Internal	Government of Ethiopia, government of Oromia Region, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), Amharic Fano militia	3
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government of Nigeria, pro-government militia Civilian Joint Task Force, Boko Haram factions (ISWAP, JAS-Abubakar Shekau, Ansaru, Bakura), civilian militias, Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF – Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger)	3
	System		=
Libya -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government of National Unity based in Tripoli; government based in Tobruk; various armed groups including the Libyan National Army (LNA, also called the Arab Libyan Armed Forces, ALAF), ISIS, AQIM, mercenaries, Africa Corps (former Wagner Group); Russia, Türkiye	1
	Government, Resources, System		=
Mali -2012-	Internationalised internal	Government; Permanent Strategic Framework for the Defense of the People of Azawad (CSP-DPA); Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM); Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), also known as Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP); Katiba Macina; Africa Corps (former Wagner Group); Alliance of Sahel States (AES)	3
	System, Self-government, Identity		=
Mozambique (north) -2017-	Internationalised internal	Government, Islamic State's Central Africa Province (ISCAP) or Islamic State's Mozambique Province (ISMP), previously known as Ahlu Sunnah Waljama'a (ASWJ); al-Qaeda; Tanzania; Rwanda; South Africa; Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM); "Naparama" local militias	2
	System, Identity		↑
Somalia -1988-	Internationalised internal	Federal government, pro-government regional forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan and warlord militias, Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, Türkiye ATMIS, EU NAVFOR Somalia (Operation Atalanta), Combined Task Force 151, al-Shabaab, ISIS	3
	Government, System		=
Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) -2023-	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, SSC Khatumo administration (Khatumo State)	1
	Self-Government, Identity, Territory		↓
Sudan -2023-[6]	Internationalised internal	National: Government (Sudan Armed Forces), Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Darfur: Government, janjaweed, RSF, armed coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), various SLA factions South Kordofan and Blue Nile: Government, SPLM-N, armed coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), community militias, RSF, South Sudan East: Government, RSF, Eastern Sudan Liberation Forces, United Popular Front for Liberation and Justice, Beja National Congress, Beja Armed Congress.	3
	Government, Self-government, Resources, Identity		↑
South Sudan -2009-	Internationalised internal	Government (SPLM/A); armed group SPLA-in Opposition (Riek Machar faction); SPLA-IO dissident Kitgwang factions led by Peter Gatdet, Simon Gatwech Dual and Johnson Olony ("Agwalek"); SPLM-FD; SSLA; SSDM/A; SSDM-CF; SSNLM; REMNASA; NAS (Cirillo), NAS (Loburon; SSUF (Paul Malong); SSOA; community militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwalek); armed coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N); Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NSSSOG, previously known as the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance, SSOMA), which includes the rebel organisations NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC); Sudan; Uganda; UNMISS	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		↑
Western Sahel Region -2018-	International	Burkina Faso; Mali; Niger; Côte d'Ivoire; Togo; Benin; Alliance of Sahel States (AES); Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM); Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), also known as Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP); Katiba Macina; Ansaroul Islam; other jihadist groups and community militias; Russia; Africa Corps (former Wagner Group)	3
	System, Identity, Resources		=

6 In previous years, two distinct armed conflicts were identified in Sudan: Sudan (Darfur), which began in 2003, and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), which started in 2012. Both conflicts, characterised as internationalised internal and motivated by self-government, resources and identity, were analysed jointly in this edition as part of the Sudanese armed conflict. This is because the dynamics of the armed conflict that began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) affect a large part of the country and particularly the regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Irregular armed actors from these regions are also actively involved in the conflict.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AMERICA			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, ELN, Estado Mayor Central (EMC), Segunda Marquetalia, narco-paramilitary groups	3
	System		↑
Haiti -2024-	Internationalised internal	Government, Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti (MSS), armed gangs (including Viv Ansanm, an alliance between two coalitions of armed groups—GPèp and Revolutionary Forces of the G9 Family and Allies)	3
	Government, Resources, Territory		↑
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, National Resistance Front (NRF), ISIS-KP, Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF)	2
	System		↑
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (naxalites)	2
	System		↑
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Governments, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, United Jihad Council, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), The Resistance Front (TRF)	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Indonesia (West Papua) -2024-	Internal	Government, OPM	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Myanmar -1948-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups (signatories of the ceasefire: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; non-signatories of the ceasefire: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP); PDF	3
	Self-government, Identity, System		↑
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS-KP	3
	System		↑
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	Internationalised internal	Government, BLA, BNA, BLF and BLT; LeJ, TTP, ISIS-KP	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		↓
Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/Dawlah Islamiyah/ Maute Group, MILF and MNLF factions	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		↓
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, BRN and other armed separatist opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
EUROPE			
Türkiye (PKK)[7] -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Russia – Ukraine[8] -2022-	International	Russia, Donbas militias, Ukraine	3
	Government, Territory		↑
MIDDLE EAST			
Egypt (Sinai) -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (SP, branch of ISIS), pro-government militia Sinai Tribal Union (STU)	1
	System		End
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Iraqi military and security forces, Kurdish forces (peshmergas), Shia militias (including Harakat al-Nujaba, the Hashd al-Shaabi coalition, Kataib Hezbollah and the coalition/network Islamic Resistance of Ira), ISIS, US-led international anti-ISIS coalition, USA, Iran, Türkiye, Israel	3
	System, Government, Identity, Resources		↓

7 In previous editions of this yearbook, the PKK conflict was coded as "Turkey (south-east)". The change of code in this yearbook reflects the name adopted by Türkiye (from Turkey to Türkiye), also incorporated by the UN, as well as the territorial dynamics of the conflict, which expand beyond the southeastern part of the country, the historical focus of the armed conflict.

8 Between 2014 and 2021 the war in eastern Ukraine was analysed as an internationalised internal conflict. See the summary on "Ukraine (east)" in pre-2022 editions of this report.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
MIDDLE EAST			
Israel – Hezbollah -2023-	International	Israel, Hezbollah, other Lebanese armed groups (Al-Fajer Forces, Amal Movement) and Palestinian armed groups in Lebanon: Al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas) and Al-Quds Brigades (Islamic Jihad)	3
	Government, Territory		↑
Israel-Palestine -2000-	International	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafist groups, Jenin, Brigades, Nablus Brigades, Tubas Brigades, Lion's Den	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Syria -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army, Ahrar al-Sham, Syrian Democratic Forces (coalition led by the Kurdish militias YPG/YPJ of the PYD), Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ISIS, US-led international anti-ISIS coalition, Türkiye, Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, former Wagner Group, Israel	3
	Government, System, Self-government, Identity		↑
Yemen -2004-	Internationalised internal	Armed forces loyal to the internationally recognised government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabaab al-Mumen/Ansar Allah), tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias (including Happy Yemen Brigades), armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, separatist groups under the umbrella of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), Joint Forces (including the Giant Brigades), AQAP, ISIS, international Saudi Arabian-led coalition, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE)	3
	System, Government, Identity		=

1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity;
↑: escalation of violence; ↓: decrease of violence ; = : unchanged; End: no longer considered an armed conflict

1.1. Armed conflicts: definition

An armed conflict is any confrontation between regular or irregular armed groups with objectives that are perceived as incompatible in which the continuous and organised use of violence a) causes a minimum of 100 battle-related deaths in a year and/or a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructures or of natural resources) and human security (e.g. wounded or displaced population, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or disruption of basic services) and b) aims to achieve objectives that are different than those of common delinquency and are normally linked to:

- demands for self-determination and self-government or identity issues;
- the opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of the government, which in both cases leads to fighting to seize or erode power;
- control over the resources or the territory.

1.2. Armed conflicts: analysis of trends in 2024

This section offers an analysis of the global and regional trends in armed conflicts in 2024. This includes an overview of conflicts as compared to that of previous years, the geographical distribution of conflicts and the main trends by region, the relationship between the actors involved and the scenario of the dispute, the main causes of the current armed conflicts, the general evolution of the contexts and the intensity of the conflicts according to their levels of violence and their impact. Likewise, this section analyses some of the main consequences of armed conflicts in the civilian population, including forced displacement due to situations of conflict and violence.

1.2.1 Global and regional trends

Following the trend in recent years, the number of armed conflicts grew overall in 2024. **Thirty-seven armed conflicts were counted throughout the year, compared to the 36 reported in 2023, the 33 in 2022 and the 32 in 2021. This is the highest figure since 2012**, meaning the highest in 12 years according to Escola de Cultura de Pau's data (see Graph 1.1). The number of armed conflicts in recent years has risen alongside a significant increase in the number of socio -political crises worldwide, which reached a total of 116 in 2024 (see chapter 2).

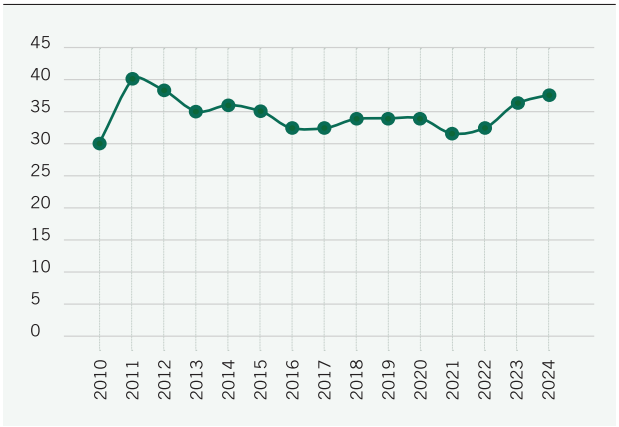
In 2024, the dynamics of violence led to two new contexts being considered as armed conflicts. In America, there was the case of Haiti, which witnessed an alarming rise in violence and a seriously deteriorating humanitarian situation alongside a political crisis that only got worse. In Asia and the Pacific, the escalation of fighting between Indonesian security forces and the armed wing of the Free Papua Organisation (PLO), attacks against civilians and intercommunity violence

also led us to reclassify the case of **Indonesia (West Papua)** as an armed conflict. At the end of the year, the case of **Egypt (Sinai) in the Middle East ceased to be considered an active armed conflict** due to the significant reduction in hostilities that in recent years had pitted fighters from the Islamic State branch in the region against the Egyptian Army, supported by tribal militias. However, several different challenges remained, linked to the return of displaced populations and accountability for war crimes and human rights violations committed during the conflict.

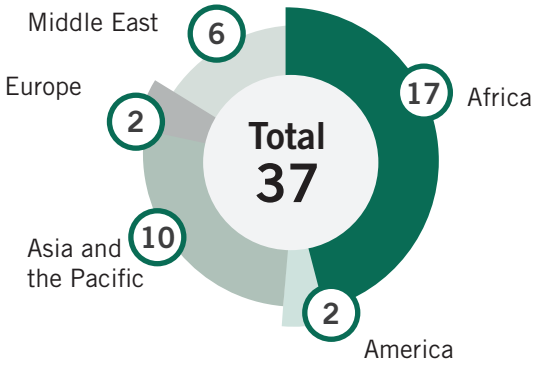
As in previous years, the largest number of conflicts worldwide were once again in Africa, which accounted for almost half (17 conflicts, representing 46%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (10 conflicts, equivalent to 27%), the Middle East (six, accounting for 16% of the total) and America and Europe (with two conflicts each, representing 5.5%, respectively).

Escola de Cultura de Pau identifies three types of armed conflicts to describe the relationship between the actors involved in the conflicts and the setting of the hostilities: internal, internationalised internal and international. In 2024, the distribution of cases according to these categories was very similar to the previous year. Seven (19%) conflicts were internal in nature (one more than in 2023), and they were distributed between Africa (three) and Asia and the Pacific (four): Ethiopia (Oromia), the DRC (west), Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo), India (CPI-M), the Philippines (NPA), Thailand (south) and Indonesia (West Papua), which was added as an armed conflict in 2024. Thus, Asia and the Pacific was once again the part of the world with the highest number of predominantly internal conflicts. The number of international armed conflicts remained stable compared to 2023, at five, which was 13% of the total. These were distributed between Africa (two), Europe (one) and the Middle East (two). They included the armed conflicts in the Western Sahel region, in the DRC (east)—considered international due to Rwanda's direct involvement in the hostilities—and Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Hezbollah and Israel-Palestine. The remaining armed conflicts (25 of the 37, representing 68%) were internationalised internal in nature. This proportion follows the trend observed in 2023 (69%), but it is also smaller compared to previous years, in which 80% of the conflicts were of this type. Even though some of the dynamics of internationalised internal armed conflicts are internal, they are characterised by the fact that some of the conflicting parties are foreign, the armed actors to the conflict have bases or launch attacks from abroad and/or the conflict has spilled into neighbouring countries. In many conflicts, this internationalisation factor has taken the form of the involvement of third parties as conflicting parties, including international missions, ad hoc regional and international military coalitions, states, armed groups that mount cross-border attacks, international private security companies and other actors.

Graph 1.1. **Changes in the number of armed conflicts per year since 2010**



Graph 1.2. **Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2024**



In 2024, most of the armed conflicts continued to be concentrated in Africa (17), followed by Asia (10), the Middle East (six), Europe (two), and America (two)

In 2024 UN peacekeeping missions remained active in some armed conflicts, but with changes compared to previous years following the withdrawal or beginning of the (total or partial) withdrawal of some of them, especially in Africa, as early as 2023. Following the departure of MINUSMA from Mali that year, the partial withdrawal of MONUSCO from the DRC began in early 2024. By June 2024, its forces had fully withdrawn from South Kivu, as agreed with the Congolese government, though the mission continued to operate in other parts of the country. In February 2024, the Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) also ended its mission due to the war that has been raging in Sudan between the Sudanese Army and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, despite being a political rather than a military mission. Along these same lines, in 2024 the Iraqi authorities also requested that the UN end its political mission in the country, UNAMI,

arguing that it was no longer necessary to ensure its stability. Its mandate was renewed for the last time in 2024 and it is expected to cease operations at the end of 2025. Despite these changes, UN missions continued to be relevant players in other internationalised internal armed conflicts, such as in the CAR (MINUSCA), South Sudan (UNMISS) and the DRC (the aforementioned MONUSCO). Additionally, even though it is not a UN mission, the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) was deployed in Haiti starting in June, having been authorised by the UN Security Council in October 2023 in response to the situation of extreme violence and instability in the Central American country. Furthermore, though it is an international armed conflict, the mission that historically oversees the ceasefire in the de facto border area between Israel and Lebanon, UNIFIL, was pressured and attacked by Israel to force it to withdraw from its area of operations in 2024, prompting condemnation from the mission and dozens of countries.

As in previous years, **regional organisations also remained involved in many conflicts in the form of missions or military operations**. These include those deployed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the DRC (SAMIDRC) and in Mozambique (SAMIM), though the latter closed its operations in the country on 15 July, and the EU mission in Somalia (EUNAVFOR). As part of the shakeup of alliances in areas such as the Western Sahel and rapprochement with other actors, particularly Russia, the EU ended the military training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and the military cooperation mission with Niger (EUMPM). Hybrid missions, which bring together regional organisations and states, also continued in 2024, as in previous years. This was the case with Combined Task Force 151, the maritime operation active in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean, which is led by the US and works in coordination with EUNAVFOR as part of the armed conflict in Somalia.[9] Another similar initiative, also led by the US, is the international coalition against Islamic State, which is made up of various actors, including the EU and the Arab League.

The involvement of third countries and the cross-border actions of armed groups were also crucial in many internationalised internal conflicts and added complexity in several scenarios. In Africa, this dynamic is illustrated by the conflict in Mozambique, where the withdrawal of the SAMIM mission mid-year led to the growing involvement of several state actors in support of the Mozambican government. The main such actor was Rwanda, which deployed additional troops and became actively involved in offensives with Mozambican government forces, alongside the key role it also played in the (international) conflict in the DRC (east). The internationalisation and interconnectedness of various active armed conflicts in the Middle East, as well as the repercussions of the Gaza crisis throughout the region, remained clear in 2024. For example, Iraq and Syria were the scene of clashes between multiple state and non-state actors as part of a confrontation pitting mainly Israel, the US and related actors against Iran and armed groups of the "axis of resistance". Hostilities between Turkey and the PKK were also fought primarily on Iraqi soil. The escalation of some of these violent dynamics led to the intensification and/or outbreak of new sources of tension, such as the bilateral feud between Israel and Iran, the dispute between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights and the conflict between the Houthis in Yemen against Israel, the US and the United Kingdom, one of the main theatres of which was the Red Sea.[10] At the end of the year, the situation in Syria also illustrated the importance of third-party involvement in the outcome of some armed conflicts, since the ouster of Bashar Assad was partly attributed to the decision of his former allies, Russia and Iran, to deprioritise their support for his regime.

Another significant example of third-party involvement was Russia, which intensified its presence in and strategic and military collaboration agreements with several African countries. In Mali, some acts of violence even suggested a spillover of the war between Russia and Ukraine into Africa. In recent years, the Wagner Group had become a paradigmatic example of the involvement of private security companies in various armed conflicts. The military uprising against Moscow led by the Wagner Group's leader in mid-2023 and his death shortly thereafter in an aerial incident (attributed to Russia) led the organisation to restructure and come under more direct control by the Russian government. According to various analysts and media reports, a significant amount of the organisation's mercenaries have joined the Russian Ministry of Defence, some through private companies and paramilitary organisations subordinate to it, and Moscow has acknowledged its ties with the forces of the former Wagner Group.[11] In their operations in Africa, the group's members have adopted a new name, Africa Corps. Under this new leadership, Russian paramilitaries have continued to operate in Libya, in Mali, in some of the countries affected by the conflict in the Western Sahel region (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), in the CAR and, to a lesser extent, in Sudan.

9 In addition to Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151), four other coalition operations are active in the Middle East and the Red Sea. See https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/

10 See the summary of these cases in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

11 For further information, see Egbejule, Eromo, "Del grupo Wagner a Africa Corps: la transformación de los mercenarios rusos un año después de la muerte de Prigozhin", *El Diario.es*, 22 August 2024; Ehl, David, "How the Russian Wagner Group is entrenching itself in Africa", *DW*, 27 October 2024; Peltier, Elian, "Year After Failed Mutiny, Russia Tightens Grip on Wagner Units in Africa", *The New York Times*, 25 June 2024; Lechner, John A., "Is Africa Corps a Rebranded Wagner Group?", *Foreign Policy*, 7 February 2024; Sukhankin, Sergey, "After Prigozhin: The Anatomy of Russia's Evolving Private Military and Mercenary Industry", The Jamestown Foundation, 3 March 2024.

Russian paramilitaries actively supported the Malian Armed Forces in 2024 and were instrumental in supporting the CAR's security forces. Russian military personnel grew in numbers in Libya, including special forces and regular troops, some having previously fought in Ukraine. They joined members of the former Wagner Group already in the country amid Moscow's intensified cooperation and contacts with Khalifa Haftar, the military leader who dominates eastern Libya. After Bashar Assad was toppled in Syria, Russia accelerated the transfer of military personnel to Libya, once again highlighting the complex interconnections between some of today's armed conflicts.

The multi-causal nature of the armed conflicts was confirmed in 2024. In keeping with the trend observed in previous years, most of the conflicts **(27 of the 37, equivalent to 73%) were primarily caused in part by the rejection of the state's political, economic, social or ideological system and/or the domestic or international policies of the respective governments**. As in recent years, the causal factor linked to disputes about the system was significant in 2024, as it was found in 18 conflicts (46%). In most of them, it was related to actors with political agendas who claim an alleged jihadist inspiration based on their particular interpretation of Islamic precepts.[12] These groups include Boko Haram factions (JAS and ISWAP) in the Lake Chad region, the Pakistani Taliban militias of the TTP and various groups that have claimed to be branches and/or "provinces" of ISIS beyond their areas of origin in Iraq and Syria, in contexts such as the Lake Chad region, Somalia, Libya, Egypt (Sinai), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), the Philippines (Mindanao) and Yemen. In some of these contexts, such as Libya, Afghanistan, the Philippines (Mindanao), Egypt (Sinai) and Yemen, these groups have reduced their activities compared to previous years. In contrast, groups with jihadist agendas have gained prominence in African armed conflicts, mainly in the Western Sahel region. These include groups such as the Jama'at Nusra al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) coalition—linked to the al-Qaeda network—and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). In other cases, such as Colombia, the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), challenges to the system were associated with other types of insurgents ideologically linked to Marxism and Maoism. Furthermore, armed conflicts motivated by the domestic or international policies of the respective governments, which resulted in struggles to erode or gain power (and in some cases, to the establishment of rival government structures) were found in 13 of the 37 cases (38%). These include Burundi, Libya, the CAR, Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Hezbollah, Yemen and Syria. In Syria, a concerted offensive by rebel forces toppled Bashar Assad's government 14 years after the start of uprisings against it in the country.

Most armed conflicts (60%) evolved negatively in 2024 towards higher levels of violence, a much higher proportion than in previous years

Another main cause of the armed conflicts were disputes about identity-related issues and/or demands for self-government, which were found in 22 of the 37 armed conflicts in 2024, or 60% (in every region except America). Following the trend of previous years, the most relevant factor among these motivations was associated with identity-related issues, which were present in 22 cases (59%). In many cases, identity-related issues were closely linked to demands for self-government (15 of the 37 conflicts, or 41%). Identity-related issues and/or demands for self-governance are motivations for some long-standing conflicts, such as Türkiye (PKK), India (Jammu and Kashmir) and Myanmar, but also for some crises that have escalated into armed conflicts more recently (within the last five years), such as Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Amhara), Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) and Indonesia (West Papua). The conflict in Indonesia (West Papua) is considered an armed conflict from 2024 onwards, partly due to the intensification of fighting between the Indonesian government and the armed wing of the secessionist group Free Papua Organisation (PLO).

Finally, **many armed conflicts were primarily caused in part by control of territory and/or resources. These factors were identified in 17 of the 37 armed conflicts, equivalent to 46%.** Disputes over resources were particularly prominent, as they were found in 14 (38%) in 2024. Most of the armed conflicts involving disputes over resources were in Africa, in line with what was observed in previous years, though they were also indirect factors in many others in other regions, perpetuating violence through war economies. Throughout 2024, the dynamics of violence linked to disputes over resources were once again particularly prominent in the DRC (east), where the escalation of the armed conflict increased the illegal exploitation of natural resources, leading to greater control of mineral-rich territories by the armed groups AFC/M23 and the Rwandan Armed Forces (RDF) and the illicit export of more than 150 tonnes of coltan from the DRC to Rwanda. Meanwhile, gold mining by armed groups and criminal networks continued in Ituri. Outside Africa, notable cases included Pakistan (Balochistan), where insurgent groups launched several attacks against the infrastructure of mining projects promoted by Chinese companies in the province, which

12 The concept of *jihad* has historically had different connotations. The term connotes the idea of "effort" and many Muslims and Islamic scholars reject its use to describe armed groups, arguing that it uses a religious concept to justify illegitimate violence. Considering this disagreement, coupled with the widespread use of the term in international relations and peace and security studies, this report refers to "groups with jihadist agendas" when the armed organisations themselves appeal to their particular interpretation of Islamic precepts in their narratives and statements of intent.

stood accused of appropriating natural resources, and Indonesia (West Papua), where rejection of the activities of the transnational mining company Freeport is one of the forces driving the conflict.

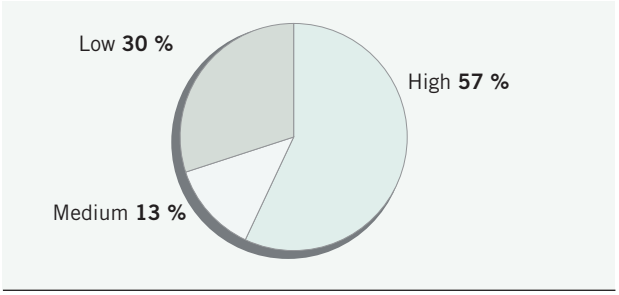
Meanwhile, issues related to territorial control were found in six of the 37 armed conflicts (16%) in 2024, including two low-intensity ones in Africa—the DRC (west) and Somalia (Somaliland SSC Khatumo)—and four high-intensity ones. One of these was Haiti, where one of the key issues in the conflict is armed gangs' control of territory in certain urban areas of the country. Territorial control was also a determining factor in the Israel-Palestine armed conflict and in the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, which is mainly being fought along the de facto border between Israel and Lebanon and was marked by the ground invasion of southern Lebanon by Israeli forces beginning in October 2024. In the Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel continued its military campaign to control Gaza, forcing massive displacements through actions that were described as genocide and attempted ethnic cleansing of the territory. The Israeli government also continued its policies to expand its de facto annexation of territories in the West Bank in 2024. In some contexts where territorial factors were not a central cause, the dynamics of the hostilities also involved aspects of territorial control in 2024. For example, armed groups in Myanmar made significant gains in controlling territories as part of their conflict with the government, whilst in the DRC (east), territorial gains by the M23 with support from Rwanda were one of the determining factors of the conflict.

The analysis of the **trend** of the armed conflicts in 2024 offers one of the most significant conclusions of the year. **More than half the cases (22 of the 37, or 60%) evolved towards higher levels of violence and instability, a significantly higher proportion than in previous years (42% in 2023 and 30% in 2022)**. The armed conflicts that witnessed a rise in violence and hostilities, with greater impacts in 2024, were most cases in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mozambique (north), the CAR, the DRC (east), Sudan and South Sudan); both conflicts in America (Colombia and Haiti); most cases in Asia and the Pacific (Afghanistan, India (CPI-M), Indonesia (West Papua), Myanmar, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Thailand (south)); one of the two conflicts in Europe (Russia-Ukraine); and half the cases in the Middle East (Israel-Hezbollah, Israel-Palestine and Syria). Nine of the 37 armed conflicts (24%) showed levels of violence similar to those of the previous year, whilst only seven (19%) had less fighting and violence.

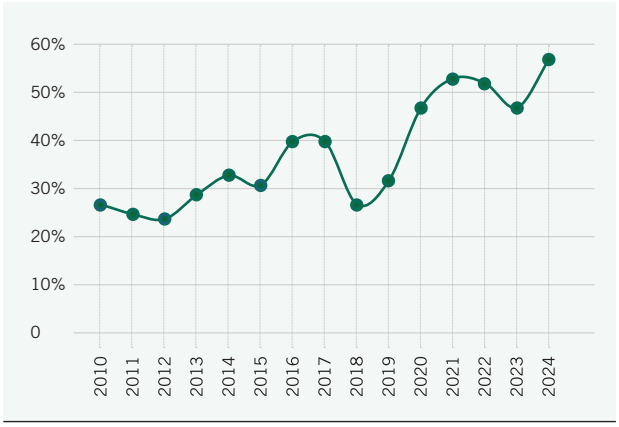
High-intensity armed conflicts increased in 2024 and now account for 57% of all cases worldwide

Various dynamics drove changes towards a decrease in hostilities. In some cases, it was related to the reduction in activity and/or apparent weakening of some of the armed actors involved in the conflict. This was the case in Egypt (Sinai), which, as mentioned, ceased to be considered an armed conflict at the end of 2024 due to the sustained decrease in hostilities in recent years. This was also true in Iraq, which, despite continuing to be the scene of a high-intensity armed conflict, has seen less fatalities associated with armed violence in recent years. In Somalia (Somaliland), a decline in hostilities was also observed in 2024, though fighting increased again towards the end of the year. Two other examples occurred in the Philippines. In the armed conflict affecting the Muslim-majority areas in southern Mindanao, violence significantly decreased, and the government announced the "neutralisation" of two of

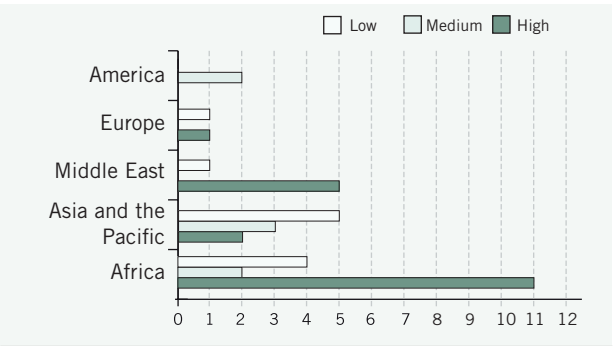
Graph 1.3. **Intensity of the armed conflicts in 2024**



Graph 1.4. **Proportion of high-intensity armed conflicts since 2010**



Graph 1.5. **Intensity of conflicts by region in 2024**



the region's most important armed organisations. At the same time, the conflict between Philippine government forces and the NPA also saw a drop in hostilities, which the Philippine authorities attributed to the weakening of the armed group. In other contexts, reductions in violence were at least partially related to the impact of ongoing negotiating processes. In the conflict between Türkiye and the PKK, there was a decrease in hostilities and fatalities alongside exploratory contacts between both parties, which at the time indicated the possible establishment of a new negotiating process.[13] In some cases that evolved similarly to the previous year, the stabilisation in levels of violence can also be attributed to the formal and/or de facto validity of ceasefire agreements, at least in part, as exemplified in Libya and Yemen.[14]

The serious armed conflicts greatly intensified in 2024, confirming the trend observed in recent years in this type of scenario. High-intensity armed conflicts, characterised by great deadliness (more than one thousand deaths annually) and severe impacts in terms of population displacement, infrastructure destruction and territorial consequences, **accounted for 57% of the armed conflicts in 2024** (Figure 1.3). This proportion is significantly higher than the 47% reported in 2023 and the highest reported in the last 15 years, according to data from Escola de Cultura de Pau (Figure 1.4). As shown in the graph, high-intensity armed conflicts used to account for less than one third of all cases worldwide, but they have reached around half since 2020.

The deadliest armed conflicts in 2024 were those of Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine, the latter mainly due to the impact of violence in Gaza

In keeping with the trend of previous years, 11 of the 21 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2024, or 52%, were reported in Africa, the largest number. Despite the high percentage, this figure is lower than that of 2023 (59%) and a big drop from that of 2022, when seven out of 10 serious armed conflicts took place in Africa. Eleven of all 17 armed conflicts in Africa were high-intensity (65%), a higher proportion than in 2023 (55%), but lower compared to previous years (75% in 2022 and 80% in 2021). The region with the second-highest number of high-intensity armed conflicts was the Middle East, with five, accounting for 24% of all serious conflicts worldwide and equivalent to 83% all armed conflicts in the region (five out of six). This marked an increase over the previous year. Asia and the Pacific and Europe maintained the same number of serious armed conflicts as in 2023, with two and one, respectively. America went from having one to two armed conflicts in 2024 and both were classified as high-intensity last year. The 21 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2024 were: Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia, Haiti, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia-Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Hezbollah, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen.

In many of the high-intensity armed conflicts, the threshold of one thousand fatalities per year has been far surpassed. The year 2024 was no exception and the hostilities and dynamics of violence in many conflicts caused death tolls that were well above that limit, in addition to making many other impacts in terms of human security. In some armed conflicts, the hostilities claimed over 3,000 lives. This was the case of the armed conflict in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, where clashes between federal security forces and the Oromo Liberation Army left more than 3,300 people dead. Amidst the worsening security situation since the armed group M23 and Rwanda intensified their offensive in the DRC (east), another 3,500 people lost their lives in acts of violence. In the Lake Chad region, the activities of the two main Boko Haram factions and counterinsurgency operations resulted in about 3,650 fatalities. In Mali, the breaking of the peace agreement in the north and the expansion of groups with jihadist agendas across the country led to almost 4,000 deaths during the year. In the Middle East, the aggravation of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and the escalation of Israeli's air and ground campaign in the second half of the year left a death toll of over 4,000. In other conflicts, over 5,000 people lost their lives due to violence. Although a decrease in violence was detected in Somalia compared to other years, the hostilities there caused almost 5,400 deaths in 2024. At least 5,600 people died due to the violence of the armed bands operating in Haiti. Meanwhile, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, escalating violence caused the deaths of nearly 6,400 people.

There were also several armed conflicts that killed over 10,000 people in 2024. In the Western Sahel region, almost 13,000 people died in the triple border area of Liptako-Gourma, which includes Mali, Burkina Faso and southwestern Niger. In Sudan, the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) claimed almost 15,600 lives. In Myanmar, the intensification of the fighting and military and insurgent operations caused nearly 20,000 deaths. **The deadliest armed conflicts in 2024 were those of Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine, the latter mainly due to the impact of violence in Gaza**. In the case of Russia-Ukraine, some death tolls amounted to almost 73,000 in Ukraine alone during the year. About 46,000 people had died in Gaza from the beginning

13 For further information, see the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
14 For further information, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Box 1.1. **Regional trends in armed conflict**

AFRICA	• Following the trend of previous years, Africa had the largest number of armed conflicts worldwide with 17, accounting for 46% of the total. • In 2024, practically two thirds of the armed conflicts in Africa were of high intensity (11 of the 17), which represent 65%, a larger proportion than what was reported in 2023 (55%), but smaller than the one observed in 2022 (75%). • Nearly half the African armed conflicts (nine) got worse in 2024, moving towards higher levels of violence. In seven cases, the situation was similar to that of the previous year. A reduction in hostilities was only identified in one conflict, in Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo). • The vast majority of African armed conflicts were internalised internal (12 of the 17). Compared to other regions, however, Africa also had a significant proportion of the highly internal conflicts (three of the seven cases) identified worldwide.
AMERICA	• The region doubled its armed conflicts in 2024 after the new armed conflict in Haiti was added to the ongoing armed conflict in Colombia. These two cases account for 5.5% of the total around the world, the same percentage as in Europe. • Both conflicts (in Colombia and Haiti) were considered high-intensity and experienced higher levels of violence in 2024. • Although only two armed conflicts were counted in America, the region continued to report high levels of violence due to other dynamics of tension and crime and stood out for its high homicide rates.[15]
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	• Following the trend of previous years, Asia and the Pacific was the region with the second-highest number of armed conflicts, trailing Africa, with a total of 10 (27% of the total). In 2024, Indonesia (Western Papua) joined the list of armed conflicts in the region due to the escalation of violence there. • One of the outstanding trends in Asia was the rise in cases that reported more fighting and higher levels of violence—seven of the 10 cases in 2024, compared to a third in 2023. • The region continued to have the most low-intensity conflicts (five of the 11 cases accounted for globally), which also represented half the conflicts in the region (five of the 10). • Asia was the region with the most internal armed conflicts (four of the 10).
EUROPE	• Europe was the scene of two armed conflicts, Russia-Ukraine and Türkiye (PKK), which account for 5.5% of all cases worldwide. • The high-intensity Russia-Ukraine conflict escalated to higher levels of violence in 2024, whilst the low-intensity Türkiye (PKK) conflict reported a decrease in hostilities, in line with the trend identified in recent years. • The Russia-Ukraine armed conflict was international. The Türkiye (PKK) armed conflict was internationalised internal and in fact, most of the fighting took place between Turkish forces and the PKK in Iraqi territory.
MIDDLE EAST	• Six armed conflicts were reported in the region, accounting for 16% of the total worldwide. • The Middle East was the part of the world with the second-highest number of high-intensity armed conflicts, after Africa. Five of the six armed conflicts in the region were high-intensity. • The levels of violence in half the armed conflicts worsened and intensified compared to the previous year: Israel-Hezbollah, Israel-Palestine and Syria. Two armed conflicts witnessed a decrease in violence: Iraq and Egypt (Sinai). The latter stopped being considered an armed conflict in 2024.

of the Israeli campaign after Hamas attacks on 7 October 2023 until the end of 2024. At least half of this total died in 2024. However, this figure is viewed as conservative, considering the estimated 10,000 people who remained buried under the rubble. Moreover, the results of some investigations suggested that the body count in Gaza had been underestimated. For instance, a study conducted by Yale University asserted that the real number could be up to 40% higher and that if indirect deaths in Gaza were taken into account, the estimated death toll could amount to 186,000. The magnitude and intensity of the violence and destruction in Gaza is all the more striking considering that it occupies a very limited surface area (365 square kilometres) and is one of the most densely populated places in the world. These figures are also dramatic if compared to the death tolls caused by all actors with jihadist agendas in Africa in 2024 (Boko Haram, branches of Islamic State, branches of al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, etc.), which killed about 19,000 people in all countries where they were active: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Somalia, Kenya and Mozambique.[16]

1.2.2. Impact of conflicts on the civilian population

In 2024, civilians continued to suffer grave consequences from armed conflicts, whose effects were often interrelated with other crises such as the climate emergency, inequalities and situations of food insecurity that aggravated the violations of rights in these contexts. In his yearly report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, published in May 2024 and referring to the events that occurred in 2023, the UN Secretary-General warned of a "resoundingly grim" situation.[17] In 2024, the year of the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions (1949) and 25 years

15 See the section on America in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
16 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality", 18 February 2025.
17 United Nations Security Council, *Protection of civilians in armed conflict. Report of the Secretary-General,* S/2024/385, 14 May 2024.

since the first session of the UN Security Council that addressed the protection of the civilian population in conflicts, the scenario was bleak due to the serious and extensive aggression against civilians and the systematic breach of international humanitarian law and human rights. António Guterres highlighted the consequences for civilians in Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, the DRC, the Sahel region, Somalia and Ukraine. The UN report stressed that hundreds of thousands of civilians had died or been wounded in deliberate or indiscriminate attacks in 2023. **According to the United Nations' records, at least 33,443 civilians died in armed conflicts in 2023, a 22% increase over 2022**. Also compared to 2022, the proportion of dead women due to the violence of armed conflicts doubled in 2023, whilst that of deceased girls and boys in such circumstances tripled. Seven out of 10 civilian deaths occurred as part of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the vast majority of them in Gaza. Therefore, this conflict was the deadliest for civilians in 2023. The year 2023 was also the most lethal for the Palestinian population of the West Bank and East Jerusalem since victims began to be counted in 2005.

In 2024, the UN Secretary-General warned of the "resoundingly grim" situation facing civilians in many conflicts and systematic violations of international humanitarian law

The UN report stressed once again that the impacts on civilians were especially dire when fighting and attacks occurred in densely populated areas and with explosive weapons, so the Secretary-General urged the states to reinforce the protection of civilians in urban areas. Guterres included this demand in his proposal for a new peace agenda, published in July 2023,[18] in which he also included a plea to avoid the impacts of conflicts on essential services. According to the report, armed conflicts destroyed or damaged critical infrastructure, including key water supply, electricity and healthcare facilities, suspending or interrupting the provision of these services to the population. These kinds of impacts were especially illustrative in Gaza, Sudan and Ukraine in 2023. The UN report also warned of the immediate and long -term consequences of land mines and military ordnance, which continued to affect civilians in many conflicts, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Syria, the DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Palestine, Ukraine and Yemen.

The analysis of armed conflicts in 2024 by Escola de Cultura de Pau corroborates the continuity of the worrying trends indicated in the UN report. During 2024, civilians continued to be severely affected by the violence of armed conflicts. One example of this was Ukraine, where the total number of civilians who died and were wounded due to the conflict increased by 30% compared to 2023, with more than 11,000 civilian victims in 2024. In Myanmar, it was estimated that approximately 17% of the 20,000 total fatalities due to the armed conflict in 2024 were civilians. In the final quarter of 2024, armed bands launched coordinated attacks and carried out some of the most serious massacres of civilians in Haiti's history. In Haiti, but also in other conflicts such as the DRC (east) and the DRC (east-ADF), civilians accused of collaborating with rival actors were reportedly killed. Armed groups also intensified the use of violence against civilians as a way to fund their activities, such as by kidnapping civilians for ransom, which was reported in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest). In Colombia, the ELN announced that it would resume the practice after having suspended it during the ceasefire agreement. Irregular armed organisations were not the only ones nor the main ones responsible for violence against civilians in many conflicts. This is illustrated by the case of the Western Sahel region, where the state actors involved in the conflict (the armed forces of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and their allies) were responsible for the death of a greater number of civilians than groups with jihadist agendas. In various conflicts, civilians were accused of colluding with militias and violently targeted during counterinsurgency operations, such as in Ethiopia (Amhara) and Ethiopia (Oromia). In the CAR, attacks against civilians had an intercommunal dimension, linked to the predominance of a group (Azandé) in the security forces that took advantage of its position to attack the Muslim-majority Fulani community.

In some contexts, the rise in the number of civilians killed by armed violence was largely attributed to the use of high-impact military armament and technology. This was the case of Russia-Ukraine, where investigations by UN human rights agencies specifically indicated the impact of the use of glide bombs. In Israel-Palestine, artificial intelligence was used to identify targets to attack, with programmes designed to strike people when they met with their families or when they went to help others who were seemingly wounded. To these dynamics are added the extended use of drones in many conflicts and condemnations of the use of banned weapons in populated areas, such as the use of white phosphorus in Israeli operations in Lebanon and Gaza. The systematic attacks against civilians and infrastructure of Gaza and actions taken with multiple consequences for civilians led increasing amounts of people, including experts and top human rights organisations, to condemn Israel for committing acts constituting genocide against the Palestinian population in 2024. One of these tactics was the use of hunger as a weapon of war. In addition to its deliberate use, armed conflicts caused and aggravated critical humanitarian situations and were the main cause of acute insecurity in 2023, as stated in the UN Secretary-General's report. In 2024, the hunger crisis in Sudan became the worst in the world as a result of the

18 For more information on UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, see: A New Agenda for Peace.

armed conflict's destruction of agricultural systems and supply chains, with half the country's population, almost 26 million people, suffering acute food insecurity.

Armed conflicts also continued to have specific impacts on some population groups in especially vulnerable situations. In his periodic reports on the consequences of conflicts for civilians, the UN Secretary-General has raised alarm about the disproportionate effects suffered by older people, who often cannot abandon battle-torn areas and are forced to face a greater risk of dying, being wounded or lacking access to essential services or support networks. He has also called attention to the extraordinary difficulties facing people with disabilities.

In 2024, the hunger crisis in Sudan became the worst in the world as a result of the armed conflict's destruction of agricultural systems and supply chains

Armed conflicts continued to have extraordinary impacts on boys and girls. According to the report of the UN Secretary-General on children in armed conflicts, which was published in June 2024 and covers the events that occurred in 2023, violence against boys and girls has reached extreme levels.[19] **The report cites a 21% increase in serious violations against children in armed conflicts**, showing widespread contempt for children's rights, including the right to life. The number of deaths and mutilations increased by 35% in 2023, especially in Gaza, Burkina Faso, the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine. The most recurring violations were killing and mutilation, child recruitment, the denial of humanitarian access and the kidnapping of minors. The case of Israel-Palestine recorded an unprecedented 155% increase in serious violations against boys and girls, reflecting their worsening scale and intensity. In Myanmar, they rose by 123%, whilst in Sudan they soared by 480%. Government forces involved in conflicts were the main parties responsible for massacres and mutilations of children, as well as for attacks on schools and the denial of humanitarian aid.

UN reports have verified a significant rise in the number of verified cases of sexual violence in armed conflicts

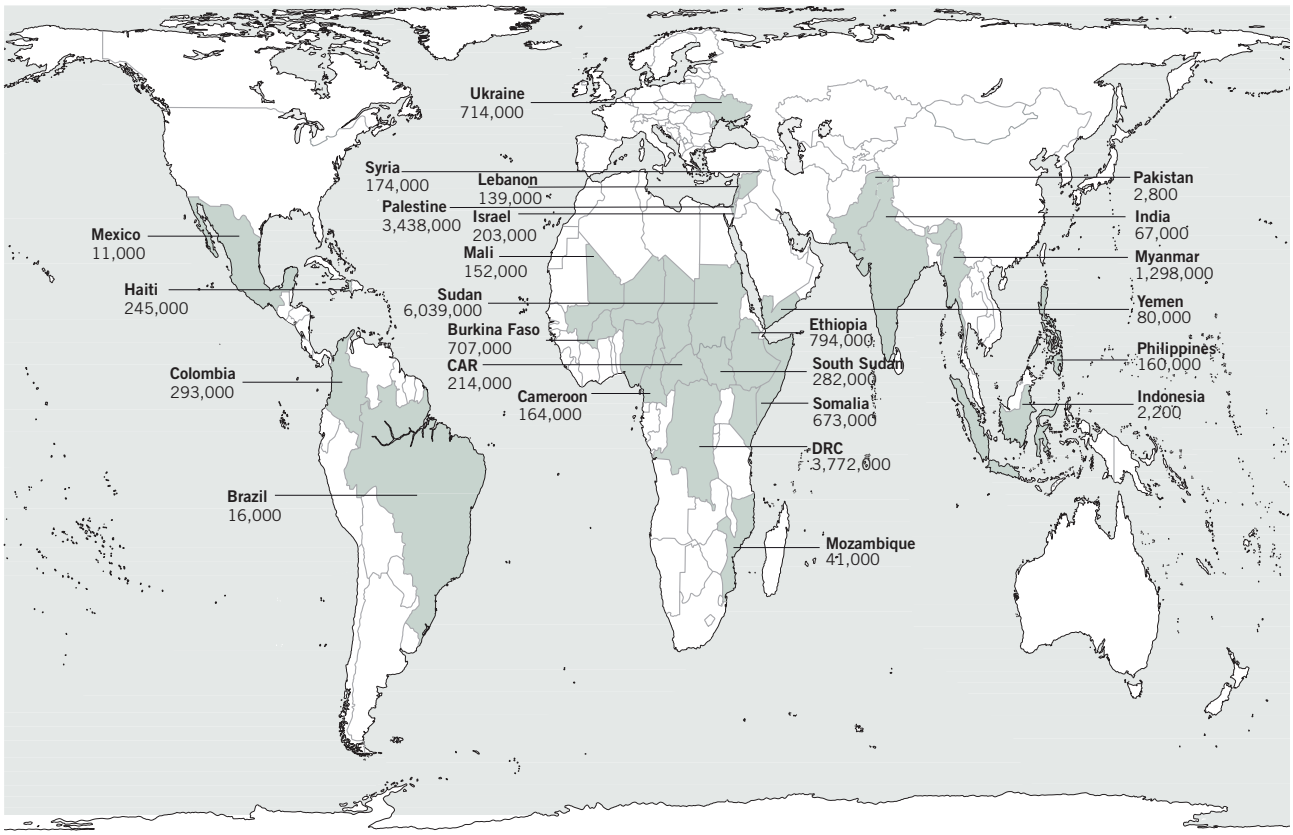
The analysis of the facts of the different armed conflicts in 2024 confirms this conclusion. In Gaza, for example, it is estimated that from 7 October 2023 until the end of 2024, more than 13,000 boys and girls had died due to the Israeli military campaign. The conscription of minors was confirmed in several conflicts, including Ethiopia (Oromia), Somalia, the DRC (east), Yemen, Colombia and Haiti. UNICEF warned that there had been a 70% increase in the number of minors recruited by armed groups in Haiti in 2024. In fact, it is estimated that between one third and half of these groups were made up of minors. Access to children's education was hindered in many armed conflicts. Thus, for example, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, the general atmosphere of violence and continuous attacks caused the closure of thousands of schools, leaving more than four million children unable to attend school normally. The same happened in the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, with thousands of children affected by the interruption of schooling at various times of the year. The violence in Haiti is estimated to have kept over 300,000 children out of school. In Afghanistan, the ban on school education for girls over 12 years old remained in place. Sexual violence against minors also increased. The Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict warned that verified cases of sexual violence against boys and girls rose by 25% in 2023. Girls were disproportionately more affected by this kind of violence. Cases of sexual violence against children skyrocketed by over 1,000% in Haiti in 2024.

United Nations research has also identified a significant and widespread increase in sexual violence in armed conflicts.[20] According to the data of the Secretary-General published in April 2024 and covering the year 2023, **there were 50% more verified cases of sexual violence related to armed conflicts than in 2022**.[21] The report reiterated that the proliferation and widespread availability of small and light weapons were key to creating the conditions for committing sexual violence with impunity. The use of small and light weapons was identified in between 70% and 90% of the incidents committed in the areas for which data were available. Sexual violence was present again in many conflicts in 2024, including Somalia, the CAR, the DRC (east), Sudan, Haiti, Israel-Palestine and Yemen.

One of the most notorious impacts of armed conflicts continued to be forced population displacement. **According to the UNHCR report published in October 2024, based on data collected during the first half of the year, the forcibly displaced population exceeded 122 million, including both refugees and the internally displaced**.[22] This number is much higher than the population of Spain (48 million) and equivalent to the population of countries such as Japan (124 million) and Mexico (128 million). **Forced displacement levels have risen incessantly in the last 12 years**. As indicated by graph 1.6, the number of people displaced by situations of conflict, violence and persecution has more than doubled since 2015, when it exceeded the number for people forcibly displaced during the Second World

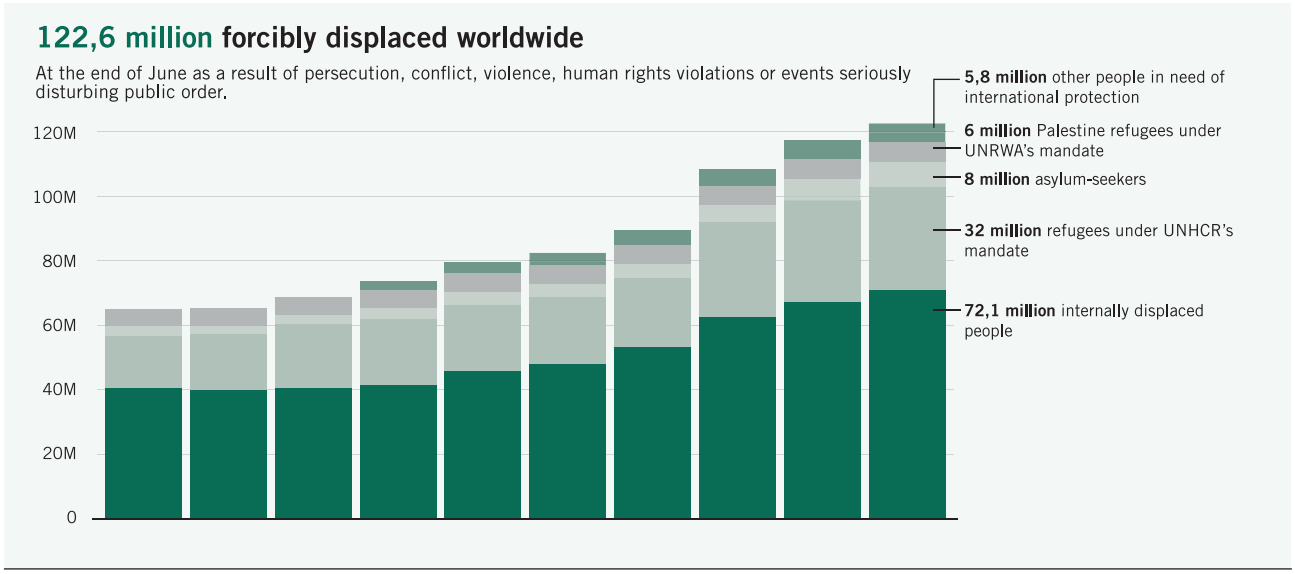
19 United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Security Council, *Children and armed conflict. Report of the Secretary-General,* A/78/842-S/2024/384, 3 June 2024.
20 See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security).
21 United Nations Security Council, *Conflict-related sexual violence. Report of the Secretary-General,* S/2024/292, 4 April 2024.
22 UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends 2024*, 29 October 2024.

Map 1.2. **Countries with the highest numbers of internal displacements due to conflict and violence in 2024**



Source: Map prepared by the authors on the basis of the data provided in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025*, 13 May, 2025.

Graph.1.6. **Evolution of forced displacement worldwide (2015-2024)**



Source: UNHCR.

War. Considering that the UNHCR report collects only the data related to the first half of 2024, figures for the entire year were expected to be higher due to the intensification of some crises stemming from armed conflicts in the second half of the year.

Some of the displacement situations that caused special concern in 2024 were in Sudan (by mid-year, it was estimated that nearly 13 million people had been displaced inside and outside the country due to the conflict), Myanmar (from June 2023 and until mid-2024 the number of internally displaced people approached one million, whilst another 1.4 million had fled the country, mainly to Bangladesh), the DRC (where the intensification of hostilities in North Kivu forcibly displaced around 850,000 people in the first half of the year, raising the total number of people displaced by the conflict until mid-2024 to 8.7 million) and the Gaza Strip (where more than 1.7 million of its 2.2 million inhabitants had been forced to move, in some cases repeatedly.

Reports released by the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) showed similar conclusions. The IDMC's tenth report on internal forced displacement, which analyses the year 2024, found an upward trend.[23] **The IDMC estimated that by the end of the year, the number of displaced people amounted to 83.4 million, more than double a decade ago, of which 9.8 million were displaced by disasters and 73.5 million were displaced due to conflicts and violence (10% more than in 2023**). According to the IDMC, the five cases in which there were higher levels of internal forced displacement due to conflicts and violence in 2024 were the DRC, Sudan, Palestine, Myanmar and Lebanon. The case of Lebanon serves to remind us that in some cases, populations affected by a new forced displacement had already been forced to leave their homes due to other conflicts in the past. Thus, during the second half of 2024, thousands of Syrian refugees based in Lebanon had to leave the country and crossed the border to Syria, next to the Lebanese population. In previous years, Palestinians who had taken refuge in Syria for years were also forced to leave the country due to the outbreak and intensification of the armed conflict.

Finally, the intensification of armed conflicts and its serious impacts on civilians came amid mounting geopolitical tensions worldwide, given changes in the global order and growing militarism and militarisation. In line with the trends observed in preceding years, **the SIPRI's annual report confirmed an unprecedented increase in military spending worldwide**.[24] This expense reached 2.718 billion dollars in 2024, a 9.4% hike compared to 2023, the most pronounced annual increase at least since the end of the Cold War.

1.3. Armed conflicts: annual evolution

1.3.1. Africa

Central Africa

Burundi	
Start:	2015
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Imbonerakure youth wing, political party CNDD-FDD, political party CNL, armed groups RED-TABARA, FPB (previously FOREBU), FNL
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The process of political and institutional transition that got under way with the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000 was formally completed in 2005. The approval of a new constitution (that formalises the distribution of political and military power between the main two communities, the Hutu and Tutsi) and the holding of elections (leading to the formation of a new government), represent an attempted to lay the foundations for overcoming a conflict that began in 1993. This represented the principal opportunity for ending the ethnic-political violence that has plagued the country since its independence in 1962. However, the authoritarian evolution of the government after the 2010 elections, denounced as fraudulent by the opposition, has overshadowed the reconciliation process and led to the mobilization of political opposition. This situation has been aggravated by the plans to reform the Constitution by the Government. The deteriorating situation in the country is revealed by the institutional deterioration and reduction of the political space for the opposition, the controversial candidacy of Nkurunziza for a third term and his victory in a fraudulent presidential election (escalating political violence), the failed coup d'état in May 2015, violations of human rights and the emergence of new armed groups. In 2020, the historic leader Pierre Nkurunziza passed away, although the new leader, Domitien Ndayishimiye, had an approach towards the political and armed opposition similar to that of his predecessor.

Burundi's security forces and insurgent groups continued to commit acts of violence throughout the year and Burundian security forces remained active in the Congolese border province of South Kivu in pursuit of Burundian insurgents. Furthermore, the Burundian government stepped up pressure on the political and social opposition and imposed greater restrictions on freedom of expression in the run-up to the 2025 legislative elections. The research centre ACLED reported a death toll of 147 in the conflict in Burundi in 2024, which was similar to that of 2023 (151 deaths), though lower than in previous years (245 in 2022 and

23 IDMC, *2025 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID)*, 13 May 2025.
24 SIPRI, "Unprecedented rise in global military expenditure as European and Middle East spending surges", *SIPRI*, 28 April 2025.

285 in 2021).[25] These figures show a certain continuity with previous years. The death toll in South Kivu province reached 282, and whilst not all fatalities were attributable to clashes pitting the Burundian Armed Forces, supported by local Congolese militias, against the Burundian insurgents operating in the province, a large proportion were (172 were attributable to RED-Tabara, one of several Burundian insurgent groups in the province). This fighting in South Kivu was not confirmed by the Burundian Armed Forces. At the same time, there were also reports that members of the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, had received military training for deployment in the DRC.[25] The armed group RED-Tabara claimed responsibility for several attacks against Burundian troops deployed in South Kivu, specifically in the territories of Uvira and Mwenga, including an attack on 5-6 December on a Burundian Army base in Mwenga and particularly in the Itombwe Mountains.

Meanwhile, reports emerged that Rwandan insurgents were involved in battles near the trilateral border between Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. Concerns about armed groups operating in the porous border areas between the three countries intensified after seven bodies wearing Congolese Army uniforms were found in late November in Burundi's Kibira forest. Smuggling groups and Rwandan (FDLR) and Burundian (FNL) insurgents were also apparently detected in the area. There were also reports of possible contact between Burundi security forces and the FDLR, including a faction of the FDLR known as the FNL, which is believed to have stoked tension between Burundi and Rwanda. There was also communication between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi to boost Burundian security forces in South Kivu, both to combat Burundian insurgents there and to support Congolese security forces and the militias that support them against the armed group M23 and Rwanda. On 22 December, Congolese President Tshisekedi visited Burundian President Ndayishimiye in Bujumbura to strengthen relations between both countries amid their mutual tensions with Rwanda, as Burundian and Rwandan troops had reportedly clashed on Congolese soil.[27]

On 30 December, the appeals court convicted 272 soldiers who refused to be deployed in the DRC with sentences ranging from three years to life in prison. None were released. The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi, whose mandate was renewed in October, reported growing impunity in the country. Several reports emerged during the year of deaths in custody and torture, as well as a lack of government cooperation in investigating the cases. Particularly egregious was the case of journalist Sandra Muhoza, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison. The EU extended sanctions against members of the intelligence services accused of repression and the excessive use of force during the 2015 protests until October 2025.

The government continued to restrict political space ahead of the 2025 elections, supported by the ruling CNDD-FDD party and the Imbonerakure. CNDD-FDD youth groups carried out extortion campaigns to finance the CNDD-FDD's electoral campaign in various provinces, denying people access to public services if they refused to support the campaign. The opposition parties Frodebu and CNL complained of totalitarian practices and warned of likely fraud and increased violence ahead of the 2025 elections. In a severe blow to the possibility of inclusive elections, according to the International Crisis Group, the electoral commission rejected all lists of the opposition coalition Burundi Bwa Bose, formed on 17 December, for the upcoming legislative elections on 31 December. Burundi Bwa Bose said that it would appeal the decision to the Constitutional Court. The electoral commission cited irregularities in the candidates' paperwork and especially the fact that opposition leader Agathon Rwasa (a former insurgent leader and the head of the CNL party) could not run for the coalition because he is a member of parliament for another party.

Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	
Start:	2018
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Cameroon, Government of Nigeria, a political-military secessionist movement including the opposition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako, to which belong the armed groups Lebialem Red Dragons and SOCADEF) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku, whose armed wing is the Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF), various different militias and smaller armed groups
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and

25 ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
26 Sos Médias Burundi, "Cibitoke: paramilitary training for Imbonerakure before their deployment in the DRC", 17 August 2024.
27 See the summary on DRC (east) in this chapter.

assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern British Cameroon (20% of the country's population) to feel politically and economically marginalised by state institutions, which are controlled by the French-speaking majority. Their frustrations rose in late 2016, when a series of sector-specific grievances were transformed into political demands, which caused strikes, riots and a growing escalation of tension and government repression. This climate has led a majority of the population in the region demanding a new federal political status without ruling out secession and has prompted the resurgence of identity movements dating back to the 1970s. These movements demand a return to the federal model that existed between 1961 and 1972. Trust between English-speaking activists and the government was shaken by the arrest of the main figures of the federalist movement in January 2017, which has given a boost to groups supporting armed struggle as the only way to achieve independence. Since then, both English-speaking regions have experienced general strikes, school boycotts and sporadic violence. Insurgent activity has escalated since the secessionist movement's declaration of independence on 1 October and the subsequent government repression to quell it.

The armed conflict between state security forces and secessionist political-military movements in Cameroon's two English-speaking regions in southwestern Cameroon saw an escalation of violence throughout the year. Various analysts have indicated that the conflict is intensifying and that its fragmentation is increasing the levels of violence, but it is also weakening the separatist movement's ability to negotiate.[28] According to data collected by ACLED,[29] between 2018 and 2023, the conflict had claimed over 8,000 lives. In 2024, the organisation counted another 1,380 deaths in a total of nearly 2,000 events of organised violence (battles, violence against civilians and explosions/incidents of remote violence). This is significantly more than in 2023, when there were 429 fatalities in a total of 262 events of organised violence. In turn, the violence in 2023 had witnessed a slight decrease compared to 2022, when 525 fatalities in 343 violent events were reported. Over one million people had been internally displaced and there were 400,000 refugees by the end of 2024, according to UNHCR. According to some analysts,[30] the insurgent groups are increasingly using violence against civilians and engaging in illegal activities to fund their activities, such as kidnapping civilians to extract ransom payments. The decline in popular support for the insurgency has led to the proliferation of extortion, the "liberation tax" that the insurgents demand. Other illegal activities include property theft, the illegal sale of gasoline and the proliferation of checkpoints set up by the insurgency in both regions. These analysts have also revealed the emergence of previously latent community conflicts, especially between farmers and ranchers. The cattle ranchers, predominantly from the Mbororo community, did not support the insurgency at first and were subjected to extortion and cattle theft by armed groups. This led them to shift their support to the security forces, increasing the complexity of the conflict by adding tension between ranchers and farmers and their respective militias and self-defence groups, as well as between ranchers and the insurgents.

Cameroon's insurgent groups are increasing their use of violence against civilians and engaging in more illegal activities to fund their activities

Ambushes by insurgent groups against Cameroonian Army detachments and patrols proliferated throughout the year. The conflict expanded to affect taxi drivers in both regions, with the insurgents burning taxis and mobilising drivers, as well as divisions within the insurgency over the repression of taxi drivers. The government had suspended taxi traffic at night to limit the movements of the insurgents, so taxi drivers who supported the government's decision were viewed as collaborators. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk met with Prime Minister Dion Ngute and other key ministers from 5 to 7 August, criticising violations by both the insurgents and the Cameroonian Army. Coinciding with the start of the school year, the main political-military groups decreed the suspension of school activities in both regions between 9 and 23 September. Furthermore, as has been the case for the past seven years, the political-military movements commemorated the 2017 declaration of independence by ordering a halt to all activities in both regions on 1 October. President Paul Biya called for the insurgents to surrender on 31 December. The political-military Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) coalition reaffirmed its alliance with Nigerian separatists in the southeastern states of Nigeria (which make up the region known as Biafra) at the Biafran Government in Exile conference in Finland, held from 28 November to 2 December 2024, thereby extending their October 2023 agreement. However, the political-military separatist movements in the English-speaking regions remained divided over the strategy to pursue to achieve their goals. Norwegian police arrested Ayaba Cho Lucas, the leader of the AGovC coalition, in Oslo, on charges of inciting crimes against humanity.

There was a standstill in the peace negotiations brokered by Canada amid growing tensions resulting from preparations for the presidential election expected to take place in October 2025, in which the current President Paul Biya was planning to run again. Biya is 92 years old. He had not made any public appearances between early September and 21 October, leading to speculation about his possible death due to his fragile health. In early October, official information about his condition was banned as a matter of national security.

28 See chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
29 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
30 Serwat, Ladd, "Q&A: The evolution of Ambazonian separatist groups in Anglophone Cameroon", *ACLED*, 11 October 2024.

The political atmosphere regarding the election worsened as a result of authoritarian decisions criticised by the opposition, such as the postponement of the legislative and local elections until 2026, the possibility of barring opposition leader Maurice Kamto from running for office because his party lacks parliamentary representation, restrictions on freedom of expression, a ban on demonstrations and a prohibition on electoral debates. Restrictions on voter registration were also announced, particularly abroad, where an estimated six million eligible voters live, adding to the eight million in the country.

CAR	
Start:	2006
Type:	Government, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of CAR, armed groups that are members of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC, made up of anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, 3R, FPRC, MPC and UPC), opposition armed coalition Siriri, ethnic militia AAKG, other local and foreign armed groups, France, MINUSCA, Rwanda, Russia, Africa Corps (previously Wagner Group)
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Since independence in 1960, the situation in the Central African Republic has been characterised by continued political instability, which has resulted in several coups and military dictatorships. The keys to the situation are of an internal and external nature. Internal, because there is a confrontation between political elites from northern and southern ethnic groups who are competing for power and minorities that have been excluded from it. A number of leaders have attempted to establish a system of patronage to ensure their political survival. And external, due to the role played by its neighbours Chad and Libya; due to its natural resources (diamonds, uranium, gold, hardwoods) and the awarding of mining contracts in which these countries compete alongside China and the former colonial power, France, which controls uranium. Conflicts in the region have led to the accumulation of weaponry and combatants who have turned the country into regional sanctuary. This situation has been compounded by a religious dimension due to the fact that the Séléka coalition, which is a Muslim faith organisation formed by a number of historically marginalised groups from the north and which counts foreign fighters amongst its ranks, took power in March 2013 after toppling the former leader, François Bozizé, who for the past 10 years had fought these insurgencies in the north. The inability of the Séléka leader, Michel Djotodia, to control the rebel coalition, which used violence to control the country and has committed gross violations of human rights, looting and extrajudicial executions, has led to the emergence of Christian militias ("anti-balaka"). These militias and sectors of the army, as well as supporters of former President Bozizé, have rebelled against the government and Séléka, creating a climate of chaos and widespread impunity. France, the AU and the UN intervened militarily to reduce the clashes and facilitate the process of dialogue that would lead to a negotiated transition, forcing a transitional government that led to the 2015-2016 elections. After a brief period of reduced instability and various peace agreements, armed groups continued to control most of the country. Neither the reduced Central African security forces (which barely controlled Bangui) nor MINUSCA were able to reverse the situation. New initiatives by the AU and ECCAS helped to reach the February 2019 peace agreement. However, some groups pulled out of the agreement in late 2020 and started a new rebellion, the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). The government's inability to deal with the situation prompted it to request bilateral support from Rwanda and the Russian security company Wagner, which increased the complexity of the situation due to the proliferation of armed actors in the country.

The Central African Republic continued to be shaken by a complex armed conflict in 2024, characterised by clashes between armed groups and government security forces, supported by the Russian security body Africa Corps, formerly known as the Wagner Group. According to the research centre ACLED,[31] there were 300 events of organised violence in 2024 (battles, violence against civilians and explosions/incidents of remote violence) in 2024 that claimed 641 lives, slightly more than in 2023 (581 fatalities in 299 violent events), but fewer than in 2022 (837) and much fewer than in 2021 (1,700).[32] Although the death toll and violent events in 2024 were relatively similar to those in 2023, an analysis of the conflict's evolution and impacts compared to the previous year indicates a worsening of the situation. Linked to greater fragmentation of armed groups and a rise in community tensions, this deterioration was highlighted by various local and international actors, including the UN.[33]

There was frequent fighting between the government armed forces and various armed groups, such as the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) and the 3R group (Return, Recovery, Rehabilitation). Attacks between community militias were also common, which occurred mainly inside the country and in border areas. The conflict gradually acquired a new layer of complexity by adding an ethnic dimension, as the demobilisation of Azande community militias and the subsequent enlistment and training of their fighters in the Central African Armed Forces led to community tensions. These security forces, which had Azande community members among their ranks, exacted revenge against Fulani civilians. The Fulani community is accused of supporting the rebels of the UPC armed group, part of the CPC coalition. As it is predominantly Muslim, the Fulani civilian population increasingly became a

31 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
32 This escalation of violence coincided with the attempted coup and the rebel offensive that gained significant momentum in late 2020 and early 2021.
33 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 5 June 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2693 (2023) addressed to the President of the Security Council,* United Nations, S/2024/444, 10 June 2024.

target of attacks and reprisals by the Central African Armed Forces and Azande militias. Africa Corps, the successor to the Wagner Group, provided significant support to security forces in clashes across the country. At the same time, tensions arose over Russian paramilitary violence, as evidenced by the Cameroonian truckers' strike between 21 November and 4 December, amid growing strain stemming from repeated intimidation and violence by Russian paramilitaries. This strike caused a temporary supply crisis in Bangui, which relies heavily on exports from neighbouring Cameroon. Concerns also grew over the repercussions of the war in Sudan on the CAR after local sources reported the return of over 1,000 rebel combatants fighting for both sides in late November.

The conflict in the CAR was exacerbated by Russian paramilitary violence and inter-community tensions

The insurgency in the CAR has been marked by fluctuating alliances and internal divisions at different stages of the conflict. The CPC, a coalition of armed groups created in 2020, experienced internal tensions throughout 2024 due to strategic differences and disagreements related to their origins and ethnic affiliation. These divisions weakened its operational capacity, allowing the government to recapture certain areas previously under rebel control. However, the fragmentation also led more radical factions to emerge, complicating efforts to promote conflict resolution.[34] The division between groups and the restructuring of the insurgency were accompanied by an escalation of fighting by the Central African Armed forces with the support of mercenaries from Africa Corps (a successor to the Wagner Group) during the year. In August, Ali Darassa, the leader of the armed group UPC, a member of the CPC coalition, announced a ceasefire and his willingness to enter into peace negotiations with the government. This was described as betrayal by the leader of the CPC, former President François Bozizé, who lives in exile in Guinea-Bissau, and caused divisions within the coalition. Meanwhile, a new faction, CPC-F, split off from the CPC, which, combined with the UPC's announcement, put the CPC in a delicate situation.

In the CAR, the coalition of armed groups CPC experienced internal tensions that were exploited by the government to recover areas previously under rebel control

Meanwhile, the armed groups continued to restructure. According to local sources, a new alliance called the Military Coalition for the Salvation and Recovery of the People (CMSPR) was formed in May, led by former Central African Army Colonel Armel Sayo, whose origins allowed him to recruit former members of both the Séléka and anti-balaka movements.[34] In November, the UN Security Council approved the extension of MINUSCA's mandate for another year, given the seriousness of the situation and amidst competition between Russia, the US and France to strengthen their alliance with the Central African authorities.[35]

The humanitarian crisis in the CAR continued to affect millions of people. According to OCHA, the CAR remains one of the countries most dependent on humanitarian aid, with approximately 40% of the population relying on humanitarian assistance for survival. Thus, more than 2.4 million people out of a total population of 5.3 million were considered vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance due to conflict, forced displacement and food insecurity in 2024.[36] UNHCR estimated the number of refugees and asylum seekers at nearly 679,566 and the number of internally displaced persons at 436,511. These figures were similar to those of the previous four years for the refugee population, though lower for the internally displaced population, which reportedly fell by 300,000 over the past three years.[37] Human rights violations continued to be widespread and were committed by all parties involved in the conflict. Amnesty International documented restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, particularly in the context of the adoption of a new Constitution, approved by referendum in July 2023, which allows the president to run for a third term in the presidential election to be held in 2025. Summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence and attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers were also reported. Levels of sexual and gender-based violence remain alarmingly high, with thousands of cases reported in 2024, continuing the trend also observed in 2023.

34 See the summary on the CAR in chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
35 Corbeau News, Centrafrique : création d'une nouvelle coalition des groupes armés… la CMSPR, 19 November 2024.
36 See the summary on the CAR in chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
37 NRC, Central African Republic: Humanitarian Response Plan, January 2024, 18 September 2024; OCHA, Central African Republic: Situation Report, 5 December 2024.
38 UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - CAR Situation [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

DRC (east)	
Start:	1998
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources International
Main parties:	DRC, Burundi, Angola, MONUSCO, EAC Regional Force (Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan), SAMIDRC (regional force of the SADC, composed of troops from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania), pro-government militias Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP, composed of dozens of former Mai Mai militias and other armed groups from North Kivu and South Kivu, like APCLS, PARECO-FF, Nyatura, Raia Mutomboki, and other pro-government militias known as Wazalendo), FDLR, FDLR splinter groups (CNRD-Ubwiyunge, RUD-Urunana), private security companies (Agemira RDC and Congo Protection); March 23 Movement (M23), Twirwaneho, Rwanda; other armed groups not part of Wazalendo, Burundian armed groups; armed group of Ugandan origin LRA; Ituri groups and community militias (including, CODECO/URDPC, FPIC, FRPI, MAPI, Zaïre-FPAC), AFC coalition and allies
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The current conflict has its origins in the coup d'état carried out by Laurent Desiré Kabila in 1996 against Mobutu Sese Seko, which culminated with him handing over power in 1997. Later, in 1998, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, together with various armed groups, tried to overthrow Kabila, who received the support of Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan and Zimbabwe, in a war that has caused around five million fatalities. The control and exploitation of the natural resources has contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict and to the presence of foreign armed forces. The signing of a ceasefire in 1999, and of several peace agreements between 2002 and 2003, led to the withdrawal of foreign troops, the setting up of a transitional government and later an elected government, in 2006. However, did not mean the end of violence in this country, due to the role played by Rwanda and the presence of factions of non-demobilised groups and of the FDLR, responsible for the Rwandan genocide of 1994. The breach of the 2009 peace accords led to the 2012 desertion of soldiers of the former armed group CNDP, forming part of the Congolese army, who organised a new rebellion, known as the M23, supported by Rwanda. In December 2013 the said rebellion was defeated and part of its combatants took refuge in Rwanda and Uganda. However, the M23 reorganised in 2022, causing an escalation of violence with the support of Rwanda, which worsened relations between the DRC and Rwanda. Rwanda sent military contingents to support the rebellion and to help the M23 offensive to conquer territory, promote its occupation and the exploitation of its resources, as well as to secure its security objectives.

The situation in the eastern DRC over the past year was marked by the expansion of the offensive launched by the armed group M23 and Rwanda into Congolese territory that began in late 2021. The United Nations has confirmed that there are between 4,000 and 7,000 Rwandan soldiers on Congolese soil,[39] as well as Burundian troops in support of the DRC. The M23's offensive expanded and by early January 2025 it was at the gates of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province. Regional diplomatic initiatives led by Angola on behalf of the African Union (AU) failed to facilitate dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda and between the DRC and the M23 throughout 2024. The armed group and Rwanda seized control of a large part of North Kivu province and occupied various parts of South Kivu province, despite the failure of the AU and international passivity, causing hundreds of victims. According to data collected by ACLED,[40] 1,652 events of organised violence (battles, violence against civilians and explosions/incidents of remote violence) were reported in the three eastern provinces of the country (Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu) in 2024, resulting in the deaths of 3,484 people. Most of these events took place in Ituri and North Kivu and claimed 1,267 and 1,918 lives, respectively, in addition to causing 299 fatalities in South Kivu. These figures are very similar to those reported in 2023, when 1,778 incidents of organised violence were reported in these same three provinces, resulting in the deaths of 3,433 people. Across the country, the number of victims of violence from various armed conflicts was similar to the figures for 2023 and 2022. ACLED reported 4,192 fatalities nationwide in 2024, a death toll very similar to the 4,045 in 2023, with around 2,000 incidents of organised violence.

The M23 rebellion attempted to recruit supporters to its cause. In December 2023, former CENI president Corneille Nangaa created the political-military Congo River Alliance coalition (AFC) in Nairobi. This coalition sought to unite various armed groups and political actors in its goal of overthrowing the Congolese government. It established an alliance with the M23 and other militias and won support from political opposition groups. According to the Group of Experts on the DRC, the M23 and the Rwandan government viewed the alliance between the AFC and the M23 as an opportunity to legitimise the M23 and its demands against the Congolese government and to downplay Rwanda's role in the crisis, thereby avoiding considerations of the M23 as an external actor in the DRC dependent on Rwanda. The AFC asked militias in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu to join it or sign non-aggression pacts with it and even established contacts with the ADF. Meanwhile, the M23 continued its offensive in North Kivu, whilst attempts to promote dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda continued without success.

39 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 31 May 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, S/2024/432 of 4 June 2024, and UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council,* United Nations, S/2024/969 of 27 December 2024.

40 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

In July, the DRC and Rwanda agreed to a humanitarian truce facilitated by the US and Angola, which was extended by a new ceasefire agreement between the DRC and Rwanda, which came into effect on 4 August. However, the AFC/M23 argued that it was not automatically bound by the agreement's conclusions, as it had not signed it. Whilst the Rwandan Armed Forces (FDR) and the FARDC initially respected the agreement, fighting soon resumed between their proxy agents, the M23 and other allied local militias and demobilised former FDLR members on the Rwandan side and the Wazalendo coalition of pro-government Congolese groups and militias, together with the FDLR on the Congolese side. All parties to the conflict took advantage of the opportunity to reinforce their troops and restock their weapons. Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda attempted to negotiate an agreement that included a plan to neutralise the FDLR and another for the withdrawal of the FDR. Stark disagreements and mutual mistrust regarding the implementation and sequencing of the two plans blocked the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement, which Angola unsuccessfully attempted to promote.[41]

The M23 and Rwanda conducted their offensive in the DRC alongside the failure of the AU and international passivity to promote a ceasefire agreement

With the support of the Rwandan Army, the M23 made significant territorial gains over the course of the year and strengthened its control over the occupied areas, whilst the FARDC and all associated militias[42] withdrew from military positions and bases. An example of this was the military base in Rwindi, where the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade (UN FIB) was deployed in October 2023 to halt the M23's military advance. However, it was harshly criticised for inaction following the arrival of the M23 and the Rwandan Army (RDF) in March 2024. The UN FIB decided not to intervene following the FARDC's withdrawal due to the FDR's vastly superior military potential, which would have led to heavy human losses, and withdrew from the position. This pattern continued despite the truce and ceasefire, prompting the Group of Experts to suggest that the M23's true objective was to expand and engage in long-term occupation and exploitation of the land it had conquered. The Group of Experts also reported that contingents from the Burundian Armed Forces (FNDB) were fighting alongside the FARDC and Wazalendo in parts of North Kivu, outside the framework of the EAC mission, though neither Burundi nor the DRC acknowledged it.[43] Meanwhile, in compliance with the mandate for a MONUSCO's phased withdrawal, as the Congolese government agreed with the UN, it fully withdrew from South Kivu province in June 2024. Since Congolese state security forces were unable to fully deploy and operate in the areas from which MONUSCO withdrew, due to their concentration in North Kivu, the civilian population was left more vulnerable to attacks and abuses, including looting, robbery, harassment, sexual violence, murder and extortion by armed groups and Congolese state security forces. Furthermore, a security vacuum emerged in some parts of the province, which was quickly filled by armed groups.

