êcp̃ escola de
cultura de pau

alert
2015!

Report on conflicts,
human rights
and peacebuilding

Icaria ❧ editorial

Alert 2015! Report on conflicts,
human rights and peacebuilding

Alert 2015!

Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding

Authors

Vicenç Fisas Armengol
Josep Maria Royo Aspa
Jordi Urgell García
Pamela Urrutia Arestizábal
Ana Villellas Ariño
María Villellas Ariño

escola de
cultura de pau

Index

List of tables, boxes, graphs, figures and maps

Foreword

Camilla Schippa
Director of Institute for Economics and Peace

2014 was not a good year for peace. Both the scope and scale of violence —or at least, the constant drumbeat of media reporting on violence and conflict— seemed to dwarf recent years by a considerable margin. In Eastern Europe, civil unrest in Ukraine exploded into riots, violence, military intervention from Russia, and the eventual annexation of Crimea. In Iraq and Syria, ISIS attracted widespread attention and condemnation for its atrocities, leading eventually to NATO airstrikes against ISIS positions throughout Syria. Similarly, in Nigeria the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls by the terrorist organisation Boko Haram drew shock, revulsion, and condemnation from across the globe. The year ended with the tragic news of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan terrorist attack on a school in the city of Peshawar that claimed 145 lives, including 132 schoolchildren, and is considered to be the deadliest terrorist attack ever to occur in Pakistan. For many observers, 2014 was the culmination of years of civil unrest and global uncertainty, the dawn of 'The New World Disorder' in which long smouldering civil conflicts reignite into civil wars, and once friendly states vie for status and position.

There is, however, a counter-narrative, one which looks to the long term rather than short terms trends, to the last century or even millennia rather than the last decade, and to the record books rather than the opinion pages. Typified by the academic Steven Pinker in his recent book *The Better Angels of our Nature,* this approach suggests that the world has never been more peaceful, and that all the long term trends suggest that protracted war, conflict, violent crime and societal disorder have been decreasing and will, perhaps, continue to decrease into the future. Despite the headlines and recent chaos, our era is relatively peaceful, and the prospects for future increases in peace are rosy.

Which trend tells the truth about our world? Which approach gives us the best, the