Rwanda continued to deny supporting the M23 or operating on Congolese soil, although its signing of the July truce recognised it as a belligerent party. The UN had accused Kigali of militarily supporting the group since 2021 and in 2023 it criticised the direct involvement of Rwandan troops on Congolese soil, which increased to between 4,000 and 7,000 soldiers, even higher than the M23 military contingent.[44] However, the allegations did not result in any credible pressure to change the situation. The M23 has also received support and training in Uganda, according to the UN Group of Experts. The UN, the DRC, the US and the EU also condemned Rwanda's support for the M23 and its activity in Congolese territory and the US and the EU slapped sanctions on some of Rwanda's political and military leaders, though this was insufficient given the evolving situation. In December 2023, the regional organisation EAC[45] withdrew the operation deployed in early 2023 that was intended to support a possible ceasefire. When this failed, it was replaced by a South African mission, the SAMIDRC,[46] with an offensive mandate to support the FARDC in combating the M23, though without results. In early 2025, Rwanda and the M23 had surrounded Goma, controlling all access and supply routes, and were threatening to seize Sake,

41 See the summary on the DRC in chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

42 In September 2023, the Congolese government created the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) from selected members of Wazalendo armed groups (pro-government groups and militias) in North Kivu to act as its "official" partner force. The new name was intended to distinguish them from other groups that also called themselves Wazalendo. However, at times the terms VDP and Wazalendo were used interchangeably. The Group of Experts noted that this reliance on armed groups reflects the FARDC's structural disorganisation and weakness. At the same time, although coordination mechanisms existed between the VDP, Wazalendo and the FARDC, the VDP remained a loose coalition, with each armed group maintaining its own independent command structure, collecting its own taxes in the territories under its control and upholding its interests in maximising the resources provided by the Congolese government. UN Security Council, *Letter dated 31 May 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council,* United Nations, S/2024/432 of 4 June 2024.

43 See the summary on the DRC (east) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau*, Alert 2024! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2024.

44 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, S/2024/969 of 27 December 2024.

45 East African Community, East African Community Regional Force (EACRF), [Viewed on 15 December 2024]

46 SADC, Deployment of the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 4 January 2024.

the communication route to South Kivu. The territorial expansion of the M23 and the FDR led to continuous clashes and intense artillery bombardments between the M23/FDR and the FARDC coalition on multiple fronts in North Kivu province. The FDR positioned themselves on the front lines, operated high-tech weapons such as air defence systems and participated directly in combat operations. The use of drones by both sides also became widespread. Whilst the use of drones had previously only been documented by the FARDC, as of February 2024 they have also been spotted on the side of the M23/FDR.

More than 25 million people (a quarter of the population) required humanitarian assistance during 2024 and violence and insecurity pushed the number of displaced people in the country to more than seven million by the end of 2024, according to various organisations.[47] Children and women made up the majority of the displaced population and faced multiple overlapping forms of violence. In addition to exacerbating displacement and food insecurity, the escalating conflict also resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe and record levels of child recruitment and gender-based violence.[48] Both sides frequently attacked densely populated areas and even camps for displaced persons, committing serious violations, including kidnappings for ransom, extortion, looting, illegal imprisonment, torture, rape, murder, reprisal killings and executions of civilians accused of collaborating with the enemy. Limited humanitarian assistance and opportunities to secure their livelihood forced many women and girls to engage in sex work to survive and also led to rising rates of child marriage: UN sources estimate that 37% of girls in the DRC are forcibly married before the age of 18.[49] Levels of sexual violence remained very high and health care services for survivors, including sexual and reproductive health, safe spaces, community-based protection mechanisms and monitoring were severely lacking.[50]

As a result of the escalating conflict, the illegal exploitation of natural resources increased and due diligence procedures collapsed at various mining sites once again controlled by armed groups, particularly the AFC/M23 and Rwanda. Furthermore, smuggling into Rwanda was on the rise again. The AFC/M23 coalition and the FDR gained control of the mineral-rich Walikale territory and also Rubaya in Masisi territory, home to the largest coltan mine in the Great Lakes region. The AFC/M23 established a parallel administration responsible for monitoring mining activities, trade, transportation and tax collection on the minerals produced. At least 150 tonnes of coltan were fraudulently exported to Rwanda and mixed with Rwandan production, according to the Group of Experts. In Ituri, gold mining continued outside state control, generating at least $140 million annually for armed groups and criminal networks.

DRC (east - ADF)	
Start:	2014
Type:	System, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of the DRC, government of Uganda, Mai-Mai militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

Summary:
The Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) is an Islamist rebel group operating in the northwest of the Rwenzori massif (North Kivu, between DR Congo and Uganda) with between 1,200 and 1,500 Ugandan and Congolese militiamen recruited mainly in both countries as well as in Tanzania, Kenya and Burundi. It is the only group in the area considered a terrorist organisation and is included on the US list of terrorist groups. It was created in 1995 from the merger of other Ugandan armed groups taking refuge in DR Congo (Rwenzururu, ADF), later adopted the name ADF and follows the ideology of the former ADF, which originated in marginalised Islamist movements in Uganda linked to the conservative Islamist movement Salaf Tabliq. In its early years it was used by Zaire under Mobutu (and later by DR Congo under Kabila) to pressure Uganda, but it also received backing from Kenya and Sudan and strong underground support in Uganda. At first it wanted to establish an Islamic state in Uganda, but in the 2000s it entrenched in the communities that welcomed it in DR Congo and became a local threat to the administration and the Congolese population, though its activity was limited. In early 2013 the group began a wave of recruitment and kidnappings and an escalation of attacks against the civilian population. Since the start of the offensive by the Congolese Armed Forces in the region in 2019, there has been an escalation of violence with serious consequences for the civilian population.

Insurgent activity by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) persisted in northern North Kivu province (the region known as Grand Nord) and in southern Ituri province in the eastern part of the country, despite military operations by the Ugandan Armed Forces (UPDF) in its solo offensive or in support of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) against the ADF as part of Operation Shujaa.[51] Furthermore, the UN Group of Experts noted

47 UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo situation. [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
48 Cone, Devon, Boru Halakhe, Abdullahi, *Ensuring Women's Protection Amid Rising Conflict in Eastern DRC*, Refugees International, April 2024.
49 Press Release, "UNICEF calls for urgent action to respond to alarming levels of increasing sexual violence against girls and women in eastern DRC", *UNICEF*, 18 May 2023; News and Press Release, "Briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Great Lakes Region", *OCHA*, 24 April 2024.
50 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Statement by principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the Democratic Republic of the Congo – Crushing levels of violence, displacement fuel unprecedented civilian suffering*, UN Women, 30 April 2024.
51 Operation Shujaa is a military offensive conducted by the Ugandan Armed Forces (UPDF) on Congolese soil in coordination with the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) against the armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in retaliation for the explosions in Kampala on 16 November 2021, for which the ADF claimed responsibility.

an **increase in contacts between ISIS and the ADF**. The fourth phase of the operation, which began in November 2023 and met with limited success, was resumed on 20 May 2024 and intensified ground and air assaults against the ADF, primarily west of the RN4 motorway. Unlike the previous phases, which were less extensive, **the recent operations significantly weakened the ADF**, as the UN Group of Experts on the DRC noted in December,[52] destroying its strongholds, causing significant casualties among its fighters and leaders and facilitating the escape of hundreds of hostages. Several ADF commanders were killed, including Commanders Braida and Amigo. The ADF was forced to relocate constantly, weakening it, hampering its operational capacity and disrupting its supply chains. In response to the intensification of attacks, the ADF resorted to its usual tactics: increasing mobility, relocating to avoid direct confrontations and to divert attention from the main camps and targeting civilians. Operation Shujaa's targeted attacks not only weakened the group, but it also pushed it into Ituri province, the territory of Lubero (North Kivu) and western North Kivu, and specifically into areas where law enforcement activity was minimal. Operation Shujaa extended beyond its official boundaries to pursue ADF cells. However, despite the losses inflicted by the Ugandan military operation, the ADF was resilient, raising questions about the operation's effectiveness in reducing threats to civilians in the DRC.

Military actions weakened the ADF, but also led to its spread to other parts of the DRC and acts of reprisal against the civilian population

In retaliation for the military offensive, the ADF attacked civilians, resulting in the highest number of civilian deaths reported in June. The ADF's fighting and retaliatory attacks by the ADF resulted in hundreds of casualties, mainly among civilians. According to the June report of the UN Group of Experts on the DRC,[53] despite a significant fall in the number of ADF attacks against the FARDC and UPDF since Operation Shujaa began in November 2021, there was a simultaneous rise in the number of civilians killed by the ADF, which is in line with the ADF's strategy of carrying out reprisals against civilians in response to military operations against the ADF. Thus, revenge killings, kidnappings, looting and targeted attacks against medical staff and health facilities increased. According to UN sources, the ADF had killed over 1,000 people in 2023, mainly civilians, and was responsible for the deaths of more than 650 civilians between June and November 2024.

Whilst **ADF attacks on Ugandan soil ceased in late 2023, activity inside the DRC intensified**, raising serious concerns about the impact of Operation Shujaa on civilians. At the same time, tensions arose between the UPDF and the FARDC due to the expansion of UPDF operations beyond designated areas and Ugandan military activity that was not reported to the FARDC. Consequently, the FARDC delayed and even halted Ugandan deployments beyond the Ituri River, to where the Madina headquarters, the ADF's operational centre, relocated during 2024. According to the Group of Experts, the FARDC feared that Uganda had a hidden agenda linked to its historical interests in Ituri. Due to the ADF's mobility and spread as a result of the attacks, Operation Shujaa had to cover a wider area of operations. Moreover, the operation lost some FARDC troops who were redeployed south to fight the M23, creating a security vacuum in some areas that the ADF was able to exploit. Despite the losses inflicted on the ADF, it demonstrated its resilience by maintaining its network of collaborators in Butembo (North Kivu) and expanding it to Ituri, particularly by leveraging the same Nande community networks of businesspeople and prominent figures in Grand Nord with whom it had forged ties over the years. It also maintained its support, recruitment and training networks for combatants inside and outside prisons, often making use of family and friendship ties. Finally, ISIS and the ADF boosted mutual contact and strengthened their relations. Starting in June, there was an increase in ADF attacks for which ISIS claimed responsibility, with less time elapsing between attacks and claims, suggesting greater collaboration and swifter and more direct communication.

DRC (west)	
Start:	2023
Type:	Identity, Resources, Territory Internal
Main parties:	DRC, Teke community militias, Yaka and Suku community militias (including the armed group Mobondo) and other allied community militias
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=

Síntesis:
The origin of the conflict in the province of Mai-Ndombe (west) dates back to mid-2022 from a disagreement over a traditional tax (as part of customary law) on agricultural products established by the "native"[54] Teke community (considered the traditional landowners) who settled in the area before the "non-native" communities, mostly Yaka, but also Suku, Mbala and Songe (originally from the provinces

52 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, S/2024/969 of 27 December 2024.
53 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 31 May 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, S/2024/432 of 4 June 2024.
54 The terms "natives" and "non-natives" are used in the same way as the UN Group of Experts in its last two reports on the subject, S/2023/431 of 13 June 2023 and especially to Annex 2 of the report S/2023/990 of 30 December 2023.

of Kwango and Kwilu). These communities came to work as farmers on the Bateke plateau more than five decades ago. The farmers who arrived leased the land from the Teke chiefs in exchange for payment of this customary tax. Until recently, the communities lived together normally and bonds had been created between them. According to local sources collected by the UN, the first disagreements arose in 2021 and intensified in early 2022, when "non-native" communities refused to pay the increased tax. The Teke attempted to collect the tax by force, with the support of some local members of the Congolese National Police (PNC) and members of the FARDC, and Teke chiefs began telling farmers who did not want to pay to abandon their lands. In mid-2022, the first inter-community clashes broke out, which increased throughout 2023. The tax payment issue was soon transformed into one of land control and farmers, mainly from the Yaka community, began to claim the lands owned by the Teke. Another complaint from the Yaka farmers was that the Teke landowners had been selling the land to investors, even though it already belonged to the Yaka.[55] The Teke attacks against what they considered "non-native" communities provoked violent reprisals by the Yaka, who began to organise the armed group Mobondo, which was joined by members of other allied communities. During 2023, Mobondo raised its level of organisation, increased its military capabilities and carried out armed attacks.

The violence that broke out in mid-2022 in Kwamouth territory, in the western province of Mai-Ndombe province, which pitted members of the Teke and Yaka communities against each other, and which was compounded by the government's military intervention against the Yaka community's Mobondo insurgency, remained active throughout 2024. According to ACLED,[56] there were 246 fatalities in a total of 68 events of organised violence in 2024 (battles, violence against civilians and explosions/incidents of remote violence) in the five provinces affected in 2024 (Mai-Ndombe, the epicentre of the conflict, and Kinshasa, Kwango, Kwilu and Kongo-Central). These figures are significantly lower than those reported in 2023 (346 fatalities in a total of 94 incidents of violence), but they still highlight the seriousness of the situation, which, far from abating, could become more entrenched, according to various analysts. In 2023, acts of organised violence were more distributed among the five provinces (92 fatalities in Mai-Ndombe, 102 in Kwango, 69 in Kinshasa, 55 in Kongo-Central and 28 in Kwilu), whilst in 2024 half the violent events (34 out of 68) were located in the province of Mai-Ndombe, where 159 fatalities were reported out of a total of 246 (50 in Kwango, 21 in Kinshasa, 12 in Kwilu and four in Kongo-Central), showing a decline of attacks in Kwango and a heavier concentration of attacks in Mai-Ndombe.

Fuelled by territorial disputes and disagreements over customary taxes, the conflict remained active in 2024, with the Mobondo militia continuing to occupy several Teke groups in Kwamouth territory. The Mobondo militia continued to attack civilians and fight with the FARDC and the Republican Guard and significantly increased its capabilities through attacks on military positions, according to the Group of Experts on the DRC.[57] In January 2024, attacks by the Mobondo militia in the towns of Fadiaka and Mbusie, in Mai-Ndombe province, displaced more than 5,000 people to Kwilu province. Most of these displaced people were women and children and they took refuge in schools, churches and buildings under construction, where they lacked food, healthcare and security. On 15 July, in the village of Kinsele, in Mai-Ndombe, a firefight resulted in the deaths of 70 people, including nine soldiers. Later, in December, more than 40 people died when the Mobondo militia ambushed a Congolese Army detachment in Kwango province, killing at least 21 militiamen and two soldiers. This triggered a new spiral of communal violence in which Mobondo militiamen carried out an attack in Kwamouth territory, in Mai-Ndombe, in which at least 12 people were killed, most of them women and children. They were burned alive after being locked in a hut that was then set on fire.[58] This act of extreme violence underscored the brutality of the conflict and its devastating impact on civilians.[59] Despite the difficulties in collecting information and data, as several displacements were not counted, the organisation ACAPS reported that at least 146,000 people had been displaced as a result of the violence by October 2024.[60]

In mid-March, President Félix Tshisekedi spearheaded an attempt to explore peace negotiations involving traditional leaders of the Teke and Yaka communities and members of the Mobondo militia, which resulted in a ceasefire agreement in April. However, the viability of the ceasefire was put in doubt when the Mobondo militia killed several civilians the day after the agreement was signed, followed by fresh fighting. Several Teke leaders questioned or withdrew from the peace initiative, considering it insufficiently inclusive or fair.

55 See Annex 2 of the report of the UN Group of Experts. UN Security Council, *Carta de fecha 15 de diciembre de 2023 dirigida a la Presidencia del Consejo de Seguridad por el Grupo de Expertos sobre la República Democrática del Congo*, S/2023/990 of 30 December 2023.
56 ACLED, ACLED Explorer: https://acleddata.com/explorer/ [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
57 UN Security Council, *Letter dated 31 May 2024 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, S/2024/432 of 4 June 2024.
58 Kombi, Yassin, "Communal attacks kill more than 40 people in western DR Congo", *Reuters*, 11 December 2024.
59 OCHA, "République démocratique du Congo - Maï-Ndombe, Kwango et Kwilu : Aperçu de la situation humanitaire - janvier à septembre 2024", *Reliefweb*, 18 October 2024.
60 ACAPS, "Democratic Republic of Congo. Conflict across the West", *ACAPS*, 19 December 2024.

Eastern Africa

Ethiopia (Amhara)	
Start:	2023
Type:	Government, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Ethiopia, regional government of Amhara, Amhara Fano militia, Oromo armed group OLA
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:

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

The armed conflict that began in April 2023 and worsened in August 2023 in the Amhara region continued to escalate and became more complex in 2024. According to ACLED,[61] 1,444 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) took place in the Amhara region in 2024, resulting in the deaths of 6,383 people. These figures are significantly higher than those reported the previous year (1,730 fatalities in 575 violent events), when the armed conflict began. This figure does not include victims of attacks in the neighbouring Oromia region.

The offensive carried out by Ethiopian security forces in 2024 made this region the most affected by violence in the entire country and made the armed conflict one of the most serious in Africa. Counterinsurgency operations were directed not only against the Amhara Fano militias, but also against civilians accused of colluding with these militias. In late February, the military operations reached the main cities of the region for the first time, such as Bahir Dar. The federal government enlisted militias from other communities in the region in its fight against the Fano militias, such as the Agaw community in the West Gondar area. This helped to aggravate the situation, building tension between the two communities and leading to attacks between their respective militias. Although the clashes had initially been concentrated in the zones of West Gojjam and South Gondar in 2023,[62] they later expanded to other zones, primarily East Gojjam, North Gojjam, South Wollo, North Wollo (affecting Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site), North Shewa, West Gondar, Central Gondar and North Gondar. In September, the Fano militias stepped up their attacks against the security forces, particularly around Gondar (and its surroundings), the country's fourth largest city, with a population of over 350,000. Various local and international human rights organisations warned of the escalating situation. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, international media outlets and even the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented human rights violations and atrocities committed by Ethiopian government forces in the Amhara region. These violations included attacks on schools, health centres and civilian homes, as well as the killing of civilians through repeated drone strikes. The widespread climate of violence and attacks led to the closure of thousands of schools across the region, leaving four million children unable to attend school normally.

People from the Amhara ethnic group also suffered arrest, torture, inhumane treatment and enforced disappearance, whilst others were killed. Between late September and early October, the Ethiopian army and Amhara regional security forces arbitrarily detained thousands of people in the region and took them to four mass detention centres. The detainees included academics and members of the judiciary, including judges and prosecutors. The arrests occurred amid heavy fighting between the Ethiopian Army and Fano militias in key towns such as Woldia (North Wollo Zone) and Dessie (South Wollo Zone). In January 2025, the

61 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025]
62 Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency, ACLED, 20 August 2024.

authorities released hundreds of people, including three judges, women, elderly people and people with chronic health conditions, though thousands remained arbitrarily detained.

Finally, armed actions by the Fano militias were observed in the areas bordering the Oromia region and inside the region throughout the year. In June, the first direct fighting between the Fano militias and the Oromo armed group OLA occurred in the North Shewa Zone, which also complicated the conflict. Added to this were tensions and clashes related to the territorial dispute between Tigray and Amhara in the West Tigray and South Tigray regions. The local Amhara administration was dismantled in both regions, but the resettlement of the displaced Tigrayan population was postponed due to insecurity, as fighting between Tigray regional forces and Amhara militias also intensified. There were even occasional clashes in Addis Ababa between Ethiopian security forces and the Fano militias.

An attempt to explore possible contacts between the parties was unsuccessful. In late June, Ethiopian military, federal and regional leaders held a peace conference in the regional capital, Bahir Dar, which resulted in the formation of the 15-member Regional Peace Council. Supported by the federal government, it was tasked with exploring peace talks with the Fano militias. In July, some factions of the Fano militias created the Amhara Fano People's Organisation and chose journalist Eskinder Nega as its leader. Nega had argued for the need to create a unified front before possible talks with the government. These initiatives went nowhere, however, and there were no reports of contacts between the parties.

Ethiopia (Oromia)	
Start:	2022
Type:	Self-Government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government of Ethiopia, regional government of Oromia, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), Amhara Fano militias
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Ethiopia has been the scene of secessionist movements since the 1970s. Between 1973 and 1974, a political and military movement called the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) arose in the central and southern Oromia region against the Mengistu dictatorship to establish an independent state for the Oromo community. Despite their differences, Oromo nationalist political and armed movements participated alongside other insurgent groups in the country to overthrow the Mengistu regime in 1991. However, in 1992 the OLF distanced itself from the EPRDF coalition government and launched a rebellion against this and other Oromo nationalist movements, demanding independence for the region. In the meantime, Oromia has experienced a cycle of protests initiated by the student movement in 2014 against the Ethiopian regime due to claims linked to its perceived marginalisation of the Oromo people. These protests provoked a harsh government crackdown that caused thousands of fatalities. The protests led in part to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in 2018 and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed, a member of the Oromo community, who undertook a series of political reforms aimed at fostering national unity and reconciliation. Abiy Ahmed reached a peace agreement with the OLF and other political and military groups, facilitating their return from exile. Though Oromo nationalists assumed that the coming to power of Abiy Ahmed, a member of their community, would boost the region's autonomy, Abiy supports a more centralised state instead of promoting ethnic federalism. In addition, although the OLF became a political party, its military wing, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), rejected the agreement and started a new rebellion, which led the government to designate it a terrorist group in May 2021. Since then, violence has been on the rise. There have also been recurring clashes between Somali herding communities and Oromo farming communities in the border areas between Oromia and Somali over competition for resources and the demarcation of the territories of both communities, with the climate emergency and the repressive intervention of the Liyu government police force exacerbating the situation.

The armed conflict in the Oromia region remained active throughout the year. The main dynamics of violence were clashes between federal security forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA, referred to by the government as OLF-Shane) in different parts of the region and violence carried out against civilians by federal security forces, the OLA and the Fano militias of the Amhara community. This violence against civilians was concentrated in the western and northern areas of the region, where the OLA is more active and influential, though no area was spared from the conflict.[63] At the same time, the Ethiopian government trained local militias to combat the OLA. All armed groups involved in the conflict forcibly conscripted young people to swell their ranks, including minors, according to a report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission published in December. Allegedly, the Ethiopian Army in particular arbitrarily arrested hundreds of young people to recruit them into militias fighting the OLA and extorted money from their families as a condition for their release.[64]Amnesty International and HRW also criticised the government for the serious abuses being committed by federal security forces and regional security forces and militias in pursuit of the OLA, with reportedly serious consequences for civilians. ACLED[65] reported that nearly six million people were exposed to armed conflict during the year, with the most affected zones being North Shewa, West Shewa,

63 Ethiopia Peace Observatory, "Oromia. Regional Profile", *ACLED*, 8 August and 19 November 2024.
64 Addis Standard, "News: EHRC reports forced conscription, arbitrary detentions and extortion in Oromia with victims including minors as young as 11", *Addis Standard*, 6 December 2024.
65 ACLED, "Unrest in Amhara and Oromia threatens Ethiopia's stability", *ACLED*, 13 December 2024.

East Wollega and Horo Guduru Wollega. According to data collected by the organisation,[66] there were 847 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) in the Oromia region in 2024, which claimed 3,332 lives. This is more than in 2023, when 604 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) occurred in the region, killing 1,716 people. However, these figures are still lower than in 2022, when fewer violent events were committed (707), though more people died (4,533).[67]

The government tried to weaken the OLA by calling for the surrender or reintegration of its fighters and by attempting to exploit existing divisions within the OLA leadership during the year, which became evident on several occasions. In October, the president of Oromia, Shimelis Abdisa, suggested the possibility of holding talks with an OLA faction led by Jaal Sagni Negasa, which had split off from the OLA insurgency in late September. These talks were successful and on 3 December the federal government announced an agreement with the splinter OLA faction, though the details were not disclosed.[68] Throughout the year, especially in August and November, public protests were staged in various locations across the region demanding an end to the violence and calls for dialogue. These protests were described by the OLA as government-orchestrated initiatives, according to ICG.[69] These protests involved community leaders, local government representatives and traditional elders and took place in the zones of North Shewa,[70] East Shewa, West Shewa, West Wollega, Kelem Wollega, Arsi and Guji.[71]

Somalia	
Start:	1988
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Federal government, regional pro-government forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan militias and warlords, Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, Türkiye, ATMIS, EUNAVFOR Somalia (Operation Atalanta), Combined Task Force 151, al-Shabaab, ISIS
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. This situation led to a new fight within this coalition to occupy the power vacuum, which had led to the destruction of the country and the death of more than 300,000 people since 1991, despite the failed international intervention at the beginning of the 1990s. The diverse peace processes to try and establish a central authority came across numerous difficulties, including the affronts between the different clans and sub clans of which the Somalia and social structure was made up, the interference of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the power of the various warlords. The last peace initiative was in 2004 by the GFT, which found support in Ethiopia to try to recover control of the country, partially in the hands of the ICU (Islamic Courts Union) The moderate faction of the ICU has joined the GFT and together they confront the militias of the radical faction of the ICU which control part of the southern area of the country. In 2012 the transition that began in 2004 was completed and a new Parliament was formed which elected its first president since 1967. The AU mission, AMISOM (which included the Ethiopian and Kenyan troops present in the country) and government troops are combating al-Shabaab, a group that has suffered internal divisions.

The armed conflict in Somalia continued to be one of the most serious in Africa. According to ACLED, the death toll rose to 5,396 in 2024 and there were 2,712 violent events.[72] This was a lower body count compared to the upward trend seen in 2023 (7,912 fatalities) and 2022 (6,418), though it was still higher than in 2021 (3,286) and 2020 (3,236). The worst affected regions continued to be those in the south-central part of the country (Galgaduud, Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Mudug and Banaadir), though the entire country was impacted by the armed conflict.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS)[73] also noted that Somalia had experienced a 41% drop in deaths in 2024 compared to 2023, bringing the death toll (4,482) down to pre-2022 levels when the federal government had launched a major offensive against al-Shabaab that had escalated the conflict. However, the body count in 2024 was 72% higher than in 2020. The decline in al-Shabaab-related violent incidents and deaths in Somalia was reflected in the border areas with Kenya, where an 11% drop in al-Shabaab-related violent activity (with 109 violent events) and a 32% decrease

66 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
67 These figures should be taken with caution since they combine violence directly linked to the armed conflict, in addition to acts of repression of social mobilizations against government actions and acts of ethnic cleansing against the civilian population. This figure also includes acts of violence against the minority of the Amhara community present in the Oromia region perpetrated by elements of the Oromia regional government and the OLA, as well as clashes between community militias from Somali livestock communities and Oromo agricultural communities that claim hundreds of fatalities every year, so there are significant difficulties in determining the real number of fatalities linked to this armed conflict.
68 See the summary on Ethiopia (Oromia) in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
69 International Crisis Group, Ethiopia Crisis Watch November, *International Crisis Group*, November 2024.
70 Addis Standard, "News: Public rallies in North Shewa Zone call for peace amid conflict in Oromia region", *Addis Standard*, 27 August 2024.
71 Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Ethiopia Weekly Update, *ACLED*, 19 November 2024.
72 This figure encompasses violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) in Somalia as a whole, excluding the five regions that make up Somaliland (Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sool and Sanaag). This figure is expected to increase to 2,803 violent events and 5,541 fatalities by 2024 for Somalia as a whole. ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025]
73 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality, 18 February 2025.

in deaths (standing at 188) were reported compared to 2023. According to the ACSS, Islamic State in Somalia (ISS or ISIS-Somalia) has become an increasingly important financial player for the global ISIS network in recent years, having established a base of operations in the Puntland region of northeastern Somalia. This has been accompanied by an influx of foreign fighters from North Africa, the Persian Gulf and East Africa. ISS has maintained a low profile in Somalia in recent years, except for occasional clashes with al-Shabaab forces in the coastal towns of Bossaso and Qandala in Puntland. US airstrikes against ISS bases in mid-2024 and early 2025 were aimed at dismantling this network. The UN Panel of Experts also investigated the evolution of ISS,[74] particularly the re-emergence of the Al-Karrar office as a key administrative and financial hub for ISIS globally. ISS was most active in the Bari region of Puntland, where extortion and smuggling have intensified and an influx of foreign fighters has been reported, posing new security risks for Somalia and the region

Separately, in September, the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia reported that al-Shabaab continued to show resilience to government military operations. Al-Shabaab continued to carry out attacks against the government, the AU Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and international forces, as well as against civilians and the business community, including within Mogadishu's protected areas. Al-Shabaab maintains a solid financial base through its highly sophisticated commercial strategies. According to the UN, the group uses both legal and illegal means to generate revenue for its operations, including checkpoints, corporate extortion and forced taxation. It also utilises third-party companies and accounts. The UN Panel of Experts received information indicating that al-Shabaab's total financial revenue for 2023 exceeded $150 million. **On 2 August, al-Shabaab conducted the most serious attack against civilians in the past two years, targeting the Beach View restaurant on Lido Beach in Mogadishu**, killing 37 civilians and wounding 200. Fighting continued between clan militias and between militias and federal troops in different parts of the country throughout the year, which helped to weaken the fight against al-Shabaab.

Islamic State in Somalia has become an increasingly important financial player for the global ISIS network in recent years, having established a base in Puntland

The conflict, combined with drought and floods, which are roughly linked to climate change, left 4.4 million people (22% of the population) facing severe levels of food insecurity. According to UNHCR, in late 2024, an estimated 6.9 million people in Somalia needed humanitarian assistance, including 3.9 million internally displaced women. Local and international human rights organisations cited many reports of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, as well as serious violations against children. According to the Panel of Experts, al-Shabaab continued to commit the highest number of incidents of child recruitment and use, abduction and forced marriage in the country. The Panel of Experts reported the continued smuggling of arms and ammunition on dhows (traditional sailing vessels), cargo vessels and fishing vessels across the Arabian Sea, destined for non-state armed groups in Somalia and Yemen. The Panel of Experts noted a resurgence of attacks on vessels transiting through or near Somali waters beginning on 24 November 2023, with more than 25 attacks on commercial vessels and dhows, including hijackings, between that date and September 2024.[75]

The mandate of the new AU mission in Somalia replacing ATMIS, the AU Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), began on 1 January 2025, following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2767 on 27 December 2024, though several critical issues for the mission remained unresolved. During the year, the last ATMIS military bases were transferred to the Somali Army, but disagreements continued over the funding of its future operations and troop-contributing countries. The crisis between Ethiopia and Somalia called Ethiopia's participation in the future AUSSOM into question, whilst Egypt offered to participate, which could bring the regional crisis between Egypt and Ethiopia into the mission, according to analysts.

Finally, relations between Ethiopia and Somalia were damaged during the year as a result of the agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland.[76] Growing tensions and disagreements between Mogadishu[77] and some member states of the federation, such as Puntland and Jubaland, also worsened during the year as part of the constitutional review process. Jubaland terminated its relations with the Somali federal government in November and clashes with federal forces broke out in December. Whilst the federal government had proposed postponing regional elections until September 2025 under the one-person-one-vote model, Jubaland unilaterally decided to hold elections under an indirect model, contradicting

74 UN Security Council, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, United Nations, S/2024/748 of 28 October 2024.

75 "Piracy" in Somalia is directly linked to the insecurity and war plaguing the country, as well as the economic problems on land. For several years, piracy has been suppressed through security action such as the deployment of foreign navies, the implementation of best management practices on vessels and armed private security teams on ships, though these practices have been scaled back in recent years. None of the vessels hijacked and boarded during the current wave of piracy had an armed private security team on board, according to data from the UN Panel of Experts.

76 See chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

77 Ibid.

the federal government, and suspended cooperation with Mogadishu. On 25 November, Ahmed Madobe was re-elected as state president. The federal government declared the elections illegal and despite Kenya's mediation attempts, both sides mobilised their respective militaries. Clashes erupted in December, killing at least 75 people in the town of Ras Kamboni and causing federal troops to withdraw from the Lower Juba region. At the end of the year, fighting continued in the Gedo region, where the presence of federal troops increased.

Somalia (Somaliland – SSC-Khatumo)	
Start:	2023
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory Internal
Main parties:	Republic of Somaliland, SSC-Khatumo administration (Khatumo State), Puntland State, al-Shabaab
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:
In early 2023, fighting intensified between the security forces of Somaliland and militias from the regions of Sool, Sannag and Cayn, which form part of Somaliland and call themselves SSC-Khatumo. Somaliland and Puntland are involved in a historical dispute over control of these border regions that dates back to 1998, when Puntland was established as an autonomous republic. The dispute has devolved into an armed conflict between the militias of these regions and Somaliland. The three regions of Sool, Sannag and Cayn are geographically located within the borders of Somaliland, though most clans in Sool, Sannag and Cayn (called SSC, by their initials) are associated with those of Puntland, so the SSC militias are allies of Puntland. Since the 1990s, there have been sporadic clashes and attempts at mediation between Puntland and Somaliland and between Somaliland and the SSC militias. In 2012, Khatumo State was created, including part of the regions of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn, calling itself SSC-Khatumo, which added more complexity to the situation. SSC-Khatumo is located within Somaliland, which claims to be independent, yet is opposed by these regions, which have gradually expressed their desire to become a new state of Somalia. In 2016, the SSC-Khatumo administration and Somaliland began peace talks. However, tensions simmered and sporadic clashes continued intermittently between the security forces of Somaliland and the SSC-Khatumo militias until 2023, when the situation escalated, leaving hundreds of people dead.

Though less intense, the conflict between Somaliland's security forces and SSC Khatumo local militias, primarily from the Dhulbahante clan, continued to simmer. The front remained largely calm during the first part of the year, though sporadic clashes resumed in August and increased toward the end of the year, mainly in Sool and Sanaag, and especially in the capital of the Sanaag region, Erigabo, where two of the warring clans reside: the Dhulbahante clan (leading SSC Khatumo's administration) and the Haber Yonis clan (whose militias receive support from Somaliland's security forces). The escalation in fighting coincided with the end of the elections in Somaliland, which had attracted the attention of Somaliland's political actors. According to ACLED, there were 141 fatalities in a total of 83 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosives) in 2024. These figures were lower than those of 2023, when 454 people lost their lives in 141 violent events.[78]

In the closely contested presidential election held in Somaliland on 13 November, opposition candidate Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, commonly known as "Irro", won 64% of the vote, defeating incumbent President Muse Bihi Abdi, who received 35%. Irro was sworn in on 12 December, marking the end of a tense political period in an atmosphere of stability and political change. The election had been delayed by two years. Outgoing President Bihi congratulated his opponent and pledged a peaceful transition. Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia welcomed the results. Irro announced his intention to intensify efforts to achieve international recognition for Somaliland. The presidential election was held concurrently with another election to determine the three national political parties for the next decade, which resulted in victories for Waddani, Kulmiye and Kaah. Kaah had supported Waddani's candidate for president and the three parties agreed on the goal of international recognition. The US ambassador to Somalia attended Irro's inauguration amid growing speculation that incoming US President Donald Trump could strengthen ties with the government and even diplomatically recognising Somaliland after taking office in January 2025.

Days after President Irro took office, fierce fighting erupted between government forces and Dhulbahante clan militias in Erigabo, the capital of Sanaag.[79] International observers and humanitarian organisations called for dialogue and an end to the violence, which had displaced 43,000 people, according to the UN. In late December 2024, a meeting was held between SSC Khatumo's leaders and a delegation from the Ethiopian state of Somaliland, which confirmed that they were working towards a solution to the conflict between Somaliland and SSC Khatumo.[80]

78 The death toll includes the fatalities in the regions of Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer. ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
79 Shabelle Media Network, "Somalia: Deadly Clashes Escalate in Somalia's Eerigabo, Seven Killed", Allafrica, 189 December 2024.
80 Somali Dispatch, "SSC-Khatumo says it's ready to discuss peace with Somaliland", *SD*, 28 December 2024.

South Sudan	
Start:	2009
Type:	Government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), Kitgwang dissident factions of the SPLA-IO led by Peter Gatdet, Simon Gatwech Dual and Johnson Olony (also known as "Agwalek"), SPLM-FD, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, NAS(Cirillo), NAS (Loburon), SSUF (Paul Malong), communal militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwelek), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NSSSOG), previously the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA, composed of NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The peace agreement reached in 2005, which put an end to the Sudanese conflict, recognised the right to self-determination of the south through a referendum. However, the end of the war with the North and the later independence for South Sudan in 2011 did not manage to offer stability to the southern region. The disputes for the control of the territory, livestock and political power increased between the multiple communities that inhabit South Sudan, increasing the number, the gravity and the intensity of the confrontations between them. The situation became even worse after the general elections in April 2010, when several military officials who had presented their candidature or had supported political opponents to the incumbent party, the SPLM, did not win the elections. These military officers refused to recognise the results of the elections and decided to take up arms to vindicate their access to the institutions, condemn the Dinka dominance over the institutions and the under representation of other communities within them while branding the South Sudan government as corrupt. Juba's offerings of amnesty did not manage to put an end to insurgence groups, accused of receiving funding and logistical support from Sudan. In parallel, there was an escalation of violence in late 2013 between supporters of the government of Salva Kiir and those of former Vice President Riek Machar (SPLA-IO), unleashing a new round of violence that continues to this day. In 2015, a peace agreement was signed between the government and the SPLA-IO, which was ratified in 2018. However, the signatory parties' reluctance to implement it, as well as the emergence of other armed groups and community militias, have kept the war raging in the country.

Insecurity grew during the year due to the escalation of intercommunal violence affecting different parts of the country. According to ACLED data, there were approximately 1,000 violent incidents (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) in 2024, claiming 2,024 lives. This is a significant increase in violence in the country compared to the previous year, when violence had declined, with 464 violent incidents and 1,262 fatalities.[81] The rising instability in the country continued to aggravate the **humanitarian and forced displacement crisis**. According to UNHCR data, more than 2.3 million people were refugees and over one million were internally displaced by mid-2024.[82] Furthermore, since the conflict in Sudan began in April 2023, nearly one million returnees, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed into South Sudan from Sudan, increasing the need for humanitarian assistance. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report published on 18 November, an estimated 6.3 million people were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity in the country.[83]

The dynamics of violence in the country were again marked by intercommunal clashes that included several different disputes throughout the year between members of different groups, mainly: Lou Nuer and Bor Dinka (Jonglei), Murle and Lou Nuer (Jonglei), Twik Dinka (Warrap) and Ngok Dinka (Abyei), Nuer and Misseriya (Unity), Balanda and Azande (Western Equatoria) and Lou (Warrap). At the start of the year, there was a notable intensification of intercommunal violence in Warrap State and the Abyei Administrative Zone, as well as in Jonglei State. Fighting between members of the Twik Dinka communities in Warrap State and the Ngok Dinka communities in the disputed Abyei Region resulted in hundreds of fatalities. Intercommunal violence also escalated in Jonglei, with various clashes between members of the Murle, Dinka and Nuer communities, jeopardising stability in the area. Instability in Jonglei prompted the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to deploy additional peacekeeping forces to deter further violence on 30 April. In the last quarter of the year, intercommunal violence increased in other states, primarily in Warrap State, with battles between two parts of the Lou community in Tonj North County that left dozens dead, and in Western Equatoria, in Tambura County, where fighting erupted between members of the Azande and Balanda communities. Meanwhile, a new armed group emerged in June as a result of a split within the National Salvation Front (NAS), led by Thomas Cirillo (an armed group not participating in the peace talks in Kenya). Internal disputes between NAS leaders

81 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 26 February 2025].
82 UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder [Viewed on 26 February 2025].
83 United Nations Security Council, "Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General", S/2025/54, 24 January 2025.

Cirillo and Kohn Kenyi Loburon led to its fragmentation, giving rise to the self-styled United National Salvation Forces led by Loburon, which increased the risk of fighting between the two factions.

The **effects of crises in various neighbouring countries were also felt in South Sudan in 2024, threatening to lead to further instability**. In the middle of the year, local media reported that Ugandan forces were active in southern South Sudan. At the end of the year, the war in neighbouring Sudan affected Upper Nile State, which borders Sudan. The rise in armed clashes between the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Sudanese states of Blue Nile and White Nile, which border Upper Nile, raised fears that the effects of the war in Sudan could further spread to South Sudan.

Finally, the UN Security Council renewed the mandate of the UNMISS for one year on 29 April and extended sanctions against South Sudan on 30 May, including an arms embargo, a travel ban and an asset freeze. Furthermore, the **implementation of the Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of 2018 (R-ARCSS) and the peace talks that the South Sudanese government has been holding since 2019** with the groups that did not sign the R-ARCSS were moved from Rome to Nairobi in 2024. Tentative progress was reported in both cases.[84]

Sudan	
Start:	2023
Type:	Government, Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government (Sudan Armed Forces), Rapid Support Forces (RSF), armed coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, Eastern Sudan Liberation Forces, United Popular Front for Liberation and Justice, Beja National Congress, Beja Armed Congress, community militias, Wagner Group
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Síntesis:
After 30 years in power, Omar al-Bashir's regime fell in April 2019 after massive popular demonstrations that security forces used to carry out a coup d'état. After months of administration by the military junta and significant national tensions, a transitional civilian-military government was formed in late 2019. However, on 25 October 2021, a new military coup carried out by the military wing of the transitional government ended the political transition. It was followed by a period of widespread public protests against the military junta (Transitional Sovereignty Council) chaired by the head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and deputy-chaired by the leader of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Lieutenant General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, popularly known as "Hemedti". In late 2022, after a year of negotiations, a framework agreement was reached in which the military promised to relinquish much of its political power and return it to civilian actors. However, disagreements between the SAF and RSF during the negotiations over security sector reform, especially regarding deadlines for integrating the RSF into the unified national Sudanese Armed Forces and the establishment of the security structure command, ended up unleashing a new armed conflict in the country on 15 April 2023. This new outbreak of violence was initially concentrated in the capital, Khartoum, but over the months that followed it intensified and expanded over much of the country, affecting the dynamics of the pre-existing armed conflict in the regions of Darfur and the Two Areas South Kordofan and Blue Nile) and reaching eastern Sudan. In the Darfur region, the armed conflict dates back to 2003 and is rooted in demands made by various insurgent groups, primarily the SLA and JEM, for greater decentralisation and development of the region. The Sudanese government responded to the armed uprising in Darfur using the Sudanese Armed Forces and Arab Janjaweed militias. The reconfiguration of the state of Sudan following the secession of South Sudan in July 2011 aggravated tensions between the Sudanese government and both border regions (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), which had supported the southern SPLA insurgency during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005). After the secession of South Sudan, the SPLA-North was formed in the Two Areas, beginning an armed conflict based on the insurgents' demand for recognition of ethnic and political plurality.

After over 20 months of incessant fighting since the war in Sudan erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023, it showed no signs of slowing down. According to data gathered by ACLED, fighting between the parties and their allied armed groups in 2024 claimed 15,597 lives in 5,324 violent incidents (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices).[85] The war also triggered the world's largest forced displacement crisis, with millions facing severe food shortages and parts of the Darfur region suffering from famine. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported that approximately one in five people were displaced within the country, with 10.7 million internally displaced and 2.3 million fleeing across borders. The destruction of agricultural systems and food supply chains, as well as restricted humanitarian access, created the world's worst hunger crisis, according to the UN, with half the country's population (approximately 26 million) suffering from acute food insecurity.[86] In this regard, the IOM reported that it only received 21% of the support required to provide the necessary aid to the Sudanese population.[87]

84 See the summary on South Sudan in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
85 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025].
86 Farouk Chothia, "Sudan slides deeper into famine, experts say" BBC News, 24 December 2024.
87 Khalid Abdelaziz, Ryan McNeill, Nafisa Eltahir, Steve Stecklow and Lena Masri, "Sudan drops out of hunger-monitor system on eve of famine report", Reuters, 24 December 2024.

The general dynamic of the **war's development** throughout the year was marked by fierce fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF that expanded to most of the country. The UN Secretary-General repeatedly voiced concern that the war could spill over to neighbouring countries, which would set off new flows of displaced persons and further fuel the regional war economy. He also criticised the widespread practice of sexual violence in the conflict, as well as the alarming intensification of intercommunal and identity-based violence, exacerbated by a rise in hate speech and campaigns inciting violence. Flagrant human rights violations and abuses and serious violations of international humanitarian law were also reportedly committed by all parties on multiple occasions, which could constitute war crimes and other atrocities.[88] Indeed, earlier this year, a report by the UN Panel of Experts on Sudan complained that the RSF and its allied militias carried out ethnic killings and widespread rape in their offensive in West Darfur, potentially amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. At the end of the year, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the US government had formally declared that the RSF committed genocide during the ongoing civil war and imposed sanctions on RSF commander Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo.[89]

The war in Sudan has plunged it into the worst forced displacement and hunger crisis in the world

Throughout the year, **various irregular armed groups continued to position themselves on one side of the war**. In Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement, under the command of Governor Minni Minawi, announced that the group was joining the Sudanese Armed Forces on 24 March. Three members of a coalition of non-Arab armed groups, the Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements, did the same on 12 April. In December, the top commander of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, led by Abdelwahid al-Nur, a Darfur-based armed group that had remained neutral in the conflict, defected and created a new faction also aligned with the Sudanese Army. Meanwhile, Darfuri Arab militias aligned themselves with the RSF. The rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (al-Hilu) in South Kordofan sided with the Sudanese Armed Forces, as did various militias known as the "Eastern Corps" and affiliated with the United People's Front for Liberation and Justice in the eastern region of Kassala. In both cases, the militants were rumoured to be supported by Eritrea.

Alongside the war, various paths of mediation and peace negotiations continued to be explored, but they failed to end the armed conflict.[90] International mediators, especially regional ones, attempted to facilitate dialogue between the warring parties throughout this period, but their disagreements hindered efforts to resolve the crisis. Furthermore, the parties to the conflict failed to honour the promises they made to protect civilians in the Jeddah Declaration signed in 2023. International pressure also had no effect, particularly due to Russia's veto of a UN Security Council resolution submitted by the United Kingdom and Sierra Leone at the end of the year that called on the parties to immediately cease hostilities and begin peace talks. The UN Security Council had previously extended the arms embargo on Darfur for one year. China and Russia, permanent members of the UN Security Council who abstained the last time the embargo was renewed in 2023, voted in support of it this time.

Maghreb – North Africa

Libya	
Start:	2011
Type:	Government, Resources, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Unity Government with headquarters in Tripoli, National Stability Government (NSG) with headquarters in Tobruk, armed groups including the Libyan National Army (LNA, also called Arab Libyan Armed Forces, ALAF), ISIS, AQIM, mercenaries, Africa Corps (formerly Wagner Group), Russia, Türkiye,
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=

Summary:
In the context of the uprisings in North Africa, popular protests against the government of Muammar Gaddafi began in February 2011. In power since 1969, his regime was characterized by an authoritarian stance repression of dissent, corruption and serious shortcomings at the institutional level. Internal conflict degenerated into an escalation of violence leading to a civil war and an international military intervention by NATO forces. After months of fighting and the capture and execution of Gaddafi in late October, the rebels announced the liberation of Libya. However, the country remains affected by high levels of violence derived from multiple factors, including the inability of the new authorities to control the country and ensure a secure environment; the high presence of militias unwilling to surrender their weapons; and disputes over resources and trafficking routes. The situation in the country

88 UN Security Council, "Recommendations for the protection of civilians in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General", S/2024/759, 21 October 2024.
89 Joseph Gedeon and Peter Beaumont, "US declares Sudan's paramilitary forces have committed genocide during civil war", The Guardian, 7 January 2025.
90 For more information, see the summary on Sudan in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

deteriorated from mid-2014 onward, with higher levels of violence and persistent political fragmentation. Efforts to solve the situation have been hampered by this scene of fragmentation and a climate of instability has assisted the expansion of ISIS in the North African country. The dynamics of violence have been accentuated by the involvement of foreign actors in support of the various opposing sides, motivated by geopolitical and economic interests, given Libya's strategic location in the Mediterranean basin and its great oil wealth.

In line with the trend seen in recent years, **Libya continued to be the scene of a low-intensity armed conflict, though with much fewer deaths due to armed violence than before the ceasefire agreement reached in October 2020**. According to data collected by ACLED, 146 people died in organised violence linked to the Libyan conflict in 2024 (battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians). This death toll is very similar to that of 2023 (86), 2022 (157) and 2021 (115).[91] Previously, in 2020 and 2019, the body count was much higher (1,500 and 2,000, respectively). However, this trend occurred in a context of extreme fragility and risk associated with ongoing division and political deadlock. No progress was made in negotiations to address the conflict during the year, and no call was made to hold presidential and parliamentary elections (postponed from 2021). **The institutional fracture in Libya remained in place due to the two rival governments**: the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), recognised by the UN and supported by the High Council of State; and the Tobruk-based Government of National Stability (GNS), backed by the House of Representatives and the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army led by former military officer Khalifa Haftar. The impasse in the negotiations persisted alongside the involvement of regional and international actors, including the UN.[92] **The UN special envoy for Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, resigned in May, citing Libyan leaders' lack of political will** and practices aimed at delaying solutions and maintaining their grip on power at the expense of the Libyan people.

The episodes of violence were mainly due to **clashes and competition for territorial control between some of the many armed groups that remain active in the country**. Fighting took place primarily in and around the capital, Tripoli, as well as in the Zuwara area bordering Tunisia and near the border with Chad. In the middle of the year, rival militias were operational in Tripoli in support of both sides in a dispute about who would lead Libya's Central Bank, prompting calls from the UN mission in the country (UNSMIL) and other actors to avoid any escalation. **There were various reports of the arrival of increasing numbers of Russian military personnel in 2024**, including special forces and regular troops, some of which had fought in Ukraine, along with members of the organisation formerly known as Wagner Group, which changed its name to Africa Corps in 2024. This growing Russian presence intensified following contacts between Moscow and eastern military leader Khalifa Haftar. In May, media outlets reported that Moscow-backed military personnel and equipment had been sighted in at least 10 locations in eastern Libya. **Throughout the year, there were also several reports that weapons and military vehicles had arrived from Moscow and that Libyan troops had been sent for training in Russia**. These movements concerned Washington and prompted US and EU senior officials to visit the authorities of both rival governments in Libya. At the same time, the security working group of the Berlin Process remained operational, holding its first plenary meeting since July 2023 in Sirte in October. The Berlin Process consists of negotiations over various aspects of Libya's future supported by various regional and international actors. Attended by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, with representatives from both sides, the plenary meeting addressed the need to unify military institutions, reorganise the different armed groups operating in the country and make progress on the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. At the close of 2024, however, alarm bells were raised when events pointed in the opposite direction, as **Russia accelerated the transfer of military personnel to Libya from Syria following the overthrow of Bashar Assad's regime** in December, fuelling speculation about an increase in Russian troops in eastern and southern Libya.[93]

Like in previous years, the situation in **Libya also raised concern due to many ongoing human rights violations**, including cases of kidnapping, disappearance, arbitrary detention and persecution of activists, critics and journalists. The UN continued to report sexual violence in the country, particularly against migrant women and girls, and warned that the proliferation of illicit weapons, divisions between political actors and governance challenges had created a climate of impunity regarding conflict-related sexual violence. This violence has also been used by state and non-state actors as a tactic to silence journalists, prisoners and women active in public life to prevent their political participation. Sexual violence has also affected LGBTQI+ people, particularly in detention centres. At the end of the year, human rights groups also reported that the Tripoli-based government intended to reinstate the "morality police" in the western part of the country to enforce codes related to dress and behaviour, especially for women.[94]

91 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
92 See the summary on Libya in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
93 See the summary on Syria in this chapter.
94 See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security)

Southern Africa

Mozambique (north)	
Start:	2017
Type:	System, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) or Islamic State Mozambique Province (ISMP)-formerly Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ)-, al-Qaeda, South African private security company DAG (Dyck Advisory Group), Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), "Naparama" local militias
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Since late 2017, the province of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique has suffered an armed conflict led by Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jamo (ASWJ). The armed jihadist organisation made its first appearance in October 2017 when it attacked three police posts in the Mocímboa da Praia district in Cabo Delgado province. Since that time, Cabo Delgado has been the epicentre of rising violent activity in the country. While some reports claim that ASWJ fighters have received training in Tanzania and Somalia, which has led locals to call them al-Shabaab, alluding to the Somali jihadist group, no significant links to international jihadist networks have been established. The causes of the outbreak of violence refer rather to factors linked to the grievances and marginalisation of the Muslim minority in Mozambique (22% of the population), as well as to the extreme poverty of what is the most underdeveloped province in the country. Poverty rates in Cabo Delgado contrast with its enormous economic potential due to its significant natural gas reserves, which have generated significant investment in the area, but this has not helped to reduce inequality and poverty among its population. Since the end of 2017, the Mozambican security forces have developed a security policy that has increased repression and retaliation in the area, influencing new factors that trigger violence. In 2018, the group intensified its use of violence against civilians and expanded the scope of its operations, leading to the deployment of international forces from Rwanda and the SADC Standby Force Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) in the country to help the government to combat the insurgency in mid-2021.

The armed conflict in Mozambique resurged in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. According to data from ACLED, a total of 252 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks involving improvised explosive devices) were reported during the year, resulting in 401 deaths. This is a significant increase compared to the 170 violent events and 261 deaths reported the previous year, though much less than the 875 deaths reported in 2022 and a great improvement over the deadliest years of the conflict, such as 2021, with 1,768 deaths, and 2020, with 1,717 deaths. In total, ACLED estimates that 5,832 people have lost their lives due to violent events since the armed conflict broke out in December 2017.[95] Violence has also had an impact on the forced displacement of people, primarily internally, with UNHCR reporting a total of 577,545 people displaced by the middle of the year.[96]

Violence escalated in Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique throughout the year

Violence in the province of Cabo Delgado rose throughout 2024 due to attacks by Islamic State Mozambique Province (ISMP) and counterattacks by international and national forces, such as Rwandan troops and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Standby Force Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). Between late December 2023 and early January 2024, ISMP carried out at least 14 attacks in the districts of Mocímboa da Praia, Macomia and Muidumbe, resulting in dozens of deaths and displacing thousands of people. In February, ISMP stepped up its attacks in several districts, primarily in Chiúre. These insurgent attacks were facilitated by the confusion generated on the ground due to the gradual withdrawal of international SAMIM forces, which left a security vacuum. On 8 March, the UN reported that more than 110,000 people had been displaced since the intensification of ISMP operations that had begun in late December. Attacks continued in the following months, though they did partly slow down due to Ramadan and torrential rains in the country. According to local analysts, the reduction was due to the fact that Mozambican government, SAMIM and Rwandan forces managed to contain their impact. Later, on 15 July, the SAMIM completed its withdrawal after being operational in Cabo Delgado for three years. However, the ongoing insecurity in the province prompted several actors to commit fresh support to defending the country: South Africa announced it would maintain its troops (1,500 soldiers) until the end of the year; Rwanda pledged to send 2,000 additional troops; Tanzania revealed it would maintain its support in the fight against ISMP on its borders; and the EU promised €20 million in financial support for Rwandan troops in the province, despite some member states' concerns that Rwanda was backing the Congolese rebel group M23. On 1 September, the EU launched a military assistance mission in the country (EUMAM) designed to provide training and advice to local forces and ensure their self-sufficiency in the fight against the insurgency.

Following the withdrawal of the SAMIM, the Mozambican government announced an offensive by government forces and Rwandan troops against the insurgency to dislodge it from strongholds such as the Catupa forest and the coastal villages of Macomia district. In September, its operations advanced and forced ISMP to evacuate its

95 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025].
96 UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder [Viewed on 18 February 2025].

strongholds in Macomia district, though they remained active in other areas, such as Nangade. In October, ISMP attacks fell off significantly, but beginning on 17 November, they advanced into Ancuabe and Chiúre districts, displacing approximately 16,000 people. The continued violence in Cabo Delgado throughout the year led to more debates about the need to open a dialogue with the insurgents.

Finally, according to the Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker,[97] a rise in gender-based violence by non-state armed groups was reported in the Cabo Delgado region during the year, with women and girls accounting for 98% of the reported victims. Three-quarters of the complaints were related to incidents involving forced marriage and sexual assault.

West Africa

Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	
Start:	2011
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Nigeria, Civilian Joint Task Force pro-government milita, Boko Haram factions (ISWAP, JAS-Abubakar Shekau, Ansaru, Bakura), civilian militias, MNJTF (Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

Summary:
The jihadist-inspired sect Boko Haram demands the establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria and considers that Nigeria's public institutions are "westernised" and, therefore, decadent. The group forms part of the fundamentalist branch initiated by other groups in Nigeria following independence in 1960 and which, invariably, triggered outbreaks of violence of varying intensity. Despite the heavy repression to which its followers have been subjected —in 2009, at least 800 of its members died in confrontations with the army and the police in Bauchi State— the armed group remains active. The scope of its attacks has widened, aggravating insecurity in the country as the government proves incapable of offering an effective response to put an end to the violence. International human rights organizations have warned of the crimes committed by the group, but also on government abuses in its campaign against the organization. In 2015 the conflict expanded to the Lake Chad Basin and affected border areas of neighbouring countries with the Nigerian region: the Extrême Nord region in Cameroon, Diffa in Niger and the province of Lac in Chad. Since mid-2016 Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon have developed a regional strategy of military pressure on BH through the implementation of a regional joint military force (MNJTF), which has highlighted the group's resilience and also the unwillingness of the Nigerian political and military authorities to deal with the situation, in addition to the shortcomings of the Nigerian Armed Forces, which have serious internal corruption problems. BH has split into four factions: The Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (JAS) faction, led by Abubakar Shekau, leader of BH since 2009; Ansaru, which aligned with al-Qaeda in 2012; Islamic State West Africa Province or Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP or ISWA), which split from JAS in 2016; and finally Bakura, an ISWAP splinter group that emerged in 2018 and subsequently moved closer to Shekau in opposition to ISWAP. ISWAP's killing of the leader of BH in 2021 sparked an escalation in the fighting between both groups for supremacy in the area.

The activities of the two main Boko Haram factions (JAS[98] and Islamic State West Africa Province, ISWAP) and counterinsurgency operations continued in the Lake Chad Basin region, which includes northeastern Nigeria (mainly Borno state), the Extrême Nord region in Cameroon, Diffa in Niger and Lac province in Chad. Despite a slight uptick in armed activity, **the death toll was similar to that of previous years. Clashes between the two factions continued in an attempt to gain supremacy in the area.** The Nigerian region with the highest number of fatalities due to the activity of Boko Haram groups continued to be Borno, followed by Cameroon's Extrême Nord region, where 2,137 and 793 fatalities occurred, respectively, according to the research centre ACLED. According to ACLED, 3,650 deaths were reported in the Lake Chad Basin region as a whole in 2024, slightly fewer than in 2023 (3,828), 2022 (3,782) and 2021 (4,163). During 2024, there were 1,521 incidents of organised violence, more than the 1,310 violent incidents in 2023 and significantly more than the 1,002 in 2022 and the 982 in 2021.[99] For the first time, **most of these violent events took place in Cameroon's Extrême Nord region** (789), followed by the Nigerian state of Borno (528), the original epicentre of the conflict. Meanwhile, the downward trend in BH and ISWAP activity continued in other north-central states. Fatalities linked to jihadist attacks were reported only in the states of Yobe (130), Niger (60) and Kaduna (54), whilst no insurgency-related violence occurred in Adamawa and Bauchi.

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS)[100] reported that fatalities linked to the activity of different jihadist insurgent factions fell by 4% compared to 2023 (3,627 fatalities), continuing the 27% decline observed in this region since 2020. However, the Lake Chad Basin remains the third most violent and lethal area in Africa, accounting for 21% of all violent events and 19% of all deaths related to jihadist insurgent groups. Northeast Nigeria remains the focus of activity for these groups in the Lake Chad Basin, accounting for 66% of all deaths in the area. In recent years, there has been a marked

97 Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker [Viewed on 10 February 2025]
98 The armed group JAS belongs to the faction of the historical leader of BH and is therefore commonly referred to as BH. Henceforth, the term BH is used to refer to JAS.
99 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
100 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality", *ACSS*, 18 February 2025.

rise in violent events in northern Cameroon, including a 51% increase over 2024. According to the ACSS, Boko Haram and ISWAP were linked to roughly equal numbers of violent events and fatalities in 2024, continuing a trend observed since 2022. The two groups continue to fight for control of territory, resources and fighters, resulting in high casualties among themselves, civilians and security forces linked to the regional MNJTF operation. Ansaru, a BH faction located in northwest Nigeria, was virtually absent.

Despite the intensity of the violence and insurgent activity against civilians and security forces, in December the Borno state governor said that military operations had reduced BH by 90%. Throughout the year, security forces reported many insurgent losses as a result of military operations (including artillery and airstrikes) and the destruction of bases and strongholds belonging to both groups around Lake Chad and Sambisa Forest (Borno), which freed hundreds of captives. Despite the heavy losses, both groups were able to reorganise, demonstrating their resilience, according to the ACSS. Notable events included the deaths of around 100 ISWAP insurgents at bases near the towns of Bama, Ngala and Marte (Borno state, the latter two in the far northeast of the state, very close to the triple border with Niger, Cameroon and Chad) in various battles in early June and the deaths of an ISWAP commander and 50 fighters in a military operation in Marte in late October. In January, ISWAP claimed its first attack outside the Lake Chad Basin since April 2022 when it attacked four Christians in Nasarawa state, near Abuja, in response to the situation in Gaza. At the end of 2024, UNHCR estimated the number of internally displaced people in the Lake Chad Basin region as a whole at nearly 3.1 million and the number of refugees and asylum seekers at around 324,000.[101]

Mali	
Start:	2012
Type:	System, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Permanent Strategic Framework for the Defence of the People of Azawad (CSP-DPA), Azawad Liberation Front, The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen) (JNIM or GSIM Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)-, Katiba Macina, Africa Corps (previously Wagner Group), Alliance of Sahel States (AES)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

101 UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, 20 January 2025.
102 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025]
103 UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder [Viewed on 11 February 2025]

Summary:
The Tuareg community that inhabits northern Mali has lived in a situation of marginalisation and underdevelopment since colonial times which has fuelled revolts and led to the establishment of armed fronts against the central government. In the nineties, after a brief armed conflict, a peace agreement was reached that promised investment and development for the north. The failure to implement the agreement made it impossible to halt the creation of new armed groups demanding greater autonomy for the area. The fall of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in 2011, which for several years had been sheltering the Malian Tuareg insurgency and had absorbed a number of its members into its security forces, created conditions that favoured the resurgence of Tuareg rebels in the north of the country, who demand the independence of Azawad (the name which the Tuareg give to the northern region of Mali). After making progress in gaining control of the area by taking advantage of the political instability in Mali in early 2012, the Tuareg armed group, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), was increasingly displaced by radical Islamist groups operating in the region which had made gains in the north of Mali. The internationalisation of the conflict intensified in 2013, following the military intervention of France and the deployment of a peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA) in the country. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2015 in the north of the country between the Arab-Tuareg groups (CMA and Platform), the exclusion of groups with jihadist agendas from the peace negotiations has kept the war going and extended the dynamics of the war to the central region of the country (Mopti).

The breakdown of the peace agreement in the north and the expansion of jihadist group activity in the country caused the security situation in Mali to worsen. According to data from the ACLED research centre, 1,470 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks involving improvised explosive devices) took place across the country during the year, leaving a death toll of nearly 4,000 people. Most of these events took place in the northern and central regions.[102] These data once again show some continuity with the dynamics of violence reported in the previous two years, though they were less deadly in 2024 (1,544 violent incidents and 4,288 deaths in 2023 and 1,340 incidents and 4,842 associated deaths in 2022). Ongoing instability and insecurity continued to impact the **country's forced displacement** crisis, with UNHCR estimating that 327,838 people had sought refuge from violence and that 330,713 people had been internally displaced by the middle of the year.[103]

The deterioration of the security situation in northern Mali coincided with the resumption of fighting in August 2023 that pitted the Malian Armed Forces (supported by the Russian paramilitary group African Corps, created to replace the Wagner Group in Africa) against the Tuareg Arab armed groups that had signed the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. This

resumption of hostilities led the **Malian military junta to officially declare the immediate termination of the 2015 peace agreement** on 25 January.[104] In response, Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, the spokesman for the Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP) rebel coalition, which brings together the groups that signed the 2015 peace agreement, acknowledged that the peace agreement was invalid and asked its members to set new political and military objectives in light of the new situation. Given the deteriorating security situation and the resumption of war in the north, in early January the UN announced the complete withdrawal of the MINUSMA mission, which had been operational in the country since 2013, and the transfer of all its assets to the Malian government. Later, on 6 March, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), made up of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, announced the creation of a joint counterterrorism force to combat the regional jihadist insurgency and address shared security needs, launching joint military exercises alongside Chadian and Togolese troops in western Niger on 20 May.

Two of the major incidents reported in Mali in 2024 occurred in the second half of the year. In late July, Tuareg rebels and members of the al-Qaeda-linked Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM) ambushed Malian forces supported by members of the Russian paramilitary group Africa Corps in Tinzaouatène, near the Algerian border. According to the rebels of the CSP alliance, the ambush resulted in the deaths of at least 84 Russian paramilitaries and 47 Malian soldiers and left dozens wounded. The rebel coalition reported using heavy weapons, drones and suicide bombers in the ambush. Following the incident, Andriy Yusov, a spokesman for Ukraine's military intelligence agency (GUR), stated that they had provided information to the rebels that enabled the military operation. In response, Mali's military junta severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine. Niger's military junta did the same as it accused Kyiv of supporting groups involved in the fighting in Mali. On 19 August, the AES called on the UN Security Council to respond to what it called "subversive actions" by Ukraine, accusing it of supporting international terrorism in the Sahel.

Another notable episode during the year was a coordinated attack carried out by JNIM in the capital, Bamako, on 17 September. The first such attack in the city since 2017, it targeted the international airport, the adjacent military airbase and the nearby police training school. Over 70 people were killed and another 250 were wounded.

Finally, in late November, the armed separatist groups of the Permanent Strategic Framework, which had been renamed the Permanent Strategic Framework for the Defence of the People of Azawad (CSP-DPA) in April, announced that they were formally uniting under the umbrella of the Azawad Liberation Front, whose stated objective is to fight for the independence of the territory of "Azawad".

Western Sahel Region	
Start:	2018
Type:	System, Resources, Identity International
Main parties:	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Alliance of Sahel States (AES), Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) – also known as Islamic State in the Province of West Africa (ISWAP)–, Katiba Macina, Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups and community militias, Russia, Africa Corps (previously Wagner Group)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The Western Sahel region (northern Mali, northern Burkina Faso and northwestern Niger) is affected by a situation of growing instability caused by several different factors, including but not limited to cross-border criminal networks in the Sahel and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of nomadic Tuareg communities in the region. This marginalisation is rooted in the Tuareg rebellions that took place in the 1960s, in the 1990s and, more recently, between 2007 and 2009, when there were rebellions against the respective governments of Niger and Mali that sought to attain greater autonomy in both countries and reverse the poverty and underdevelopment of the region. In Mali, there was a resurgence of these demands in 2012, prompted by the fall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011.[21] Meanwhile, the armed groups of Mali have expanded their activities to the Liptako-Gourma region. This expansion is related to the instability stemming from the spread of the jihadist insurgency of Algerian origin AQIM, its fragmentation and configuration into other similar types of armed groups, some aligned with al-Qaeda and others with ISIS, which currently operate and have expanded throughout the region, also affecting the countries of the Gulf of Guinea (Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin).. This expansion has contributed to further destabilisation in the area and to the creation of different regional and international cross-border military initiatives to try to control the situation, which have also helped to internationalise it. There are also links of the conflict affecting the Lake Chad region as a consequence of the expansion of Boko Haram's activity as a result of the cross-border military intervention.

For yet another year, the security situation in the Liptako-Gourma tri-border region remained critical. This tri-border region includes Mali, Burkina Faso and the areas of Tillabéri, Dosso and Tahoua in southwestern

104 For more information, see the summary on Mali in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Niger. According to data compiled by ACLED, the violence was similar in intensity to the previous year, with 3,067 violent incidents reported (battles, violence against civilians and attacks involving improvised explosive devices) that claimed 12,944 lives (compared to 3,404 violent events and 13,634 deaths in 2023). Whilst showing a slight drop compared to the previous year, the death toll was still higher than in 2022 (9,702) and in 2021 (5,279). Burkina Faso and Mali once again reported similar numbers of violent events (1,311 and 1,470 respectively). However, these incidents were again much deadlier in Burkina Faso (7,518 deaths compared to 3,999 in Mali), accounting for 58% of all lives lost in the conflict in the region. The violence had a comparatively lower impact in the southwestern regions of Niger (Tillabéri, Dosso and Tahoua), with 286 incidents resulting in 1,427 fatalities.[105] Countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea, primarily Benin and Togo, also continued to experience violent attacks in their border regions with Mali and Burkina Faso. In Benin, the body count in 2024 (153) was roughly the same as in 2023 (160), whilst Togo reported a 45% rise in fatalities (from 66 to 96).

In 2024, state actors in the Sahel and their allies were responsible for more civilian deaths (2,430) than jihadist groups (2,050)

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) once again identified **this region as the epicentre of violence by jihadist groups across the continent**.[106] In 2024, the region accounted for more than half of all violent incidents involving these armed groups in Africa and deaths tripled compared to 2020. Once again, the main perpetrator of violence was the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimeen (JNIM) coalition, which is responsible for 85% of all violent incidents and deaths linked to these groups in the Sahel, particularly the Macina Liberation Front and Ansaroul Islam. The other main actor was Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), responsible for 15% of the violent incidents and deaths in the region.[107] ACSS also reported that security forces in the Sahel, including allied militias and forces connected with the Russian paramilitary group African Corps, have intensified attacks against civilians. In the last three years (2022-2024), these attacks have risen by 76%, resulting in a total of more than 4,740 civilian deaths. **In 2024, these state actors in the Sahel and their allies were responsible for more civilian deaths (2,430) than jihadist groups (2,050).**

As a result of this upsurge in violence, the trend of **forced displacement** continued. The most reliable estimates indicated that there were more than four million internally displaced people from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. By mid-year, UNHCR estimated the number of refugees due to violence in each country at 327,838 in Mali, 88,372 in Burkina Faso and 27,237 in Niger (including all refugees in Niger). Meanwhile, the IDMC estimated that over two million people were internally displaced in Burkina Faso, 330,713 in Mali, and 407,430 in Niger as a whole at the end of 2023, which also included people displaced by the armed conflict around Lake Chad.[108] Meanwhile, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 25.8 million people are expected to require humanitarian assistance and protection in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria in 2025.[109]

Throughout the year, the three military juntas ruling Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso **continued their policy of restructuring alliances in the region**. In January, the three countries issued a joint statement accusing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of kowtowing to "foreign powers" and imposing "illegal, illegitimate, inhumane and irresponsible sanctions" on them, then announced their immediate withdrawal from the regional organisation, a move they ratified in July. In March, they announced the creation of a joint military force as part of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), which they formed in September 2023. The AES launched its first joint military exercises with Chadian and Togolese troops in western Niger on 20 May. Meanwhile, tensions continued to simmer between the military juntas and their former Western partners, leading to the non-renewal of the EU military training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), which concluded on 18 May, and the closure of the Military Partnership Mission in Niger (EUMPM) on 27 May. Niger also announced the termination of the security agreement it had maintained with the United States since 2012, which included the withdrawal of all the approximately 1,000 US troops from the country in mid-September. At the same time, the military juntas continued to forge security and defence alliances with other actors, primarily Russia. In April, Niger formalised a military collaboration agreement with Russia and began talks with China to reach a defence cooperation agreement. However, the withdrawal of Western troops and the growing Russian presence in the region have failed to curb the violence caused by jihadist groups, primarily JNIM, which, according to a report by the UN Sanctions Monitoring Team, has become "the most significant threat in the Sahel".[110] The report also warns that Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which operates primarily in

105 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 11 February 2025]
106 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa's 2024 Security Trends in 10 Graphics, 17 December 2024.
107 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality, 18 February 2025.
108 UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder [Viewed on 11 February 2025]
109 UN Security Council "Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel: Report of the Secretary-General", S/2024/871, 2 December 2024.
110 UN Security Council, "Letter dated 19 July 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council", S/2024/556, 22 July 2024.

Nigeria, has grown in both importance and capability. It is now also focusing its attention on supporting Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), which operates in Mali and the border regions of Burkina Faso and Niger.

1.3.2 America

Central America and the Caribbean

Haiti	
Start:	2024
Type:	Government, Territory, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti (MSS), armed gangs (including Viv Ansanm, an alliance between two coalitions of armed groups – GPèp and Revolutionary Forces of the G9 Family and Allies)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The serious multidimensional crisis that Haiti is facing –with high levels of violence, massive displacement, institutional paralysis, economic fragility, sociopolitical and humanitarian crisis, control of significant areas of the country by armed bands– worsened after the assassination of president Jovenel Moïse in 2021 and the strengthening and alliance of the numerous armed groups. However, the socio-political and institutional fragility of the country goes back to the dictatorship of François and Jean-Claude Duvalier (1957-86), the coup d'état against Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1991 after the first democratic elections in the history of the country, the autocratic drift of Aristide after his reinstatement in power (1994) and his abrupt and forced departure from the country in 2004, which avoided an armed confrontation with a rebel group that had taken over much of the country. Since then, the deployment of several international forces and missions –Multinational Interim Force (2004), MINUSTAH (2004), MINUJUSTH (2017,) BINUH (2019), Multinational Security Support Mission (2023)–, the imposition of several sanctions and arms embargoes by the United Nations, or the disbursement of enormous resources by international cooperation have not been able to reverse the political, social and economic instability, reduce high levels of corruption, poverty, social exclusion and crime, or eliminate the control that armed bands exert in certain urban areas of the country.

Alongside the worsening political crisis, there was an unprecedented rise in violence in 2024 and a serious deterioration in the humanitarian crisis facing the country.[111] United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said that **at least 5,601 people died in 2024 as a result of violence by armed gangs operating in Haiti, 20% more than in 2023 and the highest figure in the country's history**. According to a report published by International Crisis Group in November, armed gangs have been responsible for the deaths of more than 10,000 people over the past three years. The United Nations also documented a significant rise in the number of kidnappings in 2024 (around 1,500), lynchings of armed gang members and associates (315) and summary executions (281, in some cases with alleged police involvement). The homicide rate (62 per 100,000 inhabitants) rose by 52% compared to the previous year and was one of the highest in the world and the second highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (only surpassed by the Turks and Caicos Islands). Regarding the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing violence, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported that over one million people (9% of the total population, over half of them minors) had been displaced due to violence by the end of the year, more than triple the number in December 2023. The United Nations also warned that 48% of the population suffered from high levels of food insecurity, that less than one quarter of the country's hospitals were operating normally, that the violence prevented more than 300,000 children from attending school and that cases of sexual violence against minors exploded by more than 1,000% in 2024. UNICEF stated that the number of minors recruited by armed groups had soared by 70% in 2024 and that between one-third and half of armed group members were underage. The two events that had the greatest influence on the **patterns of the conflict** during the year were the operational **deployment in June of the Multinational Security Support Mission** (MSS), authorised by the United Nations Security Council in October 2023, and **the creation of an alliance (Viv Ansamn) between Haiti's two main coalitions of armed gangs**, G-Pèp (led by Gabriel Jean Pierre, also known as "Ti Gabriel") and the G9 Family and Allies (led by Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier), which control 85% of the metropolitan region of the capital. According to some estimates, around 300 armed gangs operate in Haiti, a number that has doubled since the assassination of former President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, according to the research centre ACLED.[112] According to ACLED, 56% of the population is exposed to violence, most of them in the department of Ouest (3.3 million people, especially in the metropolitan region), followed by the departments of Artibonite (almost 800,000), Centre (280,000), Nippes (220,000) and Nord-Ouest (150,000).

Although the Viv Ansanm alliance was created in September 2023, it did not begin operating until February 2024. According to ACLED, the alliance between gangs that had previously been rivals significantly reduced the fighting between them, which had been the main source of violence in previous years, and allowed them to expand territorially, consolidate their economic power through illegal activities, increase their capacity to militarily confront the state and express their political

111 In previous editions of this publication, Haiti was analysed as a socio-political crisis, but in 2024 it was considered an armed conflict due to the clear increase in violence and greater coordination among armed groups, their expression of political demands and the operational deployment and entry into combat of the MSS, among other issues.
112 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

demands more clearly. In late February, Viv Ansanm unleashed a wave of mass violence, looting and attacks on police posts, government buildings, businesses, port facilities, hospitals, schools, prisons (some 4,000 inmates were released from two prisons on 5 March) and the presidential palace. Hundreds of people died in these attacks, which coincided with a trip by Prime Minister Ariel Henry to Kenya to finalise the deployment of the MSS. In Henry's absence, G9 coalition leader Jimmy Chérizier declared that if he did not resign and the international community continued to support him, Viv Ansanm would start a civil war that would lead to genocide. Despite declaring a state of emergency, the security forces were unable to reverse the situation and armed gangs took control of the main airport and denied Henry entry upon his return from Kenya. He was forced to land and remain in Puerto Rico. Faced with this situation and realising that he had lost the support of the main political forces in Haiti and the international community, Henry announced his resignation on 11 March. Following an emergency meeting in Jamaica, CARICOM announced the formation of a transitional government whose main functions were to create the conditions for elections and the deployment of the MSS. Following Henry's resignation, some gangs became less active in the following months, allowing the police and the MSS to regain control of some areas controlled by these gangs.

In the last quarter of 2024, after Viv Ansanm declared the end of the observation and withdrawal period due to the deployment of the MSS, armed gangs resumed their coordinated attacks in Port-au-Prince and other cities, carrying out some of the most significant massacres of civilians in the country's history and causing a dramatic rise in violence and clashes with the police, the Haitian Army and the MSS. Thus, armed gangs launched a new wave of attacks in the capital and several areas in the metropolitan region, killing hundreds of people, displacing tens of thousands of people, forcing the closure of hundreds of schools, hospitals, shops and embassies, causing the evacuation of some United Nations staff and prompting the suspension of flights after three planes flying over the capital and a United Nations helicopter were hit by bullets. In late November, over 100 gang members were killed over the course of a three-day period during attempts to occupy one of the capital's neighbourhoods, Pétion-Ville. In December, in Cité Soléil (Port-au-Prince), the Wharf Jérémie gang murdered 207 people accused of practicing voodoo and causing the illness and death of the son of the gang's leader, Wa Mikanò, or of leaking information to the authorities. Atrocities also occurred outside the capital. In October, in the city of Pont-Sondé (department of Artibonite), 115 people were killed and another 350 were injured by the Grand Griff gang, which accused some civilians of collaborating with a self-defence group called "The Coalition". In November, in the city of Petite-Rivière in Artibonite, over 100 people died and around 10,000 were displaced in two days due to clashes between the police, the MMS and the armed gangs Grand Grief, Palmis and Lika. Alongside the actions of Viv Ansanm and other armed groups, concern also grew over the growing political and subversive activity of former police commander, rebel leader and former senator Guy Philippe. Crucial to the overthrow of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, he was deported to Haiti in late 2023 after serving a six-year prison sentence in the US for drug trafficking and money laundering. Upon his return to Haiti, he founded a political party called the Revolutionary Force of National Accord and was very active in demonstrations to force Henry's resignation. He even said he was willing to head a provisional government, an offer considered by some parts of the opposition. In addition to speculation about his ties to Haiti's armed groups, fuelled by his discussion of the possibility of pardoning them if he came to power, he holds sway over hundreds of demobilised former military personnel and especially the Protected Areas Security Brigade, a government agency charged with protecting areas exposed to environmental hazards. Some sources estimate that the agency has between 2,000 and 6,000 members. Many of them deserted, participated in anti-government protests and clashes with the police and even escorted Philippe during public appearances. In October, Philippe urged the population to step up the protests and announced his intention to lead a "revolution" to liberate Haiti and overthrow the system.

South America

Colombia	
Start:	1964
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ELN, Estado Mayor Central (EMC), Segunda Marquetalia, narco-paramilitary groups
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
In 1964, in the context of an agreement for the alternation of power between the Liberal party and the Conservative party (National Front), which excluded other political options, two armed opposition movements emerged with the goal of taking power: the ELN (made up of university students and workers, inspired by Guevara) and the FARC (a communist-oriented organisation that advocates agrarian reform). In the 1970s, various groups were created, such as the M-19 and the EPL, which ended up negotiating with the government and pushing through a new Constitution (1991) that established the foundations of a welfare state. At the end of the 1980s, several paramilitary groups emerged, instigated by sectors of the armed forces, landowners, drug traffickers and traditional politicians, aimed at defending the status quo through a strategy of terror. Drug trafficking activity influenced the economic, political and social spheres and contributed to the increase in violence. In 2016, the signing of a peace agreement with the FARC led to its demobilisation and transformation into a political party.

The armed conflict in Colombia remained active throughout the year, with significant consequences for the country's civilian population. Despite various peace processes and dialogue initiatives between the Colombian government and various armed groups, violence was constant throughout the year, though the ceasefire agreements in force at different times did manage to reduce their intensity and impact.[113] There was fighting between armed groups and security forces, as well as between different armed groups, as well as attacks specifically targeting civilians in the areas most affected by the armed conflict. The research centre ACLED reported that 1,720 people had died due to violence caused by the various armed groups operating in the country.[114] Meanwhile, the organisation Indepaz documented the murder of 173 social leaders during the year, as well as 31 people who signed the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC.[115] According to Indepaz's research, 76 massacres occurred in 2024, resulting in the deaths of 267 people. Furthermore, OCHA reported that 176,000 people were forcibly displaced as a result of the armed conflict. The actual figure could be higher, given the vast underreporting of displacement. In addition, over 137,000 people were victims of forced confinement because of threats from armed groups. OCHA noted that the phenomenon of confinement was on the rise. Furthermore, the recruitment of minors persisted. The United Nations indicated that the areas of the country most affected by violence were the departments of Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar (south), Caquetá, Cauca, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, Santander (north), Putumayo and Valle del Cauca.

The year began with ongoing negotiations between the government and the ELN and a ceasefire agreement in place, which limited the violence in the first months of the year as there were no direct clashes between Colombian security forces and the guerrilla forces. However, **there were repeated clashes between different armed groups for territorial control**. Thus, since the start of the year, armed clashes were reported between members of the groups EMC and Segunda Marquetalia, the latter in alliance with the ELN, especially in the department of Nariño, where a new paramilitary group emerged, the United Self-Defence Forces of Nariño. The ELN subsequently fragmented in this department, with the disengagement of the Comuneros del Sur, and a possible agreement was suggested between Segunda Marquetalia, Comuneros del Sur and the United Self-Defence Forces of Nariño to militarily confront EMC. Fighting also occurred between the ELN and EMC in Arauca, as well as between different rival EMC factions. The murder of an indigenous leader in Cauca by EMC led President Gustavo Petro to suspend the ceasefire agreement in Nariño, Cauca and Valle del Cauca with EMC. The armed group split after it was confirmed that Iván Mordisco, one of its main leaders, had abandoned the negotiations. In April, the government announced that it was resuming offensive military operations against all EMC blocs that had pulled out of the negotiations. In the following months, the security situation deteriorated considerably, especially in the Pacific region, where clashes were repeated between Colombian security forces and members of EMC factions opposed to the peace negotiations. EMC carried out several attacks that killed and wounded people. In one of the most serious attacks, on a police station in the southwestern department of Cauca in May, four people were killed, including two police officers. Clashes were also reported between rival EMC factions, such as between Frente 57 and the Dagoberto Ramos Front, the latter of which is one of the most active and opposed to the peace process. The escalation continued in June and even led to a shootout against a vehicle carrying Vice President Francia Márquez's father and an underage nephew, who were unharmed. The shooting was blamed on EMC factions. **In July, the government terminated the ceasefire agreement with EMC**, except for the faction led by "Calarcá", with which it held talks.

No fresh extension to the ceasefire agreement with the ELN was negotiated after it expired in August. Instead, there were episodes of violence, such as calls for "armed strikes", with significant impacts on the civilian population, particularly with regard to restrictions on mobility and economic activity. In the months that followed, leading up to the end of the year, the violence got worse in the areas most affected by the armed conflict. Despite attempts to reactivate the peace process with the ELN, armed clashes and attacks continued, killing dozens of insurgents and members of the Colombian security forces, and having significant consequences for civilians, including forced displacement and confinement. The United Nations reported that at least 66 lives were lost as a result of armed clashes between security forces and the ELN after the ceasefire was not renewed, compared to the four deaths whilst the ceasefire was in force.

1.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF), ISIS-KP, Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF)
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

113 See the summary on the different peace processes in Colombia in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
114 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 5 March 2025].
115 This refers to former members of the armed group FARC-EP who demobilised after signing the 2016 agreement.

Summary:
The country has lived with almost uninterrupted armed conflict since the invasion by Soviet troops in 1979, beginning a civil war between the armed forces (with Soviet support) and anti-Communist, Islamist guerrillas (Mujahideen). The withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 and the rise of the Mujahideen to power in 1992 in a context of chaos and internal confrontations between the different anti-Communist factions led to the emergence of the Taliban movement, which, at the end of the nineties, controlled almost all Afghan territory. In November 2001, after the Al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September, and the refusal of the Taliban government to hand over Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders (on Afghan territory) the US attacked the country aided by a contingent of British forces. After the signing of the Bonn agreements, an interim government was established, led by Hamid Karzai and subsequently ratified at the polls. Since 2006 there has been an escalation of violence, motivated by the rebuilding of the Taliban militias. Following the 2014 presidential and provincial elections, the country was plunged into a crisis sparked by allegations of electoral fraud after the second round in which the two most voted leaders, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, kept the results in the air for months. In September, an agreement was reached to create a two-headed government with Ghani as president and Abdullah as chief executive. In 2011, the international troops began their withdrawal, which was completed at the end of 2014, although the mission "Resolute Support" was deployed on the ground, with a NATO mandate to train Afghan forces and another force to carry out training and counterterrorism operations, made up of US soldiers, "Freedom Sentinel" mission. In 2021, after a significant escalation of violence, the Taliban rose to power again and all international troops were withdrawn from the country. Since 2014, the regional branch of ISIS, known as ISIS-KP, has been active in the country, whose activity has been on the rise over the last decade.

High levels of violence continued to be reported in Afghanistan throughout the year, with sporadic clashes between various armed groups and Taliban security forces, as well as armed attacks resulting in significant casualties. ACLED reported a total of 1,282 deaths as a result of violence during 2024, more than the previous year, when the death toll was under 1,000.[116] However, various analysts indicated that the main opposition groups to the Taliban regime engaged in less armed activity in 2024 despite a spike in violence, reflected by a higher body count. The United Nations reported the inability of armed opposition groups such as the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) to gain control over Afghan territory, though sporadic clashes with security forces occurred throughout the year alongside attacks and bombings in different parts of the country. Furthermore, the deterioration of relations with Pakistan led to outbreaks of violence in the border area between both countries.[117]

ISIS-KP remained active, with several attacks in Afghanistan, though less so than during 2024. The year began with several ISIS attacks. Five civilians were killed and 20 civilians were injured in an attack on a bus in a Hazara neighbourhood of Kabul. A very serious attack on a bank that killed at least 20 occurred in Kandahar in March as many people were on their way to collect their paycheques. In April, ISIS-KP claimed responsibility for an attack on a Shia mosque in Herat province that claimed six lives, including the mosque's imam, and wounded another person. In May, six people were shot dead in the city of Bamiyan. Three of the victims were Spanish tourists travelling in the country. In September, ISIS-KP claimed responsibility for an attack against the Shia Hazara community, killing 14 people and wounding four others. The attack took place in Daikundi province when gunmen shot at a group of people returning from a religious pilgrimage. The Hazara community has been subject to ongoing persecution in Afghanistan. Also in September, ISIS attacked government facilities in Kabul. The armed group claimed responsibility, stating that it was an act of revenge for its imprisoned members.

Meanwhile, the main organisations opposed to the Taliban regime, the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), remained active, though to a limited extent. According to some media reports, the leaders of both groups, Ahmad Massoud (NRF) and Yasin Zia (AFF), met for the first time in April. The AFF reportedly carried out several attacks in October, including launching rockets at Kabul airport and military installations in Faryab province. The most serious attack reportedly occurred against the Ministry of the Interior in Kabul on 18 October, resulting in the deaths of four Taliban members. The NRF also claimed responsibility for the deaths of three Taliban members in a separate attack in Faryab province that same month. In December, the NRF claimed responsibility for another attack against the Ministry of the Interior, in which 10 Taliban members were reportedly killed and four others injured.

India (CPI-M)	
Start:	1967
Type:	System Internal
Main parties:	Government, CPI-M (naxalites)
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The armed conflict in which the Indian government confronts the armed Maoist group the CPI-M (known as the Naxalites, in honour of the town where the movement was created) affects many states in India. The CPI-M emerged in West Bengal at the end of the sixties with demands relating to the eradication of the land ownership system, as well as strong criticism of the system of parliamentary democracy, which is considered as a colonial legacy. Since then, armed

116 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 5 March 2025].
117 See the summary on Afghanistan-Pakistan in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

activity has been constant and it has been accompanied by the establishment of parallel systems of government in the areas under its control, which are basically rural ones. Military operations against this group, considered by the Indian government as terrorists, have been constant. In 2004, a negotiation process began which ended in failure. In the following years there was an escalation of violence that led the government to label the conflict as the main threat to national security. Since 2011 there has been a significant reduction in hostilities.

The armed conflict between Indian security forces and the Naxalite insurgency led by the armed group CPI-M continued in several Indian states and became significantly more intense throughout the year. The rise in violence coincided with the change of government in the state of Chhattisgarh, where the Hindu nationalist BJP took power in December 2023. According to figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 400 people were killed during 2024, including 296 members of the armed group, 80 civilians and 24 members of the security forces.[118] This was a considerably higher death toll than in previous years, as 148 people died in 2023 and 135 in 2022, according to data collected by the website. Such a high number has not been reported since 2018, when the armed conflict claimed 411 lives. There was fighting between members of the CPI-M and the security forces throughout the year, and some areas were particularly affected by the violence. The state of Chhattisgarh was the epicentre of the fighting and accounted for most of the incidents resulting in deaths, particularly the district of Bijapur. A total of 313 people died in Chhattisgarh in 2024. Other states where clashes and deaths were reported included Jharkhand, Odissa and Maharashtra.

There was an escalation of violence in the armed conflict between Indian security forces and the Naxalite armed group CPI-M

The year began with a security force operation in Chhattisgarh called Surya Shakti, in which two insurgents were killed and 65 were arrested. This operation was followed by an insurgent attack on police installations in Bijapur district. At least four police officers were killed, though the armed group claimed that the real number was 35. The government denied this claim. The Minister of Home Affairs said that the security forces had set a goal of ending Naxalite violence and ideology within three years and repeated this various times during the year. Several Naxalite attacks that occurred in the following months were aimed at preventing the deployment of security force camps. Established since 2019 to end Naxalite activity, these camps have provoked stiff opposition from local communities, who complain of the militarisation of areas inhabited by the Adivasi (indigenous) population to facilitate access to natural resources for various companies. The Adivasi population has also reported that many of the victims of security force operations are not Naxalite rebels, but civilians falsely accused of belonging to the armed group. Several children were killed or injured during the year as a result of armed clashes. Local human rights organisations reported that the proliferation of security camps in the state since 2019 has been accompanied by a rise in extrajudicial killings and that many security operations against the Maoist insurgents have not been independently investigated. These organisations also reported that civilians have also been killed after being falsely accused of being insurgents.

Violence escalated again in Chhattisgarh between April and May and security forces announced several security operations that resulted in many Maoist casualties. On 10 May, 12 Naxalites were killed in armed clashes in Bijapur district. On 30 April, 10 Naxalites were killed in a firefight. On 16 April, in the deadliest security operation in the state to that point, security forces reported killing 29 Naxalites in Kanker district. Fighting continued in the following months, and in October, a large-scale security operation was repeated in Narayanpur district, claiming the lives of 38 insurgents. This made it the operation with the highest number of Naxalite casualties in the state.

India (Jammu and Kashmir)	
Start:	1989
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Governments, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Muhammad, United Jihad Council, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), The Resistance Front (TRF)
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The armed conflict in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has its origin in the dispute over the region of Kashmir which, since the independence and division of India and Pakistan, has confronted both states. On three occasions (1947 to 1948; 1965 and 1971) these countries had suffered from armed conflicts, with both of them claiming sovereignty over the region, divided between India, Pakistan and China. The armed conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947 gave rise to the current division and creation of a de facto border between both countries. Since 1989, the armed conflict has been moved to the interior of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, where a whole host of rebel groups, in favour of the complete independence of the state or unconditional adhesion to Pakistan, confront the Indian security forces. Since the beginning of the peace process between India and Pakistan in 2004, there has been a considerable reduction in the violence, although the armed groups remain active.

The intensity of the armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir was similar to the previous year, with a slight

118 SATP, Maoist insurgency datasheet, [Viewed on 10 March 2025].

drop in the number of deaths resulting from fighting between Indian security forces and various armed groups operating there. According to figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 127 people died as a result of the armed conflict in 2024, whilst the research centre ACLED reported a death toll of 155 for the entire year. Whilst violence persisted throughout 2024, there was a notable decrease in both clashes and insurgent attacks and operations by security forces in the areas most affected by the violence during the winter due to extreme weather conditions. Clashes and armed actions by groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Hizbul Mujahideen were reported and Indian security forces reported infiltration by insurgents coming from Pakistan. In addition, armed attacks were carried out against non-indigenous populations in Jammu and Kashmir, as had occurred in previous years when armed attacks and murders of migrant populations increased. There was a large number of violent incidents in July and August, with insurgent attacks against security forces and police and military operations that left dozens dead. Alongside the ongoing violence, there were some political developments related to the conflict. In March, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir since Kashmir was stripped of its statehood and reorganised into two administrative units designated as Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand and Ladakh on the other. Modi announced that regional elections would be held in September 2024 and pledged to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, Indian general elections were held in May, the first since Jammu and Kashmir's statehood was withdrawn. In July, the Indian government expanded the powers of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, the central government's representative in the region, granting him exclusive authority over the police and public order to increase control over security ahead of the regional elections. These elections finally took place in September and were won by the National Conference, whose platform included restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS-KP
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The armed conflict affecting the country is a result of the intervention in Afghanistan in 2001. Initially, the conflict played out in the area including the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly called the North-West Frontier Province). After the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, members of its Government and militias, as well as several insurgent groups of different nationalities, including Al-Qaeda, found refuge in Pakistan, mainly in several tribal agencies, although the leadership was spread out over several towns (Quetta, Lahore or Karachi). While Pakistan initially collaborated with the US in the search for foreign insurgents (Chechens, Uzbeks) and members of al-Qaeda, it did not offer the same cooperation when it came to the Taliban leadership. The dissatisfaction of various groups of Pakistani origin who were part of the Taliban insurgency led to the creation in December 2007 of the Pakistani Taliban movement (Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, TTP), which began to commit attacks in the rest of Pakistan against both state institutions and civilians. With violence rising to previously unknown levels, and after a series of attacks that specifically targeted the Shiite, Ahmadiyya and Christian minorities, and to a lesser extent Sufis and Barelvis, public opinion turned in favour of eliminating the terrorist sanctuaries. In June 2014 the Army launched operation Zarb-e Azb to eradicate insurgents from the agencies of North and South Waziristan. Following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the armed conflict in Pakistan intensified.

The armed conflict in Pakistan experienced a notable escalation throughout the year, with a significant increase in both armed clashes and deaths resulting from these violent events. Various media outlets reported that 2024 was the year with the highest number of deaths linked to the armed conflict in a decade. According to figures compiled by Pakistan's Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 2,546 people lost their lives as a result of the violence across the country in 2024.[119] A total of 1,616 deaths were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the epicentre of the armed conflict between Pakistani security forces and the Pakistani Taliban TTP insurgency. However, the TTP's armed attacks were not restricted to this province and were also reported in other parts of the country. Thus, there was a significant rise in violence compared to the previous year, when 1,524 people died as a result of the conflict nationwide, according to the CRSS. The research centre ACLED reported a body count of 1,957 linked to the armed conflict across Pakistan in 2024.[120] **Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan deteriorated, with many episodes of violence in the border area between both countries. Pakistan accused Afghanistan of harbouring the TTP and facilitating armed attacks in Pakistan from its bases in Afghanistan**. Several attempts to negotiate local ceasefires between tribal leaders and the insurgents were unsuccessful or the scope of the ceasefires was very limited. The Pakistani government also announced the launch of a security operation known as Azm-e-Istehkam ("Determination for Stability" in Urdu) to tackle the growing insurgency. The operation focused heavily on stopping cross-border attacks coming from Afghanistan. The Pakistani government announced the approval of an additional

119 CRSS, *Annual Security Report 2024*, CRSS 2024.
120 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 5 March 2024].

budget (60 billion rupees, approximately €200 million) to enhance the security forces' equipment. In response to the criticism that followed the announcement, in the midst of a severe political crisis gripping the country following the February elections, the government claimed that it was not exclusively a military operation, but would be complemented by other socioeconomic measures, as well as diplomatic initiatives to pressure the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It also stressed that this operation would not result in the displacement of large numbers of people, as had occurred in previous security operations, such as Zarb-e-Azb, which began in 2014 after an insurgent attack on Karachi airport and led to air strikes in the border areas with Afghanistan.
Hundreds of armed clashes took place throughout the year and dozens of people died each month. Most of the violence caused by the armed group TTP was concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, particularly in the districts of North and South Waziristan, as well as in Bajaur and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Several violent incidents occurred before the February elections. Various battles took place during the months that followed and the TTP expanded its armed attacks into Punjab province. Most of the TTP's attacks targeted security forces in an attempt to expand its control of territory in the tribal areas. In March, five Chinese engineers were killed in a TTP attack. In December, in one of the most serious attacks of the year, 16 soldiers were killed after the TTP assaulted a checkpoint in Makeen, in South Waziristan district. According to UNAMA, the United Nations mission in Afghanistan, Pakistani security forces responded with airstrikes on Afghan soil, killing dozens, including civilians. In addition to fighting between security forces and the TTP, there were also episodes of sectarian violence. In November, a bus carrying Shia passengers in Kurram district was attacked by unidentified gunmen who killed over 40 people. Violence erupted in the following days in various towns, claiming over 100 lives. The armed group ISIS-KP later called for the Sunni population to be protected from Shia attacks. ISIS-KP was also responsible for several acts of violence in the country at different times throughout the year. Meanwhile, Pakistani security forces attacked Taliban targets in Afghanistan and Afghan Taliban forces in Pakistan targeted ISIS-KP bases.

Pakistan (Balochistan)	
Start:	2005
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, BLA, BNA, BLF and BLT; LeJ, TTP, ISIS-KP
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Since the creation of the state of Pakistan in 1947, Balochistan, the richest province in terms of natural resources, but with some of the highest levels of poverty in the country, has suffered from four periods of armed violence (1948, 1958, 1963-69 and 1973-77) in which the rebel forces stated their objective of obtaining greater autonomy and even independence. In 2005, the armed rebel forces reappeared on the scene, basically attacking infrastructures linked to the extraction of gas. The opposition armed group, BLA, became the main opposing force to the presence of the central government, which it accused of making the most of the wealth of the province without giving any of it back to the local population. As a result of the resurgence of the armed opposition, a military operation was started in 2005 in the province, causing displacement of the civilian population and armed confrontation. In parallel, a movement of the civilian population calls clarifying the disappearance of hundreds, if not thousands, of Baluchi at the hands of the security forces of the State.

The armed conflict in Pakistan's Balochistan province escalated further, with the body count rising significantly, continuing the upward trend seen in 2023. According to figures compiled by Pakistan's Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 782 people died as a result of violence linked to the armed conflict in Balochistan in 2024, compared to 399 the previous year.[121] The research centre ACLED reported 1,086 deaths as a result of violence in Balochistan province during 2024.[122] In addition to the Baloch insurgency, comprised of various armed groups, armed attacks by the Pakistani Taliban and ISIS-KP were also reported, though these groups primarily focused on other parts of the country. The year began with several violent events linked to the general elections held in Pakistan in February. The most serious incidents occurred on the eve of the elections, when two attacks on the headquarters of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party in Killa Saifullah district and an independent candidate in Pishin district killed 30 people and injured 50. ISIS-KP claimed responsibility for these attacks. Violence persisted in the months that followed, both in clashes between insurgents and security forces and through targeted attacks. At various times during the year, the armed group BLA claimed responsibility for attacks against the Punjabi population in the province. In April, nine workers of Punjabi origin were kidnapped and shot. In May, seven people died in similar circumstances. In August, over 70 people, including civilians and military personnel, were killed as a result of various attacks carried out by the BLA. The armed group claimed that the attacks targeted the security forces and were intended to seize control of the province's main roads. There is a perception that Pakistani security forces are predominantly made up of people of Punjabi origin, which may have motivated the Baloch insurgency's attacks against the Punjabi population. These attacks were followed by others against workers of Chinese origin involved in

121 CRSS, *Annual Security Report 2024*, CRSS 2024.
122 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 5 March 2024].

various infrastructure construction projects by Chinese companies in the province. The insurgents have targeted such people in recent years amid accusations of appropriating the province's natural resources. One of the most serious attacks of the year occurred in November when a bomb exploded at the train station in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan. This suicide attack killed 26 people, at least 12 of whom were soldiers, and injured 60. The armed group BLA claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack targeted a military unit that was at the station at the time.

Alongside these insurgent attacks, civil society organisations repeatedly reported serious human rights violations by security forces, whose activity in the province has grown in recent years. Specifically, they reported cases of enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and other forms of repression against political and human rights activists. These organisations expressed concern about the launch of a large-scale security operation in the country called "Azm-e-Istehkam" that was not only aimed at confronting the Taliban insurgency, but Baloch insurgent organisations as well. Even though the authorities claimed that socioeconomic and political measures would be implemented alongside the military operations against the insurgency, repression against Baloch civil society continued. In July, at least four people were killed and hundreds injured as a result of the security forces' response to several protests organised by the human rights organisation Baloch Yakjehti Committee, which the Pakistani authorities have accused of terrorism. This organisation had called for a large national gathering in late July, but it was repressed by the security forces.

The United Nations reported that the escalation of the conflict in the Indonesian region of West Papua since December 2018 has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis

South-east Asia

Indonesia (West Papua)	
Start:	2024
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, OPM
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Although Indonesia became independent from Holland in 1949, West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) was administered for several years by the United Nations and did not formally become part of Indonesia until 1969, following a referendum considered fraudulent by many. Since then, a deep-rooted secessionist movement has existed in the region and an armed opposition group (OPM) has been involved in a low-intensity armed struggle. In addition to constant demands for self-determination, there are other sources of conflict in the region, such as community clashes between several indigenous groups, tension between the local population (Papuan and mostly animist or Christian) and so-called transmigrants (mostly Muslim Javanese), protests against the Freeport transnational extractive corporation, the largest in the world, or accusations of human rights violations and unjust enrichment levelled at the armed forces.

Fierce fighting continued throughout the year between Indonesian security forces and the armed wing of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), in addition to attacks against civilians, episodes of community violence and many allegations of systematic human rights violations. According to the research centre, ACLED,[123] 176 episodes of political violence claimed 92 lives. In a similar vein to ACLED, Human Rights Monitor stated that 99 people were killed in 2024 (44 of them civilians) in the 135 armed attacks that took place in the region, more than the previous year (110) and a three-fold increase since 2018 (44). The Indonesian Police reported 203 acts of disturbance of public order and security in 2024, which had resulted in the deaths of 92 people. Although most analysts of the conflict identify the OPM and its armed wing (also known by the Indonesian acronym TPNB) as the main armed actor confronting Jakarta in the region, some reports have highlighted the fragmented nature of the movement. Thus, the Indonesian Police stated that 24 armed criminal group networks (known by their Indonesian acronym KKB) operating in Papua carry out terrorist acts and six networks of political criminal groups (KKP) stage demonstrations and propaganda events. In addition to direct clashes between the OPM and state security forces, other forms of violence occurred in Papua in 2024, as in previous years. These police crackdowns on protests, episodes of intercommunity violence and extrajudicial killings could significantly raise the death toll associated with the conflict. For example, Human Rights Monitor documented 42 extrajudicial killings in 2023 and Amnesty International reported 82. The conflict spread to areas that had not previously been affected in 2024, with episodes of violence reported in 18 regencies or districts. The most affected regency was Intan Jaya (35 episodes), followed by Puncak, Nduga, Puncak Jaya, Yahukimo and Paniai (between 10 and 20), followed by Mimika, Pegunungan Bintang, Dogiyai and Tambrauw (four each).

Several United Nations agencies reported that the escalation of the conflict in the region since December 2018, following the killing of 20 people building a road, has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region. Human Rights Monitor stated that **at the end of the year there were over 85,000 internally displaced people** in the six provinces that make up West Papua, more

123 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed 31 January 2025].

than two thirds of them in Nduga Regency (province of Highland Papua), and that this situation could be made worse due to the Indonesian Army's deliberate destruction of civilian homes and livestock, aimed at disrupting supplies to the OPM. Human Rights Monitor also reported that most displaced people faced serious subsistence difficulties and that more than 1,200 of them had died since December 2018 due to the fragile conditions in which they live. Some of the most virulent episodes of violence occurred during operations to rescue a downed New Zealand pilot captured by the OPM in February 2023. During these operations, which resulted in the destruction of four OPM camps in Nduga, the Indonesian Army conducted airstrikes with military aircraft, helicopters and drones. In September, the pilot was released following negotiations involving religious and community leaders. Another episode that drew international attention was the killing of another New Zealand pilot in August shortly after the helicopter he was flying landed in Mimika district (province of Central Papua). The helicopter's four Papuan passengers were released unharmed. The OPM denied any involvement in the pilot's murder, but it also warned civil aviation companies about the ban on landing in the region, considering it the scene of an armed conflict.

Some members of the Papuan nationalist movement were unhappy that the presidential election in February was won by General Prabowo, who stands accused of human rights violations in both Papua and Timor-Leste and of holding leadership positions under Suharto's dictatorship. Prabowo is also Suharto's former son-in-law. These critics complained of the new government's announcement that it would deploy five new battalions (approximately 5,000 soldiers) to Papua to protect infrastructure projects. Furthermore, other Papuan leaders warned that the Indonesian government's announcement to resume its programme to relocate people to the less populated eastern regions of the archipelago after 24 years, including Papua, could have an impact on the conflict. According to official figures, between 312,000 and 390,000 people migrated to Papua from 1964 to 1999. Several analysts consider this transmigration programme one of the root causes of the ongoing conflict in the region, as it has led to profound demographic changes and increasing dispossession and marginalisation of the indigenous population. Meanwhile, **various regional leaders criticised Jakarta's environmental policies, labelling them as ecocide.** On his first official visit, Prabowo travelled to the Merauke region of Papua to oversee food sufficiency projects. Considered by some organisations to be the largest deforestation megaproject in the world, it covers two million hectares of sugarcane and rice plantations. At the end of the year, Benny Wanda, the president of the Provisional Government of West Papua and the United Liberation Movement for West Papua, presented Prabowo with his conditions for negotiating a resolution to the conflict: the withdrawal of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the return of the displaced population; free access to Papua for the national and international press; authorisation for a visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and an internationally supervised referendum on self-determination. Although Jakarta did not respond to his conditions, it did announce its intention to pardon 44,000 people to alleviate prison overcrowding, including 18 people in Papua to promote reconciliation.

Myanmar	
Start:	1948
Type:	Self-government, Identity, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, armed groups (Ceasefire signatories: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; Non-signatories: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP), PDF
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Since 1948, dozens of armed insurgent groups of ethnic origin have confronted the government of Myanmar, demanding recognition of their particular ethnic and cultural features and calling for reforms in the territorial structure of the State or simply for independence. Since the start of the military dictatorship in 1962, the armed forces have been fighting armed groups in the ethnic states. These groups combined demands for self-determination for minorities with calls for democratisation shared with the political opposition. In 1988, the government began a process of ceasefire agreements with some of the insurgent groups, allowing them to pursue their economic activities (basically trafficking in drugs and precious stones). However, the military operations have been constant during these decades, particularly directed against the civil population in order to do away with the armed groups' bases, leading to the displacement of thousands of people. In 2011 the Government began to approach the insurgency and since then there has been a ceasefire agreements with almost all of the armed groups. In February 2021, Myanmar's military leaders carried out a coup d'état that ended the transition to democracy in the country and led to an intensification of the armed conflict and the emergence of the People's Defence Force (PDF), an umbrella organisation that brings together dozens of armed groups opposed to the military regime, while clashes with ethnic insurgencies persisted.

The armed conflict in Myanmar escalated in 2024, with a significant intensification in fighting and military insurgent operations, resulting in notable victories for the armed opposition. According to data compiled by the research centre ACLED, 19,727 people died as a result of violence in connection with the armed conflict

during 2024.[124] Some analysts noted the seriousness of the conflict's death toll and the enormous impact it was having on the civilians, who account for approximately 17% of those who have died as a result of the violence.[125] These analysts indicated that the conflict in Myanmar trailed behind only those in Palestine, Nigeria and the DRC in terms of civilian casualties. The bombings by the Burmese Armed Forces had a particularly serious impact on civilians, killing and wounding many. The escalation of violence was mainly due to the continuation of Operation 1027, launched in October 2023 by the armed groups comprising the Three Brothers Alliance, made up of the Kokang armed group MNDAA, the Ta'ang group TNLA and the Rakhine group AA. The second phase of Operation 1027 focused on the Mandalay region and involved clashes with Burmese government forces for control of the country's second largest city. **The armed groups achieved significant gains and took control of various territories in the country, though the Chinese-promoted ceasefires agreed upon at different times throughout the year halted further advances and allowed the Burmese government to reorganise its counteroffensive actions**. The Burmese government lost control of territory in the northeastern part of the country and fighting continued in the states of Rakhine, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Karenni, as well as in the Tanitharyi region. The Burmese government also revived the conscription law to fill the ranks of its forces.

The armed groups made significant gains and took control of various parts of Myanmar

The year began with fierce fighting following the collapse of the ceasefire agreed upon on 23 December 2023. These clashes, which primarily pitted the Burmese security forces against the armed group MNDAA, allowed the insurgents to make significant gains and they captured the town of Laukkai after the surrender of 2,400 soldiers. Meanwhile, the Rakhine armed group AA expanded its armed activity in Rakhine state, taking control of several towns. The insurgents pressed the attack throughout the following months and the AA managed to expand its territorial control, capturing large parts of the state. The AA even managed to surround the town of Ann, the headquarters of the Western Command, with the Burmese regime nearly losing control. At various times during the year, there was speculation about the armed group's ability to expand its military action beyond Rakhine state and into the heart of the country. According to the USIP, by the end of 2024, the AA controlled approximately 88% of Rakhine state. The USIP also reported that the KIA had seized more than 200 military bases and 14 cities in Kachin state and that virtually all of northern Shan state was controlled by three armed groups: the TNLA, the MNDAA and the UWSA. Meanwhile, **the BBC published a study indicating that the government only had full control of 21% of the country's territory**, though it did maintain control of the main cities and most urban areas.[126] Coordination and communication between the various armed groups operating in the country increased significantly throughout the year, both among traditional ethnic insurgent groups and with the self-defence groups known as PDF that emerged after the 2021 coup d'état, some of which receive instructions from the government-in-exile.

In December, the armed groups consolidated their significant gains, with the AA holding control over the entire border with Bangladesh and having conquered the town of Ann, the headquarters of the Burmese Armed Forces' Western Command. The KIA also achieved significant success in December. At the end of the year, the possibility arose that the armed groups might attempt to enter Yangon and Naypidaw, though China's role and ability to keep the insurgents in check remained unclear. Thus, 2024 concluded with the armed groups in a strong position against the military regime, having made significant territorial gains and challenging the Burmese government, although China's role could tip the balance of power in 2025.

Philippines (Mindanao)	
Start:	1991
Type:	Self-government, Identity, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/Dawlah Islamiyah/Maute Group, MILF and MNLF factions
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The current situation of violence in Mindanao, where several armed groups are confronting the Government and, occasionally each other, is closely linked to the long-lasting armed conflict between Manila and the MNFL, and later the MILF, two organizations fighting for the self-determination of the Moro people. The failure to implement the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF meant that some factions of this group have not fully demobilized and sporadically take part in episodes of violence, while the difficulties that emerged during the negotiation process between the MILF and the Government encouraged the creation of the BIFF, a faction of the group that opposes this process and was created in 2010 by the former commander of the MILF, Ameril Umbra Kato. On another front, since the 90s, the group Abu Sayyaf has been fighting to create an independent Islamic state in the Sulu archipelago and the western regions of Mindanao (south). Initially this group recruited disaffected

124 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 5 March 2024].
125 Casey Johnson, *The Civilian Cost of Myanmar's Civil War: An Accounting of the First Three Years*. Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM).
126 Rebecca Henschke, Ko Ko Aung, Jack Aung & Data Journalism Team, "Soldier-spies in Myanmar help pro-democracy rebels make crucial gains" *BBC Eye Investigations & BBC Verify,* 20 December 2024.

members of other armed groups like the MILF or the MNLF, but then moved away ideologically from both organizations and resorted more and more systematically to kidnappings, extortion and bomb attacks, which lead the group to be included on the USA and EU lists of terrorist organizations. Finally, it is important to note that the emergence of ISIS on the international scene led to the emergence of many groups in Mindanao that swore allegiance and obedience to ISIS. In 2016, this group claimed authorship for the first large attack in Mindanao and announced its intentions to strengthen its structure and increase its attacks in the region.

Violence in Muslim-majority areas of the southern Philippines decreased significantly and the Philippine government announced the neutralisation of two of the most important armed organisations in the Mindanao region. However, fighting continued to rage between the Philippine Armed Forces and various armed groups, as well as between them. According to the research centre ACLED,[127] in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) alone, 157 people were killed as a result of political violence in 2024, substantially fewer than the 235 in 2023 and the 202 in 2022. However, the armed conflict in Mindanao has also historically affected regions outside the BARMM, so the associated death toll could be even higher than those figures indicate. Alongside the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement and the institutional deployment of the BARMM (provisionally led by the MILF, the main insurgent organisation in Mindanao in recent decades), **Manila highlighted the weakening—even dismantling—of some of the most heavily armed groups with the greatest operational capacity in the region**. Thus, in late March, the head of the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) declared that even though some Abu Sayyaf members were still active in the provinces of Sulu and Basilan**, the group's structure had been dismantled after more than three decades of armed activity**. In January, approximately 100 Abu Sayyaf members in Sulu province had laid down their weapons and agreed to participate in government reintegration programmes. In December, the Philippine government announced the surrender of the group led by Tawakkal Bayali, declaring that there was finally no more Abu Sayyaf activity in Basilan province, one of the group's historical strongholds. Authorities acknowledged that this surrender was not only made possible by government counterinsurgency operations, but also by the efforts of the MILF and MNLF in the region. By late 2023, the Philippine military had announced the surrender of 966 members of the group in Basilan and had declared Sulu province free of Abu Sayyaf influence. Abu Sayyaf leader Mudzimar Sawadjaan, the mastermind of the 2019 Jolo Cathedral attack, which killed 20 people and wounded 102, had been killed during an operation in Basilan in December 2023.

Violence in Mindanao decreased significantly and the Philippine government announced the neutralisation of two of the largest armed organisations in the region

Along the same lines, in February **the Philippine Armed Forces declared that the Maute Group (another one of the most active groups in recent years) was on the verge of military collapse and predicted that it would fall apart during the year**. Shortly before, Manila had reported that 12 members of the group had been killed and six more arrested following a series of counterinsurgency operations in which the group's leader, Gaddafi Mimbesa, also known as "The Engineer", was also reportedly killed. The offensive against the Maute Group had intensified significantly since December 2023, shortly after an attack on a Catholic mass at Mindanao State University, in which four people were killed and 45 others were wounded. Several prominent Maute Group leaders had been killed during these operations in late 2023, such as Abdullah Sapal, who was the group's leader and the "emir" of the region at the time. Despite these statements by the Philippine Army about the group's moribund state, clashes continued throughout the rest of the year. In April, for example, eight ISIS fighters were killed and several soldiers were wounded during clashes in Lanao del Sur—the group's stronghold—between the Philippine Armed Forces and a faction led by its new leader, Nasser Daud. In April, the Philippine Army announced the death of Mohiden Animbang, also known as "Kagui Karialan", the leader of one of the BIFF's most capable military factions, which had once declared allegiance to ISIS. The BIFF has been the most active group in Mindanao in recent years, and especially in Maguindanao. Karialan's death in Maguindanao occurred amid a series of government airstrikes that also killed 11 ISIS fighters. Previously, in March, the Karialan faction had stepped up its attacks on the Philippine Armed Forces in the province of Maguindanao del Sur after several months of inactivity. Manila also said that the number of BIFF fighters who had decided to surrender and take advantage of government demobilisation and reintegration programmes had increased during the year. Meanwhile, the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) reported that **the Indonesian-based jihadist organisation Yemaah Islamiyah had decided to disband**, though it did not rule out the possibility that related factions could emerge to continue the armed struggle. Several times in recent decades, Manila has asserted that Yemaah Islamiyah members were active in Mindanao and criticised its alliance with some of the armed groups operating in the region.

Finally, Mindanao witnessed many incidents of violence involving militias supporting certain politicians, local clans and organised crime networks, some episodes of "rido" (community or clan clashes), skirmishes between different MILF units (or between them and MNLF or BIFF factions) and fighting between different MNLF factions.

127 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

Several of these clashes involved MILF units awaiting demobilisation. The 2014 peace agreement provided for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of approximately 40,000 former combatants. Although several phases of this process have already been completed, at the end of the year the MILF warned that the disarmament of the remaining 13,000 ex-combatants would not proceed until progress was made in other aspects of the agreement, such as the provision of socioeconomic assistance to MILF former combatants and the dismantling of private militias.

Philippines (NPA)	
Start:	1969
Type:	System Internal
Main parties:	Government, NPA
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The NPA, the armed branch of the Communist party of the Philippines, started the armed fight in 1969 which reached its zenith during the 1980s under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Although the internal purges, the democratisation of the country and the offers of amnesty weakened the support and the legitimacy of the NPA at the beginning of the 1990s, it is currently calculated that it is operational in most of the provinces in the country. After the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, its inclusion in the list of terrorist organisations of the USA and the EU greatly eroded confidence between the parties and, to a good degree, caused the interruption of the peace conversations with Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's government. The NPA, whose main objective is to access power and the transformation of the political system and the socio-economic model, has as its political references the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front (NDF), which bring together various Communist organisations. The NDF has been holding peace talks with the government since the early 1990s.

Despite the fact that the death toll linked to the armed conflict between the Philippine government and the NPA fell slightly compared to the previous year and Manila repeatedly reported that the armed group was severely weakened, fighting between both sides continued in 2024. According to the research centre ACLED,[128] 173 people died as a result of the armed conflict. In early December, the Philippine Armed Forces declared that 146 NPA combatants had been killed during counterinsurgency operations, whilst over 2,200 NPA members or supporters had been neutralised (2,087 had surrendered and 149 had been arrested). Although these figures do not include the deaths of soldiers, police officers or civilians, some analysts suggest that the conflict's death toll has fallen compared to previous years, given the approximately 250 and 220 fatalities in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

It is possible that this reduction in violence was linked to the joint communiqué released in November 2023, in which both sides pledged to try to resolve the armed conflict through dialogue and political channels, and to the fact that the Philippine government and the NDF held exploratory talks throughout much of 2024 to try to finalise the terms of the communiqué. At the end of the year, the National Security Council and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ECLAC, the body that coordinates the counterinsurgency strategy of several state agencies) **predicted that the NPA would be militarily defeated during 2025 because they considered it very weak, with fewer than 1,100 fighters, though other sources held that there were considerably more, and only 22 fronts, though 20 of them were nearly inactive, compared to the 89 fronts the group had in 2018**. Manila also stated that violence had dropped significantly in some of the group's main strongholds, such as Bicol, Samar, Negros and various parts of Mindanao, and declared several provinces "free" of the communist movement's activity. The Philippine government stated that hundreds of NPA fighters were also surrendering to benefit from reintegration and amnesty programmes. In the middle of the year, the NTF-ECLAC declared that more than 44,500 fighters or sympathisers of the communist movement had demobilised since 2018, though several actors disputed these figures. In this regard, Manila stated that in July alone, around 300 former NPA fighters had taken advantage of its amnesty programme. **The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) not only rejected the government's declarations that the NPA could be heading to military defeat, but also reasserted the movement's political and military strength**, claiming that its 14 regional commands remained intact and that it had active members in approximately 70 of the country's 82 provinces. The CPP ordered the NPA to take the initiative in the conflict, launching new tactical attacks and rebuilding the underground movement supporting it.

Fighting was reported in 42 provinces, most of them in northern Mindanao, southern Luzon and some of the Visayas islands. Particularly noteworthy were the deaths of 10 NPA fighters—including three commanders—in Nueva Ecija province in late June, the deaths of eight NPA fighters in Negros Occidental and seven military personnel in Masbate in November and the deaths of five senior NPA officials in Iloilo in August. One of the most notable developments was the arrest in October of Wigberto "Baylon" Villarico, the individual who the government claimed had led the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) since the deaths of Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria in August 2022. The NDF demanded his release, arguing that he is covered by the security guarantees and immunity agreement, but Manila described Villarico as a fugitive terrorist responsible for several atrocities and said that the agreement ceased to be effective when former President Duterte ended the

128 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

peace talks in November 2017. Both the CPP and human rights organisations accused the Philippine government of systematic human rights violations, emphasising its use of "red-tagging", which consists of linking government critics to the communist movement, leading to their public identification, harassment, intimidation and sometimes torture and even murder. Human Rights Watch reported that the Philippine government has long used "red-tagging" as part of its counterinsurgency strategy and that the practice has particularly affected leftist groups and religious, indigenous, labour, student, environmental and human rights organisations. The UN Special Rapporteur for freedom of opinion and expression, Irene Khan, visited the country and called on Manila to end the practice, claiming it is a way to suppress freedom of expression, activism and criticism of the government. Khan also said that the Philippines is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, adding that 117 journalists have been killed in the past 30 years and that 81 of those cases remain unsolved. Similarly, the local human rights organisation Karapatan reported that human rights violations such as extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances persisted under the Marcos administration, with 14 activists having disappeared since he took office.

Thailand (south)	
Start:	2004
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, BRN and other armed opposition separatist groups
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The conflict in the south of Thailand dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the then Kingdom of Siam and the British colonial power on the Malaysian peninsula decided to split the Sultanate of Pattani, leaving some territories under the sovereignty of what is currently Malaysia and others (the southern provinces of Songkhla, Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat) under Thai sovereignty. During the entire 20th century, there had been groups that had fought to resist the policies of political, cultural and religious homogenisation promoted by Bangkok or to demand the independence of these provinces, of Malay-Muslim majority. The conflict reached its moment of culmination in the 1960s and 70s and decreased in the following decades, thanks to the democratisation of the country. However, the coming into power of Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001, involved a drastic turn in the counterinsurgency policy and preceded a breakout of armed conflict from which the region has been suffering since 2004. The civil population, whether Buddhist or Muslim, is the main victim of the violence, which is not normally vindicated by any group.

There was a spike in violence in the Muslim-majority provinces in southern Thailand alongside the country's political crisis and the slow progress of the peace negotiations between the Thai government and the armed opposition group BRN. According to the research centre Deep South Watch, 129 people died and 357 were wounded in the 632 episodes of violence reported in the southern provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Songkhla (listed in order of the number of armed incidents). This is significantly more than the 481 episodes of violence the previous year (the most since 2016), which claimed 116 lives and left 217 people wounded. Since 2012, when 1,850 episodes of violence were reported, this number has steadily fallen, reaching an all-time low in 2020. Since then, the number of violent incidents has gradually increased each year and primarily pit the BRN against the Thai security forces. Although the death toll did not rise significantly during this period, the number of people wounded each year did increase dramatically (from 161 in 2020 to 357 in 2024). According to Deep South Watch,[129] 22,949 episodes of violence have been reported since the conflict broke out in 2004, claiming 7,682 lives and leaving 14,418 people wounded.

As in previous years, coordinated attacks continued throughout 2024, such as the simultaneous detonation of three explosive devices in Pattani province in August, which wounded nine police officers; a coordinated attack involving explosive devices and arson in 45 towns across all three provinces in late March; the detonation of four bombs in the Sungai Padi region in mid-October, wounding five forest rangers and two police officers; and the simultaneous explosion of four bombs in Muang district in late November. According to several media reports, these attacks were intended to demonstrate that the BRN maintains its operational capacity in the southern part of the country, despite having been negotiating with the Thai government for years. Violence increased in October, coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of the Tak Bai incident, considered by several analysts to be the trigger for the start of the armed conflict in 2004. On that date, hundreds of people gathered outside a police post in Tak Bai (Narathiwat) to demand the release of several detainees. In an attempt by state security forces to disperse the crowd, seven people were killed and more than 1,300 were arrested and transported in military trucks to Pattani province. By the time they arrived at their destination, 78 of these people had died of asphyxiation due to the overcrowded transport conditions. Two other violent incidents are worth noting due to their religious connotations. In the first, in April, two forest rangers were killed and 10 others were wounded while building an arch to celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri (the end of Ramadan, which in 2024 was the most violent in recent years). In the second, in late November, the Thai government accused the BRN of detonating an explosive device at the construction site of a statue of the Buddhist goddess Guan Yin in Songkhla province

129 Deep South Watch, Conflict Incident Database, [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

that injured three people, including a child. This attack, the first against a Chinese shrine in the region and the first insurgent attack against a non-Islamic religious site in five years, was condemned by Human Rights Watch, which considered it a possible war crime. Along the same lines, national and international organisations criticised the ongoing emergency decree in southern Thailand that the Thai government passed in July 2005 and that has been extended quarterly 78 times since then. In addition to the emergency decree, martial law is in effect in the southern part of the country. Several organisations have repeatedly complained that this decree violates several of the Thai government's human rights commitments and enables abuses and violations by state security forces, including arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, prolonged detention, torture and ill-treatment.

1.3.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

Russia - Ukraine	
Start:	2022
Type:	Government, Territory International
Main parties:	Russia, Donbas militias, Ukraine
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, resulting in the military occupation of southern and eastern parts of the country, and also affected other areas and had serious impacts on human security, including mass forced displacement, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, sexual violence and food and energy insecurity. The invasion of Ukraine was preceded by previous cycles of conflict and failed dialogue: anti-government protests between late 2013 and early 2014 that led to the fall of the government of President Viktor Yanukovych, Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and war in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 between Russian-backed local militias and the Ukrainian Army. In contravention of international law, Russia's invasion and war targeted Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The antagonism between the US, the EU and NATO on one side and Russia on the other, as well as a failed security architecture in Europe, also influenced the context of the conflict and the prospects for resolution. Between late February and April 2022, Russia and Ukraine held political-military negotiations, which were unsuccessful. The invasion had multidimensional global repercussions, including food insecurity for countries in the MENA region and Africa, a strained international order and greater militarisation in Europe.

The total number of civilian deaths and injuries in the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2024 was 30% higher than in 2023

The war between Russia and Ukraine, triggered by Russia's 2022 invasion of the neighbouring country, escalated in 2024. According to ACLED,[130] there were 72,857 fatalities in Ukraine in 2024. ACLED put the death toll in 2023 at 35,996, although Uppsala University's body count for 2023 was 70,697[131]). Estimates published by *The Economist* in November put the number of Ukrainian military deaths at between 60,000 and 100,000 since the invasion, with 400,000 wounded.[132] Estimates published by *The Wall Street Journal* in September counted 200,000 Russian military deaths and 400,000 wounded since 2022.[133] In December, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported that 43,000 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed (more than the 31,000 to date in February) and 370,000 had been wounded since the start of the invasion. The total number of civilian deaths and injuries in 2024 was 30% higher than in 2023 and was largely due to Russia's increased use of glide bombs, according to the OHCHR. According to verified data from the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), at least 2,064 civilians were killed and another 9,090 wounded in 2024 (compared to 1,971 and 6,626 in 2023, respectively).

Meanwhile, the **serious humanitarian crisis caused by the war** continued. According to OCHA, 3.7 million people remained internally displaced in Ukraine and another 6.9 million were refugees. Furthermore, an estimated 36% of the country's population (12.7 million people) would require humanitarian assistance in 2025. According to the UN, although this was an improvement over the 14.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024, due to better access to services in major urban centres, the humanitarian situation in frontline regions had deteriorated.

Once again this year, there was a clear pattern of indiscriminate Russian attacks against homes, medical, educational and energy facilities. In 2024, Moscow tripled the number of airstrikes and drone strikes against civilians, a quarter of which were combined with bombings and missiles, according to data compiled by ACLED. Russian airstrikes and bombings were most prevalent in the east and northeast, but they also affected parts of the centre and south and virtually the entire country.

In 2024, Russia made faster military advances than during most of the war since it began, at an "exorbitant" cost in casualties and material losses, according to data collected by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). Altogether, in 2024 ACLED counted 51,647 events of organised violence (explosions, battles and violence

130 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
131 The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) offers different estimates of fatalities ("low", "high" and "best"). The figure of 70,697 corresponds to the "best estimate", defined by the UCDP in its codebook as the most reliable aggregate figure over a year. Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg (2024). Organized violence 1989-2023, and the prevalence of organized crime groups. Journal of Peace Research 61(4).
132 The Economist, "How many Ukrainian soldiers have died?", *The Economist,* 26 November 2024.
133 Pancevski, Bojan, "One Million Are Now Dead or Injured in the Russia-Ukraine War", *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 September 2024.

against civilians), compared to 50,303 in 2023, with a marked rise in the number of battles (17,064 in 2024, compared to 10,102 in 2023), though with fewer targeted explosions and incidents of remote violence. According to the ISW, Russian forces conquered a total of 4,168 km^2 in 2024, mainly areas of the countryside and small towns in the Donetsk region. Overall, the Russian Army launched attacks along the Kharkiv-Luhansk axis, around areas of Donetsk and around Kharkiv's northern border throughout the year. As part of this, Russia captured the towns of Avdiivka (February), Selydove and Vuhledar (October) and Kurakhove (early January 2025), all in Donetsk, and advanced toward Pokrovsk, a transportation and logistics hub that could be the scene of a high-intensity battle in 2025 like the one over Bakhmut, which was captured in May 2023. The vast majority of Pokrovsk's population (60,000 before the war) was evacuated, though around 10,000 civilians remained in the city by December. Russia also advanced and besieged Toretsk, a town on the axis towards Kostyantynivka, a municipality of 70,000 inhabitants before the war, and fought for the total capture of the devastated mining town of Chasiv Yar, a municipality on the route to Kostiantinivka, Druzhkivka, and Kramatorsk, and from the latter towards the Dnipro region.

Once again this year, there was a clear pattern of indiscriminate Russian attacks against homes, medical, educational and energy facilities

Ukraine launched an invasion of Russia's Kursk region in August. The objectives of this invasion, as announced by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, was to divert Russian troops from other areas, amid Russian offensives in Donetsk. However, Russia maintained its offensive there. The Ukrainian president also framed the Kursk invasion as part of Ukraine's strategy to bolster its position in future negotiations. Russia estimated that 130,000 Russian residents of the region had been displaced by the Ukrainian invasion, whilst several thousand remained in towns seized by Ukraine. In October, Ukraine reported the deployment of 11,000–12,000 North Korean troops in Russia to support the recapture of Kursk, allegations also supported by the Pentagon and South Korea and echoed by think tanks such as ISW. Russia did not confirm the deployment. Within a month of the Kursk invasion, Ukraine controlled 1,300 km^2 of the region and Russia had recaptured half of the areas seized by Ukraine by the end of the year. Meanwhile, Ukraine continued to launch attacks against Russia's Black Sea Fleet, leading Russia to relocate and disperse it, as well as against military, energy and transportation infrastructure inside Russia. In August, authorities in Russia's Belgorod region reported a death toll of 120 Russian civilians and 651 civilians wounded by Ukrainian attacks there since 2022. In addition, Ukraine passed a mobilisation law in 2024 that stiffens penalties for civilians who evade military enlistment and ratified another law that lowers the recruitment age from 27 to 25, while evasions and desertions increased.

International tensions escalated in the last quarter. In November, the United States authorised Ukraine to use long-range weapons to attack Russian territory, primarily against the Kursk region, according to media reports. The decision, which was justified as a response to the North Korean deployment in Kursk, came during the political transition following Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election. Following the authorisation, which was preceded by a similar green light from France and the United Kingdom, Ukraine carried out several attacks with US long-range ATACMS missiles and British Storm Shadow missiles in the Russian border regions of Bryansk and Kursk. Russia warned against the use of such weapons against its territory and, in response to the initial attacks, launched an attack with a new ballistic missile capable of delivering nuclear weapons (the Oreshnik missile) against a military facility in the city of Dnipro. Following Washington's approval, Russia made changes to its nuclear doctrine, prepared in September, which expand the circumstances under which the Kremlin would allow the use of nuclear weapons.[134] Furthermore, discussions about possible future peace negotiations intensified in the final months of the year.[135] Trump's election as the new US president created uncertainty about the direction that Ukraine's main ally in the war would take in 2025.

Southern Europe

Türkiye (PKK)[136]	
Start:	1984
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The PKK, created in 1978 as a political party of a Marxist-Leninist nature and led by Abdullah Öcalan, announced

134 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence*, 3 December 2024.

135 See the summary on Russia-Ukraine in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

136 In previous editions of this report, this case was analysed under the name Turkey (south-east). The name "Türkiye (PKK)" reflects the official change of the name of the country implemented by the government in 2022 and the expansion of government-PKK hostilities in previous years to other areas outside of southeastern Turkey—the historical territorial focus of the conflict. Besides, for information on 2024 exploratory steps towards a dialogue process see the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

in 1984, an armed offensive against the government, undertaking a campaign of military rebellion to reclaim the independence of Kurdistan, which was heavily responded to by the government in defence of territorial integrity. The war that was unleashed between the PKK and the government particularly affected the Kurdish civil population in the southeast of Türkiye, caught in the crossfire and the victims of the persecutions and campaigns of forced evacuations carried out by the government. In 1999, the conflict took a turn, with the arrest of Öcalan and the later communication by the PKK of giving up the armed fight and the transformation of their objectives, leaving behind their demand for independence to centre on claiming the recognition of the Kurdish identity within Türkiye. Since then, the conflict has shifted between periods of ceasefire (mainly between 2000 and 2004) and violence, coexisting alongside democratisation measures and attempts at dialogue (Democratization Initiative in 2008, Oslo Dialogue in 2009-2011 and the Imrali process in 2013-2015). In 2015 the war was restarted. The armed conflict has caused around 40,000 fatalities since the 80s. The war in Syria once again laid bare the regional dimension of the Kurdish issue and the cross-border scope of the PKK issue, whose Syrian branch took control of the predominantly Kurdish areas in the country.

There was less armed fighting between Türkiye and the PKK during the year, most of which took place in Iraq. This also meant that the year was less deadly. Furthermore, exploratory steps were taken that could lead to a new peace process, though overall political repression against Kurdish political and social actors continued. In 2024, ACLED counted 212 fatalities in Türkiye and Iraq, including PKK members, members of the Turkish security forces and Turkish civilians in acts of organised violence, compared to 428 in 2023.[137] Over three fourths of the 212 fatalities (167) were in Iraq and the other 45 in Türkiye (in 2023, these were 297 and 131, respectively). International Crisis Group counted 188 deaths from the conflict between Türkiye and the PKK in 2024, including 136 PKK members, 27 security forces and 25 civilians.[138] As in previous years, the warring parties provided much higher figures. Türkiye claimed to have "neutralised" (the term it uses to refer to deaths and arrests) 3,038 members of the PKK and the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, which has links to the PKK and which Ankara considers to be the same actor. The PKK admitted that 134 of its members were killed (98 in Iraq and 36 in Türkiye) and put Türkiye's military body count at 478, including nine commanders of various ranks. Historically, the warring parties' claims regarding the casualties inflicted on the other side have tended to be overdimensioned.

As in previous years, the armed hostilities occurred primarily in Iraq, with attacks carried out by both sides. ACLED counted 5,948 incidents of organised violence in 2024 in Iraq and Türkiye involving Turkish security forces and the PKK. Most were explosions and acts of remote violence (5,230 incidents, 5,184 of which were in Iraq), compared to a much smaller number of battles (635 in Iraq and 49 in Türkiye) and violence against civilians (27 in Türkiye and seven in Iraq). The PKK claimed that it 18 downed armed drones in 2024 and carried out a total of 99 air and 1,025 ground military actions (including 229 with snipers, 302 hit-and-run attacks and 409 with heavy weaponry). Meanwhile, the Turkish Army carried out many bombings against PKK targets in northern Iraq and launched some military operations in parts of southeastern Türkiye throughout the year. The Turkish government intensified its rapprochement with the Iraqi government in terms of military and economic cooperation. As part of this, Baghdad designated the PKK as an "illegal organisation" in March. The two governments also established a permanent commission on counterterrorism. In August, Ankara and Baghdad signed a Memorandum of Understanding for military and security cooperation and counterterrorism.[139] The PKK claimed responsibility for an attack on an arms factory in Ankara that killed five people and wounded 22 in October.

Exploratory steps were taken that could lead to a new peace process in Türkiye

Despite the continuation of the low-intensity armed conflict in 2024, exploratory steps were taken in Türkiye that could lead to a new negotiating process to end the armed conflict with the PKK, though there were difficulties and uncertainty about its future direction. For example, in October, *Al-Monitor* reported on non-public exploratory talks between Turkish government representatives and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been in prison since 1999. According to these sources, the talks were aimed at possibly resuming negotiations with the group, and Öcalan had told the PKK leadership that it was time to discuss laying down their weapons. Furthermore, some conciliatory political gestures were made beginning in October 2024, including the authorisation of two visits to Öcalan (a family visit in October and a political visit on 28 December with a delegation from the pro-Kurdish DEM party). The DEM subsequently conveyed Öcalan's seven-point approach, which included his willingness to take the necessary steps and issue a "call," referring to a call for an end to the armed struggle. The year ended with meetings planned for early January 2025 between the DEM delegation and parliamentary political parties and possible new visits to Öcalan.

However, the possibility of renewed dialogue and a path to ending the armed struggle contrasted with the Turkish authorities' continued repression against Kurdish political and social actors. According to HRW, hundreds of Kurdish activists and former MPs, mayors and political representatives remained in prison on charges of terrorism for non-violent activities and not all the detainees had been sentenced.[140] From the March 2024 local elections

137 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
138 International Crisis Group, Türkiye's PKK Conflict: A Visual Explainer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
139 See the summary on Iraq in this chapter.
140 Human Rights Watch. "Türkiye" in *World Report 2025*, 2025.

until mid-November, eight elected mayors from the DEM and two from the CHP were removed from office and replaced by government-appointed officials. From 2016 to 2024, 149 mayoralties were affected by these removals, which targeted those belonging to Kurdish movement parties.[141] Furthermore, the uncertain course of the fledgling dialogue initiative was also influenced by questions about the future of the Kurdish issue in Syria following the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in December[142] and the subsequent strengthening of Türkiye in the region. Türkiye and Turkish-backed SNA factions intensified attacks on areas in northeastern Syria controlled by the Kurdish YPG/YPJ militias (predominant members of the US-backed SDF coalition, and with links to the PKK) and demanded their disbandment and disarmament. In December, the SDF acknowledged that there were PKK fighters in its ranks for the first time. The SDF initiated contact and dialogue with the new Syrian authorities, whilst maintaining indirect contact with Türkiye.

1.3.5 Middle East

Mashreq

Egypt (Sinai)	
Start:	2014
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (branch of ISIS), pro-government militia Union of Sinai Tribes (UST)
Intensity:	1
Trend:	End

Summary:
The Sinai Peninsula has become a growing source of instability. Since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, the area has reported increasing insurgent activity that initially directed its attacks against Israeli interests. This trend raised many questions about maintaining security commitments between Egypt and Israel after the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1979, which led to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the peninsula. However, alongside the bumpy evolution of the Egyptian transition, jihadist groups based in the Sinai have shifted the focus of their actions to the Egyptian security forces, especially after the coup d'état against the Islamist government of Mohamed Mursi (2013). The armed groups, especially Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM), have gradually demonstrated their ability to act beyond the peninsula, displayed the use of more sophisticated weapons and broadened their targets to attack tourists as well. ABM's decision to pledge loyalty to the organisation Islamic State (ISIS) in late 2014 marked a new turning point in the evolution of the conflict. Its complexity is determined by the influence of multiple factors, including the historical political and economic marginalisation that has stoked the grievances of the Bedouins, the majority population in the Sinai; the dynamics of the Palestinian Israeli conflict; and regional turmoil, which has facilitated the movement of weapons and fighters to the area. In 2023, the crisis in Gaza added uncertainty and challenges to the situation in Sinai.

The trend of a significant decline in violence observed in 2023 as part of the conflict in the Sinai region was confirmed in 2024. In recent years, this conflict has pitted fighters from the self-proclaimed Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), a branch of Islamic State, against the Egyptian Army supported by tribal militias. Despite the challenges in obtaining information on the dynamics of the conflict due to the lack of access given to independent media outlets, indications point to a significant decrease in hostilities. The ACLED report indicated that around 10 lives were lost in 2024, a death toll similar to the one in 2023, compared to the 272 reported in 2022 and between 150 and 220 deaths reported in 2021.[143] Given this trend, **this case is no longer considered an active armed conflict**. Nevertheless, many challenges persisted. In May, local and international human rights groups warned that that the Egyptian authorities had reached some amnesty agreements with ISIS members in exchange for their surrender and relinquishment of weapons, but without publicly clarifying the conditions. These deals, which were not formally announced by Cairo, may have benefited individuals involved in committing war crimes. Following an investigation, Human Rights Watch and another NGO, the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, criticised possible impunity for serious abuses, including the mass murder of civilians and extrajudicial killings.[144] The Egyptian authorities have reportedly promoted this strategy to achieve the surrender of ISIS fighters since 2020, reportedly with the help of tribal leaders in Sinai. This approach has reportedly contributed to de-escalation in the region, though it is still considered a closed military zone where independent media outlets are prohibited. The Egyptian Army also continued to prevent tens of thousands of residents expelled since 2013 from returning to their lands. Human Rights Watch said that the strategy to pardon fighters suspected of crimes had been initiated alongside another strategy, active since 2023, of detaining and abusing women and girls related to members of Wilayat Sinai to pressure them to surrender. According to information gathered by human rights organisations, several former combatants of Wilayat Sinai have moved with their families to the neighbouring governorate of Ismailia, where they are said to receive financial support and documentation that allow them to move within a specific area.

By late 2023, the crisis in the Gaza Strip was having an impact on the situation in Sinai, along with increased instability and/or militarisation. Despite how Israel prosecuted its armed campaign against Gaza in 2024 and Israel's crossing of supposed "red lines" publicly

141 See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security).
142 See the summary on Syria in this chapter.
143 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
144 Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Questionable Amnesty Deals for ISIS Members. Risk of Impunity for Grave Human Rights Abuses", *HRW*, 13 March 2024.

laid down by the Egyptian authorities, such as the ground military campaign in Rafah and the entry of Israeli forces in the Philadelphi/Salaheddin corridor (a supposedly demilitarised 14-kilometre strip in the border area), Cairo took no action against Israel, nor did it question the validity of the bilateral agreement signed in 1979. In February, the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights reported that the Egyptian authorities were building a fortified zone along the border with Gaza to house the Palestinian population in the event of mass displacement from Gaza and to isolate them from the rest of Sinai. This NGO and its UK-based director were the targets of smear campaigns and threats from government-linked tribal leaders in Sinai.

Iraq	
Start:	2003
Type:	System, Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Iraqi military and security forces, Kurdish forces (peshmerga), Shia militias (including Harakat al-Nujaba, the Hashd al-Shaabi coalition, Kata'ib Hezbollah and the coalition/platform Islamic Resistance in Iraq), ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, USA, Iran, Türkiye, Israel
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The invasion of Iraq by the international coalition led by the USA in March 2003 (using the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction as an argument and with the desire to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein due to his alleged link to the attacks of the 11th September 2001 in the USA) started an armed conflict in which numerous actors progressively became involved: international troops, the Iraqi armed forces, militias and rebel groups and Al Qaeda, among others. The new division of power between Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish groups within the institutional setting set up after the overthrow of Hussein led to discontent among numerous sectors. The violence has increased, with the armed opposition against the international presence in the country superimposing the internal fight for the control of power with a marked sectarian component since February 2006, mainly between Shiites and Sunnis. Following the withdrawal of the US forces in late 2011, the dynamics of violence have persisted, with a high impact on the civilian population. The armed conflict worsened in 2014 as a result of the rise of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS) and the Iraqi government's military response, backed by a new international coalition led by the United States. The levels of violence have been reduced since 2018, after the announcement of defeat of ISIS, although the group continues to operate with actions of lower intensity. The country has also been affected by the growing dispute between Washington and Tehran and its competition to influence Iraqi affairs and, since late 2023, by the repercussions of the crisis in Gaza across the entire region.

During the year, Iraq continued to be the scene of hostilities between many different local, regional and international armed groups and was affected by the intensification of conflicts and tensions in the Middle East. However, **the death toll linked with the armed violence continued on its downward trend overall, as observed in recent years**. According to data collected by ACLED, 963 people lost their lives as a result of organised violence (battles, violence against civilians and explosions/remote violence) in 2024, compared to 1,334 in 2023 and 4,427 in 2022.[145] Data collected by Iraq Body Count point to a similar trend, identifying a total of 419 civilian fatalities in 2024 compared to 537 in 2023 and 740 in 2022.[146] As in previous years, **the dynamics of violence in the country involved multiple actors, some of which were influenced by the confrontation pitting Israel and the United States against Iran and the members of the "axis of resistance" with the Gaza crisis in the background**. For example, early in 2024, Iran launched an attack against an alleged Mossad target in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, killing four people. The KRG denied that the Israeli intelligence agency had any assets in its territory. The US launched several attacks against Iranian-backed Shia militias, including Harakat al-Nujaba, the Hashd al-Shaabi coalition and Kata'ib Hezbollah, as well as bases and facilities linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The most intense US strike occurred in February after a drone attack killed three US soldiers in northeastern Jordan. The coalition of militias known as the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for the drone attack[147] and launched it from their positions in Syria. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also launched attacks from Iraq to US bases in Ain al-Asad in Al Anbar governorate in western Iraq and against US positions in eastern Syria, as well as attacks against various cities in Israel, though most of these were not confirmed by the government of Benjamin Netanyahu. In July, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed to have launched attacks in the Mediterranean and against Israel in coordination with the Houthis in Yemen.[148] The attacks intensified, coinciding with the new phase of the Israeli campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon beginning in September,[149] then coinciding with Iran's second direct attack on (1 October) in retaliation for the assassinations of the leader of Hamas in July and of the leader of Hezbollah in September. During Iran's

145 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
146 Iraq Body Count, Database: Monthly civilian deaths from violence, 2003 onwards [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
147 The conglomerate known as the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) emerged in October 2023 as a mechanism to collectively claim responsibility for attacks carried out by different smaller groups designated as terrorists by the US, such as Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada and Ansar Allah al-Awfiya. Michael Knights, Amir al-Kaabi and Hamdi Malik, "Tracking Anti-U.S. and Anti-Israel Strikes From Iraq and Syria During the Gaza Crisis", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 14 October 2024.
148 See the summary on Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
149 See the summary on Israel – Hezbollah in this chapter.

first direct attack on Israel in April, then in response to the previous Israeli attack on Tehran's diplomatic delegation in Syria, Iraq closed its airspace for two days (13 and 14 April).[150]

At the end of the year, following a new Israeli attack on Iran on 25 October 25, there were some reports of arms transfers from Iran to Iraq, giving rise to speculation about a possible intensification of attacks against Israel by Iraqi militias. By October, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq had claimed responsibility for over 200 attacks against US bases in Iraq and Syria, as well as attacks against Israel. In November, Israel demanded that Iraqi authorities prevent attacks from its soil and warned of the risk of escalation. Baghdad accused Israel of seeking pretexts for aggression that could expand the war in the region. Analysts highlighted that Iraqi authorities have had to make efforts in recent years to balance their relations with the US and Iran and that they have recently pressured Shia armed groups to avoid dragging the country into a new cycle of conflict. At various points in 2024, Iraqi political and religious authorities managed to convince the militias to pause their attacks on US bases, but the attacks resumed after the Israeli ground invasion of Lebanon. While there is widespread sympathy in Iraq for the Palestinian cause and solidarity with Lebanon, there is also growing hostility toward Iran's interference in Iraqi domestic affairs. In November, Iraqi Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged military groups to submit to the authority of Baghdad, not Tehran. The US attacks on militias in Iraq also drew renewed criticism from groups that criticised the overreach of its mandate as leader of the international anti-ISIS coalition and insisted on accelerating the withdrawal of the 2,500 US forces stationed in the country. Thus**, in September, the United States and Iraq announced a transition plan under which most US forces would leave Iraq by September 2025 and the last by the end of 2026**. Representatives of Washington insisted that this was not a withdrawal, but a transition to a bilateral security agreement through which the US would continue to advise Baghdad on its operations against ISIS.

In 2024, an agreement was announced under which most US troops in Iraq would leave the country by September 2025

In 2024, ISIS continued to carry out attacks and clashed with Iraqi security forces and Shia militias, mainly in the governorates of Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk. In July, CENTCOM warned of a rise in ISIS' activities in Iraq and Syria.[151] Meanwhile, **northern Iraq continued to be a scene of conflict between Türkiye and the PKK**.[152] During the year, Ankara launched many attacks against PKK positions, mainly in Dohuk, Ninawa and Sinjar, as well as against the Iraqi Kurdish party Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), due to its links with the PKK. The hostilities left over 160 Turkish soldiers and PKK members dead on Iraqi soil and also killed and forcibly displaced Iraqi civilians. The Iraqi and Turkish governments strengthened their ties in 2024, which resulted in Erdogan's first visit to Iraq since 2011, security agreements and Baghdad's decision to ban the PKK.

In 2024, Baghdad asked the UN to end the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) at the end of 2025, arguing that it was no longer needed to ensure political stability in the country. However, some groups expressed disagreement over UNAMI's role in resolving territorial disputes and in addressing budgetary tensions between the Iraqi Kurdistan (KRG) authorities and those in Baghdad. In late May, the UN passed UNSC Resolution 2732, renewing UNAMI's mandate for a final period of 19 months. Also, at the request of the Iraqi authorities, the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq (UNITAD) ended its work. The UNITAD team submitted its final report in May, and its mandate ended in September. The situation of the internally displaced population was also important in 2024. At the beginning of the year, the Iraqi government announced the closure of all existing camps and the provision of incentives for return. Although the deadline was later extended to the end of the year, human rights organisations expressed concern about the security and economic conditions and unresolved tensions that the populations forced to return would encounter. From a gender and human rights perspective, the passage of a law criminalising homosexuality and of another facilitating child marriage, which particularly affects girls and has increased significantly in recent years, also caused particular concern in 2024.[153]

Israel - Hezbollah	
Start:	2023
Type:	Government, Territory International
Main parties:	Israel, Hezbollah, other Lebanese armed organisations (al-Fajr Forces, Amal Movement) and Palestinian organisations active in Lebanon (Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades and Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

150 See the summary on Israel-Iran in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
151 See the summary on Syria in this chapter.
152 See the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in this chapter.
153 See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security).

Summary:
In the background of this conflict is the Palestinian Israeli issue and its consequences across the region. The thousands of Palestinian refugees who settled in Lebanon after 1948, together with the leadership of the PLO in 1979, prompted Israel's continuous attacks in the southern part of the country. Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in 1978 and again in 1982, claiming to expel Palestinian militias that were using the area to launch attacks on Israel. The Shia political and armed group Hezbollah was created in Lebanon in the early 1980s, during the Lebanese Civil War, for the stated purpose of opposing Israel, rejecting the Western presence in the Middle East and liberating Palestine. Hezbollah's activities led to periodic clashes that culminated in the large-scale Israeli offensive against Lebanon in July 2006. Considered one of the most powerful non-state armed actors in the region, Hezbollah relies on Iran as its main source of external support. In recent years, it has been involved in combat operations in Syria and Iraq and has provided military assistance to other armed groups with similar agendas in the region. In 2023, the crisis in Gaza and the resulting escalation of tensions throughout the Middle East led to a new phase of the armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. Since 1978, a UN mission, UNSMIL, has been deployed on the de facto border area between Lebanon and Israel, with an evolving mandate that includes supervising the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon (2000) and the cessation of hostilities (after the 2006 war).

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah escalated significantly in 2024, with severe impacts following the intensification of the air campaign and the launch of an Israeli ground operation in southern Lebanon in the second half of the year. The high levels of violence, which turned the situation into a high-intensity armed conflict, ebbed in November after a ceasefire agreement was signed, but the death toll from October 2023 to the end of 2024 was over 4,000, with around one million people forcibly displaced in Lebanon. During the same period, 72 Israelis were killed, 30 of them in clashes with Hezbollah. Another 60,000 Israelis remained displaced from the northern region since the beginning of the armed exchanges between Israel and the Lebanese militia. These exchanges increased in frequency amid the Gaza crisis. By late 2023, the armed conflict was already considered to be of low intensity and had claimed around 165 lives.[154] In early 2024 it still seemed like both sides were trying to calibrate their actions to avoid a larger-scale open confrontation. As the weeks passed, however, the situation escalated. The exchanges of fire increased in frequency and intensity and the geographic scope of the hostilities expanded. Netanyahu's government launched a series of attacks over months that killed several senior Hezbollah officials. Beginning in February, the attacks expanded their range, reaching areas further from the de facto border between Israel and Lebanon, including cities such as Tyre and the capital, Beirut. The attacks destroyed a great deal of infrastructure and set fires in southern Lebanon. In the middle of the year, Human Rights Watch reported that Israel was using white phosphorus and the United Nations warned of the contamination of explosive materials in new areas along the border. Hezbollah continued its attacks against Israeli positions and bases near the border area and launched attacks against the occupied Golan Heights, Acre and Kiryat Shmona starting in April, alongside the escalation of the conflict between Israel and Iran.[155] According to research, **between October 2023 and September 2024, there were over 10,000 cross-border attacks, the vast majority of them (three-quarters) launched by Israel**. The remaining attacks involved other Lebanese armed organisations (al-Fajr Forces and the Amal Movement) and Palestinian organisations active in Lebanon (Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades and Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades).

Israel's ground military offensive in Lebanon beginning in October caused the deaths of more than 2,700 people and forcibly displaced more than one million

By mid-year, the rhetoric of threats contributed to increasing tensions. Israeli authorities threatened to take Lebanon back to the "Stone Age", whilst the leader of Hezbollah threatened an uncontained war and warned Cyprus, which is around 200 kilometres from Lebanon, that it could be targeted if it opened its bases and airports to Israel. However, **the situation significantly worsened on 16 September, when Israeli authorities announced their intention to focus on the "northern front"** whilst simultaneously continuing their attacks against Gaza. In the two days following Netanyahu's announcement, thousands of Hezbollah members' communication devices (pagers and walkie-talkies) were detonated simultaneously across Lebanon in a sophisticated operation attributed to Israel. Dozens of Hezbollah members and civilians were killed and hundreds were blinded or maimed in the attack. Israel then intensified its airstrikes in southern Lebanon and in the capital, Beirut, killing at least 16 elite militia commanders and other senior leaders, including Hassan Nasrallah, who had been the organisation's leader for three decades. The long-time leader died on 27 September in a devastating Israeli attack on the Dahiye neighbourhood, a Hezbollah stronghold in the Lebanese capital. The assassination of Nasrallah was part of an operation Israel dubbed "New Order", though it did not stop either Israeli or Hezbollah attacks and came at a time when efforts were being made to broker a ceasefire agreement between both sides.[156] **Beginning on 1**

154 See the summary on Israel-Palestine in this chapter.
155 See the summary on Israel-Iran in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
156 For more information, see the summary on Israel – Lebanon (Hezbollah) in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

October, Israel expanded its airstrikes and launched a ground operation in southern Lebanon, with serious impacts on the civilian population. According to data collected by OCHA, a total of 2,710 people lost their lives in Lebanon in twenty days only, as a result of the Israeli attacks between 8 and 28 October. More than a dozen hospitals were damaged and access to drinking water was compromised by the offensive. Meanwhile, Hezbollah continued to fire rockets and missiles towards Israel, which penetrated into areas farther from the border, and claimed responsibility for a drone attack on Netanyahu's vacation home. The UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, UNIFIL, reported fighting in its area of operations. Israel attempted to force the mission to leave the area, claiming that it was in danger, but UNIFIL responded that it would remain in place to fulfil its mandate. **Israel repeatedly attacked UNIFIL positions and infrastructure to force its withdrawal**, prompting criticism from the mission and condemnation from more than 40 countries.[157]

The dynamics of the conflict did not change until late November, when a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon came into effect. The ceasefire had been brokered by the United States and France.[158] According to the agreement, under terms similar to the provisions of UNSC Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese government must prevent Hezbollah and other armed groups from launching attacks against Israel and dismantle military infrastructure in southern Lebanon. Israel must cease its attacks against Lebanon, withdraw from the southern part of the country and allow the territory to be controlled by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and UNIFIL within 60 days. Hezbollah did not participate in the negotiations but accepted the terms, which required its withdrawal. By signing the ceasefire, Hezbollah waived the condition it had demanded until then, and that Nasrallah had repeated several times, that any cessation of hostilities would depend on Israel ending its attacks against Gaza. Netanyahu's government needed to give its troops a break and reduce its conscription requirements amid resistance to recruitment from ultra-Orthodox groups. It also enjoyed a more favourable public opinion after decapitating Hezbollah's leadership. Overall, the levels of violence fell following the agreement, but the situation remained fragile and both sides traded accusations about violations of the agreement. In late December, various acts of violence resulted in the deaths of several people and UNIFIL reported that Israel was still destroying residential areas, farmland and road networks in southern Lebanon. **By early 2025, Israel had withdrawn from only two of the two dozen locations it had occupied in Lebanon since October.** In December, Hezbollah's position, which was already weakened by hostilities and the deaths of many senior officials, was further battered by the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in Syria, one of its main regional allies and the crucial to its supply and communication lines with Iran.[159]

Israel – Palestine	
Start:	2000
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International
Main parties:	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups, brigades of Jenin, Nablus and Tubas, Lion's Den
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The conflict between Israel and the various Palestinian actors started up again in 2000 with the outbreak of the Second Intifada, favoured by the failure of the peace process promoted at the beginning of the 1990s (the Oslo Accords, 1993-1994). The Palestinian-Israeli conflict started in 1947 when the United Nations Security Council Resolution 181 divided Palestinian territory under British mandate into two states and soon after proclaimed the state of Israel (1948), without the state of Palestine having been able to materialise itself since then. After the 1948-49 war, Israel annexed West Jerusalem and Egypt and Jordan took over control of Gaza and the West Bank, respectively. In 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza after winning the "Six-Day War" against the Arab countries. It was not until the Oslo Accords that the autonomy of the Palestinian territory would be formally recognised, although its introduction was to be impeded by the military occupation and the control of the territory imposed by Israel.

The armed conflict continued to worsen in 2024, remaining extraordinarily deadly and having devastating impacts on the Palestinian civilian population.[160] Starting with Hamas' attacks on 7 October 2023 and the immediate launch of Israel's military campaign, around 46,000 people (16,735 men, 7,216 women and 13,319 children) had died in Gaza by late 2024, according to data collected by OCHA based on information provided by Gaza authorities. Almost half of these deaths took place in 2024. At least 10,000 bodies that remained buried under the rubble after the intense Israeli attacks should be added to this death toll. Some researchers suggested much higher figures. A study led by Yale University concluded that

157 For more information, see Statement by countries contributors to UNIFIL following recent attacks on the UN peacekeepers in Lebanon, 12 October 2024; IPI, What Is Behind Israel's Deliberate Attacks on UN Peacekeepers in Lebanon? An Interview with Karim Makdisi, 30 October 2024; and al-Jazeera, UN peacekeepers accuse Israel of 'deliberate and direct' attack in Lebanon, 8 November 2024.
158 For more information, see the summary on Israel – Lebanon (Hezbollah) in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
159 See the summary on Syria in this chapter.
160 For a more detailed description of the events in this context throughout the year, see the 2024 editions of Escola de Cultura de Pau's quarterly publication *Opportunities for peace and risk scenarios*.

deaths in Gaza had been underestimated and could be 40% higher (64,260 between October 2023 and June 2024) than the nearly 38,000 reported by the Gaza authorities up to that point. Another study, reported by *The Lancet,* suggested that given the proportion of indirect deaths to direct deaths typical of current armed conflicts, the number of people killed by violence in Gaza could rise to 186,000, which it considered a "conservative" estimate. Israel claimed to have killed 17,000 Palestinian militants, but it provided no evidence or estimate of civilian casualties caused by its attacks. According to OCHA, from the start of the ground operation in Gaza in November 2023 to 31 December 2024, a total of 393 Israeli soldiers were killed in hostilities in the Gaza Strip.

Israel continued its campaign of indiscriminate and deliberate attacks against the population of Gaza. Throughout the year, many Israeli attacks resulted in high civilian casualties, including the "flour massacre" in which at least 118 people were killed and more than 760 were wounded after Israeli forces opened fire on people seeking food from aid trucks in Gaza City in February; the brutal siege and destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital (after weeks of siege, which ended in April, mass graves were found containing bodies bearing signs of torture and extrajudicial killing); the Israeli operation to free four hostages held in the Nuseirat refugee camp, which claimed over 270 Palestinian lives in June; and several attacks that damaged tents in displaced population camps, led to fires and caused the deaths of dozens of people. Beginning in October, the Israeli government decided to step up its offensive in northern Gaza, especially around the Jabalia refugee camp. Amid the devastation and with no safe havens across the Gaza Strip, tens of thousands of people decided to remain in the area despite "evacuation orders" (forced displacement) from Israel, whose attacks killed more than 770 people in less than 20 days. In 2024, journalistic investigations also raised concerns about the use of artificial intelligence programs such as "Lavender" and "Where Is Daddy?" to identify and kill Hamas and Islamic Jihad targets, despite uncertainties about the relationship of the individuals identified with these groups and the fact that they were accompanied by their families. Journalists also reported about the use of drones with recordings of the voices of women and children to attack people who came to their aid. Furthermore, the living conditions of the Palestinian population deteriorated further during the year amid a persistent Israeli blockade of humanitarian aid and deadlock in the ceasefire negotiations.[161] This is despite the warnings raised by various organisations about the extraordinary levels of devastation in Gaza (70% of the territory's infrastructure is destroyed or damaged), the lack of even the most basic supplies, the consequences of successive forced displacements that have affected 90% of the population, the extremely serious impact of violence on the physical and mental health of Palestinian children, the famine desolating virtually the entire Palestinian population and the proliferation of diseases such as polio. The humanitarian situation was also worsened by Israel's persecution and criminalisation of the UNRWA, which is key to assisting the Palestinian population. In October, Israel passed laws banning the UN agency's activities in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, **the situation in the West Bank continued to deteriorate** amid escalating violence and Israeli occupation policies. According to OCHA, more than 500 Palestinians were killed in various acts of violence (498 in the West Bank and five in Israel). The death toll in 2024 was slightly lower than in 2023, when 548 deaths were reported, but much higher than in previous years (191 in 2022, 328 in 2021 and 30 in 2020). In 2024, 34 Israelis were killed: 21 in the West Bank and 13 in Israel; 15 were members of the security forces and seven were settlers. Israel also imposed additional movement restrictions on the Palestinian population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem throughout the year and intensified its policies of settlement expansion and *de facto* annexation of territory. Israel approved measures to "legalise" settlements previously declared illegal by Israeli courts (under international law, all settlements are illegal). It transferred authority to Israeli civilian authorities to control Area C of the West Bank—under Israeli military control, according to the Oslo Accords—and announced plans for the construction of new settlements. Additionally, in late June, Israeli authorities formalised the illegal appropriation of more than 1,200 hectares in the Jordan Valley near Jericho in the largest such move since the 1993 Oslo Accords.

In this context, **a growing chorus of voices criticised and presented evidence against Israel for committing genocide throughout the year**. In March, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, accused Israel of perpetrating at least three of the acts prohibited by the Convention: murdering members of a population group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group and deliberately inflicting living conditions on a group intended to bring about its total or partial physical destruction. Until late 2024, leading humanitarian and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders also published reports on the commission of acts constituting genocide against the Palestinian population of Gaza. At

161 For more information, see the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

the same time, international legal channels remained active. The genocide case against Israel continued at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) following the complaint filed by South Africa in late 2023. In January, the ICJ decided to open an investigation after finding some of the evidence presented in the complaint to be "plausible". Although it did not request an immediate ceasefire, it ordered a series of provisional actions to take to prevent the commission of acts of genocide. The ICJ issued new provisional actions in March in response to worsening living conditions in Gaza and the spread of famine, requiring Israel to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid. It did the same in May, when it demanded that Israel halt its military offensive in Rafah, where most of Gaza's population had been concentrated. Israel did not comply with these orders. **In July, in another case before the ICJ, it ruled on the illegality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem,** arguing that they and the regime associated with them had been established and continued to exist in violation of international law, that Israel sought permanent annexation and that Israel must end the occupation as soon as possible. The proceedings before the International Criminal Court (ICC) also yielded new developments. In May, the prosecution issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as three Hamas leaders (Yahya Sinwar, the head of Hamas in Gaza, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Marsi, the commander of the group's military wing, and Ismail Haniyeh, its top political leader) for their alleged responsibility for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ICC acted on these orders in November, but by then Israel had already killed Haniyeh (July) and Sinwar (October).

The crisis in Gaza fuelled an escalation of conflicts and tensions across the region—the armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, a direct confrontation between Israel and Iran and hostilities between Israel and the Houthis in Yemen—and negotiations for a ceasefire did not result in an agreement until early 2025. The three-phase dealt announced at the time has an outline very similar to the proposals discussed in May and July 2024, which failed primarily due to objections from Netanyahu's government and its insistence on continuing its offensive until Hamas was completely eradicated. The US remained a key political and military supporter of Israel. Alongside its involvement as a mediator in the negotiations, it continued to supply Israel with huge quantities of weapons throughout the year.

Syria	
Start:	2011
Type:	Government, System, Selfgovernment, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Ahrar alSham, Syrian Democratic Forces (coalition that includes the YPG/YPJ militias of the PYD), Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, Türkiye, Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, former Wagner Group, Israel
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Controlled by the Ba'ath party since 1963, the Republic of Syria has been governed since the 1970s by two presidents: Hafez al-Assad and his son, Bashar, who took office in 2000. A key player in the Middle East and the Arab Israeli conflict, internally the regime has been characterised by authoritarianism and fierce repression of the opposition. The arrival of Bashar al-Assad in the government raised expectations for change, following the implementation of some liberalising measures. However, the regime put a stop to these initiatives, which alarmed the establishment, made up of the army, the Ba'ath and the Alawi minority. In 2011, popular uprisings in the region encouraged the Syrian population to demand political and economic changes. The brutal response of the government unleashed a severe crisisin the country, which led to the beginning of an armed conflict with serious consequences for the civil population. The militarisation and proliferation of armed actors have added complexities to the Syrian scenario, severely affected by regional and international dynamics.

Syria saw an increase in violence in 2024, with a particularly significant escalation at the end of the year leading to the overthrow of Bashar Assad's regime on 8 December. According to ACLED data, hostilities in the country resulted in the deaths of at least 6,887 people in 2024, a higher toll than the 6,254 recorded by the think tank the previous year.[162] Figures from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) point to more than 7,400 deaths in 2024, a significantly higher toll than in 2023, when it reported 4,361 deaths. Following the fall of the Assad regime, and based on documents found in its prisons, SOHR also certified the deaths of at least 14,000 people under torture. Therefore, SOHR's counted over 21,000 documented deaths in Syria in 2024, of which the vast majority—around 18,000—were civilians.[163]

162 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
163 SOHR, Including over 18,000 civilians, SOHR verifies the death of 21,402 people across Syria in 2024, 1 January 2025.

As in previous years, **the situation in Syria was characterised by clashes between many different armed groups. This scenario had been exacerbated since late 2023 by the intensification of regional conflicts and tensions stemming from the situation in Gaza**. The internationalisation of the conflict remained evident due, among other factors, to the involvement of military forces from six countries (Russia, Iran, Türkiye, the United States, Israel and Jordan) that had directly intervened and/or were active in Syria. Various dynamics of confrontation were again identified in different parts of the country between local, regional and international actors throughout the year. Northeastern Syria was the scene of attacks and counterattacks by the United States and Iranian-backed militias operating in Syria and Iraq. There were also continuous Israeli attacks in various parts of Syria against positions of pro-Iranian militias, members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Hezbollah and Hamas. Some of these groups launched attacks against the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. An Israeli attack against the Iranian consulate in Damascus in April marked a turning point and led to a direct confrontation between Israel and Iran.[164] Also, according to SOHR, Israeli attacks in Syria reached an unprecedented level in 2024, resulting in the deaths of 482 people (414 combatants and 68 civilians).[165] Meanwhile, in the north, attacks by Türkiye and allied armed groups, such as the Syrian National Army (SNA), continued against Kurdish militias integrated into the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which in turn also clashed with pro-Iranian armed groups and tribal militias supported by the Assad regime. Türkiye, which continued to warn of the creation of a 40-kilometre corridor along the border, intensified its armed activity in November following a PKK attack in Ankara. Hostilities continued between government forces and Hayat al-Sham (HTS) in the northwest and fighting erupted between different armed factions in the south. There were also clashes and tensions between various groups aligned with Türkiye. ISIS also continued to operate in the country and increased its activity. Between January and June, the jihadist group claimed responsibility for 153 attacks in Iraq and Syria, double the number in 2023.[166]

13 years after the beginning of the uprising against Bashar Assad, his regime and more than five decades of authoritarian rule begun by his father, Hafez Assad, came to an end

After analysing the situation in the country during the first half of the year, in August the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic warned of the prevalence of fragmentation, the absence of the rule of law, the actions of armed groups that use violence and extort civilians, arbitrary arrest, torture, enforced disappearance and the death of people in custody. It also asserted that humanitarian needs had reached their highest level since the armed conflict began in 2011. In the second half of the year, the situation in the country was also affected by the escalation of violence in Lebanon after Israel decided to intensify its air and ground operations against Hezbollah, and also in Syria. According to UN data, between September and November, more than half a million people had crossed the border from Lebanon into Syria, including Lebanese and Syrian refugees previously residing in the neighbouring country.

In this context, in late November, HTS led an offensive from the northwestern part of the country and advanced to the south with the support of the SNA. Within a few days, they took control of the key cities of Aleppo, Hama and Homs. The SDF joined in from the northeast, whilst other groups launched attacks against regime forces from the south. The opposition forces encountered little resistance from Syrian troops and took control of the capital, Damascus, in just 10 days. Thus, **13 years after the beginning of the uprising against Bashar Assad, his regime and more than five decades of authoritarian rule begun by his father, Hafez Assad, came to an end**.[167] Until then, the front lines had remained stable, despite the ongoing hostilities, and Assad had projected himself as the *de facto* victor. He had regained control of most of the country's territory and had recently benefited from the "normalisation" of relations with various international actors, as witnessed by his rejoining of the Arab League in 2023. The events that took place between 27 November and 8 December 2024 resulted in more than 500 deaths and the displacement of one million people. The regime's rapid fall was attributed to various factors, including the lack of support from actors that had been its main backers: Hezbollah and Iran, focused on and weakened in their confrontation with Israel, and Russia, focused on the war in Ukraine. The transition was led by HTS, the successor organisation to the former al-Nusra Front, which was once al-Qaeda's armed wing in Syria and various actors consider it a terrorist group. HTS assumed this leadership amid uncertainty, partly due to

The events that took place in Syria between 27 November and 8 December 2024 resulted in more than 500 deaths and the displacement of one million people

164 See the analysis on Israel-Iran in this chapter.
165 SOHR, Highest annual toll ever | Israel attacks Syria on 373 occasions in 2024, destroying over 1,000 targets and killing and injuring nearly 845 combatants and civilians, 2 January 2025.
166 CENTCOM, Defeat ISIS Mission in Iraq and Syria for January – June 2024, 16 July 2024.
167 For more information and analysis on Bashar Assad's regime, see the January 2025 edition of Escola de Cultura de Pau's quarterly publication *Opportunities for peace and risk scenarios*.

its previous ties and criticism of its governance style in the area under its control, Idlib, which included protests over allegations of torture in prisons and the kidnapping of activists in 2024. HTS leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, who abandoned his *nom de guerre*, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, announced that the head of the administration in Idlib would assume the interim government. HTS also made progress in reaching agreements with other armed opposition groups regarding their dismantlement and integration into a unified military force. At the end of the year, the security situation remained extremely fragile. Acts of revenge and extrajudicial killings were reported in Hama, Homs and Latakia and attacks by groups loyal to Assad against transitional government forces were reported in Tartus. Meanwhile, Türkiye launched an offensive against the SDF and wrested control of the strategic towns of Tal Rifaat (near Aleppo) and Manbij away from Kurdish forces. ISIS also attempted to take advantage of the power vacuum, and the US and France launched attacks against ISIS positions. Hours after Assad's fall, Netanyahu government's also advanced into areas around the Golan Heights beyond the demilitarised zone, occupied new territories in Syria under the guise of preventing possible attacks against Israel and launched a broad series of attacks against Syrian arsenals.[168] Given the changing scenario, various actors advanced initiatives to establish relations with the new authorities and influence the evolution of the political process in the country.[169]

The Gulf

Yemen	
Start:	2004
Type:	System, Government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Armed forces loyal to the internationally recognised Government, followers of the cleric al Houthi (alShabaab alMumen/ Ansar Allah), tribal militias linked to al-Alhmar clan, Salafist militias (including Happy Yemen Brigades), armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, separatist groups under the umbrella of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), Joint Forces (including the Giants Brigades), Security Belt Forces, AQAP, ISIS, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

Summary:
The conflict started in 2004, when the followers of the religious leader al-Houthi, belonging to the Shiite minority, started an armed rebellion in the north of Yemen. The government assured that the rebel forces aimed to reestablish a theocratic regime such as the one that governed in the area for one thousand years, until the triumph of the Republican revolution in 1962. The followers of alHouthi denied it and accused the government of corruption and not attending to the northern mountainous regions and also opposed the Sanaa alliance with the US in the so-called fight against terrorism. The conflict has cost the lives of thousands of victims and has led to massive forced displacements. Various truces signed in recent years have been successively broken with taking up of hostilities again. As part of the rebellion that ended the government of Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2011, the Houthis took advantage to expand areas under its control in the north of the country. They have been increasingly involved in clashes with other armed actors, including tribal militias, sectors sympathetic to Salafist groups and to the Islamist party Islah and fighters of AQAP, the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen. The advance of the Houthis to the centre and south of the country in 2014 exacerbated the institutional crisis and forced the fall of the Yemeni government, leading to an international military intervention led by Saudi Arabia in early 2015. In a context of internationalisation, the conflict has acquired sectarian tones and a regional dimension. The conflict has been acquiring a growing regional and international dimension and has been influenced by tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia and between Washington and Tehran. Additionally, Yemen has been the scene of al-Qaeda activities since the 1990s, especially since the merger of the Saudi and Yemeni branches that gave rise to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2009. As of 2014, the group has taken advantage of the climate of instability in the country to advance its objectives and its militiamen have been involved in clashes with the Houthis, with government forces, with UAE troops and with tribal militias. Since al-Qaeda's attack on the USS Cole in 2000, the US has been involved in periodic attacks against the group. The conflict in Yemen has also favoured ISIS activity in the country. In 2023, the crisis in Gaza and its repercussions throughout the region also had an impact on Yemen, especially after the Houthis decided to launch attacks against Israel, Israeli ships and ships bound for Israel in the Red Sea, a route through which 15% of world maritime transport passes. The Houthis' actions prompted the establishment of an international military coalition in the area, made up of 20 countries and led by the United States, to launch Operation Prosperity Guardian.

In line with the trend observed in previous years, the armed conflict in Yemen was relatively less deadly in 2024, but hostilities increased along the front lines and the death toll remained high. As a result, the conflict continued to be classified as high-intensity. According to ACLED's assessment, at least 1,781 people died in Yemen throughout the year in various

168 See the summary on Israel-Syria in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
169 For more information, see the summary on Syria in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

acts of violence (battles, explosions, acts of remote violence and violence against civilians),[170] compared to the 3,174 fatalities in 2023, the 6,721 in 2022 and the over 20,000 deaths per year between 2019 and 2021. According to data collected by the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP), which documents civilian deaths in armed violence in Yemen, 337 civilians were killed in 2024, while another 864 were wounded. In 2023, these figures were 501 and 1,174, respectively, according to the CIMP. The total number of 1,201 civilians affected in 2024 is the lowest since the CIMP began keeping track, but a significant proportion of the casualties were due to airstrikes, which were resumed in the past year.[171] Since 2022, Yemen has seen a relative decline in hostilities due to the *de facto* validity of an UN-brokered truce. However, throughout 2024, various analysts warned that the truce was fragile and that fighting was escalating in different parts of Yemen between the various armed groups active in the country. The Houthis' escalation in the Red Sea contributed to this volatile climate. Linked to the regional repercussions of the Gaza crisis, this escalation resulted in constant armed exchanges between the Yemeni group and Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom throughout the year.[172]

The escalation of violence in the Red Sea affected the prospects for a negotiated solution to the Yemeni conflict in 2024, dampening expectations raised by a series of events and dynamics in 2023

Hostilities erupted between the Houthis and forces of the internationally recognised government in the governorates of Al Hudaydah, Dhale, Al Jawf, Sa'dah and Taiz. The Houthis, who control the capital and most of the north of the country, also clashed with the Shabwa Defence Forces in Ma'arib, the government-aligned Giants Brigade in Shabwa and the forces of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) –which is also part of the internationally recognised government headed by the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC)– in the Aden area in the south and in Lahij governorate. The STC also fought with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The Houthis also shelled residential buildings in Al Bayda governorate. Skirmishes between Saudi-backed forces (the National Shield Forces) and groups supported by the United Arab Emirates (the Hadrami Elite Forces) also occurred throughout the year, highlighting the regional dimension of the conflict and Riyadh and Abu Dhabi's competition for influence. At the end of the year, reports indicated that the PLC was attempting to gain support for a larger-scale military operation against the Houthis in Al Hudaydah. The governorates of Al Hudaydah, Taiz and Sa'dah accounted for the highest number of civilian casualties. In a report published in October, covering the period from September 2023 to July 2024, the Panel of Experts on Yemen warned of the Houthis' growing cooperation with actors from the "axis of resistance" (Iran, Hezbollah and Iraqi militias) and indicated that they were showing signs of reaching an understanding with AQAP, as both groups reportedly agreed to stop attacking each other and coordinate their attacks against government forces, and with the Somali armed group al-Shabaab, with which it reportedly shares a supplier of military equipment. The report also details the persistent violations of international law and human rights in the country—particularly by the Houthis—including indiscriminate attacks against civilians, torture and other degrading treatment as a form of punishment, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. The Panel of Experts on Yemen also reported that the Houthis were recruiting minors and that sexual and gender-based violence linked to the conflict remained widespread.[173] A particularly salient issue in 2024 was the Houthis' arrest of dozens of individuals linked to local and international NGOs and UN agencies in June on charges of espionage and collaboration with the US and other Western governments. These individuals remained in detention at the end of the year despite efforts by various actors to secure their release, including the UN.

Alongside these dynamics of violence and their impacts, the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which has been severely affected by the conflict in recent years, **took a turn for the worse in 2024**. The UN warned that the number of people in need of humanitarian aid had risen from 18.2 million in January to 19.5 million by the end of 2024. Some warned that food insecurity in the country would get worse. A study conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) concluded that 61% of surveyed households had trouble getting enough food and OCHA predicted at the end of the year that 17 million people (50% of the population) would face severe food insecurity in 2025. The spread of the cholera epidemic was also a matter of great concern. The country accounted for 35% of all cases of the disease and 18% of all deaths worldwide. The humanitarian situation was also aggravated by sudden floods and landslides in September, which

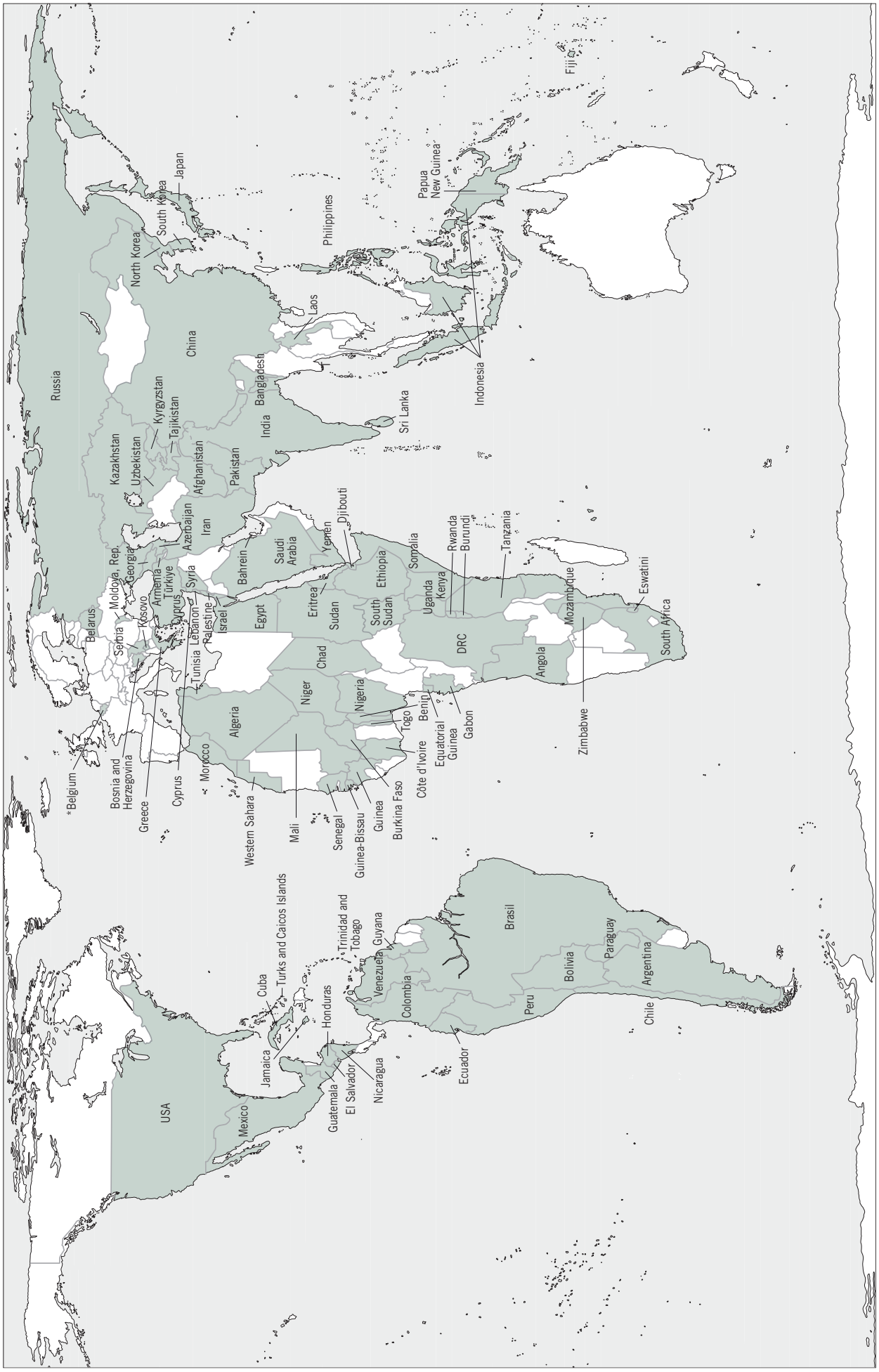
170 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 14 February 2025].
171 Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP), 2024 Annual Report: 1 January – 31 December 2024, CIMP – Protection Cluster Yemen, January 2025.
172 See the summary on Yemen (Houthis) - Israel, the USA, the United Kingdom in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
173 United Nations Security Council, Letter dated 11 October 2024 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2024/731, 11 October 2024.

resulted in the deaths of around 100 people and the forced displacement of around 250,000 in northern Yemen, once again stressing the interconnected vulnerabilities arising from the combination of armed conflict, climate change and challenges of governance.

The escalation of violence in the Red Sea also affected the prospects for a negotiated solution to the Yemeni conflict in 2024, dampening expectations raised by a series of events and dynamics in 2023. [174]

174 For more information, see the summary on Yemen in chapter 6 (Peace negotiations in the Middle East) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Map 2.1. **Socio-political crises**



* The Russia – US, NATO, EU tension is indicated on this map in a simplified manner, for reasons of graphic representation. Not all the countries that are part of NATO or those that are part of the EU have been marked, but Belgium as a country that hosts the headquarters of the EU and NATO, Russia and the USA.

2. Socio-political crises

- 116 socio-political crises were reported around the world in 2024. Most took place in Africa (38) and Asia and the Pacific (31), whilst the rest were distributed between America (20), Europe (15) and the Middle East (12).
- The post-election crisis in Mozambique left at least 225 people dead and more than 4,000 were arrested.
- A failed coup d'état and demonstrations staged by supporters of former President Evo Morales and the current president caused tensions to mount in Bolivia.
- Tensions spiked following the presidential election in Venezuela, with massive protests and allegations of state repression and human rights violations.
- The crisis between Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorated and there were episodes of violence on the border between both countries' security forces.
- Social protests in Bangladesh led to over 600 deaths, forced the prime minister to resign and resulted in the appointment of an interim government in the most serious political crisis in recent years.
- Strain increased between China and Taiwan due to the presidential election in Taiwan and intensified Chinese military activity around the island.
- Tensions rose between Serbia and Kosovo and in northern Kosovo, with security incidents and unilateral actions that stoked mistrust.
- Israel and Iran crossed a red line in their rivalry and attacked each other directly in 2024.
- After the fall of Bashar Assad, Israel expanded its occupation of Syrian territory and declared that it was pulling out of the 1974 Golan Heights agreement.
- Armed exchanges pitting the Yemeni armed group the Houthis against Israel, then against the US and the UK, which began in 2023, intensified and expanded beyond the Red Sea throughout 2024.

This chapter analyses the socio-political crises that occurred in 2024. It is organised into three sections. The socio-political crises and their characteristics are defined in the first section. In the second section, we analyse the global and regional trends of the socio-political crises in 2024. The third section describes the development and key events of the year in the various contexts. A map is included at the start of chapter that indicates the countries affected by socio-political crises in 2024.

2.1. Socio-political crises: definition

A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by different actors leads to high levels of political, social or military mobilisation and/or the use of violence with a level of intensity that does not reach that of an armed conflict and that may include clashes, repression, coups d'état and bombings or attacks of other kinds, and whose escalation may degenerate into an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity issues; b) opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, or the internal or international policies of a government, which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or c) control of resources or territory.

Table 2.1. **Summary of socio-political crises in 2024**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties	Intensity[3] / Trend[4]
AFRICA			
Algeria	Internal	Government, military power, political and social opposition, Hirak movement, jihadist armed groups	1
	Government, System		↑
Benin	Internationalised internal	Government, regional armed actors	2
	Government		=
Burkina Faso	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, army sectors	2
	Government		↓
Chad	Internal	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (including the coalition Wakit Tama, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (52 groups, including the main ones: FACT, CCMSR, UFDD, UFR), community militias, private militias	3
	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity		=
Chad – Sudan	International	Chad, Sudan (Sudan Armen Forces), Rapid Support Forces (RSF), UAE	3
	Government, Identity		↑
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed actors	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		=
Djibouti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FRUD-Armé	1
	Government		=
DRC	Internal	Government led by the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents from former President Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political opposition (including Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and social opposition	3
	Government		=
DRC – Rwanda[5]	International	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, Rwandan armed group FDLR, pro-Rwandan Congolese armed group M23 (formerly CNDP)	3
	Identity, Government, Resources		↑
Equatorial Guinea	Internal	Government, political opposition in exile	1
	Government		=
Eritrea	Internationalised internal	Government, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Eritrea – Ethiopia[6]	International	Eritrea, Ethiopia	3
	Territory		=
Ethiopia[7]	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups	3
	Government		=

1 This column includes the states in which socio-political crises are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one socio-political crisis in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.

2 This report classifies and analyses socio-political crises using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). Regarding the second type, the sociopolitical crises may be of an internal, internationalised internal or international nature. As such, an internal socio-political crisis involves actors from the state itself who operate exclusively within its territory. Secondly, internationalised internal socio-political crises are defined as those in which at least one of the main actors is foreign and/or the crisis spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Thirdly, international socio-political crises are defined as those that involve conflict between state or non-state actors of two or more countries.

3 The intensity of a socio-political crisis (high, medium or low) and its trend (escalation, decrease, no changes) is mainly evaluated on the basis of the level of violence reported and the degree of socio-political mobilisation.

4 This column compares the trend of the events of 2024 with 2023, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2023 is more serious than in the previous one, the ↓ symbol to indicate an improvement in the situation and the = symbol to indicate that no significant changes have taken place.

5 Although the DRC-Rwanda crisis is not explored in this chapter, elements of this crisis are included in the DRC summary in the DRC (east) summary in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts). Elements of analysis of this stress are also included in the summary of DRC in Chapter 1 (Peace Talks in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends* and Scenarios, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

6 Although the Eritrea-Ethiopia crisis is not explored in this chapter, elements of this crisis are included in the Eritrea-Ethiopia summary in Chapter 1 (Peace Talks in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends* and Scenarios, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

7 Although the Ethiopia crisis is not explored in this chapter, elements of this crisis are included in the Ethiopia (Oromia) and Ethiopia (Amhara) summaries in Chapter 1 (Peace Talks in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Peace* Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan	2
	Resources		↓
Ethiopia – Somalia	International	Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland	1
	Government, Territory, Resources		↓
Ethiopia – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Sudan, community militias	1
	Resources		↓
Gabon	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Guinea	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, trade unions	2
	Government		↑
Guinea-Bissau	Internationalised internal	Transitional government, Armed Forces, political opposition, international drug trafficking networks	1
	Government		↑
Kenya	Internationalised internal	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties, civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups sympathetic to al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS	3
	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government		↑
Mali	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ECOWAS	2
	Government		=
Morocco – Western Sahara	International[8]	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	2
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		=
Mozambique	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government, System		↑
Niger[9]	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		=
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, civil society organisations, Christian and Muslim communities, ranchers and farmers, community militias, criminal groups, IMN, militias and private local security forces, Lakurawa	3
	Identity, Resources, Government		↑
Nigeria (Biafra)	Internationalised internal	Government, separatist organisations MASSOB, IPOB (which has an armed wing, the ESN)	3
	Identity, Self-government		=
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, armed groups, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias of the Ijaw, Itsereki, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	1
	Identity, Resources		=
Rwanda	Internationalised internal	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the ruling party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other countries in Africa and the West	1
	Government, Identity		=
Rwanda – Burundi	International	Government of Rwanda, government of Burundi, armed groups	3
	Government		↑
Senegal	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, factions of the armed group Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)	1
	Self-government		↓

8 Although Western Sahara is not an internationally recognised state, the socio-political crisis between Morocco and Western Sahara is considered "international" and not "internal" since it is a territory that has yet to be decolonised and Morocco's claims to the territory are not recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution.

9 Although the tension in Niger is not explored in this chapter, elements of this crisis are included in the summary of the Western Sahel region in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
South Africa	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Government of Sudan, government of South Sudan, community militias	2
	Resources, Identity		=
Tanzania	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Togo	Internationalised internal	Government, regional armed actors	1
	Government		↓
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, jihadist armed groups	2
	Government, System		=
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, ADF	2
	Government		=
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
AMERICA			
Argentina	Government	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Internal		↓
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Brazil	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government, Resources		↑
Chile	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↓
Colombia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Cuba	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, System		=
Ecuador	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government, Resources		↓
El Salvador	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised bands (drug trafficking, gangs)	1
	Government, Resources		↓
Guatemala	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	2
	Government, Resources		↑
Honduras	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	2
	Government, Resources		↓
Jamaica	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government, Resources		↓
Mexico	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups, armed opposition groups	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		↑
Nicaragua	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AMERICA			
Paraguay	Government	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Internal		↓
Peru	Internal	Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations)	2
	Government, Resources		↓
Turks and Caicos Islands[10]	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government, Resources		↑
Trinidad and Tobago	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government, Resources		↑
USA	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, citizen militias	1
	Government		=
Venezuela	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Venezuela – Guyana	Territory, Resources	Venezuela, Guyana	3
	International		↑
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC			
Afghanistan – Pakistan	International	Afghanistan, Pakistan	3
	Government		↑
Bangladesh	Internal	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami)	3
	Government		↑
China (Tibet)	Internationalised internal	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government in exile, political and social opposition in Tibet	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China (Xinjiang)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China – Japan	International	China, Japan, USA	3
	Territory, Resources		↑
China – Philippines	International	China, Philippines, USA	3
	Territory, Resources		=
China – Taiwan	International	China, Taiwan, USA	3
	Territory, Resources, System		↑
China – USA	International	China, USA	2
	System, Government, Territory		=
China – South Korea	Internal	China, South Korea	1
	Territory, Resources		↑
India (Manipur)	International	Government, armed groups (PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA)	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Nagaland)	Internal	Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF	1
	Identity, Self-government		=
India – China	International	India, China	2
	Territory		↓

10 Turks and Caicos Islands have been on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories since 1946. Although they are part of the Overseas Territories.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
ASIA			
India – Pakistan	International	India, Pakistan	2
	Identity, Territory		=
Indonesia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands)	International	Japan, Russia	1
	Territory, Resources		=
Kazakhstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups	1
	System, Government		↑
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		=
Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan	International	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	1
	System, resources		↓
Laos	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin	1
	System, Identity		↑
North Korea – USA, Japan, South Korea[11]	International	North Korea, USA, Japan, South Korea, China, Russia	3
	System		=
North Korea – South Korea	International	North Korea, South Korea	3
	System, System		↑
North Korea	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	System, Government		=
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Papua New Guinea	Internal	Government, community militias, government of Bougainville	3
	Identity, Resources, Territory, Self-governmen		=
South China Sea	International	China, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam	2
	Territory, Resources		↑
Sri South Korea	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Sri Lanka	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	2
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		=
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)	Internal	Government, Pamiri social opposition to the central government in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), China	1
	Identity, Government		=
Uzbekistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	1
	Government, System, Territory		=
Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)	Internal	Government, social opposition in the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
EUROPE			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Azerbaijan, Armenia, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Türkiye	2
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓

11 This international socio-political crisis affects other countries that have not been mentioned, which are involved to varying degrees.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
EUROPE			
Belarus	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, EU, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, USA, Ukraine, NATO, Russia	2
	Government		↑
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Internationalised internal	State institutions, institutions of sub-state entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), high representative of the international community, USA, EU, NATO, Serbia, Russia	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Georgia	Internationalised internal	Georgia, political and social opposition, Russia	2
	Government		↑
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Georgia (South Ossetia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Moldova	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition, Russia, EU, Ukraine, NATO	1
	Government		↓
Moldova, Rep. of (Transdniestria)	Internationalised internal	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia, Ukraine	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Russia	Internationalised internal	Government, private security companies and paramilitary actors, political and social opposition, armed opposition actors (Freedom of Russia Legion, Russian Volunteer Corps, Siberia Battalion), ISIS-K	3
	Government		↑
Russia (North Caucasus)	Internal	Russian federal government, governments of the republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups, ISIS, social opposition in the diaspora	2
	System, Identity, Government		↑
Russia – USA, NATO, EU	Internacional	Russia, Belarus, USA, NATO, EU, United Kingdom, Ukraine	2
	System, Government, Territory, Resources		↑
Serbia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Serbia – Kosovo	International[12]	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community of Kosovo, UN mission (UNMIK), NATO mission (KFOR), EU mission (EULEX)	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Türkiye	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ISIS	2
	Government, System		↑
Türkiye – Greece, Cyprus	International	Türkiye, Greece, Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	1
	Territory, Resources, Self-government, Identity		↓
MIDDLE EAST			
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Identity		=
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		=
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups (PJAK, PDKI and Komala), Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraq	2
	Self-government, Identity		=

12 The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered "international" because even though its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. However, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion in 2010 establishing that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence did not violate international law.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
MIDDLE EAST			
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups Jundallah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran (nuclear programme[13]	International	Iran, USA, Israel, European countries (E3) that signed the 2015 agreement on the Iranian nuclear program (Germany, France, and the United Kingdom)	3
	System, Government		=
Israel – Iran	International	Israel, Iran	3
	System, Government		↑
Israel - Syria	International	Israel, Syria, UNDOF	3
	System, Resources, Territory		↑
Lebanon	Internationalised internal	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition	1
	Government, System		↓
Palestine	Internal	ANP, Fatah, armed group Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing, the Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades, Salafist groups	1
	Government		=
Saudi Arabia	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including AQAP and branches of ISIS (Hijaz Province, Najd Province)	1
	Government, Identity		=
Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom	International	Houthis/Ansar Allah, Israel, USA, United Kingdom, Islamic Resistance of Iraq, Iran	3
	System, Government		↑

1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity.
↑: escalation of tension; ↓: decrease of tension; =: no changes.
The socio-political crises in bold are described in the chapter.

2.2. Socio-political crises: analysis of trends in 2024

This section examines the general trends observed in areas experiencing socio-political crises throughout 2024, at both the global and regional levels.

2.2.1. Global trends

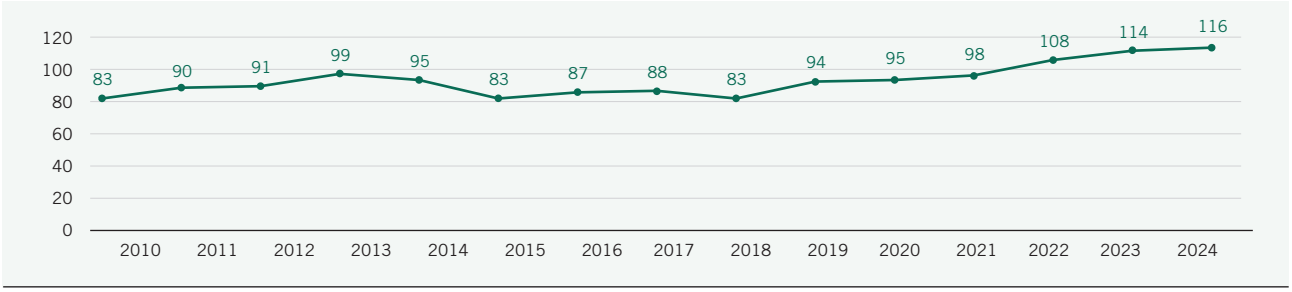
116 socio-political crises were identified in 2024: 38 in Africa, 31 in Asia and the Pacific, 20 in America, 15 in Europe and 12 in the Middle East

116 socio-political crises were identified worldwide in 2024, two more than in 2023, confirming the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises reported in recent years (33 more since 2018). Africa and Asia and the Pacific were the regions with the most crises (38 and 31, respectively), followed by America (20), Europe (15) and the Middle East (12). Twelve new crises were identified, whilst another 10 were no longer considered as such. The new cases were distributed fairly evenly across all regions of the world: in Chad-Sudan and South Africa in Africa; in Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands in America; in Indonesia, South Korea and China-South Korea in Asia and the Pacific; in Georgia and Serbia in Europe; and in Israel-Iran, Israel-Syria and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, US and UK in the Middle East. Two of the 10 crises that were no longer classified as such escalated to armed conflicts: Haiti and Indonesia (West Papua). The remaining eight became less intense: Madagascar and Sierra Leone in Africa; Panama in America; Fiji, Indonesia (Sulawesi), Thailand and China (Hong Kong) in Asia and the Pacific; and Iraq (Kurdistan) in the Middle East.

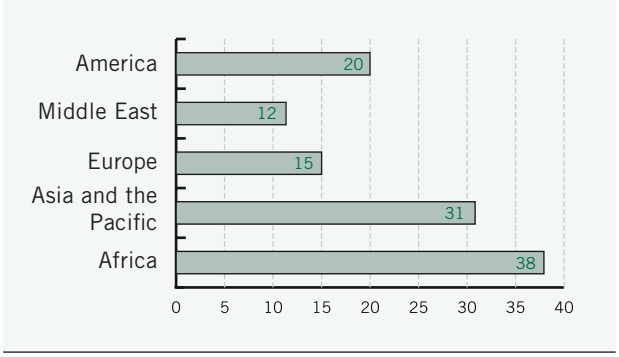
42% of the crises were of low **intensity**, 30% were of medium intensity and 28% were of high intensity. The high-intensity crises grew in number, from 31 in 2023 to 32 in 2024. These proportions are similar to those of the previous year, with a slight decrease in medium-intensity crises and a small increase in low-intensity and high-intensity crises. Africa was the region with the largest number of high-intensity crises (12), but the region with the highest proportion of such cases was the Middle East (42%).

13 In previous editions of this report, this case was referred to as "Iran – Israel, US." The new designation is intended to distinguish this case from the strictly bilateral confrontation between Israel and Iran, which escalated in 2024 and was considered a new context of socio-political crisis.

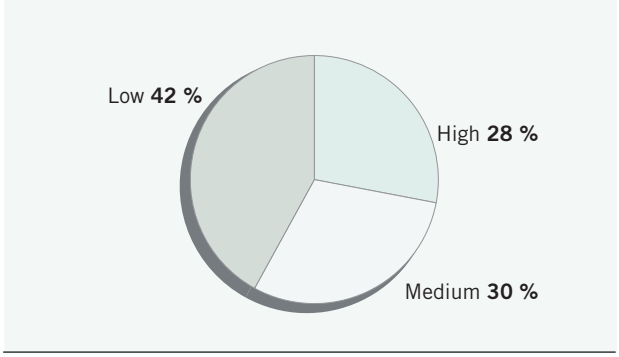
Graph 2.1. **Trending number of socio-political crises 2010-2024**



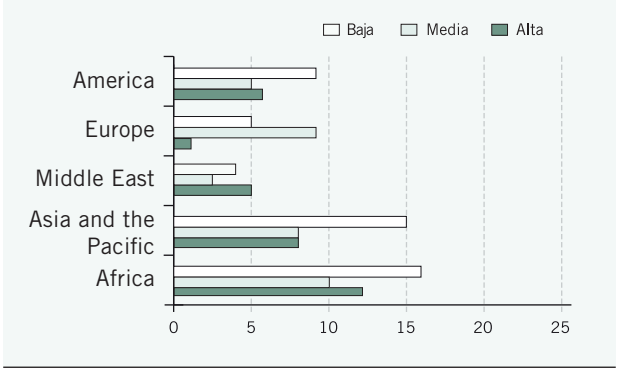
Graph 2.2. **Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2024**



Graph 2.4. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in 2024**



Graph 2.3. **Intensity of the socio-political crises by region**



21% of the crises (24) experienced a reduction in tension compared to the previous year, 41% (48) did not experience any significant change and 38% (44) got worse compared to 2023. Although the proportion of cases in which tensions escalated in 2024 (38%) was significantly lower than in 2023 (49%), the data seem to confirm a trend observed in recent years in which the number of escalating crises has clearly been higher than the number of cases in which tensions have eased. In Europe in particular, 73% of the crises worsened in 2024, compared to 85% in 2023. The East Asian subregion of the Asia and the Pacific region also

Box 2.1. **High-intensity socio-political crises in 2024**

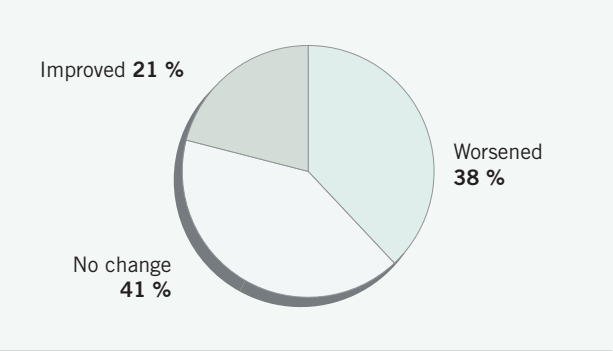
AFRICA (12)	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (8)	MIDDLE EAST (5)	AMERICA (6)	EUROPE (1)
Chad	Afghanistan – Pakistan	Iran	Bolivia	Russia
Chad – Sudan	Bangladesh	Iran (nuclear program)	Brazil	
Eritrea – Ethiopia	China – Japan	Israe – Iran	Ecuador	
Ethiopia	China – Taiwan	Israel – Syria	Mexico	
Kenya	China – Philippines	Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, US, UK	Venezuela	
Mozambique	North Korea – US, Japan, South Korea		Venezuela – Guyana	
Niger	North Korea – South Korea			
Nigeria	Papua New Guinea			
Nigeria (Biafra)				
DRC				
DRC – Rwanda				
Rwanda – Burundi				

experienced a clear rise in conflict, especially along the geographic continuum between the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Military tensions also mounted significantly in the Middle East, especially between Israel and other countries in the region (such as Syria, Iran and Yemen), with Iran also playing a prominent role. Conversely, tensions in almost half the socio-political crises in America (specifically, 45%) decreased compared to 2023, with a significant drop in the homicide rate in countries affected by dynamics linked to organised crime groups, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador and Jamaica, and due to the decrease in mass demonstrations in Argentina, Peru, Chile and Paraguay. However, some high-intensity crises also got worse in 2024 (see Table 2.3). Asia and the Pacific was the region with the highest number of such cases, followed by America.

The socio-political crises continued to be predominantly **multi-causal**, as evidenced by the fact that two or more causes were behind 62% of them. Challenging the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state and/or the domestic or international policies of the respective governments was a cause of 89 of the 116 crises (77%). Thirty-six crises (31%) had identity-related and/or self-government issues as one of their main causes, whilst the control of territory and/or resources was a relevant causal factor in 41 crises (35%). In a more detailed analysis of factors, ordered from highest to lowest prevalence, opposition to domestic or international **government** policies was again the most prevalent and was found in 70% of the 116 socio-political crises, a slightly higher proportion than the previous year. This causal factor varied clearly between regions, as it was present in 95% and 79% of the crises in America and Africa, respectively, but in only 45% of the crises in Asia and the Pacific. The second most prevalent factor was the assertion of **identity-based aspirations** (30%), though at a smaller proportion than in 2023 (33%). This factor was especially significant in Europe (52%). In America, however, it was only found in 10% of the crises. Competition for **control of resources** was as prevalent

The upward trend of recent years in the number of socio-political crises (116) continued in 2024, with 33 more compared to 2018

Graph 2.5. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in 2024**



Box 2.2. **Socio-political crises that worsened in 2024**

AFRICA (11)	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (11)	MIDDLE EAST (4)	AMERICA (7)	EUROPE (11)
Algeria	Afghanistan – Pakistan	Iran (Sistan and Baluchistan)	Bolivia	Belarus
Chad – Sudan	Bangladesh	Israel – Iran	Brazil	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Guinea	China – Japan	Israel – Syria	Turks and Caicos Islands	Georgia
Guinea-Bissau	China – Taiwan	Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, US, UK	Mexico	Georgia (Abkhazia)
Kenya	China – South Korea		Trinidad and Tobago	Moldova (Transnistria)
Mozambique	North Korea – South Korea		Venezuela	Russia
Nigeria	South Korea		Venezuela – Guyana	Russia (North Caucasus)
DRC – Rwanda	Indonesia			Russia-US, NATO, EU
Rwanda – Burundi	Kazakhstan			Serbia
South Africa	Laos			Serbia – Kosovo
Tanzania	South China Sea			Türkiye

Box 2.3. **High-intensity crises in which tensions worsened in 2024**

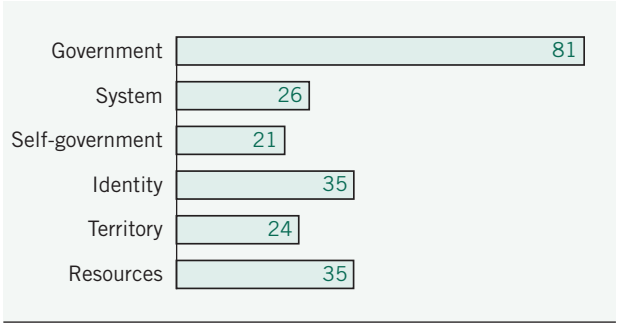
AFRICA (4)	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (6)	MIDDLE EAST (3)	AMERICA (5)	EUROPE (1)
Chad – Sudan	Afghanistan – Pakistan	Israel – Irán	Bolivia	Russia
Nigeria	Bangladesh	Israel – Siria	Brazil	
DRC – Rwanda	China – Japan	Yemen (al-houthistas) – Israel, EEUU, Reino Unido	Mexico	
Rwanda – Burundi	China – Taiwan		Venezuela	
	North Korea – South Korea		Venezuela – Guyana	
	North Korea – US, Japan, South Korea			

as identity and was an explanatory factor in 30% of all cases, a notable increase over the previous year (24%). Here, significant fluctuations were also observed between regions, as this factor was present in 60% of the crises in America (a region where many organised crime groups operate and cause high homicide rates) and in only one crisis in the Middle East.

Next in line, with very similar proportions, were issues related to **opposition** to the political, social or ideological **system** of the state as a whole (22%), **control of territory** (21%) and **demands for self-determination and self-government** (18%). Opposition to the system, a factor that slightly increased compared to the previous year, was found in 11 crises in Asia, especially in East Asia, and was a proportionally very prevalent cause of the crises in the Middle East (42%). Control of territory was present in almost half the crises in Asia and the Pacific, but in only one in America (Venezuela-Guyana). Finally, the relative importance of demands for self-determination and self-government decreased significantly compared to the previous year, when they were present in 22% of all crises. Whilst this cause was significant in nearly half the European crises, especially in the Caucasus and the Balkans, it was found in only 10% of the crises in America.

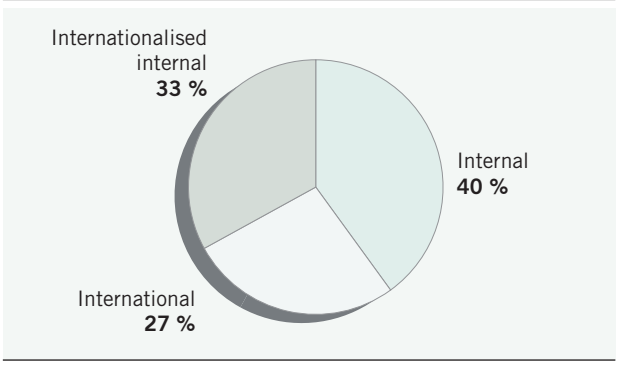
Although most socio-political crises worldwide were **internal in nature** (40%), the proportion was significantly lower than the previous year (49%). Sixty per cent of the crises in Asia and the Pacific were internal in nature, but only 13% were internal in Europe. Furthermore, one third of all crises worldwide were **internationalised internal**, meaning that one of the main actors was foreign and/or the crisis had spilled over into neighbouring countries. This was a significant increase over the previous year (28%). Finally, **international** crises rose from 23% in 2023 to 27% in 2024. In addition to the increase in the number of international crises, a good portion of them were among the most serious in the world. In fact, almost half the high-intensity crises (14 out of 32) were international in nature: Chad-Sudan; Eritrea-Ethiopia; DRC-Rwanda; Rwanda-Burundi; Venezuela-Guyana; Afghanistan-Pakistan; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-US, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; Iran (nuclear programme); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, US, UK.

Graph 2.6. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of 2024**



In a more detailed geographical analysis, the **subregions** with the largest number of socio-political crises were, in order: West Africa and Eastern Africa (13 each); East Asia (12); South America (10); South Asia and Central America and the Caribbean (eight each); Central Asia and the Gulf (seven each); Central Africa (six); the Mashreq and Southern Europe (five); South Caucasus (four); Southern Africa, the Maghreb, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and Russia (three each); North America (two); and the Pacific (one). The countries that experienced the most crises within their borders or whose governments were the main actors in the largest number of foreign disputes were, in order: Russia (13 cases); China and the United States (11); Iran (six); Ethiopia and Tajikistan (five); Sudan, India, South Korea, Israel, Ukraine, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (four); and Türkiye, Nigeria, Rwanda and Japan (three).[14]

Graph 2.7. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in 2024**



Box 2.4. **High-intensity international socio-political crises in 2024**

AFRICA (4)	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (6)	MIDDLE EAST (3)	AMERICA (1)	EUROPE (0)
Chad-Sudan	Afghanistan – Pakistan	Iran (nuclear programme)	Venezuela – Guyana	--
Eritrea-Ethiopia	China – Japan	Israel – Iran		
DRC-Rwanda	China – Taiwan	Israel – Syria		
Rwanda-Burundi	China – Philippines	Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, US, UK		
	North Korea – US, Japan, South Korea			
	North Korea – South Korea			

14 The actors who appear in the table as main actors in the tension are included in the count.

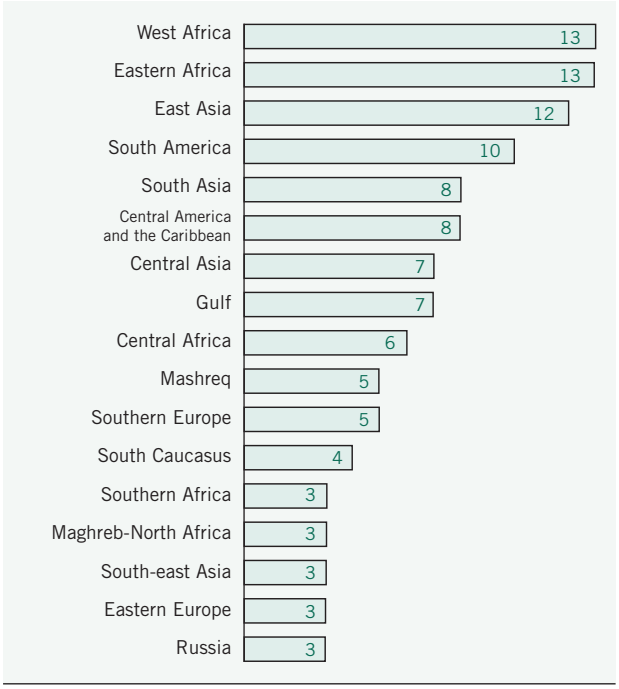
2.2.2. Regional trends

As in recent years, **Africa** was the region with the largest number of socio-political crises in 2024 (38), maintaining the same proportion of the total worldwide as previous years (33%). The cases in Madagascar and Sierra Leone stopped being considered crises during the year, whilst two new crises were added: Chad-Sudan and South Africa. The Chad-Sudan crisis is particularly noteworthy due to its severity, as relations between both countries deteriorated significantly due to Chad's alleged support for the Sudanese paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and by Sudan's backing of Chadian insurgents. Sudan also accused the UAE of supporting the RSF through Chad. As in previous years, some countries were beset by several crises, such as Ethiopia (five crises), Sudan (four), Nigeria and Rwanda (three) and the DRC, Chad, and Senegal (two). Not only was Africa the region with the highest number of crises, but it was also the one with the highest number of maximum-intensity crises (12): Chad, Chad-Sudan, Eritrea-Ethiopia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Nigeria (Biafra), DRC, DRC-Rwanda and Rwanda-Burundi.

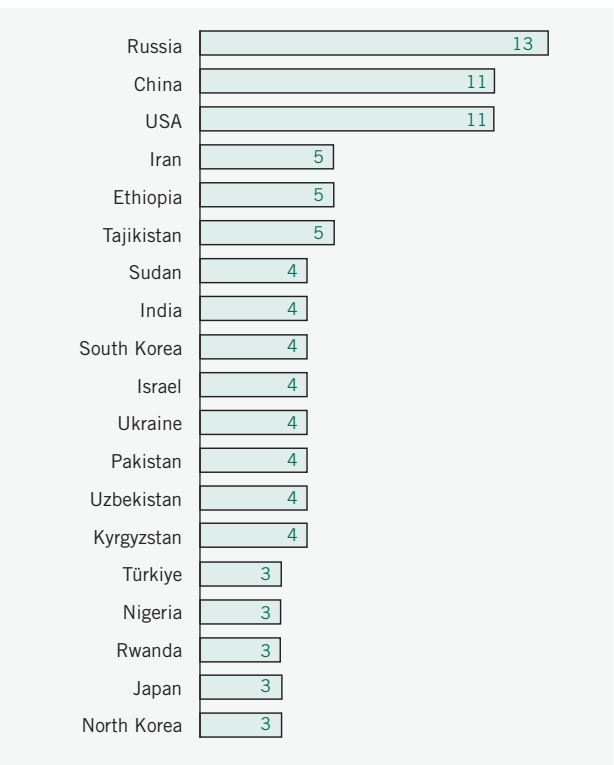
Eleven crises in Africa (29% of the total in the region) deteriorated compared to the previous year: Algeria, Chad-Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, DRC-Rwanda, Rwanda-Burundi, South Africa and Tanzania. Some of the crises that escalated during the year were particularly serious, such as in Mozambique, where the election, which was won once again by the ruling party, FRELIMO, stoked political tensions and led to crackdowns on protests, resulting in at least 225 people dead and more than 4,000 arrested by the end of the year. In Nigeria, there were significant anti-government protests due to the country's severe economic crisis, the two main Boko Haram factions (JAS and ISWAP) remained active and criminal groups in the northwest and north-central parts of the country stepped up their activity significantly, resulting in hundreds of deaths. Kenya was another African country experiencing an escalation of tension, in this case due to massive protests against unpopular economic policies, an alarming rise in femicides, an increase in intercommunal violence and struggles over natural resources, especially in the northern and western parts of the country. Kenya also suffered from an intensification of attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in the northeast.

Nearly four out of five of the most prevalent causes of crises in Africa (79%) were linked to opposition to the government. Trailing far behind, tensions related to identity or control of resources were found in 29% and 26% of the crises in the region, respectively. Finally, with very similar percentages, were demands for self-government and self-determination and disputes linked to control of territory (13% in each case) and opposition to the system (11%). These data maintain some continuity with those of the previous year. Finally, internal tensions accounted for 45% of all crises (47% in 2023 and 50% in 2022), internationalised internal tensions were behind 32% (the same percentage as the previous year) and international tensions caused 24% (21% in 2023). As elsewhere around the world,

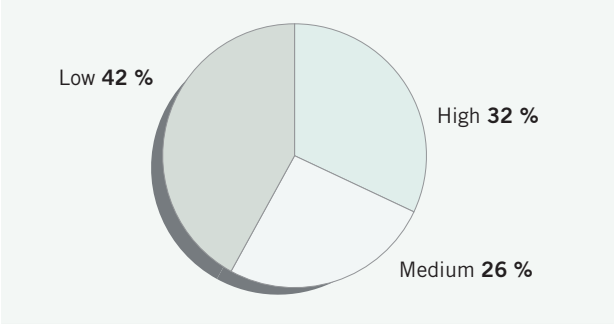
Graph 2.8. **Subregions with the highest number of socio-political crises in 2024**



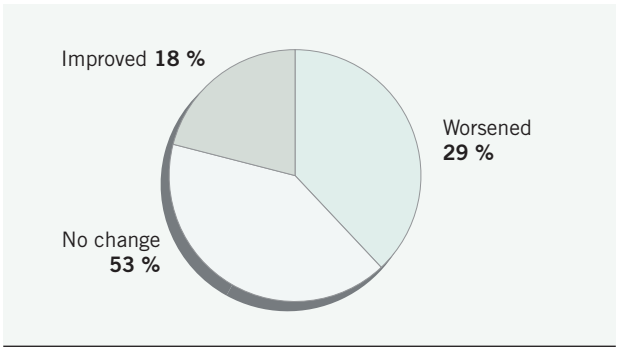
Graph 2.9. **Countries involved as main actors in the greatest number of socio-political crises in 2024**



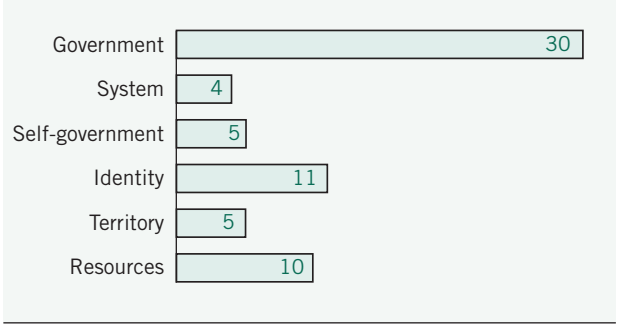
Graph 2.10. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in Africa in 2024**



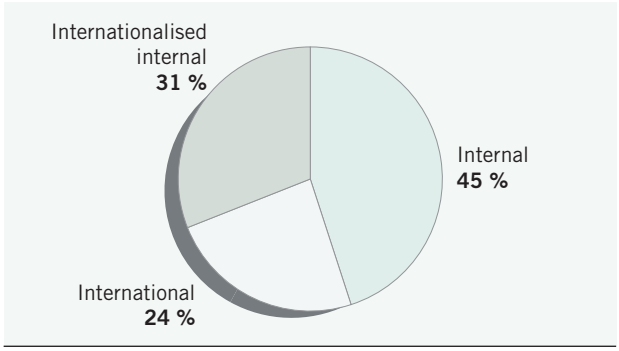
Graph 2.11. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in Africa in 2024**



Graph 2.12. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of Africa in 2024**



Graph 2.13. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in Africa in 2024**



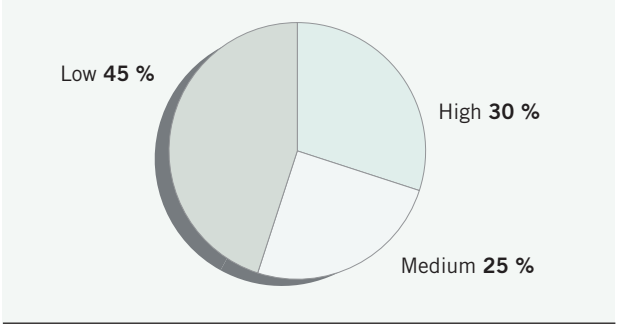
some of the international crises were highly intense, such as the cases of Chad-Sudan, DRC-Rwanda and Rwanda-Burundi.

There were 20 socio-political crises in **America** (17% of the total), the same number as in 2023. Two cases were no longer considered crises (Panama, due to the decline in protests and conflict reported in 2023, and Haiti, which was reclassified as an armed conflict), whilst two other situations were reclassified as crises (Trinidad and Tobago, with growing organised criminal group activity, and the Turks and Caicos Islands, which have the highest homicide rate in the world). Half the 10 crises were located in South America (10), followed by Central America and the Caribbean (eight) and North America (two).

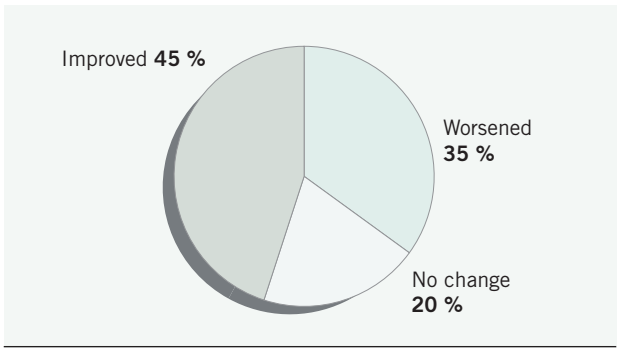
The subregions of West Africa and Eastern Africa had the highest number of socio-political crises (13)

Forty-five per cent of the crises were of low intensity, 25% were of average intensity and 30% were high-intensity. The six high-intensity crises were Mexico and Brazil, two of the countries with the highest number of murders in the world; Ecuador, one of the countries in which both the territorial control of organised criminal groups and the homicide rate have grown the most in the region and even worldwide; Bolivia and Venezuela, due to the mass protests throughout the year; and the conflict between Venezuela and Guyana, which produced political and military tension in the region. In comparative terms, although America had the greatest proportion of maximum-intensity crises in 2023, both the Middle East and Africa had a larger proportion of high-intensity cases in 2024. Along the same lines, whilst 75% of the crises in America escalated in 2023, only 35% did so in 2024. The scenarios that deteriorated with respect to the previous year were Bolivia, Brazil, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela and Venezuela-Guyana. Twenty per cent of the crises did not report any significant change and 45% observed an improvement in the situation. In fact, in 2024 America was the region of the world with the highest percentage of cases that de-escalated, either due to the drop in homicide rates (such as in Central America and Ecuador) or to the decrease in the number or intensity of demonstrations and protests, such as in Argentina, Peru, Chile and Paraguay. Despite the falling homicide rate in countries historically affected by the activity of organised crime groups, such as in the "northern triangle", there were also countries and territories in the Caribbean that experienced alarming increases in the rate, such as Surinam, Puerto Rico, Barbados and the Bahamas. In fact, in addition to the cases identified as crises (the Turks and Caicos Islands, Jamaica and

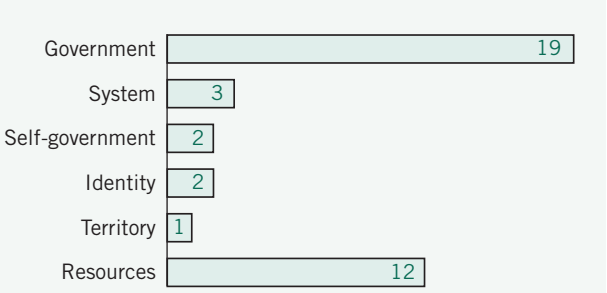
Graph 2.14. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in America in 2024**



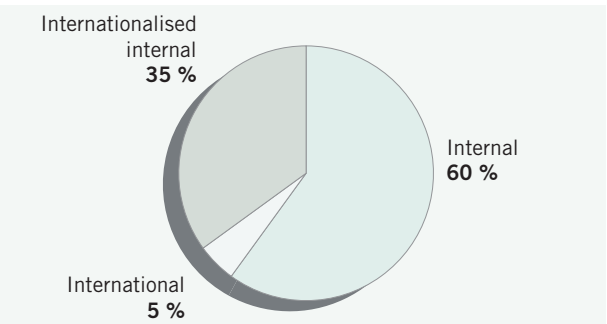
Graph 2.15. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in America in 2024**



Graph 2.16. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of America in 2024**



Graph 2.17. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in America in 2024**



Trinidad and Tobago) or armed conflicts (Haiti), the Caribbean had some of the highest homicide rates in the world, such as in Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia.

Almost half the crises (19 of the 20) were caused in part by opposition to internal or international government policies. The second-most prevalent factor in the region was the control of resources (12 cases). All crises linked to this factor in America were due to the activity of organised criminal groups in relation to drug trafficking and control of other illicit economies or due to the effects of extractivism in Bolivia and Peru. The incidence of the rest of the factors was relative in the crises of the region. Demands linked to changes in the system were important in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Factors related to identity and self-government were found in Chile, due to claims made by the Mapuche people, and Bolivia, owing to the demands of the departments of the "crescent". The only context related to controlling territory was the dispute between Venezuela and Guyana over the Essequibo region, a territory historically claimed by Venezuela, but which is formally under the effective control and administration of the government of Guyana. Seventeen of the 20 crises in the region were internal, a proportion much higher than the world average (41%).

America was the region of the world with the highest percentage of cases that de-escalated, due to the drop in homicides or in the number or intensity of demonstrations

Seven crises were internationalised internal, especially due to the transnational nature of some organised crime groups operating in Central America and the Caribbean or in countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Ecuador, as well as due to the regional dimension that the crisis has acquired in Venezuela. Only the case of Venezuela-Guyana was international in nature.

Thirty-one crises were reported in **Asia and the Pacific**, 27% of the total worldwide and two fewer than in 2023. Three new crises were counted compared to last year (Indonesia, South Korea and China-South Korea), whilst five other cases stopped being considered crises: Fiji, Indonesia (Sulawesi), Thailand, China (Hong Kong) and Indonesia (West Papua), the latter of which was reclassified as a conflict. Broken down by subregion, 12 of the crises were in East Asia (China (Xinjiang); China (Tibet); China-Philippines; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-USA; China-South Korea; South Korea-North Korea; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; Japan-Russia (Kuril Islands)), eight were in Southern Asia (Afghanistan-Pakistan; Bangladesh; India (Manipur); India (Nagaland); India-China; India-Pakistan; Pakistan and Sri Lanka); seven were in Central Asia (Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Tajikistan; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan);

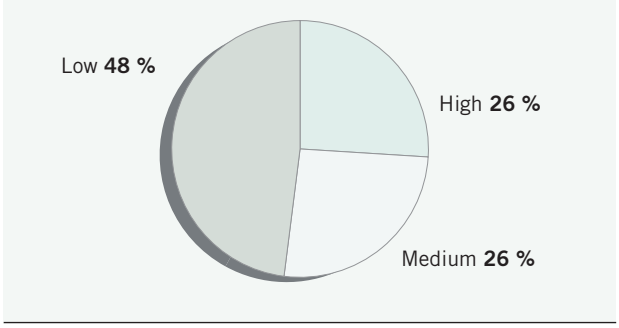
Uzbekistan; Uzbekistan (Karakalpakistan)); three were in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, South China Sea and Laos); and one was in the Pacific (Papua New Guinea). As in previous years, some countries dealt with several crises, such as China (11 crises), Tajikistan (five), Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, South Korea, India and Pakistan (four) and Japan and North Korea (three).

Virtually half the crises (48%) were of low intensity, 26% were of average intensity and the rest were of high intensity. The eight high-intensity crises were Afghanistan-Pakistan; Bangladesh; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-Philippines; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; South North-Korea Korea; and Papua New Guinea. With the exception of Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea, all maximum-intensity crises in the region were international. Thirty-five per cent of the crises identified in Asia and the Pacific escalated in 2023 compared to the previous year, whilst 13% became less intense and in the remaining 52% witnessed no significant changes. The 11 crises that escalated compared to 2023 were Afghanistan-Pakistan; Bangladesh; China-Japan; China-Taiwan; China-South Korea; South Korea-North Korea; South Korea; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Laos; and the South China Sea. As in previous years, several countries in the East Asia region, which has geographical continuity with the South China Sea, experienced a remarkable rise in political and military tension, with China playing a major role. There were also political crises in Bangladesh and South Korea, including mass protests and the departure of the Bangladeshi prime minister and the South Korean president, widespread protests in Indonesia and growing political and military tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

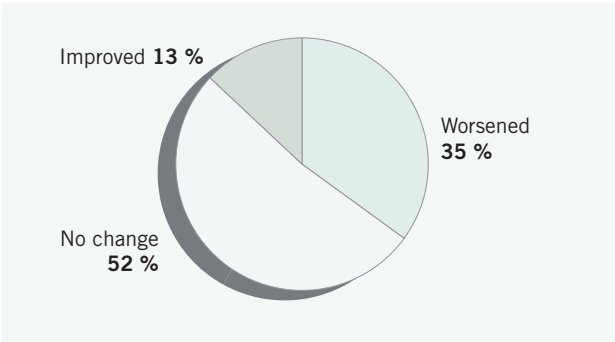
Forty-two per cent of the socio-political crises in Asia and the Pacific were international, clearly the highest proportion worldwide

The most prevalent substantive cause for the crises in the region was control of territory, which was found in 48% of them. Most of the crises related to this cause are territorial struggles between states, such as between China and the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, the USA and several Southeast Asian states with a coast on the South China Sea, as well as the cases of India-China, India-Pakistan, North Korea-South Korea, Japan-Russia (over the Kuril Islands) and Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan. Opposition to the government was nearly as prevalent as a cause and was a major factor in 45% of the cases. However, this cause is clearly less prevalent in this region than in the rest of the world and less than the global average (70%). Crises linked to the system accounted for 35% of the total in the region, clearly a larger proportion than most regions. Many such crises occurred in authoritarian countries, single-party countries and countries with low indices of democracy,[15]

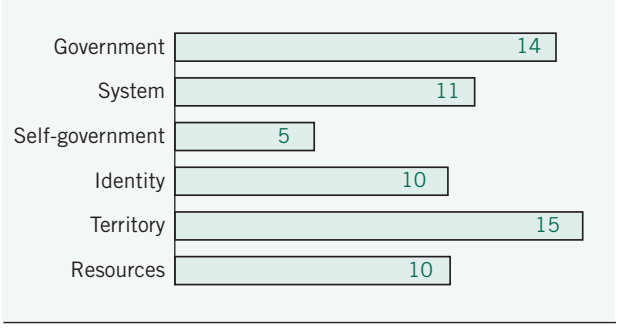
Graph 2.18. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in Asia and the Pacific in 2024**



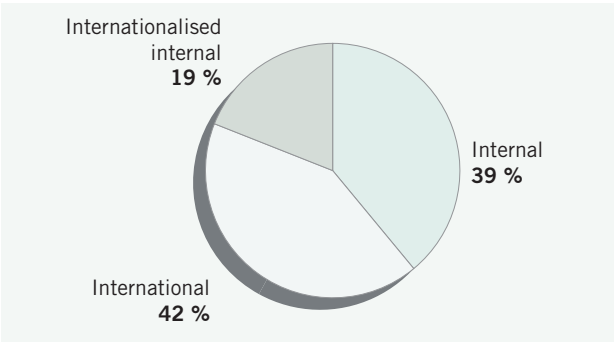
Graph 2.19. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in Asia and the Pacific in 2024**



Graph 2.20. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of Asia and the Pacific in 2024**



Graph 2.21. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in Asia and the Pacific in 2024**



15 International IDEA, Global State of Democracy Indices [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

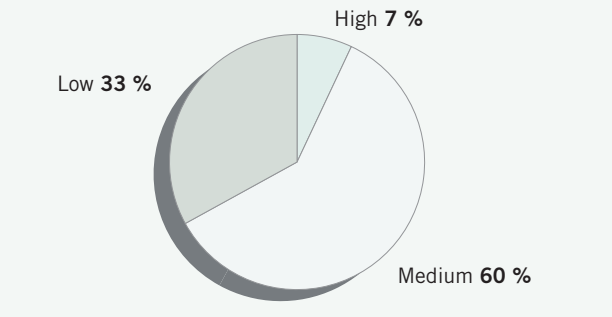
such as China, Laos, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Identity-based factors were key in one third of the cases, often related to national minorities' grievances or demands, such as in China (Xinjiang and Tibet), India (Manipur and Nagaland), Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhstan) and Uzbekistan (Karakalpakistan); repressed minorities' grievances or demands (the Hmong people in Laos); and intercommunity clashes (Papua New Guinea). Control of resources was also a cause of 32% of the crises, whilst disputes over self-government were behind 16% of all crises in Asia and Pacific.

Finally, almost 39% of the socio-political crises were internal in nature, 19% were internationalised internal and 42% were international (42%), making Asia and the Pacific the part of the world with the highest proportion of international socio-political crises. Most of them are located in the area between the Sea of Okhotsk and the northern Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea: the historical dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands; strain between China and South Korea in the Yellow Sea; tensions between North Korea and South Korea in the Yellow Sea and between North Korea and several countries regarding its weapons programme; the dispute between China and Japan (mainly over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands); the conflict over sovereignty between China and Taiwan; the geopolitical rivalry between China and the United States, one of the main theatres of which is in East Asia; and military skirmishes between China and the Philippines as part of the interstate conflict in the South China Sea, which involves China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam.

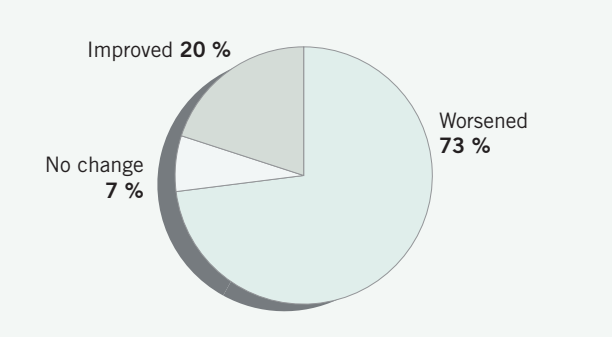
Europe was once again the region with the highest proportion of crises that worsened in 2024 (73%)

Fifteen socio-political crises were reported in **Europe**, accounting for 13% of the total. In a change from the previous year, the cases of Georgia and Serbia became analysed as crises. Broken down by subregion, Southern Europe had five crises, followed by the South Caucasus (four) and Eastern Europe and Russia (three). Russia was a significant actor in 13 socio-political crises around the world, especially in Europe and Africa. Five were of low intensity, nine were of medium intensity and only one (Russia) was of high intensity. Once again in 2024, Europe was the part of the world where the highest number of crises escalated proportionally. Whereas 85% of the crises deteriorated over the previous year in 2023, the proportion in 2024 was 73%, which was twice the world average. The crises that got worse in 2024 were Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Georgia; Georgia (Abkhazia); Moldova (Transdniestria); Russia; Russia (North Caucasus); Russia-USA, NATO, EU; Serbia; Serbia-Kosovo; and Türkiye. Tensions escalated in the three cases in Russia. Russia played a significant role in 13 socio-political crises around the world, making it

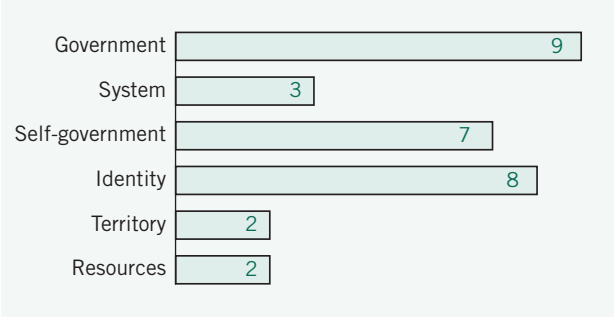
Graph 2.22. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in Europe in 2024**



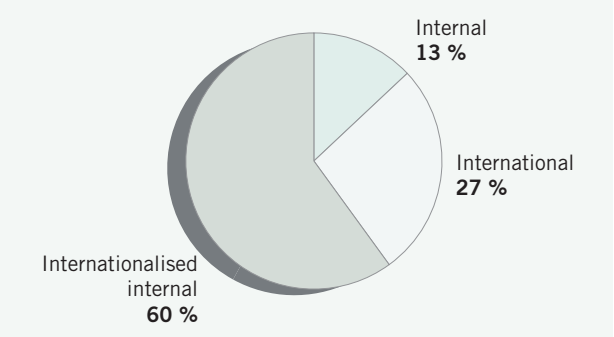
Graph 2.23. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in Europe in 2024**



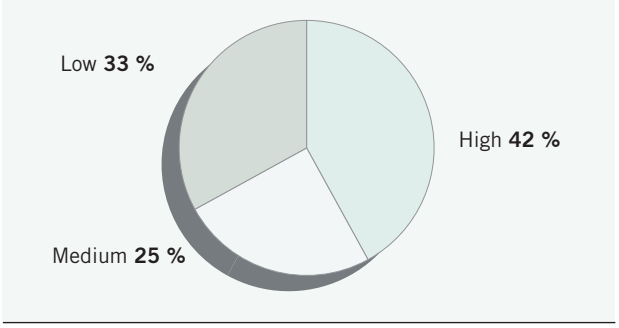
Graph 2.24. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of Europe in 2024**



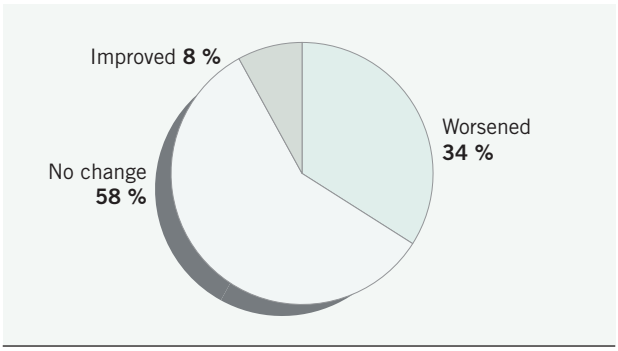
Graph 2.25. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in Europe in 2024**



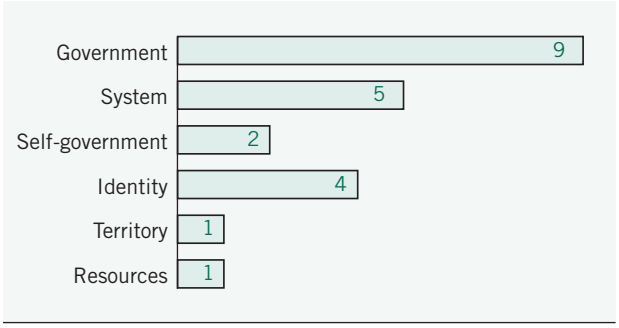
Graph 2.26. **Intensity of the socio-political crises in the Middle East in 2024**



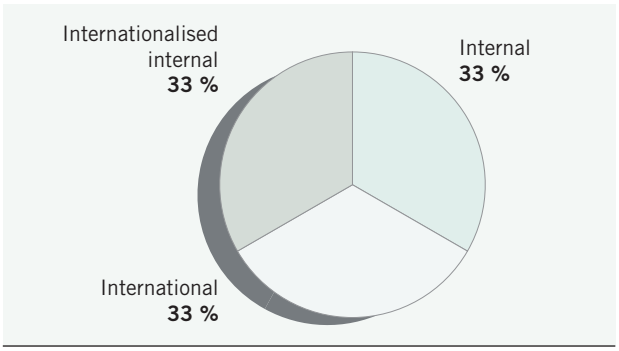
Graph 2.27. **Evolution of the socio-political crises in the Middle East in 2024**



Graph 2.28. **Factors causing the socio-political crises of the Middle East in 2024**



Graph 2.29. **Internal, international and internationalised internal socio-political crises in the Middle East in 2024**



the country involved as the main actor in the second-most crises, closely behind the United States (14).

Opposition to the government was a cause of 60% of the crises in Europe, a smaller proportion than in other regions. Identity-related factors were a significant cause of 53%, the highest proportion in the world. The issues broadly related to self-government and self-determination were also significant in almost half the cases in the region (specifically 47%). As with identity-related factors, Europe was the part of the world where self-government disputes had the greatest relative importance. The other two regions in which this factor was highly prevalent were the Middle East and Asia and the Pacific, with 17% and 16% respectively. Next, disputes around the system were a cause of three crises: Russia (North Caucasus); Russia-USA, NATO, EU; and Türkiye. Control of territory and of resources had a lower incidence as main causes of crises in Europe. Though both were present in two cases, they were projected in different crises in various ways, including through the cynical use of energy as a weapon in the dispute in Moldova, Moldova (Transdniestria) and Russia-USA, NATO, EU and through territorial control of regions with disputed status in Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Moldova (Transdniestria).

The Middle East was the region of the world with the highest proportion of high-intensity socio-political crises

Finally, 60% of the crises were internationalised internal, 27% were international and 13% were internal. Though the greatest number of crises worldwide were internal (47 of 116, or 41%), there were only two cases of this type in Europe: Russia (North Caucasus) and Serbia. Conversely, Europe was the part of the world where internationalised internal crises had the greatest relative incidence, almost twice the world average (60% versus 33%).

Twelve socio-political crises were identified in the **Middle East**, equivalent to 10% of the total. In a change from the previous year, when there were 10 crises, one stopped being considered a crisis (Iraq (Kurdistan)), whilst three other cases were classified as crises: Israel-Iran, Israel-Syria and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, USA, United Kingdom. Seven of the 12 crises were in the Gulf and the remaining five were in the Mashreq. Iran and Israel (with six and four cases, respectively) played a significant role in the greatest number of crises in the region. Thirty-three per cent of the crises were of low intensity, 25% were of medium intensity and 42% were of high intensity. The proportion of high-intensity crises (Iran; Iran (nuclear programme); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, USA, UK) in 2024 was 42%, more than double that of 2023 (20%).

In fact, the Middle East is the region with the highest percentage of high-intensity crises in the world. As is the case elsewhere, a very large proportion of the high-intensity crises was international. Whilst there were no observable escalations in 2023, four crises escalated in 2024: Iran (Sistan-Balochistan); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, USA, UK. Both Israel and Iran played leading roles in three of the four crises that escalated. In seven other crises, there were no significant changes compared to the situation in 2023, and in one case (Lebanon), internal political tensions eased somewhat due to the impacts on the country of the armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, a situation that led—after years—to an agreement to form a new government in early 2025.

The most prevalent cause of the crises in the Middle East was opposition to the government (75%). The second-most frequent cause, opposition to the system, was present in 42%, the highest proportion of any region in the world. Specifically, this factor was behind the cases of Iran (nuclear programme); Israel-Iran; Israel-Syria; Lebanon; and Yemen (Houthis)-Israel, USA, UK. Identity-related issues were one of the causes of one third of the crises, whilst self-government and self-determination were relevant in 17%. Control of territory and of resources were only significant in the case of Israel-Syria. One third of the crises were internal, one third were international and another third were internationalised internal. This pattern is significantly different from that of the previous year, when 50% of the crises were internal or internationalised, 40% were internal and 10% were international.

2.3. Socio-political crises: annual evolution

2.3.1. Africa

Central Africa

Chad	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity Internationalised Internal
Main parties:	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (such as the Wakit Tama coalition, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (mainly FACT, CCMSR, UFDD, UFR), community militias, private militias, France, MNJTF

Summary:
Often classified as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, Chad has faced a complex atmosphere of instability and violence for much of the period following independence in 1960. The country's ethnic diversity has cynically been exploited by a tradition of factionalism. French colonialism also exacerbated the animosity between the predominantly Muslim north and the more Christian and animist south, a politically exploited division at the heart of the conflict. Successive governments since 1966 have been confronted by insurgents seeking to gain power. Libya and France have historically been present in Chadian internal affairs, supporting insurgents and governments, respectively. Idriss Déby came to power after a coup d'état in 1990. An amendment to the Constitution in 2005 allowed him to become one of the longest-serving leaders in Africa, but it also planted the seed of an insurgency composed of disaffected people against the regime. After his death in 2021, a military junta carried out a coup d'état and installed his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, as the new president. During 2022, Déby reached an agreement with part of the insurgency in Doha and held the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) that allowed him to extend his mandate beyond the initially promised 18-month transition. Meanwhile, other internal sources of instability include periodic outbreaks of inter-community violence due to cattle theft and land ownership and use, persistent insurgent attacks in the north and illegal mining. Regional tensions include antagonism between Arab tribes and black populations in the border area between Sudan and Chad, linked to local grievances, competition for resources and an extension of the war in neighbouring Sudan, as well as participation in the offensive against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region.

Chad remained unstable throughout 2024. The repressive activity of the security forces, Boko Haram's attacks, counterinsurgency operations by the Chadian Armed Forces and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and sporadic outbreaks of violence surrounding cattle rustling and land use continued throughout the year. At the same time, **tension with Sudan increased**.[16] Ninety-nine violent events resulting in 523 fatalities were reported across the country in 2024, according to ACLED.[17] Most of them were concentrated in the province of Lac (324 fatalities, linked to Boko Haram's armed actions and the response of security forces). To a lesser extent, there were also deaths in the eastern provinces of Sila and Ouaddaï (46 and 31, respectively), bordering Sudan. These figures were higher than those reported in 2023.[18] Across the country, 108 violent incidents resulting in a death toll of 288 were reported in 2023, lower than the 132 violent incidents and 642 fatalities reported in 2022.

Elections were held in 2024, marking the end of the political transition that began in April 2021 following the death of President Idriss Déby and the subsequent coup d'état by a military council that installed his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, as president. After the coup

16 See the summary on Sudan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
17 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025].
18 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025]. This figure includes five types of violent events (battles, violence against civilians, explosions/remote violence, riots and protests).

d'état, Mahamat Déby had promised the AU that he would hold elections after an 18-month transition and that he would not run, although the Doha Agreement for Peace and the Participation of Political-Military Movements in the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue signed in August 2022 and the subsequent National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) in 2022 led to the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council (CMT) for a further 24 months and allowed Mahamat Déby to run in the elections of May 2024. The presidential election took place on 6 May 2024, and parliamentary, regional and municipal elections were held on 29 December, for the first time in a decade. However, all these elections were met with scepticism, described as fraudulent by local and international organisations and boycotted by the main opposition parties. Previously, a constitutional referendum had been held in December 2023, allowing President Déby to run for president. Déby won the presidential election in May with 61% of the vote. The candidate who came in second, Succès Masra, the leader of the opposition party Les Transformateurs, carried 18.5% of the vote. Masra had returned to the country in January 2024 following an agreement with Déby and was appointed prime minister. Many saw this as Déby's attempt to gain support from members of the opposition, which also undermined Masra's credibility.[19]

Deemed fraudulent by local and international organisations, the elections in Chad marked the end of the political transition with the victory of Mahamat Déby, who held on as the head of state

Pressure on the opposition had increased in recent months, reaching its peak on 28 February with the killing of opposition leader Yaya Dillo, the leader of the Socialist Party Without Borders (PSF) and a cousin of Mahamat Déby. The government claimed that Dillo died resisting arrest, but the opposition claimed he was killed extrajudicially in a military operation. During the same operation, the uncle of the transitional president and brother of the late president, Saleh Déby, was also arrested. In early February, he had left the ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) to join Yaya Dillo's PSF.[20] His defection, along with expressions of dissent from other members of the Zaghawa clan –the ethnic group to which the Déby family belongs– stoked tensions within the ruling elite. According to International Crisis Group, Dillo's death was a blatant example of the growing discord within the Zaghawa clan.[21] Just over 5% of the Chadian population belongs to this clan, but it has controlled the country for 30 years with the support of other northern elites belonging to the Gorane and Arab ethnic groups. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court disqualified 10 candidates, including two prominent opposition figures, Nassour Ibrahim Neguy Koursami and Rakhis Ahmat Saleh, due to alleged irregularities in their candidacies.

Several armed groups that did not sign the Doha Agreement expressed interest in disarmament, whilst those who did sign the agreement were frustrated by the slow progress of its implementation of DDR and other provisions. Several hundred fighters affiliated with Libya-based Chadian rebel groups that signed and did not sign the peace agreement reportedly returned from Libya in 2024 to join disarmament efforts. Meanwhile, several Chadian armed groups active in Libya, Sudan and the CAR, aligned with the Cadre Permanent de Concertation et de Réflexion (CPCR) coalition, including FACT and CCSMR, continue to pose a threat to Chad's stability.

Meanwhile, the protests that began in 2023 against the French troops stationed in the country ended with their withdrawal between late 2024 and early 2025. The protests had started after a Chadian soldier was killed by a French soldier, which led to a letter from the political and social opposition demanding that Déby withdraw French troops from Chad. The decision was aided by the investigation opened in July in France against Mahamat Déby for misappropriation of public funds, which was also used as ammunition against France for its alleged legal interference with Chadian sovereignty. Other analysts saw this trial as a way for France to pressure Chad for its rapprochement with Russia. On 19 December, the Chadian government demanded that France withdraw its troops from the country by 31 January[22] in a decision that various analysts described as an attempt by President Déby to capitalise on public support. Chad demanded the withdrawal of the contingent of 1,000 troops and various combat aircraft stationed in the country for more than 50 years following the end of the military cooperation agreement in November.[23] This contingent has supported the country's various leaders, including the father of the current president, Idriss Déby, in maintaining their positions amidst instability and insurgent threats. However, official government sources indicated that the troop withdrawal does not imply a severance of relations with France, emphasising that the situation is entirely different with respect to the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). Both countries affirmed the importance of their relations and the Chadian foreign minister described France as an essential partner. Finally, Hungarian President Viktor Orban opened a diplomatic mission in the country and announced that Hungary would provide humanitarian and military support to Chad, including the deployment of Hungarian troops[24] as a way to curb migration and support its new ally in Central Africa. This decision was described as populist and opportunistic in the context

19 See the summary on Chad in chapter 1 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Icaria: Barcelona, 2025.
20 RFI, "Tchad: pourquoi Saleh Déby Itno, oncle du président de la transition, rallie l'opposant Yaya Dillo?", *RFI,* 12 February 2024.
21 International Crisis Group, *Chad: Averting the Risk of Post-transition Instability*, 3 May 2024.
22 RFI, "Chad orders French troops to leave within six weeks as relations sour", 20 December 2024.
23 Al Jazeera, "Chad ends military cooperation with France", 29 November 2024.
24 Lawal, Shola, "Why is Hungary's Orban sending soldiers to Chad?", Al Jazeera, 23 October 2024.

of the reconfiguration of relations between France and the Sahel countries.

Finally, Chad experienced increased tension with Sudan. **A shooting at the presidential palace on 8 January 2025 was interpreted by some analysts interpreted as a possible coup attempt**. Eighteen people were killed and six others wounded in the incident due to the security forces' disproportionate response. Local and regional dynamics could have helped to cause the incident, according to International Crisis Group. These dynamics include discontent among the Zaghawa ethnic group, to which President Déby belongs, over his closeness to the UAE and to Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group that he allegedly supports against the will of the Zaghawa community, which is allied with the RSF's adversary, the Sudanese Armed Forces. Relations between Chad and Sudan deteriorated during 2024, with Sudan accusing Chad of supporting the RSF and Chad claiming that Sudan backed Chadian insurgent groups. The UAE was also accused of supporting the RSF through Chad. Internal tensions between clans also escalated following the death of Saleh Déby in late December, under murky circumstances. A Zaghawa opposition figure and uncle of the president, Déby had been imprisoned by the authorities for five months in February 2024.

Eastern Africa

Kenya	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties, civil society organisations), SLDF armed group, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and al-Shabaab sympathizers in Kenya, ISIS

Summary:
Kenya's politics and economy have been dominated since its independence in 1963 by the KANU party, controlled by the largest community in the country, the Kikuyu, to the detriment of the remaining ethnic groups. The father of independence and founder of KANU, Jomo Kenyatta, ruled the country from 1964 until his death in 1978 and was succeeded by the autocratic Daniel Arap Moi. In 1991, Moi began a transition towards the end of single-party rule and in 1992 the first multi-party elections were held, which KANU also won. Starting in 2002, the client process to succeed the autocratic Daniel Arap Moi (in power for 24 years) was interrupted by the victory of Mwai Kibaki, which together with KANU dissidents and others created the National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and defeated Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of the independence leader and official KANU candidate. Since then, different ethno-political conflicts have emerged in the country, which has produced a climate of political violence instrumentalized during the different electoral cycles. The electoral fraud that took place in 2007 sparked an outbreak of violence in which 1,300 people died and some 300,000 were displaced. After this election, a fragile national unity government was formed between Mwai Kibabi and Raila Odinga (the son of historical opposition leader Oginga Odinga). Uhuru Kenyatta was elected president in 2013 and William Ruto became vice president, though the results were challenged by the opposition led by Raila Odinga, just like in 2017, when Kenyatta won re-election. Ruto and Odinga faced off in the 2022 election, also affected by irregularities in a climate of political violence, as in previous elections. In the end, Ruto was declared the winner. In parallel, several areas of the country were affected by inter-community disputes over land ownership and cattle theft, also instigated politically during the electoral period. In addition, Kenya's military intervention in Somalia triggered attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in Kenya, subsequent animosity towards the Somali population in Kenya and tensions between Kenya and Somalia over their different political agendas, posing added challenges to the stability of the country.

During 2024, the country experienced a profound political and social crisis marked by mass protests against unpopular economic policies, an alarming increase in femicide, institutional tensions and an intensification of attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in the northeastern part of the country. The passage of the controversial and hugely unpopular 2024 Finance Bill, which proposed tax increases to reduce the fiscal deficit, sparked a wave of protests led by young people, particularly those belonging to Generation Z. Known as #RejectFinanceBill2024, these protests began in May and were largely driven by middle-class young people organising on social media[25] who feared that the new legislation would increase the already high cost of living and lead to job losses. The police arrested dozens and used tear gas and water cannons, injuring several protesters. That same day, the parliamentary finance committee announced that it would remove certain provisions, though many controversial taxes remained, including those on cancer treatments and menstrual hygiene products. When the 20 June protests resumed and spread to towns and cities across the country, clashes with security forces injured at least 200 people. In Nairobi, police allegedly shot and killed one protester, whilst another was killed by a tear gas canister.

The mostly peaceful protests reached their peak on 25 June when lawmakers approved deeply unpopular tax increases following pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). After the vote was announced, a crowd stormed the Parliament complex in Nairobi and a

25 Princewill, Nimi, "Mass arrests in Kenya as angry citizens protest against tax hikes", *CNN*, 19 June 2024.

fire broke out in clashes that were unprecedented in the country's history since its independence from Britain in 1963. According to local and international sources, security forces used excessive force, killing at least 23 people and injuring more than 300 in the capital alone. The crackdown involved the use of tear gas and live ammunition. Human Rights Watch said that the death toll was at least 30.[26] Faced with popular pressure that spread across the country, President William Ruto vetoed the bill on 26 June and announced significant budget cuts. However, the protests continued, demanding his resignation and deploring police brutality. In response, Ruto dissolved his cabinet on 11 July, retaining only the foreign minister and vice president, and promised to form a broad-based government to address the economic situation. According to Ruto, the proposed fiscal measures were part of efforts to reduce Kenya's debt burden of more than $80 billion. About 60% of Kenya's revenue collection goes towards servicing its debt. According to ACLED, President Ruto's response to the youth demonstrations was to build a coalition of political elites, co-opt influential individuals and groups and intimidate organisers and participants.[27] To build a traditional political coalition, he approached his main opponent, Raila Odinga, who led the protests against tax increases in 2023 but was completely uninvolved in the protests in June and July 2024. Ruto had secured Odinga's support by nominating him as the Eastern African candidate to lead the AU Commission, though this decision drew significant criticism from Odinga within the Azimio la Umoja coalition and his party, ODM. Although the momentum of the protests subsided in July, they continued throughout the rest of the year. In November, the National Human Rights Commission reported that at least 60 people had died during the summer protests and called on the police chief to acknowledge the deaths and expedite investigations. Dozens of activists remained missing.

Initially peaceful protests in Kenya against the 2024 Finance Bill escalated into unprecedented clashes since independence in 1963, in which the government crackdown claimed dozens of lives

Furthermore, according to data collected by ACLED,[28] in 2024 there were 1,070 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices, demonstrations and protests) across the country, claiming 708 lives. Of these, 132 violent events took place in the four counties bordering Somalia (Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu), where most of the violent incidents linked to the actions of the jihadist armed group al-Shabaab are concentrated, resulting in the deaths of 196 people. In 2023, there were 154 violent events, resulting in 297 fatalities. These attacks included ambushes on military convoys, attacks with improvised explosive devices and attacks on local communities, resulting in many deaths and causing displacement. The insecurity in these areas further complicated the humanitarian and security situation in the country. ACLED's overall tally for 2023 amounted to 1,100 violent events and 971 fatalities (higher than the 994 events and 685 deaths reported in 2022).

Furthermore, **sexual and gender-based violence has risen in Kenya in recent years**. Between September 2023 and January 2024, there were 7,107 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence.[29] According to Africa Data Hub, at least 546 women were murdered between 2016 and 2023. In the first four months of 2024, at least 100 women were murdered, mostly by intimate partners or acquaintances. In January, following the deaths of 14 women, an estimated 10,000 women took to the streets of Kenya in what became the largest protest against gender-based violence in the country's history.[30] Between 39 and 47% of women in the country have experienced gender-based violence at some point in their lives, according to analysts.[31] As a result, the government declared gender-based violence the country's most urgent security threat and established a specialised police unit and a presidential task force to address the problem.[32]

The largest demonstration against gender-based violence in Kenya's history took place in January due to the increase in femicide in recent years

In 2024, Kenya also faced a **surge in intercommunity violence**, especially in the northern and western regions of the country. Disputes over natural resources, such as land and water, exacerbated by climate change and resource scarcity, led to intercommunal clashes that left hundreds dead. Between March and May, intense rains and floods devastated the country, causing the Nairobi and Athi rivers to burst their banks and killing and displacing thousands. Over 306,000 people were affected and 315 died in Nairobi alone. Dramatic changes in weather patterns, including a prolonged drought and intense rainfall worsened by El Niño, contributed to this situation. Furthermore, droughts followed by flooding in the Busia region, near Lake Victoria, created ideal conditions for the spread of malaria.

26 Human Rights Watch, "Kenya: Witnesses Describe Police Killing Protesters", *HRW*, 28 June 2024.
27 ACLED, *Ruto settles with Odinga to quell unrest in Kenya*, 23 September 2024.
28 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 10 February 2025].
29 Africanews, "Kenya's response to gender violence: a plan for women's protection", 20 December 2024.
30 Al Jazeera, "'Stop killing us!': Thousands march to protest against femicide in Kenya," 27 January 2024.
31 Sidibé, Safourata, "Kenya's urgent battle against femicide", *Equal Measures 2030*, 27 November 2024.
32 Star, "DCI boss Amin forms special team to probe femicide cases", 30 January 2024.

Southern Africa

Mozambique	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, system Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
The coup d'état against the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974 and the guerrilla warfare carried out by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) Marxist-Leninist insurgence took Mozambique to Independence in 1975. Since then, the country has been affected by a civil war between the FRELIMO Government and the RENAMO armed group, supported by the white minorities that governed in the former Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) and South Africa during the apartheid, in the context of the Cold War. In addition, the country suffered the consequences of severe famine and poor economic management. In 1992 the parties reached a peace agreement that was considered an example of reconciliation. This was mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and ended a 16-year long war that caused one million fatalities and five million displaced persons, and gave way to a period of political stability and economic development, albeit high levels of inequality. Since then, growing accusations of fraud and irregularities in the electoral processes that followed, some of which were confirmed by international observers, have gone hand-in-hand with a growing authoritarianism and repression of the opposition, and FRELIMO taking over the State (and the communication media and economy).

The year was marked by mounting political tensions in Mozambique due to the general elections, which were won again by the ruling party, FRELIMO. This led to an acute political crisis and public protests that were harshly broken up. By the end of the year, the crackdowns had left at least 225 people dead and more than 4,000 people had been arrested. In May, the two main political parties in Mozambique (FRELIMO and RENAMO) announced their candidates for the presidential election. The ruling party, FRELIMO, elected Daniel Chapo, the governor of the southern province of Inhambane, while the main opposition party, RENAMO, re-elected Ossufo Momade. Meanwhile, Venâncio Mondlane, a former RENAMO candidate, ran as the leader of the opposition coalition, the Coligação Aliança Democrática (CAD). Later, in July, the Electoral Commission banned the CAD from registering to run in the legislative and provincial elections, though it did allow its candidate to run in the presidential election. This decision was ratified by the Constitutional Council in August, stoking tensions in the country. Finally, in an atmosphere of rising political tension, the elections were held on 9 October. Election day was largely peaceful, although observers and the opposition reported widespread irregularities. The elections were marred by low turnout (43%), especially in the north of the country, as well as by allegations of fraud, including ballot-stuffing, "ghost voters" and the use of state resources for the benefit of FRELIMO. The election results, which handed victory to Daniel Chapo (FRELIMO), were widely contested by the opposition, led by Mondlane (CAD), who claimed to be the real winner and denounced massive fraud. Tensions escalated when Mondlane's lawyer, Elvino Dias, and CAD employee Paulo Guamebe were murdered on 19 October. Days later, on 24 October, the Electoral Commission published the final results, confirming that FRELIMO held on to its two-thirds majority in Parliament and its candidate, Daniel Chapo, won the presidential election, leaving Mondlane and the CAD in second place. The announcement of the results sparked protests and demonstrations across the country, which were met with widespread police crackdowns. The provinces of Maputo, Nampula, Sofala and Zambezia were the main flashpoints of the unrest. In late October, clashes resulted in dozens of deaths and tensions escalated during the first few weeks of November, with opponents calling for strikes and mass protests that were harshly broken up by the government. Unrest continued to grow in December, especially after the Constitutional Council ratified the election results, which intensified attacks on government buildings and security forces. In early December, opposition leaders called for new demonstrations, to which the government responded with a "zero tolerance" policy. Attacks on key infrastructure increased, such as mines and power plants, paralysing the economy and leading to more repression. Between 23 and 26 December, at least 134 people died in clashes between protesters and police. Despite international efforts to mediate the crisis, such as calls for dialogue and a de-escalation of violence by South Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the EU, and the US, the Mozambican government ruled out foreign intervention and called for an internal solution to the crisis.

West Africa

Guinea	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, Guinean Armed Forces, opposition political parties, unions

Summary:
The army took advantage of the death of President Lansana Conté in December 2008, after more than two decades in power, to carry out a new coup d'état and form a military junta. The holding of elections in 2010, won by the opposition leader Alpha Condé, paved the way for a return to the democratic system. However, the elections were marred by violence and by the coming to the fore of identity-related tensions between the country's main ethnic communities. The country remains unstable due to the lack of a strategy

for national reconciliation and obstacles to the reform of the security sector, with an army that is omnipresent in Guinean political activity, kept the country in a state of instability. In 2020, Alpha Condé was re-elected president to what would be his third term of office. The opposition blasted the unconstitutionality of his re-election and political tensions in the country escalated again. As a result, on 5 September 2021, members of the Guinean Army led by Colonel Mamay Doumbouya staged a new coup d'état that ousted Condé's government. In response, ECOWAS imposed sanctions on the country and demanded a return to constitutional order. However, the new military junta decreed a three-year transition period.

Guinea experienced a year of growing political tension and restrictions on civil liberties amidst a transition that deviated from the roadmap defined by the military authorities. Since the beginning of the year, the transitional military junta led by Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya—who came to power in a coup d'état in 2021—had promised to comply with the roadmap to restore civilian government by holding elections by the end of 2024. Given these developments, on 24 February the West African regional bloc ECOWAS announced that it would lift the financial and economic sanctions against the military junta in a move that seemed to invite the junta to normalise its relations and facilitate the transition in the country. However, the junta's growing authoritarianism and repression of the opposition, as well as deteriorating living conditions in the country, led to mounting social discontent, protests and demonstrations throughout the year. Between 26 and 28 February, unions called for a general strike to demand the release of Sékou Jamal Pendessa, the secretary general of the Guinean Press Professionals Union, who had been arrested in January. In March, demonstrations erupted in the town of Kindia due to power outages. In July, the repression reached a critical point with the disappearance of activists Foniké Menguè and Mamadou Billo, members of the civil society organisation National Front for the Defence of the Constitution, mobilising opposition forces. On 6 August, the main opposition group, the Forces Vivienne de Guinea (FVG), called a general strike in the capital, Conakry, to protest against the military authorities and demand a return to civilian rule. Later, in October, Doumbouya tightened his grip over the country, promoting his candidacy for the unannounced presidential elections and taking authoritarian action that included dissolving at least 53 political parties and banning international travel for ministers. In November, the junta leader further shored up his position by promoting 16 military officers in an attempt to strengthen his network of allies, according to civil society organisations. These moves were interpreted as responses to growing internal tensions within the government and the Guinean Army. Finally, on 14 December, the authorities announced that the timeline originally established for restoring democracy would not be met and postponed the planned presidential election on the grounds that the conditions were not yet suitable. This was roundly rejected by the opposition, led by the FVG, which called for protests. In an attempt to ease tensions, on 31 December President Doumbouya announced that the election and constitutional referendum would be held in early 2025. Previously, in August, a draft constitution had been submitted that included significant amendments, such as a presidential term limit and the creation of a bicameral legislative system. However, this new Constitution did not prevent Doumbouya from running for president in the future. This increased distrust among the opposition, which accused the government of using the constitutional process as a way to perpetuate its power. At the end of the year, uncertainty about the future election and the promise of a peaceful transition remained critical issues in Guinea's political landscape.

Nigeria	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Resources, Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, livestock and farming communities, community militias, criminal gangs, IMN, militias and private local security forces, Lakurawa

Summary:
After gaining its independence in 1960, the inability of the country's successive governments to address issues associated with citizenship, ethnicity, religion and resource distribution has aggravated perceptions of grievances and discontent, leading to the rise of separatist demands in various regions. Moreover, since 1999, when political power was returned to civilian hands after a succession of dictatorships and coups, the government has not managed to establish a stable democratic system in the country. Huge economic and social differences remain between the states that make up Nigeria, due to the lack of real decentralisation, and between the various social strata, which fosters instability and outbreaks of violence. Moreover, strong inter-religious, inter-ethnic and political differences continue to fuel violence throughout the country. Political corruption and the lack of transparency are the other main stumbling blocks to democracy in Nigeria. Mafia-like practices and the use of political assassination as an electoral strategy have prevented the free exercise of the population's right to vote, leading to increasing discontent and fraudulent practices. At the same time, the actions of criminal groups in the northwestern part of the country, caused by different factors, have multiplied since 2018.

An atmosphere of political violence perpetrated by criminal groups persisted in northwestern and north-central Nigeria, whilst the activities of the two main Boko Haram factions (JAS and ISWAP) and counterinsurgency actions in the northeastern Lake Chad Basin region[33]

33 Star, "DCI boss Amin forms special team to probe femicide cases", 30 January 2024.

had death tolls similar to those of previous years. This situation was compounded by the recurring intercommunal violence between livestock herders and farmers in the central belt of the country (mainly in the states of Plateau, Kogi and Benue), ongoing clashes and insurgent attacks in the state of Biafra[34] and the proliferation of militias and private local security forces in recent years in Nigeria.[35] **Furthermore, significant protests** broke out in August against the government's management of the severe economic crisis and were harshly broken up.

Nigeria was hit by the worst floods in recent years, exacerbating food insecurity and leading to significant protests against the economic crisis by young people

Across the country, 4,071 violent incidents resulting in 9,440 fatalities were reported in 2024, according to ACLED, although these figures also included violence associated with the armed conflict with Boko Haram.[36] Violence in the four northwestern states of the country (Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger) –the epicentre of criminal group activity– claimed 4,079 lives, according to ACLED. This figure would be 4,450 if the states of Kebbi and Sokoto are included, which have seen an increase in violence in recent years. These death tolls are much higher than those of 2023 (2,344, and 2,869 if Kebbi and Sokoto are included) returning to the levels reported in 2022 (4,481 and 4,920 if Kebbi and Sokoto are included) and in 2021 (3,918 and 4,484 if Kebbi and Sokoto are included).[37]

One notable development among the criminal groups in northwestern Nigeria is the **escalation of violence by a criminal group known as Lakurawa**, according to military sources. With members originally from Mali and Niger, Lakurawa used to protect the civilians from criminal groups. In 2024, it attacked security forces and civilians in the states of Kebbi and Sokoto, leading to an increase in counterinsurgency actions by security forces. The fighting claimed the lives of dozens of members of the group and 22 training camps were destroyed in December, according to the Nigerian Armed Forces. There were also clashes between rival criminal groups. On 13 October, criminal leader Ibrahim Daji was killed as a result of these clashes in the Gusau area of the state of Zamfara. In August, criminal groups executed the emir of the town of Gobir in the state of Sokoto, who had been kidnapped in July. In June, authorities announced the death of the criminal leader known as Buharin Yadi, along with 40 militants, in the Giwa and Sabuwa areas of the state of Kaduna. Hundreds of people were kidnapped at different times throughout the year and held for ransom. One of the areas that saw an increase in kidnappings was the federal capital, Abuja, and its surrounding areas, as well as the northern and central states.

The UN warned that 31.8 million people were facing a food crisis or acute food insecurity between June and August 2024, a figure that increased compared to the previous year.[38] According to UNHCR, the number of forced displacements across the country rose to over 3.57 million people, more than 1.32 million of which were in the northwestern and north-central states and 2.25 million of which were in the northeastern states. This figure increased by more than 100,000 compared to 2023.[39] The situation worsened in September, when **the country was hit by the worst floods in recent years**, resulting in the deaths of 200 people and the forced displacement of 600,000. The destruction of crops and agricultural inputs triggered an increase in food insecurity, affecting more than 1.2 million people. At the same time, the high cost of living and inflation at over 30% and even 40% at several times during the year, exceeding the figures for 2023 and in line with recent years, led to growing social discontent at various times throughout the year. These figures had not been seen in the country since the 1990s and the rise was linked to rising commodity prices and the withdrawal of gasoline subsidies. This discontent was expressed in major youth protests across the country between 1 and 10 August against the government's handling of the crisis under the slogan #EndBadGovernance. In some areas, these protests led to looting and crackdowns by security forces. Authorities imposed curfews and used tear gas and live ammunition to break up the demonstrations. Amnesty International criticised the violation of freedom of expression and assembly during the demonstrations, stating that 22 people died on 7 August,[40] whilst organisers reported that 1,400 protesters were arrested. President Tinubu called for dialogue on 4 August, but offered no response to the protest organisers' demands.

33 See the summary on the Lake Chad region in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
34 See the summary on Nigeria (Biafra) in this chapter.
35 See the summary on Nigeria in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
36 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025]. This figure includes violent events (battles, violence against civilians and attacks involving improvised explosive devices). If we include the categories of excessive use of force and riots and protests, the total rises to 9,624 fatalities in 4,375 violent events, higher than in 2023 (8,764).
37 However, this death toll must be relativised given the difficulties in distinguishing the actions of these groups of criminal gangs from other dynamics of violence due to the many different actors, including criminal groups, security forces, armed jihadist actors, groups linked to ranching communities and civilian self-defence militias.
38 WPF and FAO, Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: November 2024 to May 2025 outlook. Rome, 2024.
39 UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder – Nigeria, [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
40 Amnesty International, "Bloody August: Nigerian government's violent crackdown on #EndBadGovernance protests," 28 November 2024.

Nigeria (Biafra)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Identity, Self-government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, separatist organisations MASSOB and IPOB (which has an armed wing, the ESN)

Summary:
After winning its independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced the challenge of bringing together the different ethnic nationalities. The most paradigmatic example was the civil war between the government and the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra (1967-1970), in which between one and three million people died. After three decades of military rule, the advent of democracy in 1999 gave rise to new expectations that the various identities could be accommodated and demands for political restructuring that have not come true, fuelling separatist grievances. In this context, demands for self-determination have resurfaced in the southeastern part of the country—known as Biafra by separatist movements—through nonviolent organisations, mainly with the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), created in 1999, then by other secessionist movements, including the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), created in 2012. The rise to power of Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, perceived as a threat in the southern regions, has contributed to a rise in tension. The imprisonment in 2015 of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu caused an increase in demonstrations that were harshly repressed by the Nigerian security forces, which have since launched a campaign of violence and extrajudicial executions. This situation worsened with the banning of the IPOB in 2017 and the increase in violence in the second half of 2020, especially in light of the IPOB ban. In 2021, a court ruled that Kanu's arrest in Kenya and subsequent transfer to Nigeria had been unlawful, but he remained in police custody.

Clashes between security forces and insurgents continued in southeastern Nigeria, resulting in dozens of deaths. The armed wing of the pro-independence movement IPOB, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), continued to carry out armed attacks throughout the year. According to the research centre ACLED, 724 violent incidents (battles, violence against civilians and attacks with improvised explosive devices) took place in 2024, resulting in the deaths of 875 people across the 10 states that make up the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra (Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Cross River), though most of the conflict-related fatalities were concentrated in the first five, where the Ibo community is the majority. In 2023, the number of events rose to 660, with 776 fatalities. In 2022, the number of events rose to 703, claiming 985 lives. This figure provided by ACLED included fighting in Biafra between the government and armed pro-independence groups, which killed dozens of people, but also the many attacks in those states committed by criminal groups, as well as inter-community clashes over land use and ownership and access to water, which cause hundreds of fatalities each year. Dozens of people died during the year as a result of the instability, the recurrence of military operations and attacks on police posts and military detachments.

In October, IPOB claimed that security forces killed one of its leaders, Ikechukwu Ugwuoha, in Aba, in the state of Abia. In August, security forces claimed they had killed 27 militants from the IPOB faction led by Simon Ekpa. On 7 May, security forces announced the deaths of an ESN commander, Tochukwu, also known as Ojoto, and of two of his deputies in Iheteukwa, in the state of Imo.[41] On 1 December, IPOB denounced Biafra's declaration of independence made in late November by the Finland-based IPOB faction led by Simon Ekpa, stating that a UN-sponsored referendum would be the only legitimate route. The leader of this faction, Simon Ekpa, was arrested on 21 November along with four others by Finnish police for allegedly funding and promoting violent attacks and inciting deadly violence in southeastern Nigeria. Ekpa had repeatedly claimed responsibility for his group's violence in the region. Finnish police have declared an ongoing investigation and his trial could take place in May 2025. Meanwhile, the Cameroonian political-military coalition AGovC reaffirmed its alliance with the political-military opposition movements of the southeastern states of Nigeria (which make up Biafra) at the Biafran Government in Exile conference in Finland, held from 28 November to 2 December 2024, extending the October 2023 pact.

2.3.2. America

North America

Mexico	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
Since 2006, when President Felipe Calderón launched the so-called "war on drugs," both the levels of violence and human rights violations throughout the country have increased substantially, making it one of the countries with the highest number of homicides and enforced disappearances in the world. Since then, organized crime organizations have multiplied, increasing their military capacity, territorial presence, and transnational ties, and diversifying their illicit activities beyond drug trafficking. Although most acts of violence are linked to clashes between organized crime groups for control of activities, territories, and routes, clashes between state security

41 Igwe, Ignatius, "Troops Kill Notorious Terrorist Ojoto, Two Others In Imo," ChannelsTV, 7 May 2024.

forces and cartels, or between the latter and community self-defense groups, are also frequent. Numerous analyses have also pointed to the existence of high levels of violence and human rights violations against the civilian population, especially by organized crime groups. Furthermore, in recent decades there have been some insurgent movements in states such as Guerrero and Oaxaca – EPR, ERPI or FAR-LP – or Chiapas, where certain levels of tension have remained in some communities after the brief armed uprising of the EZLN in 1994.

Both the number and geographical scope of episodes of violence between drug cartels, clashes between them and state security forces and attacks against civilians grew significantly in 2024. Furthermore, some analysts considered the June presidential election, won by Claudia Sheinbaum (of the MORENA party) with almost 60% of the votes, to have been the most violent in the country's history. The government declared that 30,057 homicides were reported in Mexico in 2024, 1.1% more than in 2023 (29,713). Seven states accounted for almost 50% of the homicides: Guanajuato (3,151, or 10.5%), Baja California (2,368, or 7.9%), Mexico (2,258, or 7.5%), Chihuahua (2,004, or 6.7%), Jalisco (1,804, or 6%), Guerrero (1,738, or 5.8%) and Nuevo León (1,539, or 5.1%). Andrés Manuel López Obrador's six-year term (2018-2024) was the most violent in the country's recent history, with 188,987 homicides. This figure is 38% higher than that the 137,289 homicides reported during the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018), 84% higher than the 102,859 documented during the presidency of Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) and 153% higher than the 74,577 disclosed during the presidency of Vicente Fox (2000-2006).

According to the report Índice de Paz México 2024,[42] **the number of homicides connected to organised crime rose from around 8,000 to approximately 20,000 between 2015 and 2022**, whilst the number not related to organised crime has remained relatively stable, with between 10,000 and 12,500 homicides per year. The research centre **ACLED indicated that Mexico was the country with the fourth-highest degree of conflict in the world in 2024, only trailing Palestine, Myanmar and Syria**. ACLED[43] maintains that Mexico was the most dangerous country in the world without a regular or formally declared war. According to ACLED, 8,110 people died as a result of 7,327 incidents of political violence between January and November. In addition, 5,828 attacks against civilians were reported, making Mexico the country with the second highest figures in the world. According to ACLED, the lethality of clashes between organised crime groups increased by 18% in 2024 and violence surged in 14 of the country's 32 states, especially in Chiapas, Tabasco and Sinaloa. According to the organisation Causa en Común,[44] 4,708 atrocities were committed[45] that claimed 8,960 lives and 466 massacres were reported between January and November 2024. Furthermore, according to the organisation, 2,456 police officers were murdered during Andrés Manuel López Obrador's six-year term (2018-2024), the vast majority of them at the municipal and state level and 320 in 2024. The Network for Children's Rights in Mexico (REDIM) reported that 2,243 minors were murdered in 2024 (456 girls and 1,787 boys, a 6.5% rise over 2023) and that there were 73 cases of femicide of girls and teenage girls. Reporters Without Borders warned that Mexico continued to be one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists in 2024, as it is the country with the third highest number of murdered journalists (only behind Palestine and Pakistan) and accounts for almost one third (30 out of a total of 95) of the journalists kidnapped worldwide. According to the 2024 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), between 2014 and 2023, insecurity and criminal violence led to the forced displacement of 392,000 people, the second highest figure in Latin America.

Violence linked to criminal organisations affected substantial areas of Mexico in 2024. According to the report,[46] there are 175 criminal organisations and gangs, some operating in small regions and others in several states. Overall, **cartels were found in 81% of the country, across 1,488 municipalities**. In addition to the country's two largest cartels (the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel), other notable cartels include the Pacific Cartel, the Gulf Cartel, the Arellano Félix Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, the Beltrán-Leyva Cartel, Los Rusos, the Northeast Cartel, the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel and the Nueva Plaza Cartel. The CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel are active in 28 states and 24 states, respectively, and operate transnationally in many different countries. According to the US government, the two aforementioned cartels are active in all 50 states and are involved in arms, drug and migrant trafficking, money laundering, extortion and other criminal activities, with operations in Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Along these lines, in December, US President-elect Donald Trump announced his intention to designate the Mexican cartels as foreign terrorist groups. Some analysts suggested that such a decision could put additional pressure on the Mexican government to carry out joint actions to combat the cartels more aggressively, thereby shaping the new security strategy of Claudia Sheinbaum's administration. Furthermore, Trump's inner circle outlined a plan for

42 Instituto para la Economía y la Paz, Índice de Paz México 2024, May 2024.
43 ACLED, México, el país sin guerra más peligroso y violento del mundo, 12 December 2024.
44 Causa en Común, "Galería del Horror: atrocidades y eventos de alto impacto registradas en medios", 2024.
45 These "atrocities" are sorted into 21 categories, including: massacres, murders committed with torture, aggravated rape, murders of women with extreme cruelty, murders of children and adolescents and murders of politicians and security officials.
46 Joel Cano, "Narcomapa 2024: qué cárteles tienen mayor presencia en México", Infobae, 23 April 2024.

the mass deportation of undocumented individuals that could affect around four million Mexicans residing in the US, according to some estimates. According to ACLED,[47] the main dynamics that explain the increase and territorial expansion of organised crime-related violence include the fragmentation of the Sinaloa Cartel and its struggle with the CJNG; the reshuffling of strategic alliances between criminal organisations; some cartels' struggle to diversify their criminal activities, such as extortion, human trafficking and fuel theft; the increased sophistication of the weapons they use; and the emergence of new cartels such as the Michoacán New Generation Cartel, the Tabasco New Generation Cartel (CTNG), the Chiapas-Guatemala Cartel and the Gente New Generation Cartel (GNG). According to ACLED, the war tactics and weapons of organised crime groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated and deadly, in some cases mimicking the methods used by Colombian insurgent groups. Thus, in 2024, the use of explosives and remote violence doubled, with increasing use of commercial drones for military purposes.

One of the factors that had the greatest impact on the reshuffling of alliances between organised crime groups in 2024 was the fragmentation of the Sinaloa Cartel into the faction led by sons of former leader "El Chapo" Guzmán—known as Los Chapitos—and the faction headed by Vicente "El Mayo" Zambada. On 26 July, US authorities arrested Zambada and Joaquín Guzmán López, one of "El Chapo" Guzmán's sons, in Texas. In August, whilst still in a US prison, "El Mayo" accused Guzmán López of kidnapping him and forcibly taking him to Texas after reaching a prison benefits agreement with the US. Shortly thereafter, in September, intense clashes between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel erupted in several locations in the state of Sinaloa (especially in its capital, Culiacán) and in neighbouring states such as Chihuahua and Sonora, resulting in the deaths of more than 650 people and the disappearance of another 750 in the last four months of the year. Regarding the dynamics of violence in other states, there was fighting between the CJNG and the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel (SRL) over fuel theft in Guanajuato (the state that accounts for 10% of homicides), clashes between the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel over migrant and drug trafficking and border control in Chiapas and increased violence in Tabasco due to the fragmentation of the La Barredora group and growing fighting between the CJNG and various local groups. Shortly after taking office in October, President Claudia Sheinbaum presented her new security policy, centred primarily on a few states (Guanajuato, Baja California, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Jalisco and Sinaloa) and focused on strengthening state police and prosecutors. In January 2025, Sheinbaum reported that the daily average of homicides fell by 16% in the first 100 days of her administration. She attributed this reduction to her new security strategy.

South America

Bolivia	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Bolivia's political and social crisis dates back to the abrupt departure from the country of former president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in 2003 –following the repression of anti-government protests in which more than 100 people died– and continued during the terms of former president Evo Morales (2006-2019), leader of the MAS and first indigenous president in the history of the country. During this period, some of the Government's actions –such as agrarian reform, the nationalization of hydrocarbons or the approval of a new Constitution– were hampered by fierce opposition and demands for greater autonomy by political parties and institutions in the department of Santa Cruz and other eastern regions of the country. At the same time, social conflict and protests linked to labour demands, the activity of extractive companies or the rights of indigenous communities also increased. The country's crisis worsened again after the general elections of October 2019, when accusations of fraud against officialism led to massive protests and, finally, to the resignation from the presidency and the exile of Morales, who declared having been the victim of a coup d'état. After the interim presidency of Jeanine Áñez –later sentenced to 10 years in prison—and the victory of Luis Arce (MAS) in the 2020 elections, a process of confrontation began between Morales and Arce regarding the MAS candidacy for the 2025 elections and other political issues.

The two main sources of tension in the country during 2024 were an alleged **failed coup d'état in June, described by some as a presidential self-coup,** and **massive demonstrations and protests staged in the last quarter of the year by thousands of supporters of former President Evo Morales and current President Luis Arce, both of whom plan to run on behalf of the ruling party (MAS) in the 2025 presidential election**. On 26 June, a group of military personnel led by former Army Commander-in-Chief Juan José Zúñiga, who had been dismissed the day before for repeatedly voicing his political opinions and threats, which were considered a violation of the Constitution, took over the capital's main square (Plaza Murillo), surrounded the Palacio Quemado, the presidential seat, and even knocked down a door of the building with a tank and entered. During these events, General Zúñiga blasted the country's political and economic situation and the existence of political prisoners, demanded the release of former presidents Jeanine Áñez and Luis Fernando

47 ACLED, Mexico's new administration braces for shifting battle lines in the country's gang wars, 12 December 2024.

Camacho and announced that a new cabinet of ministers would soon be formed. Outside, about 10 people were injured when the military personnel controlling the Palacio Quemado tried to disperse the crowd that had gathered outside in defence of Luis Arce's government. After a few hours, General Zúñiga's troops withdrew and the general and 17 other soldiers were subsequently arrested. The public prosecutor filed charges against Zúñiga for armed uprising and terrorism. Although President Arce ordered Zúñiga to end his insubordination and withdraw his troops from the Palacio Quemado, some argued that the lack of reinforcements was the primary motivation for the decision to end the uprising. After he was arrested, **Zúñiga said that it was President Arce who ordered him to carry out a self-coup and bring the tanks into the streets**. Although many governments and international organisations criticised what they considered a coup attempt, some governments, parties and parts of Bolivian society, including supporters of former President Evo Morales, argued that Arce had orchestrated the military coup in an attempt to boost his popularity and better position himself ahead of the 2025 presidential election.

The mass demonstrations in Bolivia were the culmination of the confrontation between current President Luis Arce and former President Evo Morales (2006-19) to be the candidate of the MAS party in the 2025 presidential election

The second source of tension were the **mass protests, riots and clashes that had taken place in various parts of the country since mid-September in which around 90 people were injured**. These demonstrations were the culmination of the confrontation between current President Luis Arce and former President Evo Morales (2006-19) to be the candidate for the MAS party in the 2025 presidential election. The estrangement between the two erstwhile allies worsened after the Constitutional Court annulled the indefinite presidential re-election in December 2023, effectively disqualifying Evo Morales from running in the 2025 election. After several months of mounting tension between leaders and different factions of MAS, thousands of people set out on the "March to Save Bolivia" in mid-September between the departments of Oruro and La Paz, along with a campaign of roadblocks throughout the country. Though much of the protests were peaceful, there were clashes and episodes of violence in which dozens of people were wounded, including a significant number of police officers. The blockades and the instability also only exacerbated the precarious economic situation and the shortages that the country had already been experiencing before September. Arce accused Morales of trying to promote a coup d'état to end his presidency and of seeking to impose his candidacy by force in the 2025 election. Furthermore, some analysts argued that some of the anti-government protests were not only related to Morales' presidential candidacy, but were also linked to accusations of government mismanagement or economic or social issues.

Tension in the country increased significantly after a prosecutor ordered the **arrest of Evo Morales in mid-October for human trafficking and the rape of a minor—with whom Morales allegedly fathered a child—after he failed to appear in court**. Morales described the charges as politically instigated and false. Following these events, blockades and clashes increased throughout the country, especially in Chapare (department of Cochabamba), a region where Morales sought refuge and evaded arrest attempts. In late October, Morales reported an assassination attempt by state agents who had fired on his convoy in Chapare province. The government condemned the action, but also claimed that it was Morales' convoy that had fired first at a checkpoint. Later, in early November, President Arce reported that Evo Morales' supporters had attacked three military units in the Chapare region, holding more than 200 soldiers hostage and seizing military weapons and ammunition. Arce deployed additional military personnel to the region to assist the police in restoring order and dismantle roadblocks. In mid-November, the Constitutional Court and the Superior Electoral Tribunal definitively ratified Morales' disqualification from running in the next presidential election. On the same day, Morales' allies in Congress disrupted the National Assembly, forcing Arce to deliver his annual speech from the presidential palace. Despite the tensions, in early November, some protest leaders declared a 72-hour humanitarian pause. In the middle of the month, they announced that no further blockades would be carried out, though they reserved the right to resume them if Evo Morales were arrested.

Ecuador	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
In recent years, Ecuador has experienced one of the sharpest rises in violence in all of Latin America. In 2022, the government reported that the homicide rate had multiplied by almost five since 2017 and that over 80% of the murders in the country are linked to drug trafficking. Although Ecuador has historically been a transit point for illicit drugs, some analysts indicate that the country is steadily playing a more prominent role in the international drug supply chain, especially for cocaine, including more participation in the storage, processing, production and international distribution of narcotics, mainly through Pacific routes (a significant percentage of the homicides takes place in the coastal city of Guayaquil) and the Amazon, thanks to its

border with Brazil. The situation has led to a substantial increase in clashes for the control of strategic places and routes between local organised crime groups (such as Los Lobos, Los Choneros and Los Lagartos), Mexican cartels (especially the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel), dissident factions of the FARC (such as the Oliver Sinisterra Front and the Urías Rondón column) and international criminal organisations.

Faced with the rise in armed activity by organised crime gangs operating in the country, the Ecuadoran government declared an internal armed conflict in early 2024, imposed a state of emergency several times throughout the year and stepped up military and police pressure against the armed gangs. In 2024, Ecuador had **one of the highest homicide rates in the world** and the highest in Latin America (excluding the Caribbean) and experienced a rise in other types of crime. According to official data, 6,964 homicides were reported in 2024, with a rate of 38.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, much higher than that of the Latin American countries with the next-highest homicide rates in the region, such as Venezuela (26.2), Colombia (25.4) and Honduras (25.3), but lower than that of seven Caribbean countries or territories (Turks and Caicos Islands, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia and Jamaica). The number of homicides, as well as other indicators of crime and violence, grew exponentially from 2018 (less than 1,000 murders) until reaching an all-time high in 2023 (8,237 homicides). In the first few days of 2024, the country reported a wave of murders (around 250) and violence in some prisons. The security situation worsened after Adolfo "Fito" Macías escaped from prison right before his transfer to a high-security facility. Macías is the leader of Los Choneros, one of the two main armed gangs in the country. Following the subsequent massive operation by the police and Ecuadoran Army to capture him and the declaration of a 60-day state of emergency to address the violence and regain military control of the prisons, many armed gangs began a wave of violence, looting, detonation of explosives and prison riots that included taking nearly 200 hostages in various parts of the country, especially in Quito and Guayaquil. In these circumstances, two of the episodes that caused the greatest alarm were the escape of Fabricio Colón Pico, the leader of the country's other major armed gang, Los Lobos, and the invasion by a group of armed individuals of a television station that was broadcasting a programme live. Though the invasion was resolved with a police operation in which 13 members of the Los Tiguerones gang were arrested, that same day **Noboa declared an internal armed conflict**, announced the creation of the Security Bloc—a strategy to centralise actions against organised crime—and the deployment of the Ecuadoran Armed Forces to combat 22 organised crime groups, which he described as terrorists and military targets. **Given the seriousness of the situation, Peru and Colombia sent more troops to the border, whilst around 40 countries offered military assistance to Ecuador**. Furthermore, in the days that followed, Quito signed a security cooperation agreement with other members of the Andean Community to confront transnational criminal networks. As part of the government's new security strategy, a referendum was held in April in which the majority of the population voted in support of the president's nine proposals, including the intensification of the militarisation of public security and tougher penalties for drug-related crimes. The provinces most affected by the violence were Guayas, El Oro, Los Ríos, Manabí, Santa Elena, Sucumbíos and Orellana, as well as the Camilo Ponce Enríquez canton in Azuay province. Certain municipalities in the country have reached some of the highest homicide rates in the world, such as Durán (Guayas province, near Guayaquil), with a rate of 149 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

Given the seriousness of the security situation in Ecuador, Peru and Colombia have sent more troops to the border, whilst around 40 countries have offered military assistance to Quito

The government stated several times throughout the year that the implementation of its new security strategy, the intensification of police and military pressure on armed gangs, greater international cooperation against organised crime and its use of extraordinary legal measures, such as states of emergency, curfews, the militarisation of prisons and the declaration of an internal armed conflict, had led to a 16% decrease in the number of homicides compared to 2023. However, some analysts indicate that this reduction in homicides mainly happened in February (with a 63% drop) immediately after the action taken by the government in January, but that it returned to its previous levels from March onwards (532 violent deaths) and increased slightly throughout the rest of the year until reaching 688 violent deaths in December. Furthermore, the number of massacres (defined as the murder of three people in the same episode of violence) remained very high in 2024. Whereas 17 people were killed in massacres in 2019, in 2023 there were 223 massacres that claimed 834 lives. In 2024, there was a slight decline in the number of massacres (645 people killed in 175 massacres, as of early December), but the percentage of total homicides increased compared to 2023. According to official data, 2024 also saw a higher number of crimes than in 2023. For example, there was a 13% increase in the number of kidnappings, 60% of which took place in the provinces of Guayas, Los Ríos and Pichincha, and an 11% increase in extortion offences. According to the government, both practices are closely linked to organised crime. Following a trend similar to that of other types of crime, extortion has soared by more than 400% in Ecuador since 2021. Furthermore, some analysts have indicated that **the government's**

intensified response to the armed gangs not only failed to significantly restore security to the country, but also led to the fragmentation and atomisation of organised crime groups and prompted them to diversify their criminal activities beyond drug trafficking. One example of this is the growing infiltration and participation of organised crime groups in informal mining and illegal gold mining, which some analysts describe as a lucrative means of laundering funds from other illicit activities that runs fewer security risks than drug trafficking. For example, in the canton of Camilo Ponce Enríquez alone, the Los Lobos gang directly controls 20 mines, extorts 30 mining companies and controls around 40 groups of illegal and informal miners. This activity is especially significant in the Amazon region and the provinces of El Oro and Azuay. Finally, although the militarisation of security and prison management in particular significantly reduced the control and influence exercised by certain gangs in the prison system, many incidents of violence continued to occur in the country's prisons in 2024, including riots, the murder of officers—including three prison directors—and clashes between gangs. In November, for example, 17 people died and 14 others were wounded in a clash at the Litoral Penitentiary, the largest in the country. Between 2021 and 2023, for example, more than 500 people were killed in the Ecuador's prisons.

Venezuela	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
The multidimensional crisis—political, social, institutional, and humanitarian—of Venezuela dates back to Hugo Chávez's rise to power in 1998 and his promotion of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution. However, it worsened with Chávez's death in 2013 and his replacement by then-Vice President Nicolás Maduro. Some of the most notable aspects of the crisis in recent decades include increased social polarization and massive and sustained protests; institutional paralysis—especially after the opposition's victory in the 2015 legislative elections; increasing insecurity, economic crisis or basic goods' shortages. Despite the fact that the ruling party has won every election held since the late 1990s—except for the 2015 legislative elections—the opposition and certain governments and international organizations consider the country to be in a situation of authoritarian drift, accusing the government of recurring electoral fraud, control of the three branches of state, closure of civic space, human rights violations, and systematic use of repression. As a direct or indirect consequence of these circumstances, the United Nations estimates that Venezuela is one of the countries in the world from which the largest number of people have fled (7.7 million people by mid-2024).

Following the presidential election in late July, Venezuela experienced one of the tensest moments in recent years, with massive protests and allegations of repression and human rights violations committed by the government. Venezuela also continued to report high levels of homicide and social unrest. According to the Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict, 5,226 demonstrations were reported in 2024. Even though they were fewer than the previous year (6,956), the demonstrations in 2024 were much more closely linked to political demands and rights than in previous years. The government declared that the homicide rate in 2024 (4.1 per 100,000 inhabitants) was one of the lowest in Latin America and was falling in line with the downward trend in homicides observed in Venezuela since 2016, when the rate was 56. However, other sources consider the number of homicides in the country to be much higher than official figures reflect. According to data from the Venezuelan Observatory of Violence (OVV), which are used by other research centres on the subject, **Venezuela's homicide rate was 26.2 in 2024, slightly lower than in 2023 (26.8), but still the second-highest in Latin America (excluding the Caribbean)**, behind only Ecuador. Although the government claims the that drop in crime rates is related to public safety policies, other sources believe that organised crime groups have recently relocated to other countries, such as Colombia, for example, due to a certain depletion of illicit economies in the country. Other analysts suggest that the consolidation of some groups aligned with or linked to the government may have led to a certain reduction in the need to use large-scale violence to compete for territories or lucrative activities.

However, 2024 was also one of the most politically charged years in recent memory. **Twenty-seven people died, around 200 were injured and more than 2,400 were arrested in the wake of the massive protests in Venezuela following the 28 July presidential election. The National Electoral Council declared Nicolás Maduro the winner** (with 52% of the vote) over the main opposition candidate, Edmundo González (43%), a decision ratified in late August by the Supreme Court of Justice. Opposition leader **María Corina Machado, who was unable to run due to disqualification, complained of massive electoral fraud and declared that González had clearly won, carrying every state in the country**. In early August, the opposition published scanned electoral records from 83.5% of the polling stations, but the government claimed that they were forged and said that making them public usurped the functions of the electoral authorities. Following the election, the Carter Center, which had sent an observation mission at the invitation of the government, declared that the election had not met international standards of credibility and could not be considered democratic. Similarly, the interim report of the United Nations Panel of Electoral Experts noted that among other things, the election lacked basic measures of transparency and integrity

that would allow them to be considered credible. In early August, it declared that the authorities' failure to publish results was unprecedented in contemporary democratic elections. Many governments around the world and international organisations, such as the United Nations, the OAS and the EU, also questioned the veracity of the results and urged the authorities to publish the electoral records from each polling station. In late September, during the United Nations General Assembly, more than 30 countries signed a declaration affirming that González had won the majority of the votes according to available data, though they stopped short of recognising him as the president-elect of Venezuela. However, **the US government did recognise Edmundo González as the president-elect of Venezuela** in November. Other countries in the region later followed suit and suspended diplomatic contacts with Caracas, including Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, Panama and Costa Rica.

In Venezuela, following the proclamation of Nicolás Maduro as the winner of the July presidential election, massive protests took place in which 27 people died, about 200 were injured and more than 2,400 were arrested

Caracas rejected all requests to publish the results and recalled the ambassadors of several Latin American countries who had called for more transparency. Maduro accused the opposition, particularly Machado and González, of being the architects of an attempted coup and demanded prison sentences for both. The Venezuelan government also rejected all the proposals from countries that tried to promote a negotiated solution to the crisis (Brazil, Colombia and Mexico), such as a repeat election (followed by the establishment of an electoral council with opposition participation) and the formation of a coalition government. The public prosecutor opened an investigation against members of the opposition for publishing the recount data, accusing them of crimes such as document falsification and incitement to disobedience. In early September, **the Spanish government granted political asylum to Edmundo González**, who had previously spent a few days at the Dutch embassy in Caracas and at the Spanish ambassador's residence. Machado reported that González had suffered terrible harassment and threats to his life. Furthermore, during a virtual address delivered to a session of the United Nations Human Rights Council held in late September, Machado said that all those directly responsible for challenging the election results were in hiding, in exile or in prison. UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke directly with Nicolás Maduro about the country's political situation and offered the United Nations' mediation and good offices as long as the parties agreed and requested it. Guterres also expressed concern about the election results and reports of post-election violence and human rights violations. One such report was released in mid-September by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Sponsored by the United Nations, the mission warned of a high risk of the disintegration of the state, noted that repression against opponents had reached unprecedented levels and reported that the human rights violations committed could constitute crimes against humanity. These documented violations include the deaths of people participating in protests, arbitrary arrests and serious violations of judicial processes, enforced disappearances, torture and sexual violence. **The UN mission documented at least 25 deaths due to police crackdowns on anti-government protests**, although the public prosector considered the opposition to be primarily responsible for these deaths. The UN report describes a repressive state structure involving various actors, such as President Maduro, state security forces, judicial authorities, the electoral authority and even the National Assembly. In August, **the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) condemned practices it described as state terrorism**, including violent repression, arbitrary arrests and political persecution. Along these same lines, in March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) unanimously rejected the Venezuelan government's appeal seeking to halt the investigation into the alleged commission of crimes against humanity during the 2017 anti-government protests, including cases of arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearance, making it the first Latin American country in which the ICC had launched a formal investigation. Finally, in December, the government announced the release of hundreds of people arrested during the unrest following the July election although several civil society organisations reported that security forces continued to hold opposition activists in detention.

Venezuela – Guyana	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government International
Main parties:	Venezuela, Guyana

Summary:
The tension between Venezuela and Guyana over Essequibo, a territory covering almost 160,000 km2 that is rich in minerals and other natural resources, controlled and administered by Guyana, dates back to the lack of agreement in the late 19th century on defining the border between Venezuela and the British Empire. While Guyana, a former British colony, maintains that an arbitral award issued in Paris in 1899 gave the disputed territory to the British Empire, Venezuela protested the ruling and bases its position on the 1966 Geneva Agreement between Venezuela and the United Kingdom (in consultation with

the government of Guyana, which won independence from the United Kingdom that same year), by which the parties undertook to resolve the dispute through friendly negotiations. Tension increased significantly after the International Court of Justice declared itself competent to resolve and issue a ruling on the matter in 2020, though Venezuela rejected the ICJ's jurisdiction. Adding to the strain in relations, Guyana granted several companies the right to explore for hydrocarbon deposits in waters disputed with Venezuela and Caracas planned to hold a referendum on the sovereignty of Essequibo in December 2023.

Amid the lack of progress in resolving the historical dispute between Guyana and Venezuela over the Essequibo region, high tensions remained between both countries throughout the year linked to military manoeuvres and alliances and the law passed by Venezuela in April declaring Essequibo a new Venezuelan state. Though military tension in the region eased temporarily following the presidential summit on 14 December 2023, **at the end of the month Venezuela launched a significant military operation** involving more than 5,600 military personnel, 28 aircraft and 16 vessels off the coast of Essequibo, on the border of the waters disputed between Guyana and Venezuela, in response to the arrival of a British ship in Guyana. Both sides accused each other of flagrantly violating the Argyle Declaration signed in mid-December. In this declaration, among other things, Guyana and Venezuela pledged not to threaten or use force against each other; to refrain, in word or deed, from escalating the conflict; and to cooperate to avoid incidents on the ground that could lead to tensions between them. Subsequently, in early April, political and diplomatic tensions between the two countries increased after the Venezuelan National Assembly approved the Organic Law for the Defence of Guayana Esequiba. Among other things, **the law declares Essequibo the country's twenty-fourth state, empowers the president to prohibit contracts from being signed with companies operating in Essequibo and bans maps or any other documentation that do not recognise Venezuela's sovereignty over the region**. After the law was passed, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro accused Guyanese President Irfaan Ali of being a puppet of the US oil company ExxonMobil, the British Empire and the US Southern Command. Maduro claimed that Venezuelan intelligence services had identified the establishment of 26 secret bases in the Essequibo region (12 belonging to the CIA and 14 to the Southern Command) aimed at preparing belligerent actions against Venezuela. The government of Guyana rejected these accusations that secret bases had been established on its soil, declared that the law approved by the Venezuelan National Assembly implied the annexation of two thirds of its territory and warned that it would not tolerate the annexation, seizure or occupation of any part of Essequibo. It also declared that the law was not only a violation of the Argyle Declaration, but also an infringement of the most fundamental principles of international law and that it would therefore seek the protection of CARICOM, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. In this regard, after the UN Security Council received a letter from the president of Guyana requesting an urgent meeting, the UN Security Council held a closed-door meeting on 9 April regarding the dispute under the title "Threats to International Peace and Security". The Venezuelan ambassador to the United Nations, who attended the meeting, ruled out any attempt at territorial occupation, whilst the government of Guyana asserted that the UN Security Council had stressed the importance of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Venezuelan National Assembly passed a law declaring Essequibo as the country's twenty-fourth state and empowering the president to prohibit contracts from being signed with companies operating there

One of the tensest moments of the entire year occurred in May, when **the Venezuelan government carried out a land, air and naval operational deployment on the Essequibo Atlantic Front in response to the overflight of two US aircraft over Guyana and its capital, Georgetown**. According to Maduro, the operation of both fighters from the aircraft carrier USS George Washington was fully coordinated and approved by the Guyanese government. Caracas also stated that its air defence system remained active and on alert for any attempt to violate Venezuelan geographic space, including the Essequibo region. In mid-May, the Guyanese government raised its alert level after reporting a Venezuelan military deployment on their shared border and a buildup of troops and military equipment on Ankoko Island and in the border region of Puerto Barima. Venezuelan opposition leaders expressed fears that Maduro could use any altercation related to the territorial dispute with Guyana to cancel the presidential election scheduled for late July, in which, according to some polls, Maduro could be defeated. Previously, in February, a well-known US think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, had published satellite images suggesting that Caracas was expanding its military bases in both regions. In late December, the Guyanese government formally protested and recalled the Venezuelan ambassador following the completion of a bridge connecting mainland Venezuela with a military base on Ankoko Island, which Guyana claimed had been built illegally. In early January 2025, **tensions between the two countries escalated again after Maduro announced his intention to appoint the first governor of Essequibo in the regional elections in May 2025**.

2.3.3 Asia and the Pacific

2.3.3.1 Asia

East Asia

China – Japan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory, Resources International
Main parties:	China, Japan, Taiwan, USA

Summary:
China and Japan's dispute over the sovereignty and administration of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (in Japanese and Chinese, respectively) in the East China Sea dates back to the early 1970s, when the US, which had administered the islands since 1945, relinquished control of them to Japan. The dispute over the islands, which have a high geostrategic value and are estimated to contain enormous hydrocarbon reserves, is part of China and Japan's conflictive historical relations since the first third of the 20th century as a result of the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and the Second World War. The territorial dispute had been managed peacefully since the early 1970s, but tension between the two increased significantly in 2012, when the Japanese government purchased three of the disputed islands from a private owner. In 2013, China unilaterally declared a new Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) that includes the airspace of the islands. In the following years, incursions by Chinese Coast Guard patrol vessels and Chinese vessels into the contiguous and territorial waters (12 nautical miles from the coast) of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands increased significantly, as did the number of fighters deployed by Japan to control and supervise its airspace. Japan adopted an increasingly assertive national security strategy in the region, notably increased its military spending and consolidated defence alliances with other countries in the region such as the US, which has repeatedly expressed its military commitment to Japan's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the bilateral security treaty of 1951. Taiwan also considers the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands an integral part of its territory, but its involvement in the dispute has drawn less international attention and caused less frictions with Japan.

Tension rose between China and Japan due to the increased presence of Chinese vessels near the Senkaku Islands and other Japanese islands in the East Asian Sea, as well as growing military cooperation between China and Russia and the strengthening of defence ties between Japan and several countries, especially the United States. The Japanese government stated that **1,351 Chinese government vessels had been present in the contiguous zone of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands**, between 12 and 24 nautical miles from the coast, for 355 days in 2024, **breaking the record for both the number of vessels and the number of days** since Chinese vessels were first confirmed to be navigating in the area in 2008. Japan also reported that Chinese vessels had maintained an uninterrupted presence in contiguous waters for 215 consecutive days—the longest continuous presence to date—sparking speculation and analysis about Beijing's alleged intention to permanently station government vessels in the area. Tokyo also reported Chinese incursions or invasions of its territorial waters (12 nautical miles) for 42 days, the same number as in 2023.

In addition to the Senkaku Islands, there were other sources of military tension in other locations in the East China Sea in 2024, such as the Miyako Strait, a strategic international waterway. In March, Tokyo scrambled fighter jets in response to Chinese military aircraft with anti-submarine and maritime surveillance capabilities patrolling the Western Pacific and crossing the Miyako Strait. In August, a Chinese electronic warfare drone flew within its Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over waters south of the Miyako Strait. In mid-month, Japan confirmed the sighting south of Miyako Island of a Chinese naval strike group deployed in the Philippine Sea. Days later, it also identified a Chinese amphibious assault ship and destroyer navigating the Miyako Strait. In another one of the episodes that caused the greatest tension throughout the year, in late August, Japan reported that a Chinese military aircraft had entered its airspace, an unprecedented situation that it considered a serious violation of its territorial rights and that provoked a major diplomatic crisis. In September, Tokyo declared that a Chinese aircraft carrier and two destroyers had entered the contiguous zone of the Japanese islands of Yonaguni and Iriomote, in the East China Sea, for the first time. Also in September, Tokyo condemned China's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile that fell into international waters in the Pacific Ocean. This was the first launch of its kind in 44 years and China had given no advance warning. In June, the Dutch government reported that Chinese fighter jets came dangerously close to a Dutch Navy frigate and helicopter in the East China Sea, creating a potentially unsafe situation.

Faced with this situation, Japan significantly increased its military spending and strengthened its strategic defence alliances with the US and other countries, all of which provoked protests from China. Indeed, **Japan announced its largest defence budget ever**, 7% more than the previous year, which was already a record high, in line with its goal of doubling its defence spending outlined in its new defence strategy announced in December 2022.[48] According to some analysts, the new budget will accelerate the deployment of hundreds of long-range cruise missiles and the acquisition or manufacture of other threat-deterring weapons. Regarding Japan's strengthening of its defence alliances, the development that caused the most tension with China was new Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's idea to **create a collective security alliance in Asia similar to NATO**. Though this idea was expressed at the Hudson Institute, a think tank in the US, in September, Ishiba

48 The boost in military spending began around 2012 with the rise of Shinzo Abe, who also pushed through a change in the Japanese Constitution to transform the strictly defensive nature of the country's armed forces.

created a Japanese government committee to discuss and develop its conceptualisation in November. Several times during the year, Ishiba advocated strengthening regional deterrence through integration into existing security frameworks, such as the ANZUS Security Treaty between the US, Australia and New Zealand, or AUKUS, between Australia, the United Kingdom and the US, or by enhancing bilateral or multilateral defence alliances. Of particular note is the relationship between Japan and the US, which conducted joint military exercises at various points throughout the year, including those in October and November, which involved more than 45,000 troops and were the largest since the 1980s. In April, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida identified China's actions in the South and East China Seas as a clear threat to their national security and announced various defence cooperation agreements, described by Biden as **the most significant enhancement of the US-Japan alliance since its inception in the 1950s**. Japan also conducted joint military exercises with the US, South Korea and Australia, strengthened its defence cooperation with India in the Indo-Pacific region, promoted a regional security cooperation framework with 14 South Pacific island nations and signed reciprocal access agreements with the UK and Australia, facilitating the reciprocal deployment of troops in both countries.

China – Philippines	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Territory, Resources International
Main parties:	China, Philippines, USA

Summary:
As part of the broader conflict between several states over maritime and territorial claims in the South China Sea, one of the disputes with the greatest military, political, and diplomatic implications in recent years has been the sovereignty dispute between China and the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea —referring to those parts of the South China Sea that lie within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. Specifically, most collisions and incidents have occurred around two land features: Scarborough Shoal—occupied by China since 2012 following a naval incident between the two countries—and the Second Thomas Shoal (Ayungin in Tagalog and Renai in Chinese), where the Philippines maintains troops permanently aboard a stranded ship to ensure its control. Faced with increasing Chinese intimidation, the Philippines referred the dispute to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) arbitration tribunal. In 2016, the tribunal ruled that there was no legal basis for China to assert historical rights within the "ten-dash line"—which covers approximately 90% of the South China Sea—and noted that China had violated the Philippines' sovereign rights with respect to its exclusive economic zone. However, China does not recognize the ruling's validity. Moreover, the United States has repeatedly warned China about its military obligations toward the Philippines under the 1951 bilateral mutual defense treaty.

Military and diplomatic tensions between China and the Philippines continued in 2024 due to increased Chinese coercive actions in the West Philippine Sea—which led to several serious maritime and air incidents—and the Philippine government's implementation of a new and more assertive defence strategy, which includes the modernisation of its military capabilities and greater defence cooperation with some countries. In **2024, Beijing substantially stepped up the deployment of Chinese Navy, Chinese Coast Guard and Chinese maritime militia vessels to the West Philippine Sea.**[49] The three points in the region with the highest number of incidents were Second Thomas Shoal, Sabina Shoal and Scarborough Shoal. During the first half of the year, there were many maritime incidents around Second Thomas Shoal[50] between Chinese Coast Guard and Chinese maritime militia vessels and Philippine vessels on rotation missions to resupply the BRP Sierra Madre, Second World War-era ship grounded since 1999 to ensure control over it. Acts of intimidation by China included dangerous manoeuvres, deliberate ramming and the use of high-powered water cannons. **Tensions between China and the Philippines soared in mid-June after the Philippine government reported that Chinese Coast Guard vessels had rammed several Philippine naval vessels**. Chinese sailors armed with axes and knives boarded the Philippine ships and assaulted the Filipino crew members, destroying their communications equipment, confiscating their weapons and drilling holes in the hull. In that incident, described by Manila as the most aggressive in recent history by the Chinese Coast Guard, eight crew members were wounded, four vessels were damaged and another was forcibly towed. Shortly before this incident, in mid-May, Beijing had passed a new regulation allowing the Chinese Coast Guard to intercept and detain foreign vessels and crews suspected of venturing into "waters under Chinese jurisdiction".[51] After the incident, the Chinese government declared that Philippine vessels on a resupply mission had deliberately collided with the Chinese ships. **Manila explicitly ruled out classifying the incident as an armed attack, thereby avoiding activation of its 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty with the United States, but it did propose revising Article 4 of the treaty to better define the concept of an "armed attack"**. Washington repeatedly offered to assist in the supply of Second Thomas, but Manila declined the offer, stating that it would exhaust all means before

49 Manila's official name for the parts of the South China Sea that lie within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.
50 Also known as Ayungin in Tagalog and Renai in Chinese, it belongs to the Spratly Islands group and is located approximately 100 nautical miles from the island of Palawan in the Philippines.
51 Using the "ten-dash line", Beijing claims a region that covers approximately 90% of the South China Sea, including significant parts of the West Philippine Sea.

seeking foreign intervention. Several times in recent years, both the Philippines and the US have cited the validity of the 1951 treaty in reference to Beijing's actions in the South China Sea, which they believe are aimed at using coercion and intimidation to change the status quo. China and the Philippines met several times to discuss the aforementioned incident and reached a non-public agreement to establish a hotline and prevent similar incidents. In the second half of the year, the Philippines was able to conduct its resupply missions from the BRP Sierra Madre.

The second scene of military friction occurred at Sabina Shoal.[52] In April, Manila accused China of building an artificial island in the atoll to prevent the Philippines from extracting gas from Reed Bank[53] and of blocking missions to resupply Second Thomas Shoal. In response, Manila deployed several vessels, including its largest, the BRP Teresa Magbanua, to the waters around Sabina Shoal to block China's "illegal activities", whilst China deployed dozens of vessels near the coast of Palawan, in the Philippines. In separate and isolated incidents in August, Chinese Coast Guard vessels rammed and severely damaged Philippine patrol boats and blocked resupply missions, forcing the Philippines to use helicopters to deliver supplies. Later, in September, they forced the BRP Teresa Magbanua to withdraw from Sabina Shoal due to hull defects, a sick crew and a lack of supplies. This opened the door to **de facto Chinese domination of Sabina Shoal** and drew criticism of Manila for yielding part of its territory. The third arena of conflict was Scarborough Shoal.[54] In May, for example, the Chinese Coast Guard used water cannons to damage two Philippine vessels en route to Scarborough Shoal and drove away a resupply flotilla for local fishermen there, organised by a Philippine civilian group claiming Philippine sovereignty over the atoll. In August, there were **three aerial incidents during which Chinese military aircraft fired flares in the path of a Philippine patrol plane**. In December, a Chinese vessel fired its water cannon at a Philippine government boat carrying supplies to Philippine fishermen at Scarborough Shoal. China later **deployed fighter jets, bombers and naval forces to simulate combat operations around Scarborough Shoal**, joining the 10 vessels already stationed there. In response to these repeated Chinese actions, Manila declared that it reserved the right to deploy warships to the region. In November, China published the coordinates of the baselines[55] around Scarborough Shoal. Beijing also announced the official designation and coordinates of Second Thomas Shoal and Sabina Shoal and 62 other islands and reefs in the South China Sea, using Chinese characters and pinyin transliteration for their names. Most of these geographic formations were part of the Spratly Islands, also claimed in whole or in part by the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan.

Beijing substantially increased its deployment of Chinese Navy, Chinese Coast Guard and Chinese maritime militia vessels to the West Philippine Sea in 2024

In response to the rise in Chinese coercive actions, the Philippines announced a new maritime defence strategy in January 2024 called the Comprehensive Archipelagic Defence Concept (CADC), which had three main dimensions: establishing an effective presence in territories that the Philippine government considers its own but that are disputed, creating an effective deterrent through the modernisation of military equipment and leveraging and strengthening strategic alliances and partnerships. This new Philippine strategy involved strengthening air and maritime patrols to monitor Chinese incursions, resupplying Filipino fishermen, publicising incidents with China and modernising infrastructure in Palawan and other landforms in the West Philippine Sea. Earlier this year, President **Marcos approved a $35-billion programme called Re-Horizon 3 to modernise the Philippine Armed Forces over the next decade**. The Philippines also participated in several bilateral and multilateral land, sea and air military exercises with the US, Australia and Japan that were joined by other partners. For example, in May, the Philippines and the US conducted their largest-ever exercise, Balikatan, with around 16,000 troops and 14 countries observing. In April, the Philippines allowed the **deployment of the US Typhon missile system, capable of firing SM-6 or Tomahawk missiles that cover the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone and can reach three of the largest Chinese military bases** in the region in Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef and Subi Reef. In November, Manila confirmed the deployment of US Task Force Ayungin to Palawan to provide technical assistance to the Philippine Armed Forces, which some analysts consider a clear signal to China.

52 Known as Escoda in the Philippines and Xianbin Jiao in China, it is part of the Spratly Islands and lies within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone, but its sovereignty is claimed by the Philippines, China, Taiwan and Vietnam.
53 Located in the West Philippine Sea, some reports claim it could hold up to 5.4 billion barrels of oil and 55 billion cubic feet of natural gas.
54 Known as Huangyan Dao in Chinese, it lies within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone, but has remained under effective Chinese control since 2012 following a dispute with the Philippines. Since then, the Chinese government has prevented Philippine fishing vessels from approaching the region's plentiful fishing grounds, leading to many incidents and diplomatic protests from the Philippines (by the end of December 2024, nearly 400 such incidents had been reported during Ferdinand Marcos' administration alone).
55 Baselines are lines used to measure the various maritime areas of a coastal state, such as territorial waters, a contiguous zone or an exclusive economic zone.

China – Taiwan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory, Resources, System International
Main parties:	China, Taiwan, USA

Summary:
The conflict between the People's Republic of China (China) and Taiwan (officially the Republic of China) dates back to 1949, after the Communist Party of China won the Chinese Civil War (1927-36 and 1945-49) against the government of the Republic of China (created in 1912 and led by the Kuomintang party). This victory led to Mao Zedong's proclamation of the People's Republic of China and the flight of Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai Chek and hundreds of thousands of people to the island of Formosa (Taiwan), where the Kuomintang established authoritarian one-party rule and martial law until the country's democratisation in the late 1980s. Since its creation in 1949, the People's Republic of China has considered Taiwan a rebellious province, refusing to establish diplomatic relations with it and asserting that no country that wants to maintain diplomatic relations with Beijing can recognise Taiwan. On various occasions, different Chinese leaders have expressed their desire to achieve reunification under the principle of "one country, two systems", but they have not ruled out the use of force to do so. The Republic of China, which exercises effective control over Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, Matsu and smaller islands, maintained that it was the sole legitimate representative of China and its territory until 1991, when it stopped considering the Communist Party a rebel group and recognised its jurisdiction over mainland China. Until 1971, the Republic of China (Taiwan) represented China in the United Nations, occupying a permanent seat on the Security Council. That year, the United Nations recognised Beijing as the sole legitimate representative of China. Washington did the same in 1979 as part of the normalisation of its diplomatic relations. Alongside the political tensions associated with the political status of Taiwan, there have been three significant military episodes. In 1954-55, Beijing bombed the islands of Kinmen, Matsu and Tachen and took effective control of the Yijiangshan Islands, prompting the signing of the Sino-American Mutual Defence Treaty in 1954. In 1958, Beijing bombed the Kinmen and Matsu again and there was a naval clash between both countries around Dongding Island. In 1995 and 1996, Beijing launched several missiles coinciding with the 1996 presidential election, the first direct election to end authoritarian rule.

Tensions between China and Taiwan increased significantly in 2024 due to the presidential election held in Taiwan, increased Chinese naval and air activities around the island and the strengthening of Taiwan's political and military cooperation with the United States and, to a lesser extent, with other countries in the region. Some analysts argue that China's military activity around Taiwan and in the Taiwan Strait has steadily increased since 2020, particularly following a visit to Taiwan by former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022, and that tensions between China and Taiwan are at their highest point since 1996, when Beijing fired missiles off Taiwan's coast, coinciding with Taiwan's first democratic elections after decades of Kuomintang authoritarianism. In January, **the Taiwanese government stated that Chinese military pressure on the island had significantly increased during 2024 and reported that there were 3,067 incursions by Chinese military aircraft in the vicinity of Taiwan in 2024, 80% more than the previous year and the most since they began to be documented**. In November, the United States declared that in the previous five months, the Chinese military had tripled its flights around Taiwan, whether by violating the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) or by crossing the "median line" in the Taiwan Strait. In January, Taipei stated that in 2024 it suffered an average of 2.4 million cyberattacks per day, which was double the number in 2023 and 80% of which targeted government agencies. Taipei also reported that disinformation from China had increased by 60% compared to 2023, largely focusing on news aimed at increasing scepticism about the reliability of US assistance to Taiwan, the competence of the government and the effectiveness of the Taiwanese military. Taipei criticised China's strategy to use disinformation and fake accounts to generate more favourable sentiment toward China among the Taiwanese population, especially among young people. Taipei also claimed that several Chinese ships have cut submarine cables near Taiwan in recent years to disrupt communications, isolate Taiwan and limit its access to information.

In addition to regular military exercises and growing routine ship and aircraft activity around Taiwan, China conducted three large-scale military exercises in 2024. The first, Joint Sword 2024A, took place in late May in response to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's inaugural address and simulated the encirclement of Taiwan by the Chinese Navy and Chinese Coast Guard patrols. The second, Joint Sword 2024B, took place in mid-October in response to the presidential speech on National Day (10 October) and involved high levels of aviation activity and the declaration of exercise areas in Taiwan's contiguous zone, the maritime area beyond its territorial waters, extending 12 to 24 nautical miles from the coast. The third, held in mid-December, was considered by several analysts to be **the largest naval operation in the past three decades**. China deployed around 90 ships (two thirds from the Chinese Navy and one third from the Chinese Coast Guard) from Japan's southern islands to the South China Sea, encompassing the vicinity of Taiwan and Japan's Ryukyu Islands and the East and South China Seas. Taiwan declared the highest alert level and activated its emergency response centre, noting that the scope of the deployment suggested that China was not only intended to demonstrate its ability to smother Taiwan, but also its ability to block potential aid from US allies in the region, such as Japan and the Philippines. Many different media outlets reported that China's naval operations were related to Lai Ching-te's November visit to three of Taiwan's diplomatic allies in the Pacific, the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau, with stops in the US territories of Hawaii and Guam.

Faced with the increase in China's military activities and actions in the "grey zone", actions of intimidation and harassment that can hardly be considered an act of

war, Taiwan established the Whole-of-Society Defence Resilience Committee to strengthen key areas in crisis situations, such as the training and use of civilian forces; the distribution of critical supplies; the protection of infrastructure, evacuation facilities and the information, transportation and energy networks; and medical care for the population. Along the same lines, in January the government conducted its first war drill with China in a scenario in which China received cooperation from Iran, North Korea and Russia. The purpose of the drill was to test whether Taiwan is capable of withstanding an attack or blockade. Furthermore, compulsory military service was increased from four months to one year in 2024.

Tensions between China and Taiwan increased significantly in 2024 due to the presidential election held in Taiwan, the increase in Chinese naval and air activities around the island and the strengthening of Taiwan's political and military cooperation with the United States

Alongside the tension between Taiwan and China, relations between China and the United States also deteriorated due to **increased military cooperation between the US and Taiwan and the growing US political recognition of Taiwan**. Twice during the year, in May and June, US President Biden declared that his government was willing to militarily defend Taiwan in the event of an invasion of the island or if Beijing unilaterally and forcibly tried to change the status quo in the region. Although Biden had made similar statements in the past, some analysts said that such a commitment was a departure from the policy of "strategic ambiguity" that Washington had previously pursued (in 1979, the United States terminated the Mutual Defence Treaty it had with Taiwan after recognising that the government of the People's Republic of China was the legitimate representative of China, thereby adhering to the "One China" principle). Moreover, at various times of the year, bicameral delegations from the US Congress and the US government visited Taiwan and met with President Lai Ching-te, prompting protests from Beijing. Moreover, 2024 saw substantial US arms sales to Taiwan and the highest levels of military aid since the early 1960s. In April, the US military and the Taiwanese Armed Forces conducted joint military exercises in the Western Pacific, though they were not officially recognised by either government. Earlier in the year, it was reported that US green berets would be permanently stationed in Taiwan for the first time, rather than temporarily or on a rotating basis, as they had been until now. Specifically, they would be stationed at several bases on Kinmen, a group of islands controlled by Taiwan just 10 kilometres from the Chinese port city of Xiamen, and on the Pescadores Islands, a group of around 90 islands located in the Taiwan Strait. Until now, only the temporary presence of US military personnel for training purposes or to protect the American Institute in Taiwan, the unofficial US embassy, had received any kind of official recognition. Similarly, it emerged that Taiwanese soldiers were receiving military training at a base in Michigan, the largest US National Guard training facility during the year, though these reports were not confirmed. Furthermore, Japan, South Korea and Australia—all of which have strategic alliances with the US—expressed concern about China's military activities in the Taiwan Strait and strengthened their defence and security ties with Taipei in 2024. In late 2023 and early 2024, **tension between China and Taiwan rose significantly due to the election held in Taiwan in January**, which was won by the candidate of the ruling Democracy Progressive Party (DPP), Lai Ching-te, with 40% of the votes, losing his absolute majority but securing a third consecutive term for the DPP. After his victory, Lai Ching-te declared that he was willing to defend Taiwan from threats and intimidation, but that he was also committed to dialogue with Beijing under the principles of dignity and parity and expressed his intention to reduce the level of confrontation. Although Lai Ching-te had publicly expressed his support for Taiwanese independence in the past and was branded an instigator of war by China in the months running up to the election, some analysts emphasised his intention to continue the policy of his predecessor in office, Tsai Ing-wen, and to prioritise the status quo (neither reunification with China nor independence, but maintaining stability and peace in the Taiwan Strait).

North Korea - USA, Japan, South Korea[56]	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government International
Main parties:	North Korea, USA, Japan, South Korea, China, Russia

Summary:
International concern about North Korea's nuclear programme dates back to the early 1990s, when the North Korean government restricted the presence in the country of observers from the International Atomic Energy Agency and carried out a series of missile tests. Nevertheless international tension escalated notably after the US Administration of George W. Bush included the North Korean regime within the so-called "axis of evil". A few months after Pyongyang reactivated an important nuclear reactor and withdrew from the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2003, multilateral nuclear talks started between the governments of North Korea, South Korea, the USA, Japan, China and Russia. In April 2009, North Korea announced its withdrawal from these talks after the United Nations imposed new sanctions after the country launched a long range missile.

56 This international tension primarily refers to the dispute about North Korea's nuclear program and affects countries beyond those mentioned in the case.

Alongside the rise in inter-Korean hostilities,[57] significant political and military tensions were reported throughout the year linked to the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, the military alliance between North Korea and Russia and the strengthening of the strategic alliance between South Korea, the United States and Japan. At various points during the year, Pyongyang declared its intention to strengthen its nuclear programme to confront the US-led military alliance in the region. In mid-November, for example, Kim Jong-un called for an "unlimited" expansion of the nuclear weapons programme. Days later, North Korea's representative to the United Nations warned during a Security Council meeting that his government was willing to speed up its weapons programme, arguing that the nuclear threat from the US and other hostile nuclear-armed states against North Korea had reached a critical point in terms of scale and danger and warning that the potential situation was approaching the brink of war. Shortly before, on 31 October, **Pyongyang had conducted a test with a Hwasong-19 intercontinental ballistic missile, which achieved the highest and longest flight to date, with the capacity to hit the US**, according to several analysts. The launch, the first of its kind since the Hwasong-18 launch in 2023, was condemned by much of the international community. Earlier in September, North Korean media published images of Kim Jong-un visiting a uranium enrichment facility for producing nuclear bombs, raising concerns about the development of North Korea's nuclear arsenal and generating speculation about future nuclear tests. Intelligence sources indicated that Pyongyang had enough fissile material to produce a double-digit number of nuclear bombs. Along the same lines, some studies indicate that North Korea possesses around 50 nuclear warheads and the material to produce up to 90, whilst other sources indicate that Pyongyang currently has between 80 and 90 uranium and plutonium nuclear warheads and that this number is expected to surpass 160 by 2030. Along these same lines, in March, several reports based on satellite imagery indicated that North Korea was continuing to expand its industrial plant in Chollima county, allegedly to enrich uranium. **North Korea launched cruise or short-range ballistic missiles at various locations on the Korean Peninsula virtually throughout the year**. In January, it tested an intermediate-range solid-fuel hypersonic missile and a nuclear-capable submarine-attack drone. In April, it launched another intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile and in May, it launched a satellite using prohibited ballistic missile technology.

Another source of international tension during the year was the **growing cooperation in arms and defence matters between Russia and North Korea**. In March, for example, Moscow vetoed renewing the mandate of the UN Panel of Experts on Sanctions against North Korea, which is charged with monitoring sanctions compliance. In June, Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un met in Pyongyang and signed a new bilateral treaty to strengthen their defence capabilities and promote cooperation in science and technology. The leaders signed a mutual defence document that obliges both parties to "provide military and other types of assistance using all available means" in the event that either side is "attacked and finds itself in a state of war". Several analysts warned of possible violations of several UN Security Council resolutions due to the increase in North Korean arms transfers to bolster Russia's war effort in Ukraine and the transfer of Russian military technology to North Korea. As part of their cooperation, **it is estimated that thousands of North Korean soldiers (11,000, according to the governments of the United States and Ukraine and up to 100,000, according to some media outlets) were deployed on the border between Russia and Ukraine**. In late December, South Korea said that around 1,000 North Korean soldiers had been killed or wounded on the front lines, but the Ukrainian president raised the figure to 3,000. Following a visit by a North Korean delegation to Iran in late April, speculation about military cooperation between the two countries also increased.

South Korea, the US and Japan strengthened their strategic defence alliance during the year, whilst the US and South Korea deepened their nuclear cooperation. Washington and Seoul held their annual joint military exercises in March and August, involving around 19,000 South Korean troops. Aimed at improving nuclear response and deterrence capabilities in the event of a North Korean attack, Pyongyang described these exercises as a potential prelude to nuclear war. In mid-July, during the NATO summit in Washington, the two presidents signed joint nuclear deterrence guidelines and the US reiterated its commitment to defending South Korea using all its capabilities, including nuclear weapons. In late September, a US nuclear-powered submarine docked in the port city of Busan to refuel. Later, just days after North Korea launched an intercontinental missile, a US bomber flew near the Korean Peninsula. Both actions provoked severe criticism from Pyongyang. The US, South Korea and Japan conducted two significant joint military exercises during the year, in June and November. Furthermore, in mid-November, the three countries formalised and deepened their military alliance, creating a joint secretariat and considering the expansion of joint air manoeuvres in the region, among other options. Kim Jong-un described the alliance as the "Asian NATO", called for his military to be prepared for war and anticipated an unprecedented expansion of his nuclear arsenal.

57 See the summary North Korea-South Korea in this chapter.

North Korea – South Korea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Territory International
Main parties:	North Korea, South Korea

Summary:
After the end of the Second World War and the occupation of the Korean peninsula by Soviet troops (north) and US troops (south), it was split into two countries. The Korean War (1950-53) ended with the signing of an armistice (under the terms of which the two countries remain technically at war) and the establishment of a de facto border at the 38th parallel. Despite the fact that in the 1970s talks began on reunification, the two countries have threatened on several occasions to take military action. As such, in recent decades numerous armed incidents have been recorded, both on the common border between the two countries (one of the most militarised zones in the world) and along the sea border in the Yellow Sea (or West Sea).

In line with the deteriorating relations between North and South Korea over the previous year, in 2024 inter-Korean relations reached one of their tensest moments in recent memory. In early 2024, Kim Jong-un declared South Korea his country's main enemy and announced his intention to abandon the goal of reunification and end the nearly 80-year history of inter-Korean relations. Subsequently, throughout the year, Pyongyang took several steps to physically express and give visibility to the change in policy, such as the deployment of thousands of troops in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), the destruction of roads and railways connecting the two Koreas (in October), the laying of thousands of new landmines near the Demilitarised Zone (where some North Korean soldiers were killed and wounded), the dissolution of all government agencies linked to inter-Korean relations and the reinforcement of the land border. **Kim Jong-un also announced that North Korea would no longer recognise the Yellow (or West) Sea known as the Northern Limit Line and subsequently accused Seoul of intruding into North Korean maritime territory and frequently violating the country's sovereignty, warning that he was willing to use armed force if such armed provocation persisted**. In October, it emerged that North Korea had amended its constitution to classify South Korea as a hostile state. Several analysts noted that the actions announced by Kim Jong-un in January and implemented throughout the year were some of Pyongyang's most assertive moves toward South Korea in recent years.

In early 2024, Kim Jong-un declared South Korea his country's main enemy and announced his intention to give up the goal of reunification and end the nearly 80-year history of inter-Korean relations

Meanwhile, the South Korean government increased security and defence cooperation with the United States and Japan, did not rule out acquiring nuclear weapons—the first time in the country's history that a defence minister has made such statements—and responded to North Korea's missile launches. In June, **Seoul completely ended its participation in the September 2018 Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA), as North Korea had previously done in November 2023, thereby enabling the resumption of military activities along the Military Demarcation Line (MDL)** and the Northwest Islands. The CMA had established a series of actions to reduce military tensions and accidental clashes, such as the dismantling of guard posts along the DMZ, a no-fly zone along the DMZ, a cessation of live-fire artillery exercises and military drills within three miles of the MDL and a ban on live-fire exercises and maritime manoeuvres on the borders in the East and West Seas.

There were several episodes of great tension between both countries. In early January, North Korea fired more than 200 artillery shells near the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong, located in a disputed area in the Yellow Sea and the scene of the 2010 incident in which 46 South Korean crew members were killed by projectiles fired by Pyongyang. South Korea ordered the island's population to take shelter and responded the same day by firing more than 400 artillery shells into the same area, sparking speculation about a military conflict in the border region. In March, following the annual joint military exercises between the US and South Korea, Pyongyang fired three short-range ballistic missiles towards waters off the Korean Peninsula's east coast. Later, in April, Pyongyang declared that it had identified targets in South Korea in the event of a "nuclear counterattack" and once again emphasised its intention to acquire the capability to attack South Korea with nuclear weapons using multiple systems. Tensions spiked in late May and June. In response to South Korea's military exercises with fighter jets near the border and the launch of propaganda leaflets toward North Korea by South Korean activists, in late May Pyongyang unsuccessfully launched a satellite using banned ballistic missile technology, jammed GPS signals and sent hundreds of balloons filled with garbage and manure toward South Korea, some of them equipped with an electrical system to release the balloons' payload. It is estimated that Pyongyang launched between 6,500 and 9,000 such balloons between late May and late November. In response, South Korea completely ended its participation in the 2018 Comprehensive Military Agreement. Shortly thereafter, it resumed broadcasting international news and K-pop songs from loudspeakers along the border. On 10 June, Kim Yo-jong, the sister of the North Korean leader, warned that the loudspeakers could provoke a "very dangerous situation" and risked

causing a "confrontational crisis". Also in June, **between 20 and 30 North Korean soldiers crossed the demarcation line between the two countries three times throughout the month and withdrew shortly after South Korean soldiers fired warning shots**. In August, the North Korean government described the annual joint military exercises between South Korea and the US, which involved around 19,000 South Korean troops and included live-fire drills, as provocative and a potential prelude to nuclear war. Finally, tensions between the two countries escalated again in October after North Korea accused South Korea of flying drones across the border and dropping anti-government leaflets over the capital. North Korea did the same in Seoul shortly thereafter.

South Asia

Afghanistan - Pakistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government International
Main parties:	Afghanistan, Pakistan

Summary:
Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have historically been characterised by complexity and disputes over the borderline established during the British colonisation of Pakistan known as the Durand Line, which divided the Pashtun population. In 1996, the Islamic Emirate was established in Afghanistan. It was governed by the Taliban, a religious and military movement formed in 1994 by men who had trained in religious schools in Pakistan and promoted by the Pakistani secret services. Pakistan was one of the few countries to recognise the Taliban government of Afghanistan. Following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the fall of the Taliban regime, Pakistan sided with the US government, though the Taliban continued to receive Pakistani support and established important operational bases in Pakistan. Although Pakistan always officially denied having helped the Taliban, parts of the government, the secret services and the Pakistani Armed Forces provided them with logistical, military and political support during the two decades of armed conflict and foreign military presence in Afghanistan. With the return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the government of Pakistan pressured the new Afghan authorities to exercise control over the Pakistani Taliban insurgency, the armed group TTP. The Afghan Taliban government tried to mediate between the Pakistani government and the TTP, but after the negotiations failed, tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan increased.

Tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan rose considerably during the year, with various episodes of violence escalating along the border. The increase in tension originated in 2023, following the breakdown of negotiations between the Pakistani government and the Pakistani Taliban insurgency, as well as the forced return to Afghanistan of hundreds of thousands of people. The Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in 2021 strengthened the Pakistani Taliban insurgency and accusations by Pakistan that the new Afghan government was supporting the armed opposition. Though both governments maintained talks throughout the year aimed at improving bilateral relations, they were not enough and tensions mounted throughout the year. The entry of insurgents from Afghanistan into Pakistan drove the deterioration of relations between both countries, as well as several episodes of violence involving Afghan and Pakistani security forces. In fact, two airstrikes by the Pakistani Armed Forces took place in Afghanistan during the year, marking an increase in violence.

The first episode of violence took place in March, indicating the start of an escalation and the deterioration of the relationship between both countries. Specifically, an attack by the armed group TTP blew up a vehicle at a military control post in North Waziristan, in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The attack on the vehicle was followed by the explosion of several bombs, one of which was detonated by a suicidal attacker, which killed seven members of the Pakistani security forces. After this multiple attack, a military operation began in which six insurgents lost their lives. Two days after the attack, the Pakistani security forces conducted air strikes inside Afghanistan, noting that the attack, for which the TTP had claimed responsibility, had been carried out from Afghan soil. The air strikes targeted alleged TTP bases in the provinces of Paktika and Khost. In response to Pakistan's military operations in Afghanistan, Kabul bombed Pakistan's Kurram district, killing a Pakistani soldier. These attacks stoked tensions between both governments and they traded blame and accusations in the months that followed. The Pakistani government demanded that Kabul take more forceful action to stop the TTP from operating from Afghanistan and stepped up security operations within its borders amid the escalation of violence.[58] In August, a soldier was killed by Afghan forces in a border area in Balochistan province. The soldier reportedly died after approaching the border in the Noshki area to carry out repairs on the fence separating the two countries and was shot by Afghan security forces. **December saw the greatest escalation of violence**, with several Pakistani attacks on Afghan territory, targeting TTP members but which, according to various sources, including the United Nations, caused dozens of civilian casualties. After several TTP actions in Pakistan, which resulted in the deaths of 16 Pakistani soldiers, Pakistani security forces launched several airstrikes against suspected TTP bases in the Afghan province of Paktia. At least 46 civilians died as a result of these bombings. The Pakistani government also claimed to have killed several insurgent leaders. In response to these Pakistani actions, Afghanistan launched a military response that resulted in the death of a Pakistani soldier. The Taliban government claimed to have attacked ISIS-KP bases on

58 See the summary on Pakistan in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Pakistani soil, prompting a response by the Pakistani security forces that resulted in the deaths of several members of the Afghan Taliban security forces. In fact, some analysts suggested that one of the reasons why the Taliban government was not taking action against the TTP presence in Afghanistan, in addition to the historical ties between the Taliban on both sides of the border, was the fear that internal divisions within the Taliban could strengthen ISIS-KP.

Bangladesh	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami)

Summary:
The political situation of Bangladesh has been complex since it was created as an independent state in 1971 following its secession from Pakistan in an armed conflict that claimed three million lives. The 1991 elections ushered in democracy after a succession of authoritarian military governments that had dominated the country since independence. The two main parties, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and the Awami League (AL), have since then held power after various elections, which have always been contested by the losing party. This has given rise to governments that have failed to address the country's main challenges, such as poverty, corruption and the poor quality of democracy, and that have responded to partisan interests. In 2008, the AL came to power after a two-year period dominated by an interim military government that unsuccessfully tried to end the political crisis that had plunged the country into violence in the preceding months and that even led to the imprisonment of the leaders of both parties. The scheduling of elections for 2014 in a very fragile political context and with staunch opposition from the BNP to the reforms undertaken by the AL, such as the elimination of the interim government overseeing the electoral process, triggered a serious and violent political crisis in 2013. At the same time, the establishment in 2010 of a tribunal to try crimes committed during the 1971 war, used by the government to crush the Islamist opposition, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami party, aggravated the situation in the country. The 2018 elections, won by the AL, provoked another episode of tension and violence, with accusations of fraud and the imprisonment of BNP leader and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for corruption. In the following years, political tensions persisted, escalating into the massive social protests of 2024 that led to the formation of an interim government.

Bangladesh experienced a year of profound political change as a consequence of a grave political crisis that led to the resignation of the prime minister following massive popular protests and the formation of a new interim government. In August, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the leader of the Awami League (AL), was forced to resign after 20 years in office following weeks of intense social protests. Police crackdowns led to **violent clashes between police and protesters in which more than 1.400 people died, according to figures compiled by the United Nations**.[59] The protests began as a result of student protests against the Bangladeshi Supreme Court's reinstatement of a quota system that reserved 30% of civil service positions for descendants of participants in the Bangladesh Liberation War, which ended with the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971. The significant economic growth resulting from the expansion of the Bangladeshi textile industry—one of the main suppliers to the international textile market—has not led to an improvement in the labour market for university students, as workers in this industry are predominantly women, earning very low wages under highly unstable working conditions. Student organisations demanded that the quota be abolished and protests grew in the face of the prime minister's disdain for the student movement, who went so far as to call the students descendants of those who collaborated with Pakistan during the war for independence. Organisations close to the government carried out violent attacks and all educational institutions were closed. The deaths of 20 students as a result of a police crackdown on the protests on 18 July led to negotiations finally opening with the government on 19 July. Two days later, the Supreme Court reduced the quota to 7%. However, the protests persisted and grew, with other parts of civil society participating. Clashes between police and protesters resumed in early August and on 3 August the student movement stated that its only demand was the resignation of Prime Minister Hasina. Demonstrations drew hundreds of thousands of people to the capital on 5 August in what became known as the "March to Dhaka". The head of the Bangladeshi Armed Forces refused to take more forceful action against the protesters, forcing Hasina to resign, flee the country and seek refuge in India.

Following Hasina's departure, President Muhammad Shahabuddin Chuppu dissolved Parliament. Ultimately, as a result of negotiations between the president, the Bangladeshi Armed Forces and student representatives, an agreement was reached to form an interim government headed by economist and Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, who was to lead the country until elections were held, which, according to the Constitution, should take place 90 days after the dissolution of Parliament. Following his appointment, the government, which included some student representatives, undertook an agenda of economic, electoral, judicial and media reforms, though these were limited by the interim mandate. Thus, the heads of the Supreme Court and the Bangladesh Bank were replaced and the country signed the International Convention for the Protection

59 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Fact-Finding Report Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), February 2025.

of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). However, political tension and protests persisted after the appointment of the new government, though less intensively, and at the end of the year many educational institutions had still not returned to normal operations due to the dismissal of their leadership. The opposition demanded a timetable for elections and the chief of staff of the Bangladeshi Armed Forces indicated that they supported the interim government and would stay out of politics, suggesting an 18-month transition period. In October, the new government began a dialogue with the main parties except the AL to agree on the necessary electoral reforms. Finally, in December, interim Prime Minister Muhammed Yunus presented a tentative electoral calendar, indicating that the elections would take place between December 2025 and June 2026. At the same time, in the months following the formation of the interim government, members of Hasina's government were arrested, including several former ministers. Hasina and her family were also accused of embezzling 5 billion USD intended for infrastructure and of disappearing and systematically torturing people in secret detention centres, prompting the government to initiate the process to request her extradition from India.

India (Manipur)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Identity, Self-government Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed groups (PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA)

Summary:
The tension that confronts the government against the various armed groups that operate in the state, and several of them against each other, has its origin in the demands for the independence of various of these groups, as well as the existing tensions between the various ethnic groups that live in the state. In the 1960s and 70s several armed groups were created, some with a Communist inspiration and others with ethnic origins, groups which were to remain active throughout the forthcoming decades. On the other hand, the regional context, in a state that borders with Nagaland, Assam and Myanmar, also marked the development of the conflict in Manipur and the tension between the ethnic Manipur groups and the Nagaland population which would be constant. The economic impoverishment of the state and its isolation with regard to the rest of the country contributed decisively to consolidate a grievance feeling in the Manipur population. Recent years saw a reduction of armed violence.

Tension and violence persisted throughout the year in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur. However, the death toll from intercommunal violence and clashes between Indian security forces and insurgent groups active in the state decreased significantly compared to the previous year. The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)[60] reported that 87 people died as a result of various episodes of violence in 2024, compared to 157 deaths in 2023, a year that saw a significant rise in tension between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. In May, marking the first year since the outbreak of violence in 2023, International Crisis Group[61] reported that 67,000 people had been displaced by violence and more than 220 had died. Clashes and shootings by armed groups from both communities occurred throughout the year, claiming dozens of lives. Several police stations were also attacked, burned down or shot at. As a result of the violence and insecurity, the Indian general elections in April were seriously disrupted in the state and several polling stations had to cancel the vote. As was the case throughout 2023 and in other phases of the conflict, there were incidents of violence specifically targeting women that increased tension between the Meitei and Kuki communities. For example, 75 Meitei women were abducted by Kuki insurgents in May. In November, Meitei insurgents shot and raped a Kuki woman and burned down many houses in a Kuki village. Kuki insurgents killed a woman in response and security forces launched an operation that left 11 Kuki rebels dead in what was reportedly the worst episode of violence since the fighting began in May 2023. Since October, the violence has spread to Jiribam district, which is inhabited by both Kuki and Meitei people and had previously been spared the consequences of the tension. Since the outbreak of violence in 2023, the segregation of the population has significantly increased and the areas where the Meitei and Kuki populations coexist have shrunk considerably. Following the wave of violence in November, an additional 5,000 security forces were deployed to the state and anti-terrorism legislation known as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) was reinstated. The AFSPA grants sweeping powers to the security forces and has been persistently criticised by human rights organisations for the serious violations it has entailed, including the killing of civilians accused of insurgency and cases of arbitrary detention and torture.

2.3.3.2 The Pacific

Papua New Guinea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Identity, Resources, Territory, Self-government Internal
Main parties:	Government, community militias, Government of Bougainville

60 SATP, Manipur datasheet, [Viewed on 20 March 2025].
61 International Crisis Group, India May 2024, Crisiswatch, May 2024.

Summary:
In recent decades, high levels of intercommunity, clan and tribal tension and violence have been reported in various regions of Papua New Guinea, a country made up of more than 600 islands and with great cultural diversity (more than 850 languages are spoken). Most of this intercommunity violence, which especially affects the provinces of Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands, is linked to conflicts over land tenure (a very high percentage of which is regulated by customary law), though historically there have also been episodes of violence related to other issues, such as control of resources, family and clan rivalries and accusations of witchcraft and black magic, which have caused the death of dozens of people. Community tensions get worse around elections (as happened in 2022) and are becoming deadlier due to growing access to firearms. In addition, the regions most affected by intercommunity violence are among those that suffer from the highest rates of poverty, the lowest levels of formal education and the absence and fragility of institutions related to security, law enforcement and access to justice and conflict resolution.

Amid the imposition of a state emergency following protests in January that left over 20 people dead, rising political tensions over the political status of Bougainville Island and a parliamentary crisis in September, **high levels of intergroup violence continued to be reported in several provinces** throughout 2024, particularly in Enga province (Highlands Region) and East Sepik province (Momase Region). In terms of community, clan and tribal violence, at least 49 people (65 according to other sources) were killed and many others wounded in mid-February during clashes in a border area between the districts of Wabag and Wapenamanda, in Enga province (Highlands Region). The government considers the clashes to be **one of the worst massacres in recent history**. According to the authorities, the violence mainly pitted the Ambulin and Sau Walep tribes against the Sikin, Kaekin and Palinu communities, but members of up to 17 tribes were reportedly involved in the fighting, which displaced thousands of people and had a significant humanitarian impact on the region. Following the national upheaval caused by the aforementioned massacre, in March the leaders of the two main tribal alliances involved in the violence, the Yopo Alliance and the Palinau Alliance, met in the capital under government auspices and signed a three-month ceasefire agreement for laying down (but not surrendering) arms. This agreement also provided for the cessation of all forms of violence and bellicose, hostile or provocative behaviour; police access to all areas where violence took place; and a commitment to work with the state to address conflicts and problems in the affected communities,, among other things. Major outbreaks of violence occurred in Enga province again in September and October. In September, over 30 people were killed (up to 50, according to the United Nations) and many others were wounded in the Porgera Valley region during five days of clashes between the Sakar and Piande clans over control of a gold mine and unauthorised mining activity. Previously, in August, there had been an incident between the two communities. The government declared a two-month state of emergency in the area, which had already seen an incident of violence between the two communities in August. In October, a 30-vehicle convoy escorted by state security forces heading to the Porgera mine to deliver fuel to the company operating it (New Porgera Limited) was attacked by armed men from the Kipul tribe. Two weeks later, seven people were killed and another 12 reportedly went missing after an armed group attacked a bus in Lagaip district (Enga province) in an episode that authorities linked to the aforementioned incident earlier that month and to other controversial events related to illegal mining. There have been many incidents of violence in the vicinity of the mine in recent years. The research centre ACLED[62] has counted at least 127 deaths since 2021, aggravated by the growing influx of people arriving to the area in search of work and the significant growth in illegal mining activity.

Another region of the country hardest hit by violence was East Sepik Province (Momase Region). In mid-July, at least 26 people (the United Nations stated that the number may have been over 50), including 16 minors, were killed after an attack by more than 30 members of the I Don't Care gang in three villages in Angoram district. According to local authorities, the attack lasted several days and included extreme forms of violence and brutality, including sexual violence, beheadings and amputations, shootings and the indiscriminate burning of homes. The government stated that the attack was related to land disputes and ownership and user rights at a lake in the area, but also to retaliation for previous incidents of violence and accusations of witchcraft. Over the past five years, the gang had already been involved in many attacks and cases of sexual violence, including holding girls captive and forced marriage. According to ACLED, the number of violent incidents in the province (24) rose significantly in 2024 compared to previous years (seven in 2023 and four in 2022). Local authorities maintain that witchcraft is a widespread cultural practice in various parts of the country. According to some sources,[63] around 3,000 people were killed in violence related to accusations of witchcraft between 2000 and 2020. The government asserts that whilst intercommunity violence linked to land disputes, honour, revenge and specific episodes of crime is common in certain parts of the country, some other factors have made the violence deadlier in recent years, including the increasing use of mercenaries or people from outside the conflict zone hired to participate in certain attacks, the greater sophistication of the weapons used in the attacks and the limited institutional

62 ACLED, ACLED Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].
63 Tim Swanston and Theckla Gunga, Sorcery accusations in PNG can quickly spiral into a life-threatening attack, but this safe house offers victims a lifeline, ABC News, 12 April 2024.

presence of the state and particularly of the police. In Enga province, for example, there are around 200 police officers serving a population of around 300,000, a ratio far below that recommended by the United Nations.

There were other flashpoints of tension in the country throughout the year, such as growing **frustration in Bougainville with the slow progress of the negotiations over the island's political status** and tensions between the government and the opposition, which led to the prime minister facing a vote of no confidence. However, the most significant were the wage protests that erupted in January. Staged by state civil servants and police officers, these protests led to **many clashes and riots in various parts of the country, in which at least 22 people died**. Faced with this situation and the product shortage crisis caused by a wave of looting of businesses, the government declared a state of emergency.

2.3.4. Europe

South Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International
Main parties:	Azerbaijan, Armenia, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Türkiye

Summary:
Armenia and Azerbaijan faced various dimensions of interstate tension. On one hand, they have had a dispute over the sovereignty of Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory historically inhabited by a predominantly local Armenian population and that was integrated by the USSR in 1923 as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan. In the late 1980s, the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and their local authorities began a campaign to join Armenia. Preceded by incidents and civil violence since 1988, amidst the decomposition of the USSR and the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the tension around Nagorno-Karabakh escalated into an armed conflict between Azerbaijan and the local forces of the enclave, that were supported by Armenia. It ended with a ceasefire in 1994. In that war, Nagorno-Karabakh's forces took control of the enclave and the seven surrounding districts, which belonged to Azerbaijan and whose Azerbaijani population was expelled. More than 24,000 people (over 30,000, by some estimates) died and more than a million people were displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan. A peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the years that followed failed to resolve the conflict. Since the 1994 ceasefire, there have been several escalations of violence, such as in 2016, which claimed several hundred lives. The conflict resumed in 2020 with an Azerbaijani military offensive and a 44-day war, in which Baku recaptured the districts around Nagorno-Karabakh and a third of the enclave. Several thousand people were killed and tens of thousands were displaced. A cessation of hostilities agreement was reached, which authorised the deployment of Russian peacekeeping troops, but left the political status of the disputed territory unresolved. Azerbaijan launched a new one-day military offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, which led to the exodus of its Armenian population and by which Baku forced the reintegration of the enclave into Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Baku and Yerevan continue to disagree on the delimitation of their border and the opening of transport routes, aggravated by their historical hostility over Nagorno-Karabakh. The political dispute has been punctuated by cross-border incidents of violence.

Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan eased and their governments continued to negotiate a peace agreement[64] one year after Azerbaijan's military offensive in September 2023, which resulted in its military takeover of the entire Nagorno-Karabakh enclave and the forced exodus of the vast majority of its Armenian population. The self-proclaimed administration of Nagorno-Karabakh ceased to exist on 1 January 2024 as a result of Azerbaijan's military offensive in 2023. The prospects for the return of its approximately 100,000 Armenian inhabitants were poor, according to analysts. In October, the Armenian government extended the temporary protection status of the refugee population in Nagorno-Karabakh for another year, until December 2025. Analysts said that the Armenian government was facing financial difficulties in supporting the integration of the Armenian refugee population.[65] According to ACLED, Azerbaijan has carried out further destruction of Armenian buildings and heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, including the demolition of the region's parliament in Stepanakert/Khankendi (March) and the destruction of the village of Mokhrenes/Susanlyg.[66] Civil society organisations in Nagorno-Karabakh blasted the destruction and expropriation of cultural heritage and urged UNESCO to dispatch a mission to document and prevent further attacks.

Military tensions eased in 2024, with no offensives or large-scale violence, unlike in recent years since the 2020 war. However, some incidents of violence did occur along the border. ACLED reported 102 incidents of political violence (71 battles, 29 events of remote explosions/violence and two events of violence against civilians) in the two countries.[67] At different times of the year, Armenia urged Azerbaijan to agree on an incident prevention and response mechanism, but Azerbaijan did not respond. Among the incidents in 2024, in February, Azerbaijani forces killed four Armenian

64 See the summary on Armenia-Azerbaijan in chapter 5 (Europe) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
65 International Crisis Group, *Armenia Struggles to Cope with Exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh,* ICG, 4 March 2024.
66 ACLED, *Destruction of Armenian heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh*, ACLED, 20 September 2024.
67 ACLED, Data Explorer [Viewed on 31 January 2025].

soldiers, wounded another and destroyed a military post in the Syunik region in response to an Armenian attack that wounded an Azerbaijani soldier. Azerbaijan accused Armenia of firing at areas of the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan, which Yerevan denied. The two governments continued to clash over the issue of the Zangezur corridor, which connects Azerbaijan with the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan through the Armenian province of Syunik. Facing disagreement over this issue, they agreed to exclude it from the draft peace agreement, but the dispute continued to pose risks of future conflict. Azerbaijan has threatened to use military force to establish this corridor on several occasions. In early 2025, the Azerbaijani president issued new warnings. Furthermore, the two countries planned further hikes in military spending for 2025, with Azerbaijan's military budget reaching a record $5 billion (a 17% increase over 2024 and a 43% increase compared to 2023, the year of the military offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh). Finally, with respect to external actors, Russian peacekeeping forces withdrew from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2024, which had been deployed in 2020 under the cessation of hostilities agreement of that year. Moreover, the Joint Russian-Turkish Monitoring Centre, established in 2020 to monitor the cessation of hostilities over Nagorno-Karabakh, concluded in 2024. Azerbaijan also called for the withdrawal of the EU mission in Armenia (EUMA), calling it a "NATO mission".[68] During the year, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to delimit some sections of the border and made headway in negotiations for a peace agreement, but tensions lingered over conditions demanded by Baku and unresolved issues left out of the draft agreements, such as the aforementioned Zangezur corridor, creating uncertainty about the future course of relations between the two countries.

Southern Europe

Serbia – Kosovo	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Government International[69]
Main parties:	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX

Summary:
The socio-political crisis between Serbia and Kosovo is related to the process of determining the political status of the region after the armed conflict of 1998-1999, which pitted both the KLA (Albanian armed group) and NATO against the Serbian government following years of repression inflicted by Slobodan Milosevic's regime on the Albanian population in what was then a province of Serbia within the Yugoslav federation. The NATO offensive, unauthorised by the UN, paved the way for the establishment of an international protectorate. In practice, Kosovo was divided along ethnic lines, with an increase in hostilities against the Serb community, whose isolationism was in turn fostered by Serbia. The territory's final status and the rights of minorities have remained a constant source of tension, in addition to Kosovo's internal problems, such as unemployment, corruption and criminality. The process of determining this final status, which began in 2006, failed to achieve an agreement between the parties or backing from the UN Security Council for the proposal put forward by the UN special envoy. In 2008, Kosovo's parliament proclaimed the independence of the territory, which was rejected by the Serbian population of Kosovo and by Serbia. In 2011, the parties began a new negotiating process facilitated by the EU with the support of other actors. However, the political dispute between Serbia and Kosovo continues, as does the political and social tension between the institutions of Kosovo, on the one hand, and political and social actors and the Kosovo Serb population, on the other hand, with intermittent expressions of violence.

Tension between Serbia and Kosovo remained high. First, the security situation worsened. In November, an explosion in Zubin Potok (in Kosovo Serb-majority northern Kosovo) damaged a strategic canal that supplies water to two of Kosovo's coal-fired thermal power plants, the main generators of electricity in the territory, as well as to hundreds of thousands of people in northern Kosovo and parts of the capital. The Kosovo Security Council (KSC) blamed the "terrorist organisations Civil Defence and Northern Brigade" and former Kosovo Serb politician Milan Radoičić for the attacks, under direction from the Serbian government and president.[70] The Serbian government denied its involvement in the explosion in the Zubin Potok canal and accused Kosovo of using the attack to increase its control over Serb-held areas in northern Kosovo. The KSC approved action to deploy the Kosovo police and the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) to critical infrastructure and services, such as lakes, canals, bridges, antennas and substations. **NATO increased the presence of its KFOR mission in the area, but it did not authorise the Kosovo government to deploy the KSF in the north.** International governments and actors condemned the explosion. It was preceded by two hand grenade attacks that same month in Zvecan (north), which the Kosovo Ministry of the Interior blamed on criminal organisations supported by Serbia. Furthermore, the explosion occurred 14 months after

68 See the summary on Armenia-Azerbaijan in chapter 5 (Europe) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
69 The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered "international" because even though its international legal status is still unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by more than a hundred countries.
70 *Communication of the Security Council of the Republic of Kosovo* en Telegrafi, "Security Council meeting, additional security measures around critical facilities", *Telegrafi*, 30 November 2024.

around 30 armed men staged a serious paramilitary ambush and barricaded themselves in the Banjska Monastery in northern Kosovo in 2023, for which Kosovo blamed individuals and groups supported by Serbia, including Radoičić.[71]

Furthermore, both Kosovo and Serbia implemented unilateral actions in 2024 that stoked tension and mistrust. In August, the Kosovo government dismantled five Serbian institutions in the Kosovo Serb towns of Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic. These institutions, considered illegal and parallel by the Kosovo government, operate with Belgrade's support as service providers for the Kosovo Serb population. International actors such as the EU and the US criticised Pristina for taking such action outside the negotiating process between Kosovo and Serbia. Kosovo also banned the use of the Serbian dinar for cash payments and transactions, allowing only the euro (regulation from December 2023, with entry into force in February 2024 and a three-month transition period). The decision negatively affected the Kosovo Serb population dependent on salaries, pensions and benefits paid by the Serbian government, who had to travel to Serbia to receive them. Serbia and Kosovo addressed the issue of the ban on the Serbian dinar during the negotiating process, though no agreement was reached. Furthermore, for much of 2024, Kosovo maintained its embargo on the import of goods from Serbia, which it introduced in July 2023 under the guise of security concerns. In early October, ahead of the EU-Western Balkans summit that month, Kosovo lifted the restriction. Tensions were also heightened by expropriation carried out by the central government in northern Kosovo and by the Central Election Commission's decision on 23 December to reject the Kosovo Serb party Serbian List from participating in the Kosovo parliamentary elections on 9 February, though it ultimately authorised the party to participate.

Meanwhile, Serbia took action that also aggravated tensions between Serbia and Kosovo, such as Serbian government's adoption of a bill declaring Kosovo a "special protection zone" in October and another draft law organising and granting powers to Serbian judicial authorities for the prosecution of crimes committed in Kosovo. Kosovo described the pieces of legislation as acts of hostility against its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Meanwhile, Kosovo described Serbia's April military exercises 30 kilometres from the border with Kosovo as a provocation.

2.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

Israel – Iran	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Government International
Main parties:	Israel, Iran

Summary:
Relations between Israel and Iran have historically had their highs and lows, but a hostile atmosphere has prevailed between them since the last few decades of the 20th century. In 1947, Iran was one of the countries that voted against the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine due to its potential consequences for the region and advocated an alternative proposal for a single federal state. Nevertheless, after the First Arab-Israeli War (1948), Iran was the second Muslim country (after Türkiye) to officially recognise Israel, during the rule of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Beginning in 1953, when a *coup d'état* supported by the United States and the United Kingdom reinstated pro-Western leadership in Iran, the two countries intensified their economic, military and security relations. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran led to a breakdown in those relations and a dynamic of confrontation. The Islamic Republic of Iran took a more active stance on the Palestinian issue and does not recognise Israel. Meanwhile, Israel considers Tehran as a threat. Since the mid-1980s, Iran and Israel have been engaged in a proxy conflict that has had repercussions throughout the region. They have engaged in a shadow war, exchanging attacks against each other's interests. Iran's nuclear programme has been one of the main targets of these attacks. Israel, which possesses nuclear weapons, despite not publicly acknowledging it, is determined to prevent Tehran from developing an atomic weapon. The conflict between Israel and Iran had primarily been waged through indirect attacks, but in 2024, amid escalating regional tensions stemming from the Gaza crisis, both countries crossed a red line and engaged in direct attacks on each other's soil.

In 2024, Israel and Iran crossed a red line in their rivalry and attacked each other directly

The year saw an escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran amid an increasingly volatile regional context due to the repercussions of the Gaza crisis. Until then, the two countries had primarily expressed their confrontation through indirect attacks. These included assassinations for which Israel did not publicly claim responsibility and attacks against members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and pro-Tehran militias in Iraq and Syria, as well as attacks against Israel by actors within Tehran's orbit, the "axis of resistance". **However, in 2024 Israel and Iran crossed a red line in their rivalry**

71 See the summary on Serbia-Kosovo in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2024! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2024.

and engaged in direct attacks in an unprecedented dynamic of hostilities that left at least 38 people dead. The turning point came on 1 April, when Israel launched an attack against the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing five Iranian officials and two senior IRGC officials, one of them Brigadier General Mohammed Reza Zahed, a veteran commander of the al-Quds Force, involved in Iranian operations abroad, both in Syria and Lebanon. The scale and nature of the attack, which targeted a diplomatic headquarters in Tehran, thereby challenging Iranian sovereignty, prompted immediate speculation about how Iran would respond. Iran had avoided any direct confrontation with Israel, which could play into the strategy of Netanyahu's government to more actively involve the US in Middle East conflicts, yet failure to respond to the Israeli aggression could jeopardise its credibility as a regional power and among its allies in the region. **Days later, with the support of some of its allies, Iran launched a massive attack against Israel on 13 April, involving more than 120 ballistic missiles, 30 cruise missiles and 170 drones. Officially called Operation True Promise, the attack was Iran's first direct attack on Israel since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979**. Despite its spectacular nature, it was widely publicised, which helped Israel to intercept 99% of the missiles and drones with the help of the US, the United Kingdom and Jordan. The Iranian attack injured 12 people in southern Israel and caused minor damage to the Nevatim air base in the Negev Desert. In a letter to the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General, Tehran justified its attack on the grounds of its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Following the attack, Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN declared the episode over, implying that it did not intend to escalate again, but warning that it would respond more severely if Israel made another such "mistake". Israel launched another attack against the city of Isfahan a few days later, on 19 April, but Tehran downplayed the incident and showed no signs of taking further action.

In this context of regional tension, a helicopter crash resulted in the deaths of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, his foreign minister and six others on 19 May. Speculation about possible Israeli responsibility was dismissed. **On the eve of the inauguration of Raisi's successor, Masoud Pezeshkian, Israel launched an attack in Tehran that killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh on 31 July.** The Palestinian leader was in Iran to attend Pezeshkian's inauguration and until then had been the head of the Hamas delegation in the negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza. The episode once again stoked tensions, but, according to reports, after various diplomatic contacts, Iran decided to reserve the right to retaliate for the fresh Israeli attack on its territory, this time against Haniyeh. It also decided not to avenge the death of Fuad Shukr, the Hezbollah commander killed in Beirut by Israel days earlier, so as not to jeopardise the ceasefire negotiations over Gaza, which were being facilitated by the US, Qatar and Egypt.[72] However, the regional outlook continued to deteriorate due to the intensification of the Israeli offensive on Gaza and Israel's decision to focus its campaign on the "northern front" starting in September in its confrontation with Hezbollah.[73] **Following the assassination of a senior IRGC commander, Abbas Nilforoushan, on 27 September, and the long-time leader of the Lebanese Shia militia, Hassan Nasrallah, on 29 September, and shortly after Israel launched its ground military operation in southern Lebanon and announced its intention to reshape the regional order, Iran launched another missile strike against Israel on 1 October.** The Iranian attack involved around 200 ballistic missiles, most of which were intercepted by the Israeli defence system and the US. The attack was more forceful than the one in April and used more advanced missiles and less prior warning. Damage was reported only at the Israeli air bases of Nevatim and Tel Nof and one Palestinian civilian was killed. Tehran again argued that its strike was an act of self-defence in the face of previous Israeli attacks on its territory and Israel's ongoing offensives in Gaza and Lebanon. The Iranian foreign minister stressed that they had only attacked military targets and that they considered the attack over unless Israel decided to escalate the situation again.

Israel took weeks to respond directly. **On 26 October, Israel launched another series of attacks against Iran that hit around 20 targets**, including missile manufacturing facilities and defence systems responsible for protecting energy infrastructure in Tehran, Ilam, Karaj, Khuzestan and Semnan. At least four Iranian soldiers and one civilian died in these attacks. The US reportedly asked Israel to avoid these attacks on nuclear facilities for fear that they could lead to a larger escalation. Netanyahu's government warned Iran not to retaliate and claimed to have achieved all its objectives. In November, the Iranian regime warned of possible changes to its nuclear doctrine if its security was threatened and movements of weapons from Iran to Iraq were identified, which could indicate that a new retaliatory action against Israel could be carried out by (or in coordination with) Iraqi militias.[74] In this context, various actors, including the UN Secretary-General, expressed alarm at the continued escalation of violence in the

72 See the summary on Israel-Palestine in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.
73 See the summary on Israel-Hezbollah in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
74 See the summary on Iraq in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Middle East. At the end of the year, Iran's position in the regional arena was shaken by the fall of Bashar Assad's regime on 8 December, to which it had provided key support over the past decade.[75] Assad's fall from power compromised Iran's ability to project its influence in the region and the communication and supply channels to its other major regional ally, Hezbollah. According to data collected from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), at least 25 IRGC members were killed in Israeli attacks on Syrian soil in 2024.[76]

Israel launched a broad armed offensive against Syrian arsenals, degrading Syria's military capabilities in the long term

Israel - Syria	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Resources, Territory International
Main parties:	Israel, Syria, UNDOF

Summary:
The tension between Israel and Syria is set against the backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its consequences for the region. The outcome of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War included Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights. In 1973, Syria unsuccessfully attempted to recapture this territory militarily in a concerted effort with Egypt, which in turn sought to regain control of the Sinai Peninsula. The 1973 Arab-Israeli War or the "Yom Kippur War" ended in a ceasefire. In 1974, a disengagement agreement was signed between Israel and Syria and the UN established an observer force to monitor its implementation in the Golan Heights (UNDOF). Two major lines of tension between Israel and Syria have been Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights, a strategically key area for its water reserves, which Israel annexed in 1981 in a move unrecognised by the international community; and Damascus' support for the Lebanese Shia militia party Hezbollah, which emerged during the Israeli occupation of Lebanon in 1982. The outbreak of the armed conflict in Syria in 2011 and its subsequent regionalisation and internationalisation had a direct impact on the dynamics of this tension and on the positioning of the various actors involved in the dispute. In this context, Israel became actively involved in attacks on positions of Hezbollah, Iran and Tehran-backed militias in Syria. Following the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in December 2024, Israel expanded its occupation of Syrian land in the Golan Heights area and declared the end of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

For most of 2024, the Syrian armed conflict and the regional escalation stemming from the Gaza crisis overshadowed the dynamics of the historical tension between Syria and Israel, centred on the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. Throughout the year, Israel was involved in many attacks on Syrian soil against various actors, including pro-Iranian militias, members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Hezbollah and Hamas. Israeli attacks on various parts of Syria reached unprecedented levels, resulting in the deaths of 482 people in 2024, including 414 combatants and 68 civilians.[77] Some of these groups also launched attacks against the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, one of which resulted in the deaths of 12 Druze civilians in July.[78] Israeli forces increased their offensive in Syria starting in September, alongside the intensification of their military campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon.[79] According to data from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the vast majority of these deaths (472) occurred between January and November, before the fall of Bashar Assad's regime on 8 December. **Following the regime's collapse, various Israeli attacks in Syria opened a new chapter of uncertainty in the relationship between both countries**. Hours after the capture of Damascus by opposition forces led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) (successor organisation to the former al-Nusra Front, the former armed wing of al-Qaeda in Syria), **Israel launched a broad armed offensive against Syrian arsenals**. The more than 500 Israeli strikes conducted as part of Operation Bashan Arrow destroyed around 70-80% of Syria's naval and air capabilities, chemical weapons stockpiles and weapons production sites, degrading Syria's military capabilities in the long term.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces advanced in the Golan Heights beyond the demilitarised zone and occupied new land in Syria on the pretext of preventing possible attacks against Israel. Netanyahu's government declared that the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria had "collapsed". In response to the withdrawal of Syrian military forces, Israel ordered its forces to take up positions to prevent them from falling to "hostile forces" or "jihadist groups" in a move it described as defensive. The 1974 agreement established withdrawal zones and a demilitarised zone where only the 1,200-strong UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), is permitted. According to Israel, the day before Assad's fall, armed groups had entered the demilitarised zone and stolen UNDOF equipment, but the mission itself later asserted that this was a

76 SOHR, Highest annual toll ever | Israel attacks Syria on 373 occasions in 2024, destroying over 1,000 targets and killing and injuring nearly 845 combatants and civilians, 2 January 2025.
77 See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
78 Israel and the United States blamed this attack on Hezbollah, which denied responsibility. Some analysts thought that the attack failed. In retaliation, Israel launched an attack in Lebanon that killed a Hezbollah commander, Fuad Shukr, and five civilians.
79 See the summary on Israel – Hezbollah in this chapter.

one-off incident and that it had recovered the stolen weapons. There were various indications that Israel intended to remain in the area. Whilst the English version of Netanyahu's statement asserted that the Israeli presence in the area would be "temporary" until the establishment of a force committed to the armistice that could guarantee Israel's security, the Hebrew version made no reference to any limitations of time. Days later, **Netanyahu's government approved doubling the Israeli population in the occupied Golan Heights**.[80] In a statement made in mid-December, UNDOF described Israeli actions and presence in various locations in the area as a violation of the 1974 agreement and stressed that Israeli movements within the area of separation along the ceasefire line had been intensifying since July 2024. In November, UNDOF had warned that some Israeli construction projects along the Alpha Line were serious violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, as it stipulates that Israel cannot cross it.[81]

Syria's new authorities condemned Israel's actions and declared that they did not intend to pose a threat to their neighbours. In mid-December, HTS issued a public statement explicitly stating that it did not seek confrontation with Israel, but warning that with Iranian influence and Hezbollah's presence in the country having ceased, as both had been key allies of Bashar Assad, Netanyahu's government had no excuse or reason to continue bombing Syria. This position was interpreted as a sign that tensions could escalate if Israel persisted with its activities on Syrian soil. Some analysts said that Assad's fall was celebrated in Israel for weakening Iran, but that the former Syrian regime had in practice been a "convenient rival" in recent decades.

Summary:
The crisis in Gaza and the resulting escalation between various Middle Eastern actors fostered the beginning of a new scenario of tension that has focused mainly on the Red Sea since late 2023 and has led to constant armed exchanges pitting the Yemeni armed group known as the Houthis (or Ansar Allah) against Israel, the US and the United Kingdom. From a declared position of opposition to Israel and the US, which has been part of their political ideology for decades, and expressing solidarity with the Palestinian population, the Houthis launched armed attacks against vessels in the Red Sea in mid-November 2023, warning that they would continue their attacks until Israel halted its military campaign in the Gaza Strip. The Yemeni group then expanded its operations against merchant ships of various flags bound for Israel, thereby affecting traffic in an area crucial for global maritime transport. This shift led to the establishment of the military Operation Prosperity Guardian (December 2023), led by the US and with significant participation from the United Kingdom and other countries. Since then, hostilities have intensified and expanded from their epicentre in the Red Sea. The dispute is also framed and influenced by tensions between the US and Israel with Iran, as the Houthis are part of the "axis of resistance" that brings together various actors in Tehran's orbit. This tension also impacts the dynamics of the armed conflict in Yemen and the prospects for transforming it through negotiations.

Following the fall of Bashar Assad, Israel expanded its occupation of Syrian land and declared its disengagement from the 1974 agreement on the Golan Heights, opening a new chapter of uncertainty in bilateral relations

The Gulf

Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Government International
Main parties:	Houthis/Ansar Allah, Israel, USA, United Kingdom, Islamic Resistance in Iraq, Iran

The armed exchanges pitting the Yemeni armed group known as the Houthis against Israel, then with the US and the UK (among other countries) that began in late 2023 intensified and expanded throughout 2024, creating a high-intensity crisis whose epicentre was in the Red Sea, but which also involved hostilities in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean. Beginning in the second half of the year, the tensions also increasingly affected Yemen and Israel. The dispute reportedly killed between 30 and 50 people and wounded dozens, according to ACLED and informal accounts based on media reports. The dispute is framed and has been influenced by a series of regional events and dynamics, particularly after the 7 October attacks in Israel, the Israeli military campaign and genocide in Gaza and the resulting escalation of conflicts and tensions between various actors in the Middle East. Claiming solidarity with the Palestinian population, the Houthis began armed attacks against vessels in the Red Sea in November 2023, warning that they would continue until Israel halted its offensive in and blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Yemeni group,

80 In January 2025, Israel announced that it would remain in the newly occupied territory for an unlimited period of time.
81 The Alpha Line, to the west, demarcates the area that Israeli forces cannot cross, while the Bravo Line, to the east, demarcates the area that Syrian forces cannot cross. Between the two lines lies the demilitarised buffer zone.

which is also known as Ansar Allah, initially focused its attacks on Israeli-owned vessels, but later extended them to ships of various nationalities bound for Israel. The impact of these attacks on global maritime traffic and trade led to the establishment of the military Operation Prosperity Guardian in December 2023, led by the US (Israel's strategic ally in the region) and with significant participation from the United Kingdom and other countries. **Throughout 2024, the US and the UK intercepted Houthi attacks and launched sustained strikes against its positions, though they did not deter it from continuing**. The Houthis attacked merchant vessels, killing their first victims in March, when three crew members of a ship from Barbados lost their lives. They also attacked Israeli, British and US military vessels and claimed responsibility for downing drones. The US and UK launched dozens of airstrikes against Houthi positions, weapons depots, missile systems and underground facilities in the governorates of 'Amran, Al Bayda, Al Hudaydah, Hajjah, Sa'dah and the capital, Sana'a. A series of such strikes in Al Hudaydah in May reportedly left 16 people dead, according to the Houthis, while a dozen Houthi fighters were killed in another US attack in November. **In February, the EU established its own maritime mission in the area, EUNAVFOR Aspides**, described as defensive and aimed at securing maritime traffic in the Red Sea, which did not carry out attacks on Yemeni soil.

The Yemeni armed group's armed exchanges with Israel, then with the US and UK, which began in late 2023, intensified and expanded beyond the Red Sea throughout 2024

In October, the Houthis claimed to have attacked 196 ships since the start of their campaign in November 2023. In the second half of the year, the Yemeni group's maritime attacks subsided somewhat. Exchanges of missiles reaching Yemen and Israel intensified, however. The Houthis had attacked the Israeli city of Eilat in March and June and in early June they also claimed responsibility for drone attacks against the port of Haifa for the first time, in coordination with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a militia group backed by Iran. In July, one of their drone attacks hit Tel Aviv, killing one person and wounding 10 others. Israel responded with an intense attack, the first acknowledged on Yemeni soil. The attack hit the port of Al Hudaydah, killing nine people and wounding 87 others. In September, alongside the intensification of the Israeli military campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon,[82] the Houthis launched another missile attack against Tel Aviv. Israel's response, in coordination with the US, struck the ports of Al Hudaydah and Ras Issa, killing five people and wounding around 20. In October and November, new Houthi attacks against Israel occurred in Eilat, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Ashkelon and the Nevatim military base in the Negev Desert. In December, the Houthis intensified their actions, apparently in coordination with Iraqi militias, in an attempt to demonstrate the resilience of the "axis of resistance" amid setbacks faced by the Tehran-led bloc in the region.[83] The Yemeni group launched around 15 airstrikes against Israel, wounding around 20 people. Israel launched its third direct attack on Yemen, with several strikes since mid-December that hit electrical infrastructure in Sana'a; the ports of Al Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Issa; and the capital's international airport at a time when a UN delegation (including the WHO director) was on the scene. Israeli attacks left 15 dead. The UN Secretary-General expressed grave concern about this escalation of violence, its impact on civilians and the foreseeable negative consequences of the Israeli attacks on the ability of Yemeni ports to import food at a time of critical humanitarian need in the country and growing food insecurity.[84]

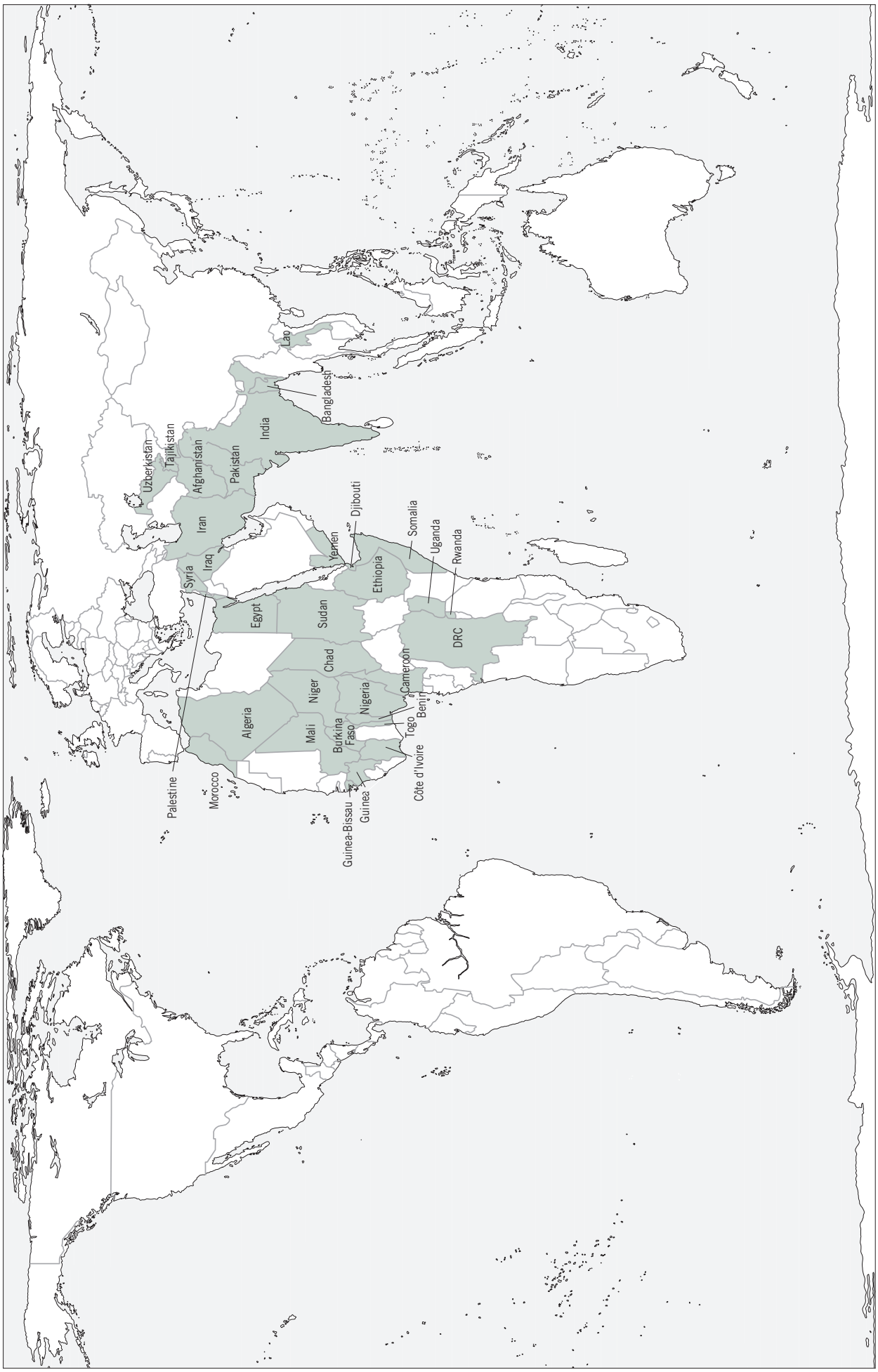
Both the Houthis and the Israeli government intensified their threatening rhetoric at the end of the year. Members of Netanyahu's cabinet warned of attacks against the group's leaders, alluding to previous assassinations of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders. At Israel's request, the UN Security Council held a meeting to analyse these developments and their repercussions for international peace and security. **Israel stated at the time that the Houthis had launched more than 200 missiles and drones against Israel in the previous 14 months**. In January and June, the UN Security Council adopted Resolutions 2722 and 2739, respectively urging the Houthis to halt their attacks on merchant ships and to release the crew of the Galaxy Leader vessel, who had been held in detention since November 2023.[85] At the end of the year, the outlook for the conflict's development was partly shaped by the return to the White House of Donald Trump, who took various forms of action against the Houthis during his first term of office and accused the Biden administration of reacting weakly to the events in the Red Sea. After the attacks began, Biden reinstated (in January 2024) the classification of the Houthis as a terrorist group, but with a less severe formula than

82 See the summary on Israel-Hezbollah in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
83 See the summaries on Syria and Israel-Hezbollah in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) and Israel-Iran in this chapter.
84 See the summary on Yemen in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
85 The Galaxy Leader crew was released in January 2025 following the implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza.
86 Donald Trump's first administration (2016-2020) designated the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organisation through two mechanisms: as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Group (SDGT). Both involve economic sanctions, but only the FTO authorises sanctions against those who provide "material support" to the designated group. Biden lifted both designations in February 2021 and only reimposed the SDGT in January 2024. By January 2025, the second Trump administration had begun the process of redesignating the Houthis as an FTO.

the one promoted by Trump at the end of his first term.[86] The US special envoy for Yemen also called for intensifying sanctions against the Houthis in various forums and for strengthening the Djibouti-based verification mechanism (UNVIM) that monitors the implementation of the embargo against the group. **The dynamics of this conflict also ended up impacting the internal situation in Yemen, resulting in an impasse in the negotiations, which had shown some signs of progress in 2023**.[87] According to reports, an attempt was made to open a channel of dialogue between the US, Iran and the Houthis with Oman's facilitation for a de-escalation of the Red Sea crisis in 2024, but these efforts were unsuccessful.

87 For more information, see the summary on Yemen in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

Map 3.1. **Gender, peace and security**



3. Gender, peace and security

- 22 of the 37 armed conflicts in the world in 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality.
- 79% of the high-intensity conflicts occurred in countries with low-or medium-low levels of gender equality.
- In 2024, the United Nations reported a record number of cases of sexual violence in 2023, with a 50% increase over the previous year.
- The Court of Justice of the EU issued a ruling that will guarantee international protection to women victims of gender-based violence in line with the Istanbul Convention, which recognises it as a form of persecution.
- Women's organisations in Myanmar condemned sexual violence committed by the Burmese Armed Forces during the armed conflict.
- Six hundred civil society organisations demanded that the UN Security Council strengthen implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.
- The escalation of the conflict in the DRC was accompanied by a widespread increase in sexual violence.
- The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry warned of Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence against the Palestinian population.
- Syrian feminist activists demanded to play an active role in the new political process.

The Gender, Peace and Security chapter analyses the gender impacts of armed conflicts and socio–political crises, as well as the inclusion of the gender perspective into various international and local peacebuilding initiatives by international organisations, especially the United Nations, national governments, as well as different organisations and movements from local and international civil society.[1] In addition, a follow–up is made of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. The gender perspective provides visibility to the distinct impacts of armed conflict on the population as a consequence of gender inequalities and intersections with other lines of inequality, as well as the contributions that women and the LGBTIQ+ population are making to peacebuilding. The chapter is structured into three main sections: the first provides an assessment of the global situation with regard to gender inequalities by analysing the Gender Development Index; the second analyses the gender dimension in armed conflicts and socio–political crises; and the final section is devoted to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. At the beginning of the chapter, a map is attached that shows those countries with serious gender inequalities according to the Gender Development Index. The chapter conducts a specific follow–up of the implementation of the agenda on women, peace and security, established after the adoption by the UN Security Council in 2000 of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

1 Gender is the analytical category that highlights that inequalities between men and women are a social construct and not a result of nature, underlining their social and cultural construction in order to distinguish them from biological differences of the sexes. Gender aims to give visibility to the social construction of sexual difference and the sexual division of labour and power. The gender perspective seeks to show that the differences between men and women are a social construct, which is a product of unequal power relations that have historically been established in the patriarchal system. Gender as a category of analysis aims to demonstrate the historical and context–based nature of sexual differences. This approach must be accompanied by an intersectional analysis that relates gender to other factors that structure power in a society, such as social class, race, ethnicity, age, or sexuality, among other aspects that generate inequalities, discrimination and privileges.

Table 3.1. **Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality**[2]

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Burkina Faso** Sahel Region **Chad** Lake Chad Region **Egypt** Egypt (Sinai) **Iraq** **India (2)** India (Jammu and Kashmir) India (CPI-M)	**Mali (2)** Mali Western Sahel Region **Niger (2)** Lake Chad Region Western Sahel Region **Nigeria** Lake Chad Region **Palestine** Israel – Palestine **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan)	**DRC (3)** DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) DRC (west) **Syria** **Somalia (2)** Somalia Somalia (Somaliland-SCC Khamuto) **Sudan** **Yemen**
Medium-low level of equality		
Cameroon (2) Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest) Lake Chad Region	**Ethiopia (2)** Ethiopia (Amhara) Ethiopia (Oromia)	

3.1. Gender inequalities

To evaluate the gender inequality situation in countries affected by armed conflicts and/or socio-political crises, the data provided by the UNDP's Gender Development Index (GDI) has been used. This index measures disparities in relation to the Human Development Index (HDI)[3] between genders. The value of the Gender Development Index is calculated based on the ratio of HDI values for women and men.[4] The GDI divides countries into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values.

According to the GDI, levels of equality between men and women were medium-low or low in 43 countries, mostly located in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East. The analysis achieved by cross-referencing the data of this index with those of the countries involved in an armed conflict reveal that **22 of the 37 armed conflicts active throughout 2024 took place in countries with low levels of gender equality** (Mali, the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region,[5] the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), the DRC (west), Somalia, Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo), Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen) **and medium-low gender equality** (Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), Ethiopia (Amhara) and Ethiopia (Oromia). **There are no data** on the CAR and South Sudan, both countries **in which an armed conflict is taking place.** Fifteen of the 19 armed conflicts with **high-intensity** violence in 2024 (79%) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality and there were no GDI data for South Sudan. In eight other countries with one or more armed conflicts, levels of discrimination were lower, in some cases with high levels of equality (Libya, Colombia, Thailand, Russia,

22 of the 37 armed conflicts active throughout 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality

2 Table compiled from the data gathered by the School for a Culture of Peace on armed conflicts and from the data on countries with low and medium-low levels of gender equality according to the UNDP's Gender Development Index, as indicated in the 2023/2024 Human Development Report. The country is highlighted in bold and the armed conflict(s) active in the country in 2024 are listed below the country. In countries where there is more than one armed conflict, the number of conflicts is indicated in brackets.

3 The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life (longevity), being knowledgeable (education) and having a decent standard of living (income per capita). For more information, see the UNDP's *Human Development Report 2023/2024. Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world*, UNDP 2024.

4 To establish the different levels of inequality in countries, the classification proposed by UNDP has been used, in which countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1: countries with a high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation below 2.5%); Group 2: countries with a medium-high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 2.5% and 5%); Group 3: countries with a medium level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 5% and 7.5%); Group 4: countries with a medium-low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 7.5% and 10%); and Group 5: countries with a low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity exceeding 10%).

5 The conflict in the Western Sahel region is counted as one of the 20 armed conflicts in countries with low levels of gender equality. This conflict involves three countries with a low level of equality (Mali, Ivory Coast and Niger) and one country with a medium-low level (Burkina Faso).

Table 3.2. **Countries affected by socio-political crises with a medium-low or low level of gender equality**[6]

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Afghanistan - Pakistan** **Argelia** **Benin** **Burkina Faso** **Chad (2)** Chad Chad – Sudan **Côte d'Ivoire** **Djibouti** **DRC (2)** DRC DRC – Rwanda **Egypt (2)** Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan **Guinea** **Guinea Bissau**	**India (4)** India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan **Iran (5)** Iran Iran (northwest) Iran (Sistan Balochistan) Iran (nuclear programme) Iran – Israel **Mali** **Morocco** Morocco – Western Sahara **Niger** **Nigeria (3)** Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta)	**Palestine** **Pakistan (3)** Pakistan Afghanistan – Pakistan India – Pakistan **Syria** Israel – Syria **Sudan** Sudan – South Sudan **Togo** **Uganda** **Yemen** Yemen (Houthis) – Israel, USA, United Kingdom
Medium-low level of equality		
Bangladesh **Ethiopia (5)** Ethiopia Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Somalia Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia **Laos**	**Rwanda (3)** Rwanda Rwanda – Burundi RDC – Rwanda **Tajikistan (3)** Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)	**Uzbekistan (2)** Uzbekistan Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)

Ukraine and Israel) or medium levels of equality (Burundi, Mozambique, the Philippines, Myanmar and Türkiye), according to the GDI. **Forty-eight of the 116 socio-political crises active during 2024 took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality.**

3.2. The impact of violence and conflicts from a gender perspective

79% per cent of the high-intensity conflicts occurred in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality

This section addresses the gender dimension in the conflict cycle, especially in reference to violence against women. The gender perspective is a useful tool for the analysis of armed conflicts and socio–political crises and makes it possible to give visibility to aspects generally ignored in this analysis both in terms of causes and consequences.

3.2.1. Sexual violence in armed conflicts and socio-political crises

As in previous years, during 2024 sexual violence was present in a large number of active armed conflicts.[7] Its use, which in some cases was part of the deliberate war strategies of the armed actors, was documented in different reports, as well as by local and international media.

In April, the UN Security Council held its yearly **open debate on sexual violence in armed conflict** and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report

6 Table compiled from the data gathered by the School for a Culture of Peace on socio-political crises and from the data on countries with low and medium-low levels of gender equality according to the UNDP's Gender Development Index, as indicated in the 2023/2024 Human Development Report. The country is highlighted in bold and the socio-political crisis or crises active in the country in 2024 are listed below the country. In countries where there is more than one socio-political crisis, the number of crises is indicated in brackets.

7 The UN considers sexual violence related to conflicts to be "incidents or patterns of sexual violence [...], that is, rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancies, forced sterilisation or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, boys or girls. These incidents or patterns of behavior occur in situations of conflict or post–conflict or in other situations of concern (for example, during a political confrontation). In addition, they have a direct or indirect relationship with the conflict or political confrontation, that is, a temporal, geographical or causal relationship. Apart from the international nature of the alleged crimes, which depending on the circumstances constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or other gross violations of human rights, the relationship with the conflict may be evidenced by taking into account the profile and motivations of the perpetrator, the profile of the victim, the climate of impunity or the breakdown of law and order by which the State in question may be affected, the cross–border dimensions or the fact that they violate the provisions of a ceasefire agreement". UN Action Against Sexual Violence In Conflict, Analytical and conceptual framework of sexual violence in conflicts, November 2012.

on the issue. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, noted in 2024 that a record number of cases of sexual violence verified by the United Nations had been reported in 2023 (3,688 cases, a 50% increase over the previous year).[8] Women and girls accounted for 95% of the verified cases. Patten noted that whilst military spending figures continued to rise, budgets for humanitarian aid and victim support had been cut drastically.

In 2024, the United Nations warned of a 50% increase in cases of sexual violence that it had verified the previous year

In his 2024 report, which covered the period between January and December 2023, the UN Secretary-General warned that the outbreak of new conflicts during the year and the intensification of previously active conflicts, aggravated by the proliferation of weapons and growing militarisation, significantly increased civilians' exposure to sexual violence in situations of conflict. Both state and non-state armed actors perpetrated rapes, gang rapes and abductions of civilians amid historic levels of internal and international displacement. The UN Secretary-General noted that sexual violence profoundly affected women's livelihoods and hindered girls' access to education. At the same time, it generated illicit profits for armed groups and violent extremist organisations, which engaged in human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, among other practices, in the context of these conflicts.

The report also noted the impact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and ammunition had on acts of sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Sudan and South Sudan, which directly contributed to their increase. The indiscriminate circulation of weapons helped to keep armed conflicts active and created conditions conducive to the commission of acts of sexual violence with a high degree of impunity. The UN Secretary-General cited United Nations research conducted in areas with available data, which certified that approximately 70% to 90% of all incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involved the use of small arms or light weapons. He also highlighted the significant role that sexual violence played in the political economy of war, providing economic profits to armed groups through human trafficking for sexual exploitation and increasingly through kidnappings, in which threats or acts of sexual violence were used to demand larger ransoms

9 of the 11 contexts of sexual violence indicated by the UN Secretary-General were countries with high-intensity armed conflicts

The annual report submitted in 2024 by the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence –which covered the period between January and December 2023– identified 58 armed groups which were strongly suspected of having committed or having been responsible for rapes or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict settings on the agenda of the UN Security Council.[9] Most of the actors identified by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors, although some government-sponsored armed actors were also identified, across a total of 11 settings (Haiti, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, CAR, DRC, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan).

According to the classification system used by Escola de Cultura de Pau, 9 of the 11 contexts analysed in the UN Secretary-General's report were countries with high-intensity armed conflicts during 2022 (Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), DRC (east), DRC (east – ADF), Syria, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan), generally exceeding one thousand fatalities per year and having serious impacts on people and the territory, including sexual violence related to the armed conflict. These 10 conflicts remained active in 2024 at high levels of intensity. In six of them, there was also an escalation of violence during 2023 compared to the previous year (Haiti, Myanmar, the DRC (east), Syria, Sudan and South Sudan. Most of the armed actors blamed for sexual violence in armed conflicts by the UN Secretary-General were non-state actors, some of which had been included on the United Nations' list of terrorist organisations.

Reports on sexual violence in **Sudan** published in 2024 revealed the disproportionate impact of the war on women and girls, with continued reports of rape, forced marriages, sexual slavery and trafficking of women and girls, particularly in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan. According to 2024 OCHA data, since war broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023, the number of people in need of gender-based violence care services in Sudan has soared by more than one million to 4.2 million and is expected to reach 6.9 million by the end of the year.[10] At the end of the year, UN Women reported that since December 2023, the number of survivors of gender-based violence in need of care, including conflict-related sexual violence, has risen by 288%, illustrating the scale of the crisis.[11] In April 2024, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Joyce Msuya, issued a joint statement calling for greater international engagement

8 UN Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2024/292, 4 April 2024.
9 Ibid.
10 UN Women, "Women grapple with unplanned pregnancies after sexual violence in Sudan war", 10 April 2024.
11 Ibid.

Table 3.3. **Armed actors and sexual violence in conflicts**[12]

The UN Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflicts, published in April 2024, included a list of armed actors who are suspected of having committed systematic acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence or of being responsible for them in situations of armed conflict, which are subject to examination by the Security Council.[13]

	STATE ACTORS	NON-STATE ACTORS
CAR	National armed forces	Azande Ani Kpi Gbe; Coalition des patriotes pour le changement – former President François Bozizé: Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation – General Bobbo; Anti-balaka Mokom-Maxime Mokom; Anti-balaka Ngaïssona-Dieudonné Ndomate; Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique –Noureddine Adam and Zone Commander Mahamat Salleh; Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique – Mahamat Al-Khatim; Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique-Ali Darrassa; Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain – Abdoulaye Miskine; Lord's Resistance Army; Révolution et justice
DRC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Congolese National Police	Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain-Janvier; Allied Democratic Forces; Chini ya Tuna; Coopérative pour le développement du Congo; Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda; Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri; Forces patriotiques populaires-Armée du peuple; Lord's Resistance Army; Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale; Mai-Mai Kifuafua; Mai-Mai Malaika ; Mai-Mai Perci Moto; Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki; Mai-Mai Yakutumba; Mouvement du 23 mars (M23); Nduma défense du Congo; Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové faction led by "General" Guidon Shimiray Mwissa and faction led by Commander Gilbert Bwira Shuo and Deputy Commander Fidel Malik Mapenzi; Ngumino; Nyatura; Twa militias; Twirwaneho; Union des patriotes pour la défense des citoyens; Zaïre militia
Haiti		G9 Family and Allies – Jimmy Cherizier (alias "Barbeque"); 5 Segond gang – Johnson Andre (aka "Izo"); Grand Ravine gang – Renel Destina; Kraze Barye gang – Vitelhomme Innocent; 400 Mawozo gang – Wilson Joseph
Iraq		Dáesh
Mali		Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin; Ansar Eddine; Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, part of Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger; Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of Coordination des mouvements de l'AzawadMuslimin; Ansar Eddine; Grupo de Autodefensa de los Tuaregs Imgads y sus Aliados, miembro de la Plataforma de los Movimientos del 14 de Junio de 2014 de Argel; Movimiento Nacional de Liberación de Azawad, miembro de la Coordinadora de Movimientos de Azawad
Myanmar	Myanmar armed forces, including the integrated Border Guardde Fronteras	
Nigeria		Islamic State West Africa Province; Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)
Somalia	Somali National Army; Somali Police Force (and allied militia); Puntland forces	Al-Shabaab
South Sudan	South Sudan People's Defence Forces; South Sudan National Police Service	Lord's Resistance Army; Justice and Equality Movement; Sudan People's Liberation/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar
Sudan	Sudanese Armed Forces	Justice and Equality Movement; Rapid Support Forces; Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid
Syria	Government forces, including the National Defence Forces, intelligence services and pro-government militias	Ahrar al-Sham; Army of Islam; Da'esh; Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

to combat sexual violence against women and girls in the country. However, reports of sexual violence in the conflict were constant throughout the year, as noted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan. In its October 2024 report, it asserts that the RSF was the main armed group responsible for committing large-scale acts of sexual violence in areas under its control, including gang rapes and abductions and the detention of victims in conditions that amount to sexual slavery. Whilst the report also documented cases involving the Sudanese Armed Forces and allied armed groups, it concludes that most rapes and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence were committed by the RSF, particularly in Greater Khartoum and the states of Darfur and Gezira.

The escalation of the conflict in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** in recent years, and particularly in

12 This table uses the names of the armed actors as they appear in the Secretary-General's report, so they do not necessarily coincide with the ones used in chapters 1 and 2 of this yearbook.

13 UN Security Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Report of the United Nations Secretary-General*, S/2024/292, 4 April 2024.

the eastern part of the country in recent months, has been accompanied by a widespread increase in sexual violence committed by the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC), various local armed groups and proxies from neighbouring countries (particularly the Rwanda-allied M23), UN peacekeepers from the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) and even members of the communities of origin of victims of sexual violence, according to a new report published by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR).[14] The UN estimated that at least 113,000 cases of sexual violence related to the conflict were reported in 2023 alone.[15] PHR called for immediate action by the DRC government, neighbouring countries and the international community to support the survivors and end the violence.

Meanwhile, new data highlighted the extent and escalation of sexual violence in the DRC as a result of the war. According to data published in 2024 by the humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), its teams treated more than two victims and survivors of sexual violence each hour in the country during 2023, representing a total of 25,166 victims of sexual violence, 98% of whom were women and girls.[16] Furthermore, in the first five months of 2024 alone, the total number of victims treated by the organisation was nearly equivalent to 70% of the total for 2023. In previous years, MSF had treated around 10,000 victims per year, which demonstrates the escalation of the situation in the five provinces where MSF operates—North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Maniema and Kasai Central—though 91% of the victims treated were in North Kivu, the epicentre of the conflict. Most of the victims were women displaced as a result of the violence stemming from the offensive conducted by the armed group M23. In fact, 71% came from the displaced population camps located around Goma, the capital of North Kivu, demonstrating the atmosphere of insecurity in the camps. Another study conducted by MSF in four displaced population camps housing around 200,000 people located around Goma indicated that one in 10 women between the ages of 20 and 44 had been raped between November 2023 and April 2024.[17]

Several NGOs and international organisations warned of an unprecedented rise in sexual violence against women and children in **Haiti**. UNICEF reported that sexual violence against children had skyrocketed by 1,000% in 2024, especially by armed groups that control more than 80% of the country's territory. Similarly, HRW[18] published a report noting that criminal groups have frequently resorted to sexual violence to instil fear in rival territories. According to HRW, though clashes between armed groups declined in 2024, there was also a dramatic increase in sexual violence. Along these lines, according to Gender-Based Violence subcluster (which includes grassroots women's organisations, international organisations and government agencies), nearly 4,000 girls and women reported sexual violence, including gang rape, between January and October 2024, committed primarily by members of criminal groups. However, both NGOs and the Haitian government asserted that these figures represent only a fraction of the actual cases, as most attacks go unreported. In line with HRW, Amnesty International[19] reported that minors in Haiti are subjected to many human rights violations, including forced recruitment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, kidnapping, murder and injury, especially committed by armed groups.

There were many allegations of sexual violence in the war in Sudan and the independent international mission singled out the RSF as the main culprit

Different reports of sexual violence were released regarding the armed conflict in **Myanmar**, primarily related to the actions of the Burmese Armed Forces, known as the Tatmadaw, as the UN Secretary-General noted in his report on sexual violence. The Women's League of Burma reported that it had documented 492 cases of sexual assault against women between 1 February 2021 and June 2024, including at least 13 cases in which women were also murdered. Various organisations also expressed concern about the potential impact of the forced conscription law on women. Whilst it did not affect women at first, women gradually began to be included on the lists of people between 18 and 25 years of age who could be recruited in 2024. Women's organisations in Myanmar expressed concern about the risk of sexual violence to which young women would be exposed if they were recruited in a highly oppressive institutional context that violates women's rights. In a joint statement, several women's organisations highlighted the risks of sexual violence and sexual slavery in a context of total impunity for Burmese security forces.[20] Alongside the impacts of sexual violence, women's organisations

14 Physicians for Human Rights, "Massive Influx of Cases". Health Worker Perspectives on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, *PHR*, Reliefweb, 22 October 2024.
15 United Nations Security Council, *Aplicación del Acuerdo Marco sobre la Paz, la Seguridad y la Cooperación para la República Democrática del Congo y la Región*, S/2024/278, 1 April 2024.
16 Médecins Sans Frontières, *'We are calling for help': Sexual violence in DRC. 2023 Annual Report*, MSF, 30 September 2024.
17 Simons, Erica, *Enquête transversale de mortalité rétrospective, d'évaluation nutritionnelle, violence et de couverture vaccinale contre la rougeole dans les sites de Bulengo, Elohim, Rusayo et Shabindu, Zones de santé de Goma, Karisimbi et Nyiragongo, RDC*, MSF, April 2024.
18 HRW, Haiti: Scarce Protection as Sexual Violence Escalates, 25 November 2024.
19 Amnesty International, Gangs' Assault on Childhood in Haiti, 12 February 2025.
20 Public Statement: Women's Organizations Condemn Junta's Forced Conscription Law in Myanmar. Politics for Women Myanmar, Rory Women's Union – Dawei, Sisters 2 Sisters, Spouses of People's Soldiers, Women Advocacy Coalition – Myanmar, Women Alliance Burma, Women's League of Burma, Women Peace Network. 8 March 2024.

reported the continued detention and torture of female activists, as well as the continued murders and gender-specific impacts of the armed conflict.

Various actors continued to document and report sexual violence in the context of **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and the war between both countries. In its December report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine – based on the work of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU)– the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that it had documented 370 cases of sexual violence perpetrated by members of the Russian armed forces and other Russian agents and authorities since February 2022.[21] 252 of these cases were committed against men, 106 against women, 10 against girls and two against boys. The vast majority of the documented cases (306, or 82.7%) occurred in detention, primarily against people with prisoner-of-war status (209), though also against civilian detainees (88) and detained medical personnel (nine). According to OHCHR, there were 62 other documented cases of sexual violence against civilians in residential areas. These cases primarily affected women and girls (45 women, 10 girls, six men and one boy). Furthermore, between the start of the invasion and November 2024, OHCHR documented 51 cases of sexual violence committed by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, officers and Ukrainian prison services. Most cases (43) were perpetrated against men. Twenty-six of the 51 cases were committed against people with prisoner-of-war status and another 25 against civilians. According to OHCHR, the cases largely involved threats of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Commission of Inquiry warned of the systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence in the conflict between **Israel and Palestine** since 7 October 2023. In one of its investigations, the Commission concluded that abuses and crimes involving sexual, reproductive and gender-based violence had noticeably intensified and were aimed at collectively avenging and punishing the Palestinian population for the attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023.[22] The Commission's report states that Israeli officials have sought to drum up support for the military campaign in the Gaza Strip with references to sexual violence against Israeli women on 7 October based on an argument intertwining notions of masculinity, militarism and the idea of the dignity of the nation associated with women's bodies. To reinforce this message, Israel has used videos of Palestinian prisoners allegedly confessing to acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the events on 7 October. The Commission explicitly states that it does not validate these confessions, which were obtained under abuse and torture. The report compiled many instances of sexual violence against Palestinian men and minors, including rape, genital beatings, forced nudity and others. Many of these practices have been filmed, photographed and spread as a means of humiliation and intimidation. The investigation addresses cases of abuse committed against Palestinian prisoners, which have also included sexual abuse and threats.

The Commission studied events that took place in detention centres, as well as during Israeli military operations and at military checkpoints, including acts committed by Israeli soldiers and settlers, often in collusion with Israeli forces. It found that Palestinian women have been subjected to invasive searches and forced to undress or remove their veil in public. They have also received insults with sexual innuendos and online harassment through the sharing of photographs and videos. These practices, and others, occur in a social and normative context that particularly exposes women and girls to humiliation and social stigma. The report also details the destruction of sexual and reproductive health infrastructure in Gaza (including maternity wards and Gaza's main fertility clinic), the impacts on the health of Palestinian women and girls (such as regarding access to menstrual hygiene products, for example) and the severe impacts on prenatal and postnatal care for Palestinian women. For example, a rise in maternal mortality, abortions, premature births and high rates of urinary tract infections in women and girls has been identified due to the unhealthy living conditions in Gaza resulting from the military operations. The Commission considers sexual, reproductive and gender-based violence to be an instrument to intensify the subordination of the Palestinian population and maintain the system of oppression imposed by Israel. The Commission published another report on the events of 7 October and the responsibility of Hamas and other Palestinian groups in 2024. This report asserted that there was reasonable evidence that crimes of sexual violence were committed in Israel on 7 October, but added that with the information available, it was not possible to determine the identity of the perpetrators and whether they were part of Hamas' military wing, other Palestinian groups or Gazan civilians.[23] In both reports, the Commission stated that Israel had not complied with its requests for information or allowed its investigators access to conduct their investigations.

21 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 September - 30 November 2024,* OHCHR, 31 December 2024.

22 Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, "*More than a human can bear": Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since 7 October 2023*, A/HRC/58/CRP.6, 13 March 2025.

23 Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, *Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel*, A/HRC/56/CRP.3, 10 June 2024.

UN reports and Yemeni civil society organisations warned of sexual violence as part of the armed conflict in **Yemen**. The UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen documented incidents of sexual violence against women, men and children, most of which were attributed to the Houthis. This armed group, which controls the capital and most of the northern part of the country, detained women for various reasons (for having alleged links to other parties to the conflict, for their political affiliation, for their association with civil society or human rights organisations or for acts the Houthis classified as "indecent") and some of them were sexually assaulted and subjected to virginity tests. The United Nations warned that sexual violence was also used as a tactic to silence women, discourage their activities in the public sphere and impede their political participation in Yemen, and elsewhere such as in Libya. UN reports also stated that human trafficking gangs linked to some of the parties to the conflict in Yemen also committed abuse and mistreatment, including sexual violence, against migrants and asylum seekers, especially women and children. Some also raised concerns about sexual violence against minors in Yemen. In his report on the situation of children in armed conflict, the UN Secretary-General verified more than 20 cases in 2023, attributed to various armed groups operating in the country. However, Yemeni organisations claimed that the publicly known cases are just the tip of the iceberg of a largely invisible phenomenon, which has increased and is fuelled by impunity and a lack of access to services. Organisations such as the Rasd Foundation for Human Rights, the Justice for Yemen Coalition and the Centre for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children in Yemen documented cases and said that the parties to the conflict were failing to address sexual violence against minors and were covering up these crimes, which are directly linked to the deteriorating security situation in the country. They also warned about the shortcomings in protection and specialised care for minors (both boys and girls) who are victims of sexual violence.

Several NGOs and international organisations warned of an unprecedented rise in sexual violence against women and children in Haiti. UNICEF reported that sexual violence against children had skyrocketed by 1,000% in 2024, especially by armed groups that control more than 80% of the country's territory. Similarly, HRW published a report noting that criminal groups have frequently resorted to sexual violence to instil fear in rival territories. According to HRW, though clashes between armed groups declined in 2024, there was also a dramatic increase in sexual violence. Along these lines, according to Gender-Based Violence subcluster (which includes grassroots women's organisations, international organisations and government agencies), nearly 4,000 girls and women reported sexual violence, including gang rape, between January and October 2024, committed primarily by members of criminal groups. However, both NGOs and the Haitian government asserted that these figures represent only a fraction of the actual cases, as most attacks go unreported. In line with HRW, Amnesty International reported that minors in Haiti are subjected to many human rights violations, including forced recruitment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, kidnapping, murder and injury, especially committed by armed groups.

3.2.2. Response to sexual violence in armed conflicts

Throughout the year there were different initiatives to respond to sexual violence in the context of armed conflicts, as well as to fight against impunity in different judicial bodies. Some of these are described below.

In relation to the **United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel serving under its mandate**, the strategy promoted by UN Secretary-General António Guterres since 2017 continued to focus on four areas of action: prioritising the rights and dignity of victims; ending impunity by strengthening reporting; collaborating with states, civil society and associated actors; and improving communications. In his report for 2024, the UN Secretary-General[24] indicated that 675 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were filed against United Nations personnel (292) and associated partners (383). Twenty-seven per cent of these allegations involved child victims. One hundred and two specific allegations were filed against peacekeeping missions and special political missions, compared to 100 in 2023. Thus, for the third time in the past 10 years, 100 or more allegations were filed in a single year. There were 125 victims identified in the 2024 allegations, 98 of which were adults and 27 were minors. Once again, two missions accounted for most of these allegations. Eighty-two per cent of the allegations were filed against the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the DRC and the former United Nations Observer Mission in the DRC (44 allegations) and MINUSCA (40 allegations). The remaining allegations were filed against UNMISS (seven), the former UNMIL (four), UNIFIL (one), the former MINUSTAH (one), the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (one), UNAMA (one), the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), whose mandate recently concluded (one), and UNSOS (two).

Pending challenges were highlighted again, particularly regarding accountability and the fight against impunity. Despite positive assessments of the rise in reporting, the

24 UN Secretary-General, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Report of the Secretary-General*. A/78/774, 2024.

report notes that significant obstacles remain, resulting in higher rates of sexual exploitation and abuse than reported as a result of unequal power structures and the problems victims face in accessing justice systems.

According to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the armed conflict ravaging certain areas of **South Sudan** continued to cause serious harm to women and girls. According to its data, at least 65% of women and girls experience physical, sexual and gender-based violence throughout their lives.[25] In 2024, the South Sudanese government created the first national task force to combat sexual, gender-based and conflict-related violence. The UN also urged the government to quickly pass a new law against gender-based violence, establish specialised courts, a family protection centre and a dedicated fund to protect and support victims and encourage public participation to change the social norms perpetuating the violence.

MONUSCO and MINUSCA peacekeeping missions accounted again for 82% of the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse

According to the UN Women and UNODC report on femicide worldwide, published in November 2024, Africa had the highest rate of intimate partner-related femicide in 2023. With an estimated 21,700 victims of intimate partner or family member femicide in 2023, Africa is the region with the highest number of victims in aggregate terms. Africa also continues to have the highest number of intimate partner or family member femicide victims relative to its population (2.9 victims per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023).

There has been a rise in sexual and gender-based violence in various African countries in recent years, particularly in **Kenya**. According to Kenyan Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, 7,107 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported between September 2023 and January 2024. According to Africa Data Hub, at least 546 women were killed between 2016 and 2023. In the first four months of 2024, at least 100 women were murdered, mostly by intimate partners or acquaintances. Around 10,000 women took to the streets of Kenya in January 2024 to condemn the gravity of the situation and demand action to address it, in what became the largest demonstration against gender-based violence in the country's history. A total of 14 women were murdered in January, highlighting the seriousness of the situation. Between 39% and 47% of women in Kenya have experienced gender-based violence at some point in their lives, according to analysts. As a result, the government declared gender-based violence the country's most urgent security threat and established a specialised police unit and a presidential task force to tackle the problem.

A criminal court in **Peru** convicted 10 former military personnel of sexual violence between 1984 and 1995, committed during the country's armed conflict that lasted from 1980 to 2000. The convictions were for the abuse of nine women in the Huancavelica region in a case known as Manta and Vilca, which the court classified as a crime against humanity. The sentences against the soldiers ranged from six to 12 years in prison. This case was included in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2003, which prompted the provincial prosecutor's office to initiate preliminary investigations. The victims were rural Quechua-speaking women from communities near the Manta and Vilca military bases and included minors who suffered sexual abuse by soldiers at these bases. The Peruvian Ministry of Justice's Single Victims Registry indicates that over 5,300 women were victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict. The trial lasted almost 10 years and it was the first time in Peru that a trial for sexual violence as a crime against humanity had been held in the context of the internal armed conflict. The Mata and Vilca case was the third of its kind in Latin America, following the Sepur Zarco and Achí cases in Guatemala, in which a national court ruled that sexual violence is a crime against humanity.

In recent years, the levels of violence and lethality reached in the armed conflict in **Iraq** have decreased compared to the most critical years of the conflict. However, from a gender perspective, a series of worrying events and trends have been reported, involving violations of and threats to the rights of Iraqi women and girls. One of these issues, closely linked to the legacy of the armed conflict in the country, is the rise in gender-based violence and the high rates of physical, psychological and sexual abuse suffered by Iraqi women and girls in their own homes. A study published in 2024, documenting the experiences of 1,200 women and children exposed to this type of violence between 2018 and 2023, demonstrates the connection between domestic violence and the status of combatants, ex-combatants or victims of violence themselves. In 2022, there were 33,000 officially reported cases of domestic gender-based violence, but the real number is estimated to be much higher due to underreporting. Nevertheless, the political impasse over the bill seeking to penalise domestic violence dragged on. Another issue of particular concern in 2024 was the parliamentary initiative that threatened to legalise child marriage, among other things. Iraqi civil society groups worked throughout 2024 to express their opposition and try to prevent Parliament from making changes to the Personal Status Law that could approve marriages for girls as young as nine and boys as young as 15. The legal age for marriage is currently set at 18. The rate of child marriage among girls has been increasing in Iraq in recent years and UNICEF estimates that 28% of girls in Iraq were married before the legal age of 18. Moreover, 22% of unregistered marriages—those that

25 UNifeed, "South Sudan / Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Taskforce", 2 December 2024.

are not legalised but are officiated by tribal or religious authorities—involve girls under the age of 14. Pressure from civil society, and especially women's organisations, achieved some improvements compared to the original draft of the law, but the reform to the Personal Status Law approved in early 2025 effectively established different legal regimes—marriages may be governed by the law in force since 1959 or by a new code developed according to Islamic jurisprudence—and allowed minors under 15 years of age to marry depending on their degree of "maturity" and if they have a judge's permission. Iraqi activists warned that the authority granted to clerics to officiate marriages could also open the door to legalising temporary marriages, which they described as vehicles for sexual exploitation.

In **Iraq**, but also in other countries such as **Libya** and **Yemen**, local and state authorities have taken action to ban the use of the term "gender" and are persecuting the activities of those working for gender equality and women's human rights. In Yemen, movement restrictions imposed on women have forced many of them to work within a limited area or to quit their jobs.

3.2.3. Other gender violence in contexts of crisis or armed conflict

In addition to sexual violence, armed conflicts and socio-political crisis had other serious gender impacts. Impunity for human rights violations continued to be a recurrent element.

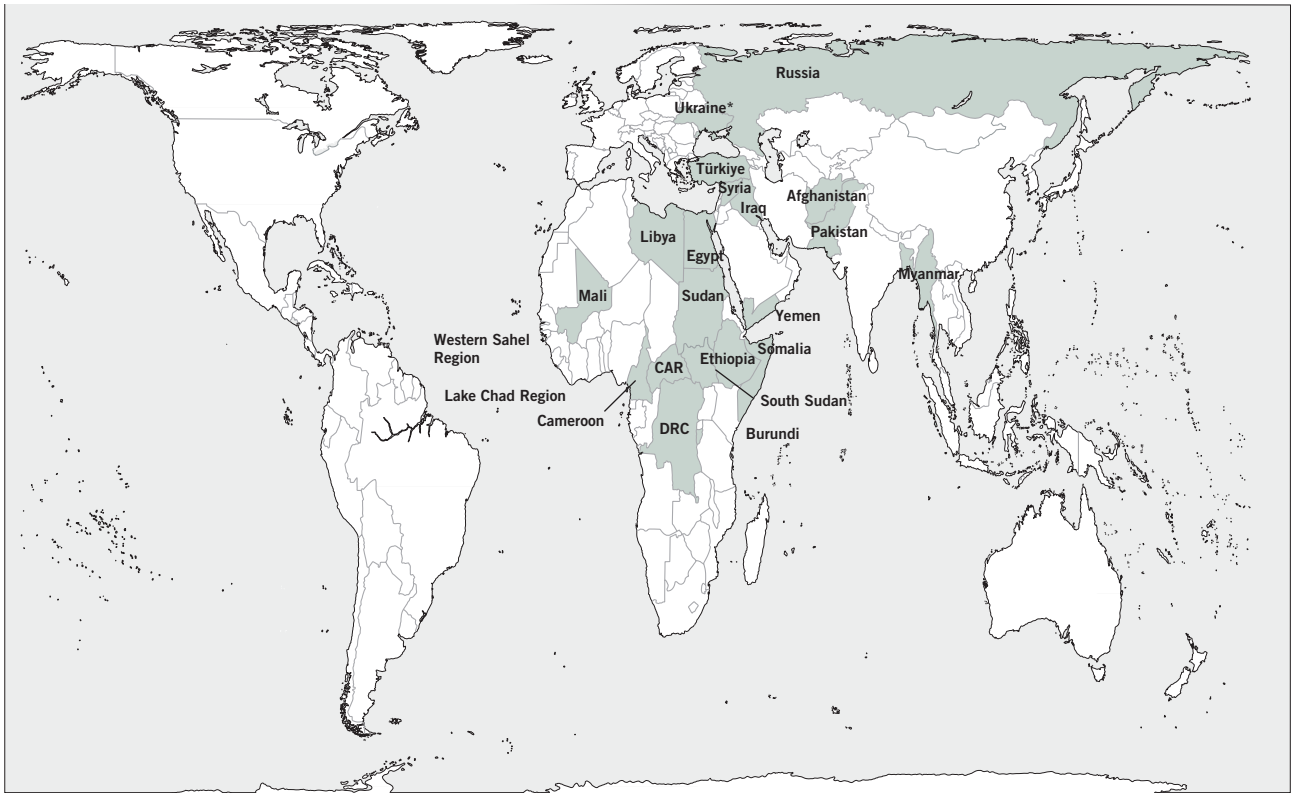
The Court of Justice of the EU issued a ruling that will **guarantee international protection to women victims of gender-based violence**, as it establishes that women can be considered a social group subject to persecution in such cases. The Court noted that Directive 2011/95/EU, which establishes the requirements for recognising third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection in the EU, must be interpreted in line with the Istanbul Convention, which recognises violence against women as a form of persecution and aims to prevent, prosecute and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. According to the ruling, women can be considered as belonging to a particular social group when it is proven that they are subjected to acts of physical or psychological violence on the basis of their gender in their country of origin, including sexual and domestic violence. The Court also notes that if the conditions for refugee status are not met, women who apply for it may be eligible for subsidiary protection, particularly when they are "under real threat of being killed or of being subjected to acts of violence by a member of their family or community due to an alleged violation of cultural, religious or traditional norms". The ruling came in response to a request from a Turkish woman in Bulgaria, a victim of abuse by her husband in her home country. Bulgaria initially rejected her asylum request on the grounds that she did not meet the requirements for refugee status.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) released its annual data on **internal displacement** and noted that 73.5 million people were displaced as a result of conflict and violence, a significant increase from previous years.[26] Several conflicts stood out as having particularly severe gender-based impacts on internal displacement, according to the IDMC's figures and analysis. For example, it noted that most of those displaced in Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique as a result of armed insurgency attacks were women and children. In Sudan, the IDMC noted that 12 million people were at risk of gender-based violence and that displaced women and girls had been subjected to sexual violence in shelters and at illegal checkpoints through which they had to pass in search of safety. Eighty per cent of the 4.8 million internally displaced people in Yemen were women and children, who faced significant difficulties in accessing income and basic services. Their displacement was also having very negative consequences in terms of leaving school early, child labour and early marriages. In Syria, 80% of the two million people displaced in the northwestern governorates were women and children. It was also noted how women had been subjected to gender-based violence in the context of forced displacement in Papua New Guinea.

Freedom of expression and the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly deteriorated in **Türkiye**, with systematic bans on demonstrations, excessive use of force, mass arrests and criminal charges against protesters, according to a report by the Council of Europe's human rights rapporteur.[27] According to the report, bans on demonstrations and events particularly targeted events organised by female human rights defenders, the LGBTQI+ population and environmental defenders or in support of these groups. Local and international human rights organisations reported arrests and charges brought against women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, such as renowned activist Nimet Tanrıkulu, arrested in November 2024 along with other defenders, trade unionists and politicians. Human rights groups such as the Saturday Mothers—mothers and relatives of victims of enforced disappearances, who have held Saturday vigils since 1995—continued to face restrictions on their freedom of peaceful assembly. In 2024, the Turkish authorities imposed a new round of removing and arresting elected mayors, mainly from the pro-Kurdish DEM

26 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025*, IDMC, 2025.
27 Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, *Memorandum on freedom of expression and of the media, human rights defenders and civil society in Türkiye*, Council of Europe, 5 March 2024.

Map 3.2. **Countries in armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population**



Armed conflicts in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population

* The Russia-Ukraine armed conflict is included in this map because ILGA's report includes Russia as a country with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.

Table 3.4. **Armed conflicts in countries with criminalising legislation or policies against the LGBTIQ+ population**[28]

AFRICA	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	MIDDLE EAST	EUROPE
Burundi Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) DRC (East) DRC (East-ADF) DRC (West) Ethiopia (Amhara) Ethiopia (Oromia) Libya Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Western Sahel Region Central African Republic Somalia Somalia (Somaliland-SSC Khatumo) Sudan South Sudan	Afghanistan Myanmar Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan)	Egypt (Sinai) Iraq Syria Yemen	Türkiye (PKK) Russia – Ukraine*

Source: Prepared internally with data from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025; and Kellyn Botha, *Our identities under arrest: A global overview on the enforcement of laws criminalising consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults and diverse gender expressions*, ILGA, 2023.
* The Russia-Ukraine armed conflict is included in this table because ILGA's report includes Russia as a country with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.

party. Analysts pointed to the gendered impacts of the government's policy of forcibly removing elected pro-Kurdish mayors and replacing them with government-appointed officials since 2016. These impacts include the closure of policies, programmes and support services for women, such as the closure of women's shelters and women's cooperatives.[29] According to these analyses, in the periods following the 2014 and 2019 elections,

28 This table includes armed conflicts in 2024 in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population.
29 Bodette, Megha, "Erdogan Declares War on Kurdish Mayors, Again", *Kurdish Peace Institute*, 19 November 2024.

132 female politicians from pro-Kurdish parties were removed from their mayoral positions (the DEM presents two candidates as co-mayors in elections, one male and one female, as did its predecessor parties).[30] In 2024, the general climate of restrictions on the rights of women and other parts of the population contrasted with the start of a dialogue process between the government and the PKK.[31]

In other developments, the Parliament of **Sierra Leona** passed a historic bill criminalising child marriage with prison sentences of up to 15 years or substantial fines for perpetrators. On 2 July, President Julius Maada Bio signed into law the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2024.[32]

16 of the 21 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2024 (76% of cases) occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population

In 2024, 25 of the 376 active armed conflicts occurred in countries where the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population, exacerbating the impacts of violence in these contexts. 16 of the 21 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2024 (76% of cases) occurred in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population, namely the conflicts in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest regions), Ethiopia (Amhara), Ethiopia (Oromia), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region, DRC (East), DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia-Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. In the Russian invasion and armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, only Russia was identified as a country with legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTIQ+ population, and not Ukraine, according to ILGA data.

The law that entrenched the criminalisation of same-sex sexual relations in **Uganda**, passed by its Parliament on 21 March 2023, and ratified months later by President Yoweri Museveni, was upheld again in early April 2024 by the Constitutional Court, which refused to overturn it. Ugandan activists had challenged the law in court.

In September, the government of **Georgia** passed anti- LGBTIQ+ legislation (the Law on Family Values and the Protection of Minors), which came into effect in December. The law restricts freedom of expression and assembly for the LGBTIQ+ population, banning LGBTIQ+ pride events, outlawing gender-affirming care (such as gender-affirming surgeries), prohibiting non-heterosexual civil unions, adoption and foster care by LGBTIQ+ citizens and banning positive references in the media. It also censors references to non-heterosexuality in the media, advertising, education and creative works, among other areas. Around 30 Georgian civil society organisations, including LGBTIQ+ groups and women's organisations, condemned the legislation in a joint statement.[33] The Council of Europe's Venice Commission had issued an unfavourable opinion on it in June.[34] Among other things, it lamented the launch of a legislative initiative on "highly sensitive issues" during a period of mass protests and political and social tension. One day after the law was passed, trans activist and model Kesaria Abramidze was murdered. Human rights organisations warned of the deteriorating situation faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in Georgia. In 2024, the self-organised LGBTIQ+ community did not hold public Pride Day events due to violent attacks in 2023 by far-right and ultranationalist groups, the risk of further violence amidst the 2024 parliamentary elections and the government's hostile anti- LGBTIQ+ rhetoric. Furthermore, the group Tbilisi Pride complained that homophobia was being used as a political weapon by Russia against Georgian society and sovereignty.[35] The Georgian government has ramped up anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric in recent years amidst sociopolitical tension over its governance model and foreign LGBTIQ+policy orientation, with the crisis escalating in 2024.

In April 2024, the Parliament of **Iraq** criminalised homosexuality through legislation that penalises same-sex sexual relations with sentences of between 10 and 15 years in prison. The law also established penalties of between one and three years for individuals who undergo surgical interventions to "imitate women". The legislation was accompanied by recent initiatives launched by Iraqi political groups to ban the use of the term "gender" and others advocating legal reforms that would roll back the rights of women and girls in the country.

3.3. Peacebuilding from a gender perspective

In this section some of the most notable initiatives are analysed to incorporate the gender perspective into the various aspects of peacebuilding.

30 Ibid.
31 See the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) of this report and in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria 2025.
32 Amnesty International, "Sierra Leone: Historic bill to end child marriage passed – sustained efforts to raise community awareness must now follow", *AI,* 3 July 2024.
33 Various authors, Statement of the civil society organisations of Georgia, 17 September 2024.
34 Venice Commission, Council of Europe, *Opinion on the draft constitutional law on protecting family values and minors, Adopted by the Venice Commission at its 139th Plenary Session (Venice, 21-22 June 2024)*, CDL-AD(2024)021, 25 June 2024.
35 Tbilisi Pride, "Announcement: No Pride Week in 2024", 14 June 2024.

3.3.1. Resolution 1325 and the agenda on women, peace and security

A new session of the open discussion on women, peace and security was held in October and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue.[36] The main theme in 2024, a debate presided over by Switzerland in the UN Security Council, focused on the role of women in peacebuilding in a changing international environment. In its call for debate, Switzerland highlighted that worrying trends had been observed in recent years regarding women's representation in peace processes. The UN Secretary-General's annual report noted that data collected by UN Women indicated "a lack of overall progress on women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes". Based on an analysis of more than 50 peace processes in 2023, women accounted for 9.6% of the negotiators, 13.7% of the mediators and 26.6% of the signatories of peace and ceasefire agreements, though in the percentage for ceasefire agreements drops to 1.5% if the signatures of the agreements reached in Colombia are excluded. In addition to women's participation and regarding the content of the peace negotiations, the UN Secretary-General's report states that the texts of only eight (26%) of the 31 agreements signed in 2023 included references to women, girls, gender or sexual violence. This figure is lower than the 28% in 2022. The report also noted a negative trend in funding for gender equality issues in the areas of cooperation and humanitarian aid. For example, it indicates that bilateral aid to women's and feminist organisations and organisations defending women's rights in conflict situations accounted for only 0.3% of all bilateral aid to conflict situations during 2021-2022, a decrease compared to the 2019-2020 period.

Furthermore, as part of the open debate, over 600 civil society organisations from 110 countries addressed the UN Security Council with 10 proposals aimed at strengthening the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. In recent years, there has been a decline in civil society participation in UN Security Council debates. Aspects related to the women, peace and security agenda have also been included less in the Security Council's resolutions as a result of growing tensions among its members, as well as various governments and international actors' rejection of it. Civil society organisations' demands included preventing, avoiding and ending conflicts; reforming the UN Security Council; halting arms transfers; defending women's human rights; promoting reproductive justice; insisting on giving a place to women at the negotiating table; supporting principled humanitarian action; demanding justice and accountability; supporting feminist movements; and funding peace instead of war.

In 2024, 26 countries involved in peace negotiations had a National Action Plan in place to promote the participation of women in these processes. Eleven of these countries were in Africa (Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan); two in America (USA and Colombia), two in Asia (South Korea and the Philippines); eight in Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Kosovo, and Ukraine); and two in the Middle East (Palestine and Yemen). Thus, in 34 of the 52 active negotiations during 2023, at least one of the negotiating government actors had a plan of action that was supposed to guide its activity in terms of inclusion of the gender perspective and women's participation. The 34 negotiations and peace processes took place in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Chad, Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan, Mali, Morocco–Western Sahara, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Senegal (Casamance), Somalia, Somalia-Somaliland, Ethiopia-Somalia (Somaliland), Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, North Korea-South

Table 3.5. **Countries with 1325 National Action Plans participating in peace negotiations and processes**

Cameroon (2017)	USA (2011)
Chad (2023)	Philippines (2009)
CAR (2014 and 2019)	Armenia (2019)
DRC (2010)	Azerbaijan (2020)
Mali (2012)	Cyprus (2020)
Morocco (2022)	Georgia (2018)
Mozambique (2019)	Moldova (2018)
Senegal (2011)	Serbia (2017)
Somalia (2021	Kosovo (2014)
South Sudan (2015)	Ukraine (2016)
Sudan (2020)	Palestine (2015)
South Korea (2014)	Yemen (2019)
Colombia (2024)	Lebanon (2019)

*In parentheses, the year that the National Action Plan was approved

36 UN Secretary-General, *Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2024/671, 24 September 2024.

Korea, North Korea-USA, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Colombia (ELN), Colombia (EMC), Colombia (FARC), Colombia (Segunda Marquetalia), Armenia-Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo, Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, Palestine, Yemen and Israel-Lebanon (Hezbollah). However, even if they had this tool, most peace negotiations continued to exclude women and did not include the gender perspective into their dynamics, calling into question the effectiveness of action plans as inclusive peacebuilding tools.

In **Colombia**, the government presented the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 (PAN 1325). Along with the presentation of PAN 1325, it established a follow-up and monitoring committee for the plan. The plan was presented by Colombian Vice President Francia Márquez, who stressed its importance, highlighting not only the crucial role women have played in peacebuilding in Colombia, but also the fact that 50.2% of the 9.8 million victims of the armed conflict are women. The Colombian national action plan establishes seven strategic lines: women as guardians of peace; health and wellbeing for women and girls in their diversity; a life free from violence against women; access to justice for women and girl victims; protection of territory from the actions of illegal armed groups and mining industries that generate violence; economic autonomy for women; and human mobility for displaced, refugee and migrant women. PAN 1325 was developed through a consultative and participatory process that included input from 1,500 women from different parts of the country. The monitoring committee will be comprised of the Colombian Ministries of the Interior, National Defence, Foreign Affairs and Equality and Equity, with the latter serving as the technical secretariat.

3.3.2. Gender in peace negotiations

Several peace processes were relevant from a gender point of view during the year 2024.[37] Women's organisations demanded greater participation in different negotiations around the world as well as the inclusion of gender agendas. However, in most of the negotiating processes, significant changes were not implemented to include the participation of women in a significant way.

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

Some progress was observed regarding women's increased participation in activities related to reconciliation and mediation in the ongoing tension between **Sudan and South Sudan**, mainly framed by the violence in the Abyei enclave, with greater female involvement in peace conferences and committees. However, their participation remained far lower than that of men. Activities carried out to promote women's involvement during the year resulted in significantly more women participating in the conference held in Noong in May 2024 between Ngok Dinka and Miseriya communities (137 participants, including 41 women) than in the previous conference in November 2023 (118 participants, including 22 women). One of the conference sessions addressed gender concerns in transhumance and highlighted the challenges and risks faced by different groups and the importance of women's participation in decision-making. Moreover, regarding the participation of women in community protection committees, which have 1,223 members, 181 were women at the end of the year, more than the previous year.

Women's participation in **Colombia** was confirmed in all ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the various active insurgencies in the country as part of the Colombian government-backed policy known as Total Peace. Women were represented both in the government's negotiating delegations—the government panel in the negotiations with the armed group ELN has been headed by a woman, Vera Grabe, since 2003—and, to a lesser extent, in those of the armed groups. However, no specific mechanisms for the inclusion of women and the LGBTQI+ population were designed or implemented and various women's organisations

37 For more exhaustive information on the incorporation of a gender perspective in currently active peace processes, see the yearbook of Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2023. Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Icaria editorial, 2024. For more comprehensive information on integrating the gender perspective into currently active peace processes, see Escola de Cultura de Pau's yearbook, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 2025.

pointed out that the shortcomings in the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement with the FARC were compounded by a weakening of women's participation and gender agendas in the current peace negotiations.

In **Papua New Guinea**, the United Nations facilitated several women's participation in the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB), the main negotiating forum between the central government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG). Specifically, three women from the Bougainville House of Representatives, three women from different departments of the ABG and other female leaders with important roles in Bougainville participated in the JSB and Joint Technical Committee meetings. Furthermore, in June, the ABG presented its Gender Equality Policy to representatives of UN Women and the governments of Australia and New Zealand.

3.3.3. Civil society initiatives

Different peacebuilding initiatives led and carried out by women's civil society organisations took place in 2024. This section reviews some of the most relevant ones.

Various initiatives to promote the recognition of **gender apartheid** as an international crime continued throughout the year. Spearheaded by Afghan and Iranian women, the international campaign aims to amend the Draft Convention on Crimes against Humanity to include gender apartheid, including the gender dimension, in the specific definition of the crime of apartheid. In this regard, civil society organisations and governments were asked for support to promote the recognition and criminalisation of this serious human rights violation. The campaign aims to expand the legal definition of apartheid in both international and national legislation. The United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls issued a similar statement.

A new women's peace initiative, known as the **Cyprus** Women Bicommunal Coalition (CWBC) was created in 2024. The CWBC is comprised of women from diverse backgrounds and political and professional spheres to promote an inclusive solution to the conflict. Its founding communiqué highlights the threefold objective of promoting an urgent solution to the conflict on the island; the full, equal and substantive participation of Cypriot women at all levels of the negotiating process and the inclusion of a gender perspective in the negotiations; and the strengthening of women's role in peacebuilding by promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation.[38] In July, the CWBC warned that the process was deadlocked and called on the UN Secretary-General to redesign the negotiations, so they do not fall solely on the responsibility of the two leaders and take a more participatory and transparent approach. This new coalition carried out various activities throughout the year.

At a forum held in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, in August, the **South Sudan** Women's Coalition for Peace (SSWCP) called for a 35% increase in women's participation in all peace and development processes. Formed in September 2017, the coalition represents over 50 women and women-led organisations from South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. However, in the Tumaini Initiative currently taking place in Kenya, women's participation was marginal in 2024. UNMISS reported that in support of women's inclusion and participation in the initiative and the broader peace process, the institution provided financial support to five women leaders to attend the Tumaini Initiative in Nairobi as observers. The women represented the South Sudan Women's Bloc, academia and civil society organisations.

The fall of Bashar Assad's regime in **Syria** in early December 2024 opened a new political landscape in the country and encouraged Syrian women's groups to stake out different positions regarding the transition phase. From the outset, Syrian feminist activists emphasised women's intention to actively participate in the country's new political process and called for the new authorities to recognise the work they have been doing throughout the years of armed conflict. Syrian activists expressed hope for the prospects offered by the new period, but they also voiced doubts about the new authorities' record of governance in the parts of Syria they had controlled (Idlib). In this regard, they repeated the need to prioritise respect for women's rights. In this crucial new context, many Syrian organisations presented their roadmaps and visions for the country's future, including those that had been working abroad in the diaspora in recent years. Groups such as the Syrian Women's Political Movement (SWPM) stressed the importance of remaining committed to the values of freedom, democracy and justice that inspired the 2011 uprising against the Assad regime; the need for an inclusive political process and women's effective and substantive representation in decision-making; the importance of ensuring the protection of civilians throughout Syria and the safe return of the refugee population; and the importance of promoting transitional justice mechanisms to hold all perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations accountable for their abuses, assuming that accountability and justice are fundamental aspects of sustainable peacebuilding in the country. SWMP also called for attention to be paid to the situation of detained and missing persons, the need to support civil society and young people's participation in shaping the new Syria.

In the **Philippines**, the Bangsamoro Women Commission, the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and Mindanao State University (MSU) launched a diploma programme on Women, Peace and Security as

38 Cyprus Women Bi-communal Coalition, *Press Statement: Launch of the Cyprus Women Bi-communal Coalition (CWBC)*, 11 May 2024.

part of the implementation of both the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023-2033 and the Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023-2028. Promoted by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), it is the first such diploma in the Philippines. Both action plans enjoy the collaboration of the United Nations system, national and international NGOs and local governments.

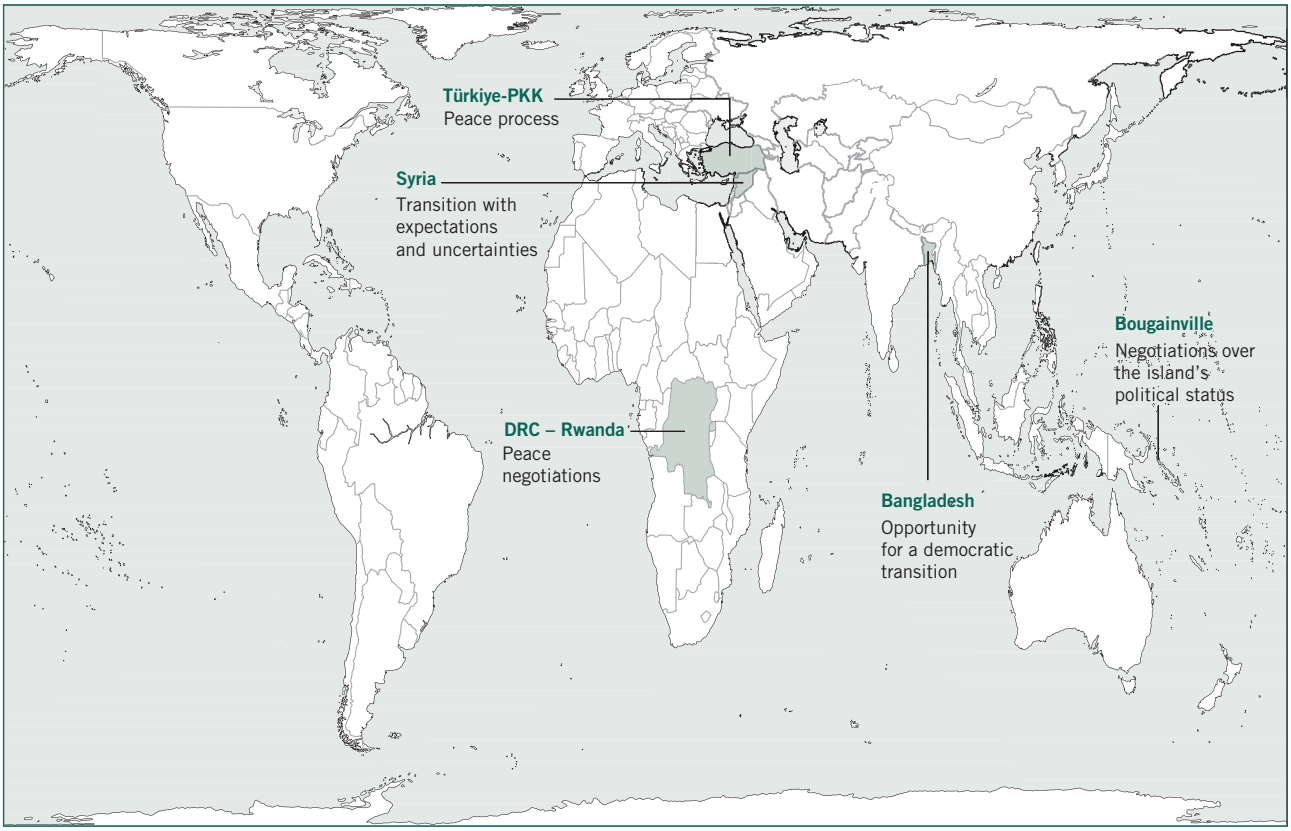
In **Venezuela**, the Women's Group for Dialogue and Peace of Venezuela remained active throughout the year. Created in 2022 by Venezuelan female members of civil society organisations and political parties, the group aims to include a gender perspective in the dialogue between the government and the opposition. Promoted by the Cauce Association, the group works to incorporate all the country's social groups—especially women, Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples and women with disabilities—into the negotiations between the government and the Unitary Platform; to create a working group to monitor agreements with equal participation and representation from various social groups; and to fund projects implemented by women to defend their rights, especially with regard to health and food.

4. Opportunities for peace

After analysing the year 2024 from the perspective of conflicts and peacebuilding,[1] in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace highlights five areas that are opportunities for peace in the future. They are contexts where there is, or has been, an armed conflict or socio-political crisis in the past and where a series of factors converge that could lead to a positive transformation. The opportunities for peace refer to the negotiations between DRC and Rwanda that could contribute to resolve one of the longstanding conflicts in Africa; the possibilities for a democratic transition in Bangladesh after the severe political crisis in the country; the negotiations on the political status of the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea; the new dialogue between Türkiye and the Kurdish armed group PKK; and the perspectives in a new historical juncture in Syria after the overthrow of Bashar Assad's regime in December 2024.

All these opportunities for peace will require the effort and real commitment of the parties involved and, where appropriate, the support of international actors so that the synergies and positive factors already present foster peacebuilding. As such, the analysis by the School for a Culture of Peace aims to provide a realistic vision of these scenarios and themes, identifying the positive aspects that encourage expectations of change while also highlighting the existing difficulties and problems that could hinder their crystallisation as opportunities for peace.

Map 4.1. **Opportunities for peace**



1 The analysis of each context is based on the yearly review of the events that occurred in 2024 and includes some important factors and dynamics of the first four months of 2025.

4.1. A new opportunity for peace between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda

The current diplomatic situation in Africa's Great Lakes region presents a new opportunity for peace between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, two countries whose relations have been marked by decades of violence, mutual mistrust and deep historical wounds. After years of diplomatic failure and military advances by the armed group M23, which the UN, the US, the EU and others claim is backed by Kigali, **recent negotiations in Doha and Washington have opened a window of opportunity that could transform the longstanding conflict in the eastern DRC**. On 18 March, President Félix Tshisekedi and President Paul Kagame signed a joint declaration in Doha calling for an immediate ceasefire, mediated by the emir of Qatar. Shortly thereafter, on 25 April, the foreign ministers of both countries signed a "declaration of principles" in Washington under US auspices, committing to drafting a peace agreement by 2 May, though this deadline was not reached. Although fighting persists on the ground and the parties involved have repeatedly violated previous truces, these steps provide fresh impetus to resolve one of Africa's longest-running and most devastating conflicts.

The recent negotiations between the DRC and Rwanda in Doha and Washington have opened a window of opportunity that could transform the longstanding conflict in the eastern DRC

However, for this opportunity for peace to be sustainable and not another failed attempt, it is essential to address the root causes of the conflict. It is not enough to agree on ceasefires or establish formal negotiations if the historical, social, economic and political factors that have turned the eastern DRC into a recurring theatre of war are not addressed. One of these is the issue of land ownership and use. Land disputes, aggravated by forced displacement and the informal colonisation of abandoned territory, have been systematically exploited by armed groups that manipulate these tensions to recruit combatants and legitimise their violence as a form of community defence. At the same time, although the struggle over natural resources alone does not explain the origin of the conflict, it has helped to establish and entrench the status quo of violence and instability. The eastern DRC is home to vast reserves of strategic minerals such as coltan, cobalt, gold and tin, which are highly sought after by the global technology and energy industries. This has sparked US interest in facilitating dialogue between the warring parties in recent years and an agreement between both governments on access to these mineral resources was expected. These resources have helped to fund both armed groups and institutional corruption networks, creating a perverse cycle in which territorial control translates into economic power. Illegal mineral exploitation, often with the complicity of state actors and international corporations, has created incentives to prolong the conflict and has strengthened a war economy that denies local communities the profits proceeding from their own resources.

Another fundamental cause and factor sustaining the conflict is the cynical exploitation of ethnic differences. While ethnic identities in and of themselves are not the cause of the war, political elites, armed groups and foreign interests have used ethnic divisions as a tool for mobilisation and social manipulation in the DRC. The Congolese Tutsi community, the Banyamulenge, has historically been marginalised and stigmatised, leading certain groups to demand their protection through armed conflict. The M23 presents itself as the defender of this community, whose members condemn discrimination and systematic violence. In this context, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the subsequent creation of the FDLR, an armed group founded by former perpetrators of the genocide who took refuge in the DRC, have promoted a narrative of existential threats that both Kigali and its opponents have exploited to justify their military action.

The chronic weakness of the Congolese state, particularly with regard to its security, justice and territorial governance institutions, has contributed to a situation in which over 100 armed groups operate with impunity in the eastern part of the country. As such, the state has been perceived as absent, biased or even complicit with certain armed actors rather than neutral or a guarantor of rights. This lack of institutional legitimacy has created a power vacuum occupied by non-state actors and has allowed violence to become a common mechanism for resolving disputes and obtaining benefits. Successive governments in Kinshasa have used the conflict as a tool for managing power, showing little willingness to implement structural reforms that could reduce the causes of the conflict.

The peace processes promoted to date have largely failed by reproducing these dynamics. The Pretoria Agreements, the 2009 deals following the CNDP rebellion and the more recent Luanda and Nairobi processes have been marked by negotiations between political and military elites without any significant participation from civil society, affected communities, women or young people. These initiatives have also lacked credible implementation and monitoring mechanisms. Most agreements have been based on the

parties' goodwill without establishing clear sanctions for non-compliance. As a result, commitments have been systematically violated, supporting a culture of impunity and mistrust. Added to this is the failure of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme. Thousands of former combatants have ended up rejoining armed groups, fuelling a vicious cycle of violence. Security sector reform has been just as unsuccessful, keeping the Congolese Armed Forces divided, poorly equipped and often implicated in serious human rights violations.

In this context, recent diplomatic efforts offer a real possibility for change. Qatar's mediation and US efforts have brought new dynamism, moving away from previous regional processes that had lost credibility. The direct meeting between Tshisekedi and Kagame in Doha was the first in three years. The agreement later signed in Washington committed both parties to cease their support for armed groups and to mutually respect each other's sovereignty, laying the groundwork for a broader agreement.

However, this new opportunity also runs considerable risks. The first is the deep lack of trust between the parties. Since the start of the M23 offensive in late 2021, at least six truces have been reached, only to collapse within days or weeks, with both sides accusing each other of breaking them. The use of international sanctions, such as those imposed by the EU on M23 leaders and senior Rwandan officials, have added tension to already fragile negotiations. The M23 refused to participate in a meeting in Angola after learning of these sanctions, claiming that they undermined the possibility of dialogue. Adding to this is the complex internal political landscape in the DRC. The reappearance of former President Joseph Kabila has created divisions within the government, as he is accused of maintaining ties to the M23. The arrest of senior officials who served in his administration, the lifting of his parliamentary immunity and his visit to Goma have intensified suspicions and political polarisation. This fragmentation could also undermine the ability of Tshisekedi's government to implement any agreements and weaken its position in the face of M23 demands.

Meanwhile, Rwanda continues to deny any support for the M23, despite UN reports documenting that there are between 4,000 and 7,000 Rwandan soldiers on Congolese territory. The lack of effective sanctions against Kigali and the ambiguity of some international actors have supported the status quo. The symbolic weight of the 1994 genocide and the West's guilt over its historical inaction continue to hold back a more assertive policy towards Paul Kagame's government.

Even so, the ongoing peace process could mark a turning point if built on solid foundations. To achieve this, it must be inclusive (incorporating civil society, local communities and women), address the structural causes of conflict (such as land ownership, ethnic marginalisation, institutional weakness and illegal resource exploitation) and establish credible implementation, verification and accountability mechanisms. It will also be essential to maintain international pressure and ensure that economic incentives linked to the process, such as investment in mining and infrastructure, benefit local populations and do not become new forms of plunder.

In conclusion, the peace process between the DRC and Rwanda provides a historic opportunity to break with decades of cyclical conflict, failed processes and unfulfilled promises. Unlike previous efforts, this time greater international pressure has come together with potential geopolitical interest in stabilising a key region for the global flow of strategic minerals. The path will not be linear or easy. Political fragility, mutual distrust and the complexity of the conflict make significant obstacles predictable.

4.2. Bangladesh's political crisis: an opportunity for transition

The political crisis that gripped Bangladesh in 2024 created an opportunity for a democratic political transition following the fall of the government of Awami League leader Sheik Hasina and the formation of an interim government that will lead the country until the next elections. A powerhouse of the international textile industry, but whose population paradoxically lacks job opportunities with guaranteed labour rights, especially for the younger generations, Bangladesh was shaken by intense protests in 2024 due to social discontent with its political and economic situation. The magnitude of the protests forced the resignation of the prime minister, who also had to leave the country and go into exile in India following accusations of corruption and excessive use of force in responding to social unrest in the streets, and especially in the capital. According to the United Nations, 1,400 people were killed in connection with the protests and the heavy police crackdown, making it one of the country's worst political crises in recent decades.

The protests began when the student movement refused to accept the Supreme Court's reinstatement of a quota system that reserved and awarded 30% of all civil service positions to the descendants of those who actively participated in the Bangladesh Liberation War, which led to the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971. Following the partition of the Indian subcontinent and India and Pakistan's proclamation of independence, the latter was divided into eastern and western wings. Bangladesh emerged as an independent country as a result of a new formal division of what had previously been East Pakistani territory. The student discontent that led to the 2024 crisis was rooted in the lack of improvements in working conditions and the precariousness of the job market for university students. The significant economic growth resulting from the expansion of the Bangladeshi textile industry, one of the main suppliers to the international textile market, has not improved job opportunities for university students, as the industry workers are predominantly women who earn very low wages and face extremely insecure working conditions. The quota in question was perceived by large swathes the population, and especially students, as a way for the prime minister to consolidate her political power and the protestors' demand for its elimination started off as the main slogan of the protests.

Over 1,400 people died in the largest anti-government protests in recent decades

The prime minister's contempt for the students, going so far as to call them the descendants of those who collaborated with Pakistan during Bangladesh's struggle for independence, coupled with violent attacks by organisations close to the government and the closure of all educational institutions, caused the protests to escalate. Whilst the demonstrations had initially been peaceful, their enormous swelling following the prime minister's controversial statements was met by increased police crackdowns that claimed the lives of 20 students on 18 July. These events forced the start of negotiations with the government on 19 July. Two days later, the Supreme Court reduced the quota to 7%. However, the protests persisted and grew, involving other parts of civil society. Clashes between police and protesters resumed in early August. On 3 August, the student movement stated that its sole demand was for Prime Minister Hasina to resign. The demonstrations brought hundreds of thousands of people to the capital on 5 August in what became known as the "March to Dhaka". The head of the Bangladeshi Armed Forces refused to take more forceful action against the protesters, forcing Hasina to resign and flee the country, taking refuge in India.

Hasina's flight from Bangladesh created an opportunity for democratisation and dialogue among the country's various political and social actors. Following the prime minister's departure, President Muhammad Shahabuddin Chuppu dissolved Parliament, allowing for talks to move forward. Negotiations between the president, the Bangladeshi Armed Forces and student representatives led to an agreement for an interim government headed by economist and Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, a figure of renowned local and international standing. The new executive branch was tasked with leading the country until new elections could be called, which, according to the Bangladeshi Constitution, should take place 90 days after the dissolution of Parliament. The new interim government, which included some student representatives, committed to an agenda of economic, electoral, judicial and media reform, albeit limited by the interim mandate. Thus, the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the governor of the Bangladesh Bank were replaced and the country signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPPED). In the months following the formation of the interim government, members of Hasina's government were arrested, including several former ministers. Hasina and her family were also accused of embezzling $5 billion intended for infrastructure, as well as of the disappearance and systematic torture of people in secret detention centres, and the government began the process of seeking her extradition to India.

Although political tensions simmered in the country in the months that followed, Yunus' announcement of an election schedule helped to contain a new crisis.

According to the schedule, the elections would take place between December 2025 and June 2026. Yunus also received the support of the head of the Bangladeshi Armed Forces, who indicated that the military backed the interim government and would stay out of politics during the 18-month transition period. However, the interim government will face many different challenges in this new pre-election period to ensure a reasonably successful transition that will give wings to some of the reform proposals. Some obstacles relate to the actors involved in the political transition, since once Hasina's government had ended, Bangladesh's political leadership shifted to what had been the main opposition party, the BNP, whose record at the helm of previous Bangladeshi governments had also been marred by authoritarian behaviour. Whilst the interim government managed to prevent the country's economic crisis, which had partly motivated the protests, from worsening, both the interim government and the new executive branch must urgently address the situation to prevent further deterioration of the unstable living conditions of a large portion of the country's population.

Another challenge that the elected government will have to address will be its relations with neighbouring countries, especially India and Myanmar. India had been one of the main pillars of Hasina's administration and is still perceived as such by large parts of the population. Tensions between both countries have been mounting since the change of government. However, India's status as a regional power makes it essential for Dhaka to maintain relations with New Delhi, given the political and economic implications that doing so has for Bangladesh's future. At the same time, the deteriorating violence in Myanmar could have serious consequences, especially due to the escalation of violence in Rakhine State, since Bangladesh is already hosting hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees from that part of Myanmar.

The expectations facing both the interim government and the new executive branch that will win the elections are high, given the enormous desire for political and economic change among broad swathes of the population, especially young people. This creates an opportunity to establish democracy and greater economic justice for a population that has been marginalised from the profits produced by the expansion of the textile industry in the country, and which has also had serious environmental impacts, particularly water pollution and toxic emissions. Therefore, the new governments must prioritise an inclusive transition with guarantees of political pluralism, laying the foundation for legal, constitutional and economic reforms and for improving relations with neighbouring countries, based on a focus on ensuring the rights of the Bangladeshi population.

4.3. Negotiations on the political status of the island of Bougainville

In 2024 and the early months of 2025, a series of circumstances occurred that could accelerate the negotiating process between the government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to determine the political status of the island of Bougainville. Following the self-determination referendum in 2019, in which 97.7% of Bougainville's population voted for independence, dialogue between the two governments in the following five years was hampered by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and by fundamental political disagreements, as well as methodological and procedural differences regarding the negotiations and validation of the referendum results. The slowdown and at times the deadlock in the dialogue not only led to mutual criticism between the parties and the trading of blame, but it also gave rise to warnings of a possible rise in tension and conflict in Bougainville. In March 2025, speaking before representatives of the international community, Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape raised the possible circulation of weapons on the island and challenged the United Nations on the issue, which was leading the process to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate combatants at the time. Between 1988 and 1998, there was an armed conflict in Bougainville between the Papua New Guinean Armed Forces and the armed opposition group Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), in which an estimated 10% of the island's population died. Bougainvillean President Ishmael Toroama is a former BRA leader.

The appointment of an independent moderator and the international community's greater willingness to engage in negotiations could accelerate the dialogue in Bougainville.

Faced with the uncertainty caused by the impasse in the negotiations, **in September 2024, both parties announced the selection of New Zealand diplomat Jerry Mateparae**, the former governor-general of New Zealand, chief of the New Zealand Defence Force and commander of the Bougainville Peace Monitoring Group, to serve as an independent moderator. Mateparae was a key figure in the signing of a ceasefire agreement in 1998 that ended the hostilities. In 2001, the final peace agreement was signed, which included a self-determination referendum once the disarmament of the BRA and the establishment of self-government in Bougainville had been achieved, among other issues. Shortly after he was appointed to the position, Mateparae met with both parties and voiced his optimism about the future of the negotiating process. **Both parties expressed their conviction that the agreed appointment of a facilitator for the negotiations could mark a turning point, especially the Autonomous Bougainville Government**, which had long called for international third-party involvement. In 2020, former Irish Prime Minister Bernie Ahern (1997-2008), who had chaired the Bougainville Referendum Commission for years, agreed to facilitate the post-referendum negotiations, but ultimately did not play any role in them. Following Mateparae's appointment, the United Nations publicly declared that it was willing to continue supporting the negotiating process. Both governments decided that Mateparae's mandate would be extended until approximately June 2025, coinciding with the general elections in Bougainville. They also agreed that in addition to facilitating dialogue between both governments, his role would also include assisting Parliament's bicameral Committee on Bougainville, which according to the 2001 peace agreement must ultimately decide on Bougainville's political status.

Another international issue that could help the negotiating process along is the fact that the two main intergovernmental organisations in the Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), have shown an increased willingness to get involved in the negotiations. Both organisations had historically considered the Bougainville conflict an internal matter for Papua New Guinea to resolve and had stressed the primacy of the national sovereignty of their member states over other considerations. In contrast to the PIF's historical reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of its member states, in March 2025, PIF Secretary General Baron Waqa said that the organisation was willing to work on resolving the conflict if official bodies in Bougainville made a formal request, referring any decision on the matter to the PIF's annual summit to be held in the Solomon Islands in September. MSG Director General Ilan Kiloe was even more explicit, declaring that he was ready to provide assistance to Bougainville in 2025. He added that the MSG was initially established to promote the collective interests of Melanesian countries, assist those that had not yet achieved independence and support them in their goal of becoming independent. The MSG was formally created as a subregional group in 2007 and is composed of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, which seeks independence for the island. In 2024, Toroama announced his intention to seek observer status for Bougainville in the MSG. Unlike other territories that were or still are part of the United Nations-led decolonisation process (such as West Papua in Indonesia, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Guam and American Samoa), Bougainville's self-determination is enshrined in the Papua New Guinean Constitution. Under the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement, Papua

New Guinea retains jurisdiction over the country's foreign affairs, but the Autonomous Bougainville Government is allowed to interact externally with regional organisations. However, several analysts have highlighted Papua New Guinea's importance in Pacific regional organisations, as with approximately 11 million inhabitants, it is the most populous country in the region after Australia, with more than twice as many people as New Zealand and more than the entire population of the rest of the countries in the region.

Another factor that could spur and accelerate progress in the negotiating process are the general elections scheduled for 2025 in Bougainville. In February, for example, Bougainville's Minister for Independence Mission Implementation, Ezekiel Masatt, said that both governments were committed to resolving the most contentious procedural issues in the negotiations before the aforementioned elections and had agreed to meet as often as necessary for that purpose. Some sources even suggested the possibility that some of these meetings could take place in New Zealand, the country of origin of the independent moderator and the site of preliminary talks in the late 1990s that led to the signing of the peace agreement in 2001. In this regard, Masatt repeated both governments' agreement that Mateparae's mandate would conclude before the elections, ideally by the end of June.

In addition to the election date, other factors have pressured and lent urgency to the Papua New Guinean government to resume the negotiations. In March 2025, in a meeting with Jerry Mateparae and representatives of the international community, Ishmael Toroama announced his intention to declare Bougainville's independence on 1 September 2027, as he believes doing so would be consistent with the roadmap to implement the results of the referendum (known as the "Wabag Roadmap"), which establishes the deadline for the declaration of independence as "no earlier than 2025 and no later than 2027". Shortly before Toroama's declaration, the Bougainville Independence Leaders Consultative Forum issued an official statement asserting that Papua New Guinea lacks the authority to veto the referendum result and recommending 1 September 2027 as the date for the declaration of independence. In March 2025, Toroama also said that in his view, the negotiations over independence ended with the referendum and that Mateparae's moderation should focus on seeking an agreement for implementing the result of the independence referendum and the terms of the new relationship between Bougainville and Papua New Guinea as two independent and sovereign states. Toroama urged Marape to wrap up the independence process during the current parliamentary term. In line with Toroama's intention to declare the island's independence in September 2027, the Autonomous Bougainville Government has been taking action to prepare for the island's eventual independence in recent years and especially in 2024, such as by submitting the first draft of a Bougainvillean Constitution by the Bougainville Constitutional Planning Commission in March 2024.

Despite the appointment of an independent moderator, the international community's greater willingness to get involved in the negotiations and the domestic political factors that could accelerate them, some analysts have also drawn attention to the difficulties facing the process. The most important of these is undoubtedly the firm disagreement regarding the island's political status. Whilst the Autonomous Bougainville Government has made it clear that it will not accept any status other than independence, in the sense of a new country separate from Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby has stressed Bougainville's limited economic viability as an independent state, noting that the island is currently highly dependent on transfers from the national government and donor countries and arguing that Bougainville's economic independence must precede any political independence. Whilst some argue that reopening the Panguna mine, operated by the multinational company Rio Tinto, could guarantee Bougainville's long-term sustainability, as it is one of the largest in the world, others say that doing so would run environmental and political risks, as activity at the mine was at the epicentre of the island's armed conflict. The Papua New Guinean government has also stressed the non-binding nature of the 2019 independence referendum and has noted that according to the 2001 peace agreement, Parliament has the authority to make any decision on Bougainville's political status. Port Moresby has also argued that unlike other Pacific territories, Bougainville is not pending decolonisation. In addition to these political disagreements, procedural issues have also held the negotiations back, such as the majority required in Parliament to validate the results of the independence referendum. Whilst the Papua New Guinean government believes that such a decision should be approved by a two thirds supermajority, the Autonomous Bougainville Government thinks it should be ratified by a simple majority.

Despite these difficulties, and even though a final agreement does not seem realistic in the short term, both parties agree that the outlook for mid-2025 is more positive and hopeful than it was in early 2024.

4.4. New talks between Türkiye and the PKK

Since 2024, a new chance for peace has opened in Türkiye regarding the long-running armed conflict that has pitted the Turkish government against the Kurdish armed movement PKK since 1984. This armed conflict is an expression of the Kurdish issue, a problem that refers to the discrimination and violations of cultural, linguistic and political representation rights that the Kurdish population of Türkiye has historically faced and whose origins date back to the formation of the republic in the early 20th century. The armed conflict between Türkiye and the PKK, which in recent years has been of low intensity and has had northern Iraq as its main theatre of conflict, has accumulated a legacy of impacts on human security, including several tens of thousands of deaths, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, exile, imprisonment, torture, sexual violence, militarisation and a political economy of violence. Now, in a changing internal and regional context shaped by many different challenges, a new peace process has begun, combining aspects of opportunity, but risk factors as well.

The new negotiating process is complex and multifaceted in nature. It has been given different names, emphases and language by different actors, such as "Terror-free Türkiye" by the government coalition and "Peace and Democratic Society Process" by the PKK, in addition to other names. Media reports indicate that the Turkish government and the PKK have held non-public exploratory talks since at least April 2024. **In the public sphere, the process began to unfold in October 2024, when it was accompanied by various gestures of rapprochement and other actions, which gradually expanded** and were backed by politicians' statements about the dawn of a new period and the glimpse of an opportunity, though the names and focuses remained distinct. Starting in October and mostly from December onwards, family members and some politicians were authorised to visit PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been in prison since 1999. After these visits, the PKK leader's position and vision of the process were shared with the public and talks took place between the delegation of the pro-Kurdish DEM party visiting Öcalan and most of Türkiye's parliamentary political parties.[2]

Overall, a peace process has been taking place both privately and publicly, which for now consists of **talks between Turkish government representatives and the leader of the PKK; communication between Öcalan and the PKK; visits to Öcalan by the pro-Kurdish DEM delegation and subsequent public outreach by the delegation; and rounds of bilateral meetings between the DEM delegation and the vast majority of Türkiye's parliamentary political parties,** including the ruling AKP and its partner, the MHP. Furthermore, the creation of a parliamentary commission to address issues related to the peace process is under discussion. Such a commission would provide a more institutionalised and collective forum. The DEM delegation has also met with Kurdish actors from Iraq and Syria. This new peace initiative is also interrelated with the negotiations that have been taking place since the fall of Bashar Assad's regime[3] between the transitional government in Syria and the SDF regarding Kurdish integration into the new Syria. The SDF is a coalition opposed to Assad and backed by the US in the fight against ISIS, and it is led by the Kurdish YPG/YPJ militias, with ties to the PKK and territorial control in northeastern Syria.

The new initiative in Türkiye combines several aspects of opportunity. On one hand, the new process did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather draws on lessons learned from previous experiences, including the most recent (the Oslo Talks of 2008-2011 and the 2013-2015 process). It is characterised by the parties' apparent willingness to pursue a negotiating process that produces results, even though it is influenced by different motivations and factors of uncertainty and risk, as detailed below.

Furthermore, **as the process unfolds, it has already produced some significant early results in its initial focus: weapons**. Of particular note is Öcalan's statement on 27 February 2025 calling for the PKK to convene a congress, lay down its arms and disband as part of a vision of a solution based on peace, a democratic society and an open political space. The PKK responded on 1 March 2025 by declaring a unilateral ceasefire and fully endorsing Öcalan's message. In early May, following its 12th congress (5-7 May), the PKK announced the end of the armed struggle and the dissolution of the organisation. That is, the process has already silenced the guns, which in itself is a milestone. The process started with a focus on ending the armed struggle, presumably under pressure from Türkiye and aligned with its interests, but in any case this nullifies what has been Türkiye's main argument for repressing Kurdish political and social actors: their alleged ties to the PKK, which it has considered a terrorist organisation. The PKK has been advocating a negotiated solution to the

2 For a detailed chronology of the steps between October 2024 and April 2025, see "Türkiye-PKK" in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Risk scenarios and opportunities for peace*, January 2025 and "Türkiye-PKK" in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Risk scenarios and opportunities for peace*, April 2025. See also the summary on Türkiye (PKK) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2024. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2025.

3 See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) and "A chance for peace in Syria? Perspectives on a fragile transition" in this chapter.

conflict for decades. In recent years, the group has come under increased military pressure from Türkiye, driven by factors such as the intensive use of drones, which has weakened it and led it to retreat and use defensive strategies. The dissolution of the PKK would potentially remove the struggle against terrorism as a method for addressing the Kurdish issue and it could strengthen the Kurdish political and social sphere and Kurdish political actors, especially if it led to the release of imprisoned Kurdish political figures. However, the peace process also coexists with dynamics of authoritarianism and political repression in Türkiye.

Another positive sign is the lack of internal dissent within the PKK regarding its historic decision to give up its armed struggle and disband, as well as the broad support to the process among the vast majority of Turkish political parties, including the ruling AKP and its ultranationalist Turkish partner, the MHP. Another promising and interrelated aspect is the focus on parliamentary actors and the potential role that the Parliament can play through a future commission. Furthermore, specific meetings have started between women representatives of the various political parties that support the peace initiative. The Kurdish movement's historical focus on women's rights may have positive repercussions on the process, such as this new dynamic of meetings.

However, **the risks are significant. It remains to be seen how disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and a possible amnesty law will be managed, as well as whether and to what extent Kurdish demands** for cultural and linguistic rights, guarantees of political participation and greater administrative decentralisation, at least at the municipal level, will be addressed. Furthermore, the lack of transparency and opacity, partly motivated by the desire to bolster the process against leaks and attacks, create significant uncertainty, including whether the parties have a consensual negotiating framework/roadmap.

The dynamics of internal repression in Türkiye and the risks of authoritarianism are another factor against it, as they could limit the scope for decision-making on reforms and rights, relating to the Kurdish issue and the country as a whole, and alienate the main opposition party, the CHP, and its base. Thus, some analysts have argued the factors at work in the new peace process include the AKP's loss of electoral support, with the CHP emerging as the leading force in the 2024 municipal elections, and the government coalition's attempts to undermine electoral cooperation between Türkiye's main opposition party, the CHP, and the pro-Kurdish DEM party. Furthermore, the AKP could try to use the process to gain Kurdish support for a future amendment to the Constitution that would reflect some Kurdish demands, but that could also extend the term limit and open the door to Erdogan's re-election in the next election scheduled for 2028, or seek Kurdish support in a possible early election. The peace process is taking place alongside the regime's heavy crackdown on the CHP, including the dismissal of several mayors and the arrest of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, Erdogan's potential main rival for the presidential election, which sparked massive protests. This dynamic adds to the historical repression the Kurdish movement has faced in exercising its civil and political liberties and the criminalisation of human rights defenders, independent journalists and peace, feminist and LGBTQ+ activists.

Regional volatility and the Syrian Kurdish factor also create uncertainty. Faced with the complex regional landscape of recent years, especially since the crisis in Gaza and the intensification of regional disputes (the Israel-Iran crisis, the ouster of Bashar Assad in Syria, tensions between Israel and Türkiye and others), Türkiye has prioritised an approach of reducing risks and threats and seeking external political, commercial and military influence. Thus, as part of a vision to prioritise broader national interests in the new Middle East that is taking shape, Ankara is negotiating with the PKK and accepting the ongoing negotiations between the Syrian transitional government and the SDF regarding the integration of Syrian Kurdish fighters and the future Kurdish integration in the new Syria.[4] Türkiye appears to be taking a cautious and dialogue-oriented stance with the SDF, in contrast to the red line that the Syrian Kurdish Autonomous Region (DAANES, popularly known as Rojava) has represented for it in recent years. However, the volatility in the Middle East and the complexity and uncertainty surrounding the Damascus-SDF process could slow down the peace process in Türkiye and the way that the latter evolves could also influence the former.

Another factor of uncertainty is the degree of ownership and transformation. The Kurdish movement has launched initiatives to encourage its constituents to participate in and support the process, but it remains to be seen whether Türkiye as a whole will move towards broader paths of involvement, enabling greater social alignment with the challenge at hand and supporting the negotiating process with complementary avenues for peacebuilding, including those related to redefining the image of the enemy, social cohesion, truth, memory, justice and reparation.

In conclusion, a new negotiating process has been launched in Türkiye regarding the historical armed conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK, with factors that strengthen it, but also with internal and regional risks and aspects of uncertainty. Efforts are required to support the process if it is to move beyond the PKK's abandonment of armed struggle and the accommodation of interests in a negative peace format in a context of authoritarian tendencies. Such efforts must also address fundamental issues related to the Kurdish issue, lead to greater democratisation and political openness and create avenues for participation and mobilisation that push towards that goal.

4 Ibid.

4.5. A chance for peace in Syria? Perspectives on a fragile transition

Syria is at a historic juncture. After more than a decade of armed conflict, the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in December 2024 and the end of the authoritarian government established by his father more than half a century ago have ushered in a new era. The scenario is complex and rife with internal and external challenges in a turbulent and volatile regional environment. However, there is no doubt that **the new context has fostered hope and expectations for change among a large part of the population, who aspire to leave behind a devastating cycle of violence and imagine the possibilities of a new Syria**. "For the first time in decades, we have the opportunity to stop being subjects and become citizens of our country", said one Syrian analyst. Following the overthrow of the government and the assumption of power by the new authorities, the trend of events in the first few months of 2025 supports the view that the transition is fragile and that prospective analyses must reflect nuances and uncertainties.

Since the regime change, **one of the main points of concern has to do with how the political transition is going, including its degree of inclusiveness in a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country fragmented by years of war, and the role that the new Syrian authorities will play in this period**. Ahmed al-Sharaa, the leader of the opposition forces that overthrew Assad, has taken the lead in the transition process. Among other things, he has attempted to allay the misgivings arising both inside and outside the country by his organisation, Hayat al-Sham (HTS), and by himself, due to his past ties to al-Qaeda. In their first public statements, the new authorities appealed to unity and to the principles of justice, freedom and dignity, thereby attempting to connect with the aspirations of the Syrian revolution. The new authorities designed their own roadmap, describing the negotiating framework unsuccessfully backed by the UN for over a decade and anchored in UNSC Resolution 2254 (2015) to be "obsolete", as it was designed to mediate between the Assad regime and the opposition. In the months that followed, the policies and processes initiated have received mixed reviews, with some positive signs and others that have exposed the complexity and risks of the new situation.

One of the first milestones was a national dialogue conference that brought together around 900 participants in late February. Preceded by two weeks of local consultations in different parts of the country, the two-day conference addressed topics such as the future Constitution, freedoms and economic challenges. The dialogue had a symbolic dimension, as an event of this nature in Damascus would have been unthinkable just three months before. The conference resulted in a declaration with a general commitment to unity, equality, institutional reforms and guarantees of rights, with specific mentions of the need to protect freedoms of thought and expression and the importance of incorporating civil society into the definition of a post-Assad Syria. However, it also raised concerns and misgivings for failing to address some key issues, for lacking clarity about how its outcomes would be implemented and for representativeness and procedural issues due to the limited time for discussion, its haste (many invitations were sent at the last minute) and the lack of transparency regarding the criteria for selecting participants and members of the preparatory committee, among other factors. Some observers said that the conference seemed to be part of a checklist that the new authorities had to cross off for the benefit of foreign actors, especially Western ones, whilst others argued it provided an opportunity to move forward on discussions about a new Syria, despite its imperfections.[5] Other voices said that the authorities should build on the experience and continue holding talks for reconciliation.[6]

Two other milestones occurred in March. In the middle of the month, a constitutional declaration was published defining the prerogatives of the new government and the system that will be in place during the transition period, which is expected to last five years until the adoption of a new Fundamental Charter and the holding of elections. Drafted by a committee of seven legal experts appointed by al-Sharaa, the declaration guarantees the separation of powers, freedom of belief, equality among citizens without discrimination based on race, religion or gender and the state's guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms. At the same time, however, the text also enshrines a system heavily focused on the presidency, which analysts warn entails a propensity for authoritarianism: the president appoints one third of the members of the transitional Parliament, the committee responsible for appointing the other two thirds as well as vice presidents, ministers and the members of the Supreme Constitutional Court.[7] **Under this new legal framework, the new transitional government was unveiled in late March**, replacing the caretaker government that had taken office in December 2024, immediately following Assad's ouster. The new 23-member cabinet

5 Ibrahim al-Assil, The national dialogue in Syria: A step forward or a concerned trajectory?, Middle East Institute, 5 March 2025; Justin Salhani, Key takeaways from Syria's National Dialogue conference, Al-Jazeera, 26 February 2025.

6 Qutaiba Idlbi, Charles Lister and Marie Forestier, Reimagining Syria. A Roadmap for Peace and Prosperity Beyond Assad, Atlantic Council, Middle East Institute, European Institute of Peace, March 2025.

7 International Crisis Group, What lies in store for Syria as a new government takes power, Q&A Middle East ¬North Africa, 25 April 2025.

is diverse and includes a significant number of independent figures with renowned careers, technocrats and civil society leaders. Nine are members of the country's main minorities, unaffiliated with political groups. However, HTS holds the most powerful positions (the ministries of foreign affairs, defence, interior and justice). The new government prompted mixed reactions both inside and outside the country and suspicion among groups such as the Kurdish forces controlling northeastern Syria, led by the SDF. After the SDF leader and al-Sharaa signed an agreement in March for the integration of Kurdish forces into state institutions, the SDF rejected the constitutional declaration for failing to explicitly recognise the political, cultural and linguistic rights of Syria's ethnic and religious minorities. The Syrian Kurd appointed as the Minister of Education in the new cabinet has no political ties to the SDF. Negotiations between the central government and the SDF are expected to continue to navigate obstacles and will also be influenced by the progress of the dialogue between Türkiye and the PKK.[8]

The new Syrian government was also criticised for a lack of gender inclusion because there was only one woman in the cabinet. Some saw the appointment of Hind Kabawat as the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs as a token gesture. A well-known opponent of the Assad regime, a women's rights activist, a member of the Christian minority and an expert in conflict resolution, Kabawat acknowledged that she had unsuccessfully lobbied for more female ministers, but that there was a commitment to appoint more women to senior positions.[9] According to Kabawat, al-Sharaa is aware that he cannot govern alone, though it remains to be seen whether this could provide an incentive to go beyond rhetoric in his commitment to women's inclusion. The national dialogue, the preparatory commissions for it and the constitutional declaration all included women (25% of the participants in the former and two of the seven members in the commissions), but Syrian women aspire to more than the establishment of a minimum quota. Since before Assad was toppled, Syrian feminist activists both in the diaspora and inside the country have been demanding a decisive role in defining Syria's future,[10] and since the fall of the regime, some have outlined in detail the priorities that they consider essential to the transition.[11] Syrian women are expected to continue lobbying and advocating in this regard. This was attested, among others, by the work of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, promoted by the UN special envoy for Syria in 2016, which held its first meeting on Syrian soil in 2025 and took the opportunity to ask the new authorities on the role of civil society and guarantees for women's political participation. The appointment of the transitional Parliament will presumably provide further evidence of policies of inclusion in the new Syria.

The new situation has fostered expectations for change among a large part of the population, who aspire to leave behind a devastating cycle of violence and imagine the possibilities of a new Syria

Another major area of concern regards ways to overcome the dynamics of violence that have impacted the country over the last decade, address security challenges and simultaneously move accountability processes forward that contribute to reconciliation. The acts of violence that primarily affected the Alawite community in March 2025 served as a dramatic wake-up call regarding these risks. The swift establishment of a commission of inquiry by al-Sharaa's government was initially welcomed, but it has since been criticised for a lack of transparency and for insufficient cooperation with human rights organisations. Other related initiatives promoted by the new authorities have received mixed or nuanced assessments. In May, presidential decrees established the National Commission on Transitional Justice and the National Commission for Disappeared Persons. These decrees are hailed as a significant step forward in recognising the demands of victims and their families, as a sign of efforts to respond to the widespread rights violations committed during the armed conflict in Syria and as an opportunity to embark on a national process of truth, healing and accountability.[12] However, experts have voiced concern about the limitations of these bodies' mandates. The National Commission on Transitional Justice has come under fire for solely focusing on violations committed by Assad's regime, thereby excluding victims of abuses by other armed groups. The new Syrian authorities have therefore been called upon to promote an inclusive transitional justice process, prioritise the victims' genuine participation in these commissions' work and build on the enormous efforts exerted for over a decade by civil society groups, lawyers and victims' families in documenting abuses and seeking justice.[13] Among other things, these efforts have led to the UN General Assembly's establishment of the Independent Institution for Missing Persons in Syria in 2023.[14] Steps of this kind appear key to meeting the population's expectations for transitional justice in Syria.

8 See "New dialogue between Türkiye and the PKK" in this chapter.
9 Hélène Sallon, Hind Kabawat, the only woman in Syria's transitional government: 'Al-Sharaa has a vision, and he knows he cannot govern alone', Le Monde, 2 April 2025.
10 Ruth Michaelson, 'We've proved we can do anything': the Syrian women who want a say in running the country, The Guardian, 5 January 2025.
11 Syrian Women's Political Movement, Press Release on the Syrian Women's Political Movement's Strategic Vision to Achieve a Free and Democratic Syria, 12 December 2025.
12 ICJT, ICTJ Welcomes Establishment of Syria's New National Commissions for Transitional Justice and the Missing, 22 May 2025.
13 Ibid and Human Rights Watch, Syria's Transitional Justice Commission: A Missed Opportunity for Victim-Led Justice, 19 May 2025.
14 For more information, see the website of Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP).

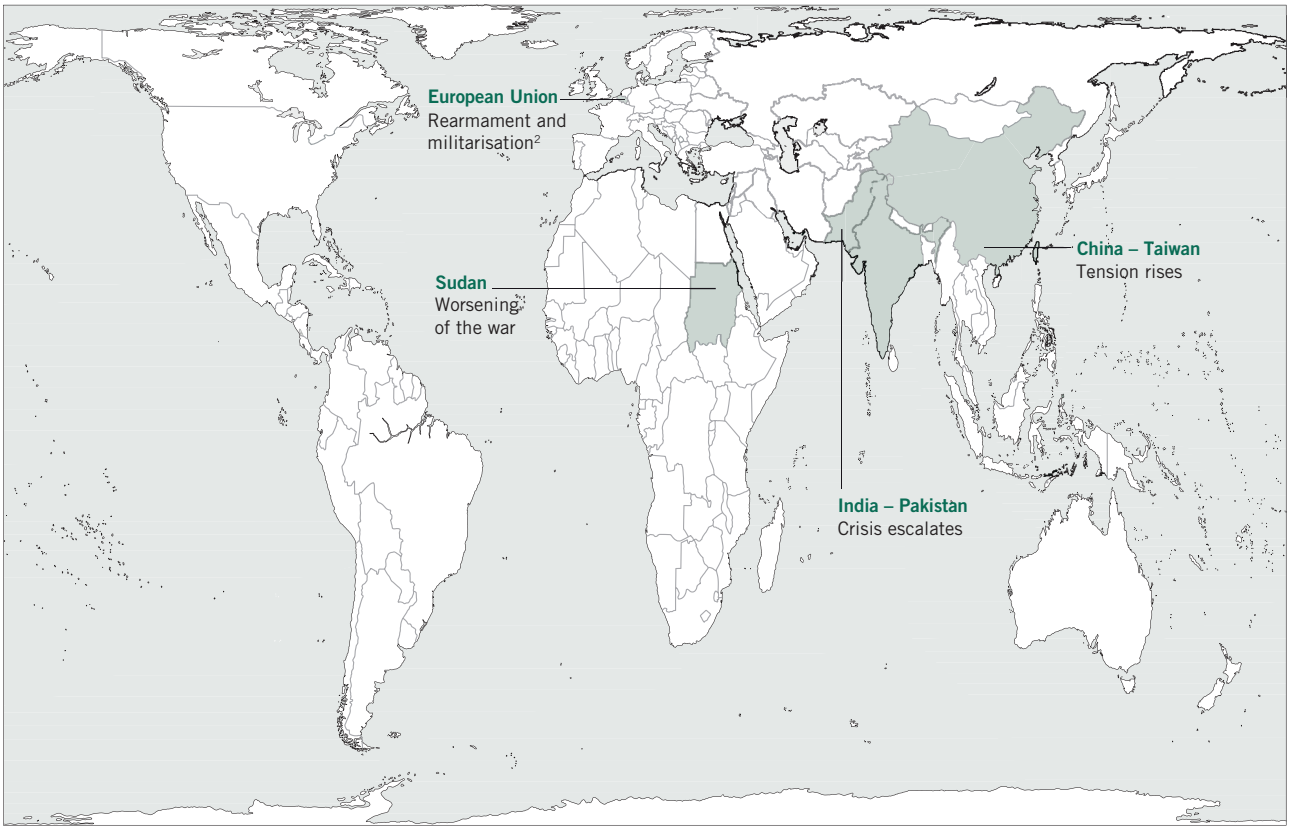
A third area of concern relates to the country's material living conditions, as it deals with an economic situation severely deteriorated by the impacts of the conflict. According to OCHA, the humanitarian needs were immense, considering that 90% of the population lives in poverty, nearly half faces severe food insecurity and millions suffer the consequences of forced displacement due to violence. Despite this critical situation and the uncertainties surrounding the political and security situation, various reports confirm that **many people displaced within the country or living abroad as refugees are returning to their places of origin in post-Assad Syria**. UNHCR estimates indicate that in the first few months of 2025, 1.7 million people (including half a million refugees) had returned to their homes and that this number could double by the end of the year. These returns are motivated by various factors, but they partly reflect the Syrian people's expectations for the new situation in the country. Therefore, it will be crucial to stay vigilant to prevent forced returns, since several countries had expressed their willingness to reach agreements with Assad to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees before the fall of his regime. The country's enormous needs for economic stability, reconstruction and the provision of essential services must also be addressed after years of devastating war. Thus, some have argued for the importance of lifting sanctions dating back to the Assad era, which have been maintained due to suspicions about the new Syrian authorities. In this regard, the US and the EU's announcements in May about potentially lifting the economic sanctions, which would depend on how the political process unfolds, opened a window of opportunity. Particularly striking was Washington's announcement following a surprise and unprecedented meeting in Saudi Arabia between Donald Trump and al-Sharaa (the first between the presidents of the United States and Syria in 25 years), recognising a leader who had been on Washington's terrorist list just a few months before.

The development of the situation in Syria will not solely depend on the factors analysed thus far. The management of governance issues, the way in which political and territorial disputes are resolved, the approach to security challenges and the challenge posed by armed groups (pro-Assad groups, ISIS and others), the repercussions of Israel's offensives in the Golan Heights and its aggressive attempts at destabilisation (including through the cynical use of minorities such as the Druze), possible interference from other foreign actors, the consequences of tensions and conflicts in the region and many other factors will continue to be decisive. In the short and medium term, however, many Syrians seem to remain hopeful that despite the risks and uncertainties, it is worth believing that another Syria is possible and that it is imperative to exert efforts to prevent a new escalation of violence and confrontation.

5. Risk scenarios

Drawing on the analysis of the armed conflicts and socio-political crises around the world in 2024,[1] in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace identifies four contexts that may worsen and become sources of greater instability and violence in 2025 or even further into the future due to their conditions and dynamics. The risk scenarios refer to the evolution of the civil war and humanitarian crisis in Sudan; the potential for large-scale armed conflict between India and Pakistan in a context of unresolved historical disputes; the rising political and military tensions between China and Taiwan and the dispute between China and the US over the latter's stance towards Taiwan; and the militaristic escalation in the EU, especially through the ReArm Europe plan, which creates risks of escalating tensions in the continent, among other consequences.

Map 5.1. **Risk scenarios**



1 The analysis of each context is based on the yearly review of the events that occurred in 2024 and includes some important factors and dynamics of the first four months of 2025.

2 The risk scenario on the militaristic escalation in Europe is shown on this map in a simplified manner for graphical representation purposes. Not all EU member countries have been marked, just Belgium as it is the country that hosts the headquarters of the main EU institutions.

5.1. Sudan on the brink of collapse: civil war, humanitarian crisis and failed diplomacy

Since 13 April 2023, Sudan has been plunged into a devastating civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), under the command of Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti. The spread of violence across virtually the entire country and the growing involvement of community militias and regional armed groups have turned the conflict into a fragmented and highly localised war that is difficult to contain.

Recently, even though the Sudanese Army has partially regained Khartoum and other areas, the RSF is still holding on to crucial regions such as Darfur and Kordofan. These regions are not only strategically vital due to their size and resources, but also because of their symbolic and identity-related value. The persistence of the RSF in Darfur has given rise to concerns about a de facto partition of the country, where two parallel governments could become established: one dominated by the Sudanese Army in the north and another dominated by the RSF in the west.

The war has triggered one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world, with approximately 30 million people (more than half the Sudanese population), in need of urgent aid. Food insecurity affects 26 million, with 14 zones at risk of imminent famine between June and September 2025. The healthcare system is in ruins and one in three hospitals has stopped operating. Malnutrition menaces over 4.9 million pregnant women and children. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) warned that it has only received 21% of the funds needed to cope with the situation, reflecting a critical shortage in international commitment. The war has also plunged the country into the greatest forced displacement crisis in the world, with over 12 million internally displaced people and more than four million refugees in neighbouring countries. The situation in West Darfur is particularly grim, with reports of genocide and war crimes committed by the RSF.

The war in Sudan has triggered one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world

There is a real possibility that the conflict might spill over to neighbouring countries. This is not only because the massive flows of displaced people could destabilise Chad, Egypt, South Sudan and other bordering countries, as the UN warns, but also due to the growing tension between the warring parties and neighbouring states that are backing the other side, such between the Sudanese Army and Chad due to Chad's support for the RSF.

In this context, the Sudanese conflict is evolving towards a geopolitical power struggle in North Africa and the Sahel. Iran has bolstered its support to the Sudanese Army, whilst the United Arab Emirates (EAU) and other actors stand accused of arming the RSF. This indirect intervention has turned Sudan into a chessboard for regional and international powers, prolonging and intensifying the conflict. China and Russia have played an ambivalent role in the UN Security Council. Although both countries voted to extend the weapons embargo on Darfur in 2024, Russia blocked a broader resolution proposed by the United Kingdom and Sierra Leone that called for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations.

Different attempts at mediation since 2023 have failed. Talks in Jeddah, Bahrain and Geneva have been intermittent and marked by absences, unacceptable preconditions and irreconcilable agendas. In March 2025, the RSF participated in negotiations in Switzerland, but the Sudanese Army did not attend, arguing that its minimum conditions (such as the RSF's withdrawal from civilian areas) had not been met. The international community, led by the United States, Saudi Arabia, the African Union (AU) and the UN, has continued to push for a diplomatic solution. The Paris summit in April 2025 secured $2.1 billion in committed humanitarian aid, but efforts to resume the peace negotiations have been consistently hindered by the parties' lack of political will.

On 4 March 2025, the RSF established what it called the "Government of Peace and Unity" with Hemedti as chair of the Presidential Council. This government has been widely rejected for lacking democratic legitimacy and for resulting from military force rather than from civilian consensus. In contrast, the Sudanese Army and its allies have promoted a political transition proposal led by the "National Forces Coordination" coalition, which advocates for a three-year transitional government with civilian and military involvement. However, the fragmentation of political actors and mutual distrust have prevented any tangible progress toward unified governance from being made.

Faced with this situation, various potential scenarios are emerging in the country. The one most likely in the short and medium term is that the conflict will continue with episodes of intermittent violence. The lack of any lasting ceasefire, the fragmentation of

actors and foreign support for both sides make any immediate resolution difficult. The consequences will include increased displacement, famine, institutional weakening and the risk of the total collapse of the Sudanese state. There is also a threat that the war could lead to a de facto partition of the country, given that the RSF controls much of the west and south and the Sudanese Army maintains its hold over the north and centre, which could lead to an entrenched territorial divide. This situation could prompt the practical establishment of two parallel power structures that would hamper any kind of national reconciliation in the future. A third scenario, which is not yet feasible, is to achieve a negotiated solution as the only viable path to lasting peace. However, it requires conditions that currently do not exist, such as mutual trust, sustained pressure from key international actors (especially those who fund or arm the warring parties) and a roadmap accepted by both civilians and the military. So far, diplomatic efforts have failed to yield any significant progress.

In short, expectations for resolving the conflict in Sudan in 2025 are low. The war has not only destroyed lives and cities, but it has also fragmented the country's political, social and economic fabric. The international community must redouble its efforts to exert effective pressure on the actors involved, impose restrictions on arms sales and promote an inclusive transition with the meaningful involvement of civil society. Barring a drastic change in the current dynamics, such as the military collapse of one side or the other or a concerted, large-scale diplomatic intervention, Sudan risks entering a protracted spiral of violence similar to what Somalia suffered for decades. Time is running out. Sudan not only needs peace: it needs justice, reconstruction and a viable future for the millions of people currently living between hunger, war and exile.

5.2. Rising political and military tensions between China and Taiwan

Political and military tensions between China and Taiwan increased significantly in 2024 and the first half of 2025, as did the confrontation between China and the US over the latter's stance towards Taiwan. China's pressure on Taiwan grew dramatically after William Lai Ching-te won the Taiwanese presidential election in January 2024. Some analysts argue that China's military activity around Taiwan and in the Taiwan Strait has steadily increased since 2020, particularly following the visit to Taiwan by then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022, and that tensions between China and Taiwan are at their highest point since 1996, when Beijing fired missiles off the coast of Taiwan, coinciding with Taiwan's first democratic elections after decades of authoritarian rule by the Kuomintang. In response to Beijing's increased activity, Lai Ching-te's new government also increased military spending and announced the development of its defence capabilities, stepped up military exercises, rolled out new national security measures and strengthened its defence ties with the US and other countries. The new US administration of Donald Trump increased the rhetoric against Beijing while explicitly expressing its commitment to the defence of Taiwan. Although on several occasions in 2024, former President Biden had said that his administration was willing to defend Taiwan militarily in the event of an invasion of the island or if Beijing sought to alter the status quo in the region through force, the Trump administration's greater assertiveness in this regard raised suspicions in Beijing about whether such a commitment represented a departure from the policy of "strategic ambiguity" that Washington had followed until then. In 1979, the US terminated its Mutual Defence Treaty with Taiwan, recognising the government of the People's Republic of China as the legitimate representative of China and adhering to the "One China" principle. Since then, successive US administrations have been "strategically ambiguous" (avoiding explicit commitments to Taiwan's military defence) with the goal of deterring both Chinese military aggression against Taiwan and Taipei's declaration of independence.

China's pressure on Taiwan increased dramatically after William Lai Ching-te won the Taiwanese presidential election in January 2024

In 2024, Taipei reported more than 3,000 incursions by Chinese military aircraft near Taiwan, an 80% increase over the previous year and the highest number since such activity began to be documented. Similarly, in April 2025, the head of the US Indo-Pacific Command declared that China's aggressive military actions near Taiwan, which he described as rehearsals and not as simple exercises, increased by 300% in 2024 compared to the previous year. In addition to the substantial rise in the number of Air Defence Identification Zone violations, or median line crossings, in the Taiwan Strait, and the growing routine presence of ships and aircraft around Taiwan, in 2024 China conducted three rounds of a large-scale military exercise, Joint Sword-2024, in Taiwan's contiguous zone, the maritime area below its territorial waters, extending 12 to 24 nautical miles from the coast. In the third round, in December, China deployed around 90 ships between Japan's southern islands and the South China Sea. Several analysts considered it the largest naval operation in the previous three decades. In April 2025, the Chinese government also conducted large-scale live-fire military exercises involving air and naval forces around Taiwan. Called Strait Thunder 2025, these exercises simulated a blockade of the island and the neutralisation of critical Taiwanese infrastructure and targets. Beijing released videos of Taiwanese port cities being hit by rockets and ballistic missiles. In response, Taipei sent aircraft and ships and deployed land-based missile systems. Several analysts said that the exercises were aimed not only at demonstrating China's ability to block or invade Taiwan, but also at showing that it could block or counter potential aid from US allies in the region, such as Japan and the Philippines. The Taiwanese government also blasted an unprecedented rise in submarine cable cutting to disrupt communications in Taiwan and isolate it from information, as well as cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns aimed at fuelling scepticism about the reliability of US assistance to Taiwan, the competence of Lai Ching-te's government and the Taiwanese military's effectiveness.

Alongside its military activity, Beijing also stepped up political pressure on Taiwan. In recent years, senior government officials and Xi Jinping have repeatedly said that the "peaceful reunification" of Taiwan with mainland China is one of their top priorities, but they have repeatedly warned that they would not renounce the use of force if necessary. In February 2025, the Chinese defence minister said that Beijing could not guarantee that it would renounce the use of force in response to activities aimed at achieving Taiwan's independence or foreign interference and added that the seizure of Taiwan would occur sooner or later. Beijing has publicly stated that a declaration of independence by Taiwan would lead to a military invasion of the island, and this is reflected in its domestic legal system. However, some analysts argue that this scenario is highly unlikely, because there is no social majority in Taiwan supportive of such a declaration and because both Taipei and the US are aware of the consequences that doing so would entail. Furthermore, Taipei believes that any declaration of independence is unnecessary because Taiwan already enjoys de facto independence. According to some sources, Beijing is aware of the difficulties of

achieving peaceful reunification, as there is neither a social majority in Taiwan supporting reunification, nor have successive Taiwanese governments shown any political will to address the issue. However, Beijing has placed so much emphasis on reunification that inaction, or failure to achieve reunification, could damage its credibility. Given this scenario, many analysts argue that Beijing's strategy involves pressuring Taiwan for peaceful reunification whilst simultaneously preparing for military intervention. In fact, although Beijing has never mentioned a date for achieving reunification, some sources have placed a possible invasion of the island as early as 2027. Along these lines, in April 2025, US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs John Noh said in the US House of Representatives that Xi Jinping had ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to be ready to invade Taiwan in 2027.

In response to China's increased political pressure, military activities and "grey zone actions" (acts of military intimidation and harassment that fall short of being considered acts of war), the Taiwanese government took various forms of action in 2024 and the first quarter of 2025, such as the reinstatement of compulsory military service (which in 2024 was extended from four months to one year); the holding of its first war drill against China in January 2025 to test Taiwan's ability to withstand an attack or blockade, in a scenario of cooperation between China, Iran, North Korea and Russia; and the establishment of the Whole-of-Society Defense Resilience Committee to strengthen its response in crisis situations. Along the same lines, in March 2025, the Taiwanese president declared China a "hostile foreign force" and announced several measures to counter what he condemned as China's growing infiltration into the Taiwanese government, society and military, such as tightening restrictions on people travelling to China and reinstating military courts for cases such as espionage.

The final factor that raised tensions between China and Taiwan was the growing assertiveness of the US administration and the escalating rhetoric between China and the US over the issue. During the 2024 US election campaign and in the early months of the Trump administration in early 2025, some in Taiwan expressed surprise and concern at the lukewarm and ambiguous way in which Donald Trump spoke about his ties and commitments to Taiwan. Indeed, Trump was quite clear in calling for Taiwan to substantially increase its defence budget. Given these statements, some analysts suggested that Trump could bring about a significant shift in US foreign policy towards Taiwan from that of his predecessors. However, as 2025 progressed, several senior US officials made forceful statements against China and demonstrated their willingness to prevent Beijing from unilaterally and forcibly altering the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. For example, in May 2025, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth warned that a Chinese military attack on Taiwan could be imminent and called on his Indo-Pacific allies to ramp up defence spending to strengthen deterrence against Beijing. Hegseth said that any Chinese attempt to invade Taiwan would have devastating consequences for the Indo-Pacific and the world, warning that the US did not seek conflict with China, but that it would not allow its allies and partners to be subordinated to China either. Hegseth accused China of seeking to become the hegemonic power in Asia, of harassing Taiwan and other countries in the South China Sea and of using its cyber capabilities to attack critical infrastructure in the US. In a similar vein, US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs John Noh told the US House of Representatives that Xi Jinping had ordered the PLA to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027. Noh warned that to counter the growing threat posed by China in the Indo-Pacific region, the US must reestablish deterrence with credible military forces. The head of the US Indo-Pacific Command also warned that China was surpassing the US in air, sea and ballistic capabilities, whilst Australia's defence minister said that China has undertaken the largest military buildup in the world since the end of the Second World War.

Some analysts have also speculated that the Trump administration will drastically increase arms sales to Taiwan, far exceeding sales during its first term (estimated at around $18.3 billion, according to Reuters) and those during Biden's term (around $8.4 billion, according to the same source). Despite not having any formal diplomatic ties (due to the "One China" policy), the US is Taiwan's main arms supplier. Furthermore, the Trump administration is reportedly pressuring Taiwan to increase defence spending to 3% of its GDP. Beijing has expressed strong opposition to both the growth in US arms transfers to Taiwan and the expansion of Taiwan's military budget. China has repeatedly demanded that the US stop interfering in what it considers an internal affair and creating new sources of tension in the region. In fact, in a telephone conversation with Trump, Xi Jinping urged the US to handle the Taiwan issue prudently to prevent "Taiwanese separatist forces" from dragging China and the US into the dangerous terrain of confrontation or even conflict.

Although any military escalation by Beijing against Taiwan seems unlikely in the short term, as well as any scenario of direct confrontation between the US and China over the issue, Beijing has significantly increased political and military pressure on Taiwan in recent years, and particularly since the January 2024 presidential election, repeating that it could use force to achieve the goal of reunification. Taiwan has also announced its intention to clearly increase its defence capabilities, whilst the US has said that it is willing to act decisively to prevent Beijing from unilaterally altering the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

5.3. India and Pakistan on the brink of a full-scale armed conflict

After several years of tense calm in relations between India and Pakistan, an attack in Kashmir carried out on 22 April 2025, by the armed opposition group The Resistance Front brought both countries to the brink of a full-scale armed conflict. Twenty-six men were killed in a shootout in the Kashmiri tourist town of Pahalgam, almost all of them Indian tourists from other parts of India, though the victims also included a Nepalese tourist and a local worker. Considered an offshoot of the armed group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which emerged in 2019 after Jammu and Kashmir was stripped of its statehood, The Resistance Front claimed responsibility for the attack in a Telegram message, although days later it published a statement on its website denying its involvement. The group had previously carried out attacks against non-Kashmiri residents in the state, many of them migrant workers from other parts of India, to protest what it sees as an attempt by Indian authorities to demographically transform Jammu and Kashmir. In recent years, the Indian government has removed various constitutional protections that reserved government jobs and land ownership for the local population, provoking opposition from the Muslim Kashmiri population.

India and Pakistan faced off militarily for several days in 2025 in the largest escalation of the conflict between the nuclear powers in recent decades

In response to the attack on 22 April, the Indian government took several diplomatic measures, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, which governs the shared use of the waters of the Indus River by India and Pakistan, expelling Pakistani diplomats (all defence attachés) and ordering Pakistani visitors with certain visas to leave the country within 48 hours. Pakistan retaliated with reciprocal actions and also closed its airspace to India—a move that the Indian government then mirrored. There were also exchanges of fire along various parts of the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing both countries.

After several days of diplomatic and rhetorical escalation, amid growing international concern over rising tensions between two nuclear powers, India finally decided to respond militarily to the crisis and launched Operation Sindoor on 7 May. The operation targeted nine sites in Pakistan (in the province of Punjab) and in Kashmir, which India described as operational bases for Pakistani terrorist groups. India conducted airstrikes against what it said were headquarters of the armed groups Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Pakistan considered these attacks an act of war and reported that 31 people had been killed, including women and children. Pakistan claimed that it had downed several fighter jets in the Indian state of Punjab and reports of Pakistani drone strikes in several Indian cities spread on social media. India asserted that its military action in response to the Pahalgam attack was fully supported by the United Nations, referring to the Security Council statement on the 22 April attack.[3] Whilst the Indian government said the attacks only targeted "terrorist infrastructure", Pakistan said mosques and other buildings had been hit.

In the days that followed, the conflict escalated considerably with reciprocal attacks and mutual accusations. India carried out more airstrikes against Pakistani military installations in various locations, including the city of Rawalpindi, located 15 km from the capital, Islamabad, and home to the headquarters of the Pakistani Armed Forces and the military airport. The targets included the Nur Khan airbase in the city, located near the headquarters of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division Force, which oversees and protects Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, though the nuclear warheads are spread across the country. India claimed that it was retaliating against Pakistani attacks. On 10 May, the Pakistani government launched Operation Bunyan ul-Marsoos, attacking several Indian military installations, as New Delhi later acknowledged. As a result of the violence during the days of conflict, India reported that 21 civilians and five soldiers had died and Pakistan stated that 40 civilians and 11 soldiers had lost their lives.

The escalating violence and the risk of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal being compromised led to several diplomatic appeals from different governments demanding that the parties agree to a ceasefire, especially Washington. While US Vice President JD Vance had previously ruled out involvement in the crisis, the nuclear risk prompted a change in Washington's diplomatic position. On 10 May, both sides announced a ceasefire, effective immediately. Shortly before the announcement by the Indian and Pakistani governments, US President Donald Trump had reported on the ceasefire agreement on his social media platform, Truth Social, though neither India nor Pakistan made any reference to the US administration when publicly proclaiming the agreement. The US State Department's official announcement indicated that it was a US-facilitated ceasefire. Since the beginning of the conflict, several governments, including those of the US, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Türkiye, had held talks with Indian and Pakistani representatives to try to de-escalate the tension.

3 International Crisis Group, *Pulling India and Pakistan Back from the Brink,* Statement, International Crisis Group, May 2025.

The crisis between both countries was the most serious since the armed conflict in 1999 and came after several years of de-escalation of violence. However, the two historical rivals also experienced a serious crisis in 2019 that included episodes of violence. Since then, the Indian government changed its approach to the situation in Kashmir, downgrading its administrative status by removing its statehood and dividing it into two union territories: Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand and Ladakh on the other. Violence in Indian-administered Kashmir had significantly decreased in recent years and the Indian government had publicly declared the conflict virtually over. However, in 2023 and 2024 there were attacks against non-indigenous people that were similar to the one in Pahalgam, though less severe, and many had warned of the risk of such attacks escalating. Compared to the 2019 crisis, the conflict in spring 2025 ran a greater risk of turning into a large-scale, open confrontation. The military response from both sides was greater than on previous occasions and the danger of nuclear weapons and facilities being added to the equation also increased significantly, to the point that it motivated various international actors to play a more significant and assertive role. This was especially true of the United States, which had previously chosen to stay out of the crisis. Historically, India has rejected any internationalisation of its rivalry with Pakistan and this time it publicly stated that the ceasefire agreement had been reached bilaterally. Not only was the nuclear issue at stake, but for the first time both countries used military equipment such as drones in their clashes, leading to a more rapid escalation than on previous occasions. Furthermore, India stuck to its policy of responding to terrorist attacks with high-intensity military counterattacks and indicated that any action by actors operating from Pakistan would be considered an act of war.

Despite the enormous risks and further escalation in the confrontation between India and Pakistan, a ceasefire was finally agreed upon and has held up, even though both sides have accused each other of violating it. Communication channels between military authorities and security advisors from both countries have remained open, though it has not been publicly reported that the dialogue has progressed beyond issues related to the ceasefire. Whilst there is an opportunity for broader talks that could enable de-escalation and the establishment of confidence-building measures, as occurred previously in the history of the relationship between both countries, this does not appear to have happened thus far. The role of international actors in pushing for expansion of the dialogue would be fundamental, especially at a time when the internationalisation of the conflict has made it possible to avoid an open confrontation of greater intensity and unpredictable consequences for the region. The rebalancing of alliances in the region amid the geopolitical struggle between the US and China has also produced a new scenario. This comes on top of years of high-intensity tension between China and India over border disputes and China's rapprochement with Pakistan (some of the weapons Pakistan used to retaliate to Indian attacks were Chinese), making the crisis between India and Pakistan even more complex.

Thus, whilst the opportunity to transform the conflict through dialogue remains open, India and Pakistan have crossed red lines in their historical rivalry, placing their relationship and the prospects for responding to future crises at greater risk of escalation than ever before. The risks are clear and the international community should strengthen all diplomatic channels available to avoid further crises with unpredictable consequences in a highly militarised situation that includes the threat of nuclear weapons.

5.4. Militaristic escalation in the European Union

The EU and its member states have approved a massive rearmament plan, ReArm Europe, which intensifies the global arms race, creates risks of escalating tensions in Europe and of impacting human and environmental security and diverts away the efforts, resources and leadership required to promote negotiated resolutions to socio-political crises and ongoing conflicts and to restore and strengthen multilateral arms control and disarmament frameworks.

The EU's militaristic escalation has accelerated in the early months of 2025, although it was preceded by years of militarisation in the EU and its member states. According to data from the SIPRI, total military spending in Europe reached $693 billion in 2024, an 83% increase compared to 2015 and above the levels reported at the end of the Cold War. Between 2015-2019 and 2020-2025, European NATO countries boosted their arms imports by 105%.[4] Though far behind military spending at the country level, the EU's security and defence budget has also increased, with new instruments and programmes since 2017, including the Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PRDA) (2017-2019), with a budget of €90 million; the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) (2019-2020), with €500 million; the European Defence Fund (EDF), with €8 billion, as part of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2017-2027; the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP), established in 2023, with €500 million; the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Joint Procurement (EDIRPA), also created in 2023, with €310 million; and the European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP), with at least €1.5 billion for 2025-2027, which is intended to implement the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) adopted in 2024.[5] Added to all this are other instruments in the EU budget related to "internal security" and border control, as well as outside the EU budget through the European Peace Facility (EPF).[6]

The EU's militaristic escalation has accelerated in the first few months of 2025, though it comes after years of militarisation in the EU and its member states

The rearmament drive intensified in the first few months of 2025. On 4 March 2025, the president of the European Commission presented the "ReArm Europe" plan,[7] with various proposals for measures to massively boost defence spending, the economic cost of which would be borne primarily by the member states. The plan was endorsed by the European Council on 6 March (EUCO conclusions 6/25). In turn, the European Commission presented the White Paper on Defence in March. According to ENAAT's analysis, the White Paper incorporates the measures of the ReArm Europe plan, expands on them and aligns them with other current military industry measures in Europe. According to ENAAT, what is new is the magnitude or large scale of the new steps compared to the path of militarisation already followed by the EU.[8] Following the ReArm Europe plan and the White Paper, the European Commission has taken new steps to promote the implementation of the ReArm Europe Plan.[9]

Both **consist of measures for massive rearmament in Europe that seeks to spend €800 billion over four years**, in addition to the high previous expenditure. The EU has identified seven areas of defence capabilities to strengthen: air and missile defence; artillery systems, including missile systems capable of deep precision and long-range attacks; ammunition and missiles; drones and counter-drone systems; military mobility (a network of land corridors, airports, seaports and support elements and services that facilitate the rapid transfer of troops and military equipment across European and partner countries); cyber and electronic warfare and military artificial intelligence and quantum computing for defence; and strategic enablers and protection of infrastructure considered critical (including airlift, air-to-air refuelling aircraft, intelligence and surveillance, maritime awareness and others).[10] The EU also stresses "border protection" (land, sea and air). In addition to enhancing member state capabilities, the White Paper lays out priorities and measures aimed at increasing

4 George, Mathew et al., *Trends in military arms transfers*, 2024. SIPRI Factsheet, March 2025.
5 Sédou, Laëtitia, "ReArm Europe, or the myth of a European defence for peace", *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels Office,* 15 April 2025; Brunet, Pere et al. *Peace and Disarmament in Europe. For shared détente, peace and security*, Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau, Report No. 65, September 2024; Arteaga, Félix, *Europa en guerra y la defensa europea: ¿Cómo siempre?, Real Instituto Elcano*, ARI 117/2024, 9 September 2024, p.3.
6 Jones, Chris, Jane Kilpatrick and Yasha Maccanico, *At what cost? Funding the EU's security, defence, and border policies, 2021–2027. A guide for civil society on how EU budgets work*, Transnational Institute and Statewatch, April 2022.7
7 The "ReArm Europe" plan was later renamed "Readiness 2030" at the urging of the Spanish government, but without changing its purpose to promote large-scale rearmament.
8 Sédou, Laëtitia, "ReArm Europe, or the myth of a European defence for peace", *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels Office,* 15 April de 2025.
9 European Commission, "EU budget set for defence-related boost under new regulation", 22 April 2025; ENAAT," News from the Brussels' Bubble", NBB #2025-2, 30 April 2025.
10 European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030*. JOIN(2025) 120 final, 19 March 2025, pp. 6-10.

military support for Ukraine, which it defines as a "porcupine strategy" (military assistance in the war and as a deterrent against future attacks) and which it also considers a way to boost Europe's competitiveness in the defence sector.[11]

The EU Commission and EU governments have not articulated detailed arguments and justifications for this new rearmament race. They state that the objective is "to strengthen the security of the European Union and the protection of our citizens" and argue that "Europe must be more sovereign and more responsible for its own defence".[12] The White Paper on Defence highlights a proliferation of threats to European security that threaten "our way of life", including challenges arising from wars, migration and climate change in neighbouring regions; terrorism and violent extremism; organised crime; systemic competition between actors and geopolitical rivalry in different parts of the world; Russia, understood as a "fundamental threat" to European security; hybrid threats; a global technological race; and risks to the supply of critical raw materials. According to the White Paper, the EU must spend massively on defence to develop military capabilities that deter armed aggression. Meanwhile, various EU documents and speeches also stress that the massive support plan for military defence aims to boost European industrial and technological competitiveness.

With its rearmament plan, the EU and its governments are neglecting non-military avenues for addressing conflicts and building security

The ReArm Europe plan seems to consider militarism as the only or primary viable path forward and turns the theory of military deterrence into dogma, in contrast to the possible range of non-military strategies and courses of action that have been underutilised by the EU and its member states to deal with armed conflicts and socio-political crises (current ones and less intense ones previously). These include the strengthening of the EU's external action and the diplomatic services of member states with resource allocations on par with those proposed for military action; greater efforts in political dialogue and mediation; support for other mediating and facilitating actors; large-scale promotion of capabilities to support dialogue and integrate conflict sensitivity into external and internal policies; programmes dedicated to research and action on non-violent conflict prevention and transformation capacities; support for civil society engaged in non-violent action in Europe and third countries; programmes and instruments to address the links between militarism, violence and hegemonic masculinities; the strengthening of public systems, public goods and social cohesion (both inside and outside the EU); and the strengthening of regional and global arms control and disarmament frameworks and instruments.

In the past and before the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU and its member states neglected options to explore responses to the specific threat posed by Russia, such as by strengthening continental dialogue in the political and security spheres. Marked by Russia's imperialist dynamics and confrontation with Euro-Atlantic institutions, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had devastating and long-lasting consequences for the Ukrainian population and has given rise to real dilemmas among broad swathes of the population regarding the need to provide military support to Ukraine to resist the invasion. Given Russia's invasion, occupation and hypermilitarism, further efforts are needed to shift the confrontation towards military de-escalation, both in relation to the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions between Russia and the EU/NATO. The combination of the "porcupine strategy" (massive support for Ukraine's long-term military capabilities) and massive EU rearmament as a means of military deterrence against Russia could exacerbate tension and militarisation on the continent and worsen security risks and hotspots of conflict rather than help them to dissipate. **In cooperation with actors outside the Western geopolitical arena, the EU and its member states could leverage greater political and diplomatic action to foster a negotiated solution to the Russia-Ukraine war, even if it proves difficult and costly**. The EU could explore dialogue aimed at de-escalation and confidence- and security-building measures regarding tensions between Russia and the EU/NATO.

Furthermore, even if the ReArm Europe plan focuses on supporting Ukraine and Europe's military capabilities, it could lead to an increase of European military industry arms exports to third countries based on military industry companies' pursuit of profits and economies of scale, including exports to countries with human rights violations, socio-political crises and conflicts and gender-based violence. Militarisation and armament act as fuel for and enable crises and armed conflicts, with serious impacts on civilians in armed conflict zones, including the risks of exposure to sexual violence.

The EU and its member states' rearmament strategy will also exacerbate the climate crisis, which the EU paradoxically perceives as a threat to its security. Studies have indicated that the world's militaries are "the largest consumers of fossil fuels on the planet and also the largest emitters of greenhouse gases that cause the climate crisis, with 5.5% of total global emissions". The plan also takes a reductionist approach to the goal of industrial growth and competitiveness, proactively and massively promoting the military industry, whose arms exports aggravate socio-political crises and conflicts and their impacts on affected populations. This comes at the expense of supporting non-military industries that meet people's basic needs and a necessary eco-social transition to deal with the climate emergency.

11 Ibid., p .10.
12 European Council, *Special meeting of the European Council (6 March 2025) – Conclusions*, EUCO 6/25, 6 March 2025.

Critical analyses have highlighted the arms industry's influence on the EU's path to militarisation. Through extensive lobbying, the military industry has forged close ties with European institutions and decision-makers and has influenced EU decisions made over the years, including those related to earmarking specific funds for the sector, the increased flexibility of civilian programmes and their opening to the entry of the military industry and the creation of architecture and forums for ongoing dialogue with the military industry.[13] **The facilitation of the arms lobby contrasts with the lack of transparency regarding EU funds for the security and defence industry[14] and the lack of broad political and social debate on EU rearmament proposals and possible alternatives**.

The ReArm Europe plan aims to ensure that the bulk of massive military defence spending comes from state public budgets. To this end, the EU proposes that states request the activation of the general safeguard clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (known as the "general escape clause"). The EU will allow states that request activation of that clause to spend above the 3% deficit threshold and increase their military defence spending by 1.5% of GDP annually, without penalty, for a period of four years. In doing so, states are encouraged to spend on military defence at the expense of public debt that the states and their citizens will have to repay, to the detriment of other non-military (and more economical) ways to address the challenges identified by the EU to justify its ReArm Europe plan. Outside the EU, the United Kingdom has already announced plans to cut social spending and development cooperation to increase its defence spending. Even if member states such as Spain have stated that there will be no rollbacks in social spending, additional defence expenditure funded by new revenue streams (and not from cuts or fiscal deficits) still involves a political decision to prioritise military spending over other critical needs. These could include public housing, education, healthcare, transport, caregiving services, the eco-social transition amid the climate emergency, gender-based violence prevention and response, tax fraud enforcement, anti-corruption efforts or other areas that would strengthen populations and countries across Europe facing internal and external challenges.

The EU is also promoting a new instrument called Security Action for Europe (SAFE), whose legislative proposal was also presented in March 2025. Through this instrument, the EU will raise €150 billion in capital markets and provide loans with simplified processes, pre-financing and VAT-free payments to states upon request to provide "urgent and substantial public investment" in the European defence industry, with joint procurement**. A third main pillar of the ReArm Europe plan consists of possibilities and incentives for member states to use funds from EU Cohesion Policy programmes to boost national defence spending**. The Cohesion Policy encompasses various funds to promote economic growth and social and territorial cohesion and reduce disparities between countries and regions. It includes instruments such as the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund and others. Diverting these funds, or part of them, to cover defence spending means militarising the EU's Cohesion Policy and depriving it of resources. This is especially serious given the climate emergency and the need for a just eco-social transition, as well as specific challenges facing both rural and urban areas.

The plan also includes deregulatory measures to facilitate the military industry's access to public and private funding and promote military production and military mobility, according to ENAAT, which also warns that this will affect environmental and social regulations.[15] Among other actions, the European Investment Bank has lifted restrictions on financing for military activities, with the exception of lethal weapons.

The shift towards greater militarisation and rearmament in the EU and its member states is also influenced by the position taken by the NATO military alliance and the uncertainty surrounding trans-Atlantic relations under the new administration of US President Donald Trump. Whilst the alliance agreed to a target of 2% of member states' GDP for defence spending at the 2014 NATO summit (the year of Russia's military annexation of Crimea), NATO, the US and EU actors are now pushing to agree on higher spending thresholds of between 3% and 5% at the 2025 summit. As with the ReArm Europe plan, prioritising rearmament and militarisation, whether at 3%, 3.5% or 5%, whilst neglecting non-military approaches to building security in Europe and worldwide, will only exacerbate trends towards conflict and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations. In response, civil society actors have sprung into action to condemn the rearmament promoted by the EU and NATO and advocate other ways to build security.

Instead of mimicking global dynamics of militarisation and confrontation, the EU and its member states could promote other forms of international relations through multilateralism and military de-escalation. Given the militarist paths currently taken by EU states, efforts are required at multiple levels, including national parliaments, political parties, sub-state governments, universities, trade unions and peace, feminist, anti-racist and environmental movements, among others, to articulate alliances and alternative proposals to promote multidimensional security.

13 Akkerman, Mark and Chloé Maulewaeter, *From war lobby to war economy How the arms industry shapes European policies*, ENAAT, September 2023.
14 Brunet, Pere, *The European Defence Fund: the Opaque Use of Public Fund*, Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau and ENAAT, Report No. 70, December 2024.
15 Sédou, Laëtitia, "ReArm Europe, or the myth of a European defence for peace", *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels Office,* 15 April 2025.

Glossary

11S: September 11th
3R: Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation
AA: Arakan Army
AAPP: Association for Assistance to Political Prisoners
ABSDF: All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABM: Ansar Beit al-Maqdis
ACLED: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACSS: Africa Center for Strategic Studies
ACT: Ambazonia Coalition Team
ADF: Allied Democratic Forces
ADF: Ambazonia Defence Forces
ADF-NALU: Allied Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
AFF: Afghanistan Freedom Front
AFL: Afghanistan Liberation Movement
AGC: Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (Gaitanistas Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)
AGovC: Ambazonia Governing Council
AKP: Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ALAF: Libyan Arab Armed Forces
ALBA: Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)
ALDEA: Asociación Latinoamericana para el Desarrollo Alternativo (Latin American Association for Alternative Development)
ALP: Arakan Liberation Party
AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia
ANRHI: Arab Network for Human Rights Information
APCLS: Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo)
AQIM: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQPA: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ARS: Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASWJ: Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a
ATMIS: African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AU: African Union
AUBP: African Union Border Program
BDB: Benghazi Defense Brigades
BH: Boko Haram
BIFF: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BINUH: United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
BLA: Baloch Liberation Army
BLF: Baloch Liberation Front
BLT: Baloch Liberation Tigers
BRA: Balochistan Republican Army
BRN: Barisan Revolusi Nasional
BRP: Baloch Republican Party
CAR: Central African Republic
CCMSR: Conseil de Commandement Militaire pour le Salut de la République (Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic)
CENCO: Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Congo (Congolese Episcopal Conference)
CERAC: Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (Conflict Analysis Resource Center)
CHD: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
CIDE: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (Economic Research and Teaching Center)
CJNC: Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (Jalisco New Generation Cartel)
CJTF: Civilian Joint Task Force
CMA: Coordination of Movements of Azawad
CMC: Coalition of Movements for Change
CMDPH: Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights
CMPFPR: Coordinating Committee of Patriotic Resistance Movements
CNDD-FDD: Congrès National pour la Défense de la Démocratie - Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Congress for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy)
CNDP: Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (National Congress for the Defense of the People)
CNF: Chin National Front
CNL: Congrès National pour la Liberté (National Congress for Freedom)
CNRD-Ubwiyunge: Conseil National pour le Renouveau et la Démocratie (National Council for Renewal and Democracy)
CODECO: Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (Cooperative for the development of Congo)
CODNI: Comité Organizador para el Diálogo Nacional Inclusivo (Organizing Committee for the National Inclusive Dialogue)
CONAIE: Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)
COP 27: 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022
CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPC: Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (Coalition of Patriots for Change)
CPCR: Cade permanent de concertation et de réflexion (Permanent framework for consultation and reflection)
CPI-M: Communist Party of India-Maoist
CSFA: Supreme Council of the Fuerzas Armadas
DAG: Dyck Advisory Group
DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFLP: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DGCIM: Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar (General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence)
DKBA: Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DMLEK: Democratic Movement for the Liberation of the Eritrean Kunama
DNIS: Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue)
DPA: Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC: East African Community
ECCAS: Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS: Economic Community Of West African States

EDA: Eritrean Democratic Alliance
EFDM: Eritrean Federal Democratic Movement
EHRC: Ethiopian Human Rights Comission
EIC: Eritrean Islamic Congress
EIPJD: Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development
ELF: Eritrean Liberation Front
ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
ENSF: Eritrean National Salvation Front
EPC: Eritrean People's Congress
EPDF: Eritrean People's Democratic Front
EPL: Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army)
EPR: Ejército Popular Revolucionario (People's Revolutionary Army)
EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERPI: Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente (Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People)
ESN: Eastern Safety Net
ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)
ETIM: East Turkestan Islamic Movement
ETLO: East Turkestan Liberation Organization
EU: European Union
EUCAP NESTOR: European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity-Building in the Horn of Africa
EUCAP SAHEL Mali: European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali
EUCAP SAHEL Niger: European Union Capacity Building Mission in Niger
EUFOR: European Union Force
EULEX: European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUNAVFOR Somalia: European Union Naval Force in Somalia - Operation Atalanta
EUTM Mali: European Union Training Mission in Mali
EUTM Somalia: European Union Training Mission in Somalia
EUTM Mozambique: European Union Training Mission in Mozambique
EZLN: Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army)
FACT: Front for Change and Harmony in Chad
FADM: Mozambique Armed Forces
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAR-LP: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Liberación del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces for the Liberation of the People)
FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FARC-EP: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army)
FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FDLR: Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
FFC: Forces for Freedom and Change
FFC-CC: Forces for Freedom and Change-Central Command
FIS: Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLEC-FAC: Frente de Liberação do Enclave de Cabinda (Cabinda Enclave's Liberation Front)
FLM: Front de Libération du Macina (Macina Liberation Front)
FNL: Forces Nationales de Libération (National Liberation Forces)
FPB: Forces Populaires du Burundi (Popular Forces of Burundi)
FPR: Front Populaire pour le Redressement (Popular Front for Recovery)
FPRC: Front Patriotique pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic)
FRELIMO: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique)
FSA: Free Syrian Army
FRUD-armé: United Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy-Armed
G20: Group of Twenty
G5 SAHEL: Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel
G7: Group of Seven
GATIA: Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Alliés (Imghad Tuareg Self-Defense Group and Allies)
GBAO: Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
GDI: Gender Inequality Index
GERD: Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GFT: Transitional Federal Government
GNA: Government of National Accord
GSIM: Groupe de Soutien à l'Islam et aux Musulmans (Support Group for Islam and Muslims)
GSPC: Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat)
HCUA: High Council for Unity of Azawad
HDI: Human Development Index
HIMARS: High Mobility Artillery Rocket System
HRMMU: United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine
HRW: Human Rights Watch
HTS: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
IBC: Iraq Body Count
ICC: International Criminal Court
ICG: International Crisis Group
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU: Islamic Courts Union
ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IFLO: Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia
IG SAKO: Interim Government - Sako
IG SISIKU: Interim Government - Sisiku
IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IISS: International Institute for Strategic Studies
ILGA: International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
IOM: International Organization for Migration
IMN: Islamic Movement of Nigeria
IMF: International Monetary Fund
INEC: Independent National Electoral Commission

IPAC: Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict
IPI: International Press Institute
IPOB: Indigenous People of Biafra
IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISCAP: Islamic State Central African Province
ISGS: Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIS: Islamic State
ISIS-KP: Islamic State of Khorasan Province
ISMP: Islamic State of Mozambique Province
ISWAP: Islamic State in the West African Province
IWF: Iduwini Volunteers Force
JAS: Jama´atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda´Awati Wal Jihad
JAS-Abubakar Shekau: Jama´atu Ahlus-Sunna facción Abubakar Shekau
JCPOA: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JEM: Justice and Equality Movement
JKLF: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
JMB: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (Mujahideen Assembly)
JNIM: Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Support Group for Islam and Muslims)
KANU: Kenya African National Union
KCP: Kangleipak Communist Party
KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDPI: Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran
KFOR: Kosovo Force
KIA: Kachin Independence Army
KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army
KNA: Kuki Liberation Army
KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defence Force
KNF: Kuki National Front
KNPP: Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU: Kayin National Union
KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army
KPLT: Karbi People's Liberation Tigers
KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government
KYKL: Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (Organization to Save the Revolutionary Movement in Manipur)
LeJ: Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Army of Jhangvi)
LeT: Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Good)
LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer +
LNA: Libyan National Army
LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M-19: Movimiento 19 de Abril (April 19 Movement)
M23: March 23 Movement
MAA: Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (Arab Movement of Azawad)
MARA Patani: Majlis Amanah Rakyat Patani
MASSOB: Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
MDM: Democratic Movement of Mozambique
MEND: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MFDC: Mouvement de las Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance)
MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MINUJUSTH: United Nations Mission to Support Justice in Haiti
MINUSCA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH: United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MIT: Mujahidin Indonesia Timur
MLC: Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo)
MLCJ: Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice)
MLF: Macina Liberation Front
MLRS: Multiple Launch Rocket System
MNDAA: Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
MNJTF: Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA: Mouvement National pour la Libération de L'Azawad (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad)
MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front
MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MOSOP: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MPC: Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique (Patriotic Movement for Central Africa)
MPSR: Mouvement Patriotique pour la Sauvegarde et la Restauration (Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration)
MRC: Mombasa Republican Council
MS13: Mara Salvatrucha
MSF: Doctors Without Borders
MUYAO: United Movement for Jihad in West Africa
NAS: National Salvation Front
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCP: National Congress Party
NDA: Niger Delta Avengers
NDAA: National Democratic Alliance Army
NDC-R: Nduma Defense of Congo-Renovated
NDF: National Democratic Front
NDFB: National Democratic Front of Boroland
NDFB (IKS): National Democratic Front of Boroland (IK Songbijit)
NDGJM: Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate
NDM-PF: National Democratic Movement-Patriotic Front
NDPVF: Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDV: Niger Delta Vigilante (Niger Delta Patrol)
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NGO WGWPS: NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
NLAW: Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon
NLL: Northern Limit Line
NMSP: New Mon State Party
NNC: Naga National Council NPA: New People's Army
NPA: New People's Army
NRF: National Resistance Front
NSCN (K-K): National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Kole-Kitovi)

NSCN-IM: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muivah
NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang
NSCN-R: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation
NSLA: National Santhal Liberation Army
NSF: Nigerian Security Forces
NSSSOG: Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups
NST: Nigeria Security Tracker
NTF-ELCAC: National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict
OAS: Organization of American States
OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDM: Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement
OIC: Organization for Islamic Cooperation
OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPC: Oromo People's Congress
OPM: Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Organization of Free Papua)
OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OTSC: Collective Security Work Organization
OVCS: Observatorio Venezolano de Conflictividad Social (Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict)
OVV: Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia (Venezuelan Violence Observatory)
OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PA: Palestinian Authority
PANDEF: Pan Niger Delta Forum
PCF: Communist Party of the Philippines
PDF: Popular Defence Forces
PDKI: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
PIJ: Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PJAK: Party of Free Life of Kurdistan
PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan **(**Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PLA: People's Liberation Army
POLISARIO Front: Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PNLO: Pa-O National Liberation Organisation
PP: Prosperity Party
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
PREPAK (Pro): People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak – Progressive
PROVEA: Venezuelan Program Education Action on Human Rights
PS: Province of Sinai
PULO: Patani United Liberation Organisation
PYD : Democratic Union Party of Kurds in Syria
R-ARCC: Revitalized Agreement on Conflict Resolution in South Sudan
RCSS: Restoration Council of Shan State
RED-Tabara: Résistance pour un État de Droit au Burundi (Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi)
RENAMO: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
REWL: Red Egbesu Water Lions
RFI: Radio France International
RNLF: Rabha National Liberation Front
RPD Corea: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front
RPF: Revolutionary People's Front
RSADO: Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization
RSF: Rapid Support Forces
RUD-Urunana: Ralliement pour l'unité et la démocratie (RUD)-Urunana (Rally for Unity and Democracy (RUD)-Urunana)
SADC: Southern Africa Development Community
SADR: Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SAMIM: Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique
SCACUF: Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front
SCDF: Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces
SCF: Shiite Coordination Framework
SEBIN: Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional (Bolivarian National Intelligence Service)
SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index
SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLA: Sudan Liberation Army
SLA-AW: Sudan Liberation Army - Abdul Wahid
SLA-MM: Sudan Liberation Army- Minni Minnawi
SLDF: Sabaot Land Defence Forces
SNNRPS: Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State
SOCADEF: Southern Cameroons Defence Forces
SOHR: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition
SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-FD: Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Freed Detainees
SPLM-N: Sudan People's Liberation Army-North
SRF: Sudan Revolutionary Forces
SSA: Shan State Army
SSA-N: Shan State Army – North
SSC: Sool, Saanag and Cayn
SSDM/A: South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army
SSLA: South Sudan Liberation Army
SSOMA: South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance
SSPDF: South Sudan Armed Forces
SSPP: Shan State Progress Party
SSPP/SSA: Shan State Progress Party/ Shan State Army
SSUF: South Sudan United Front
STC: Southern Transitional Council
TAK: Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons)
TEDH: European Court of Human Rights
TNLA: Ta-ang National Liberation Army
TFG: Transitional Federal Government
TPLF: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
TRF: The Resistence Front

TTP: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
UAE: United Arab Emirates
UDA: United Democratic Alliance
UDRM/A: United Democratic Revolutionary Movement/ Army
UFDD: Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development)
UFR: Unión de Fuerzas de Resistencia (Union of Resistance Forces)
ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam
ULFA-I: United Liberation Front of Assam - Independent
UMP: Unidades de Movilización Popular (Popular Mobilization Units)
UN: United Nations
UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMI: United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNAMID: United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA: United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei
UNITAMS: United Nations Integrated Mission for Transition Assistance in Sudan
UNJHRO: United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (DRCongo)
UNLF: United National Liberation Front
UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL: United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOWAS: United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSMIL: United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UPC: Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (Union for Peace in Central Africa)
UPDF: Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPLA: United People's Liberation Army
USA: United States of America
USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWSA: United Wa State Army
VRAE: Valle de los Ríos Apurímac y Ene (Valley between Rivers Apurimac and Ene)
WB: World Bank
WFP: World Food Programme of the United Nations
WILPF: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WTO: World Trade Organization
YPG: People's Protection Unit
YPJ: Women's Protection Units
ZUF: Zeliangrong United Front

Escola de Cultura de Pau

The Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace, hereinafter ECP) is an academic peace research institution located at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The School for a Culture of Peace was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, Track II diplomacy, training and awareness generating activities.

The main fields of action of the Escola de Cultura de Pau are:

- Research. Its main areas of research include armed conflicts and socio-political crises, peace processes, the gender dimension in conflict and peacebuilding, and peace education.
- Teaching and training. ECP staff gives lectures in postgraduate and graduate courses in several universities, including its own Graduate Diploma on Culture of Peace at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It also provides training sessions on specific issues, including conflict sensitivity and peace education.
- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II initiatives, including facilitation tasks with different actors and on various themes.
- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.

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Alert 2025! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding is a yearbook providing an analysis of the state of the world in terms of conflict and peacebuilding from three perspectives: armed conflicts, socio-political crises and gender, peace and security. The analysis of the most important events in 2024 and of the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main armed conflicts and socio-political crises that currently exist in the world makes it possible to provide a comparative regional overview and to identify global trends, as well as risk and early warning elements for the future. Similarly, the report also identifies opportunities for peacebuilding and for reducing, preventing and resolving conflicts. In both cases, one of the main aims of this report is to place data, analyses and the identified warning signs and opportunities for peace in the hands of those actors responsible for making policy decisions or those who participate in peacefully resolving conflicts or in raising political, media and academic awareness of the many situations of political and social violence taking place around the world.

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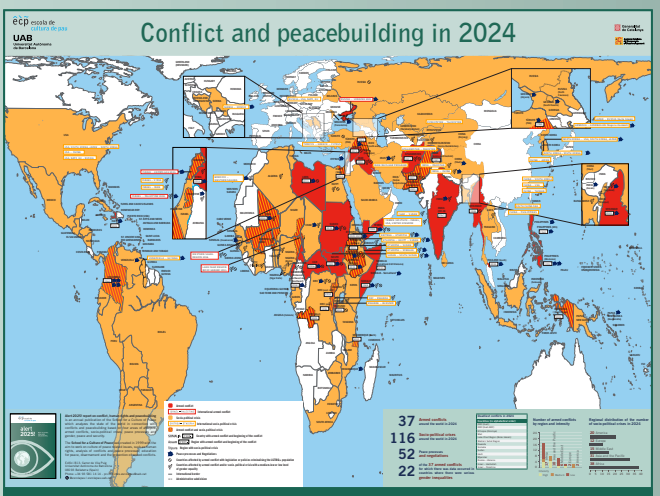

Foldable map on conflict and peacebuilding attached inside

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In these particularly turbulent times, marked by the erosion of multilateralism and the escalation of armed conflicts, the *Alert!* report serves as an indispensable and well-established tool. Since 2001, this yearbook has provided a rigorous and committed analysis of global conflict, taking an approach that identifies both risks and opportunities for peacebuilding. This year, as we commemorate the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security against a backdrop of conflicts that have exposed sexual and reproductive violence, as well as other forms of gender-based violence against civilians, the *Alert!* report makes a valuable contribution. In an era of uncertainty and competing visions about the future direction of the international order, it urges critical reflection on the persistent challenges to achieving a truly inclusive peace that places gender justice at its core.

Patsilí Toledo Vásquez
Member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Taking a critical view of armed conflicts with a historical perspective is essential for identifying real risks and opportunities to advance towards peace with human security. Using a precise classification system, Escola de Cultura de Pau's research team meticulously studies armed conflict to provide a holistic overview of armed conflicts and socio-political crises around the world. At both regional and state levels, they analyse their root causes and structural drivers, their trends and levels of intensity, as well as their impact from a gender perspective. Once again this year, the *Alert!* yearbook continues to be a benchmark for understanding conflict and contributing to the prospects for peacebuilding in the world today.

Enric Gonyalons
Senior Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean of DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

In a geopolitical context as complex as the one we witness today, it is difficult to adequately assess the peacebuilding work carried out by hundreds of institutions and organisations around the world. We need ways to accurately describe the state of armed conflicts and current socio-political crises, explain the progress of the peace negotiations taking place and identify the opportunities for peace that emerge, like beacons of hope pointing the way. For 24 years, this is what the *Alert!* report has provided as a tool for analysis that relates conflicts to human rights and peacebuilding

Xavier Masllorens
President of the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP)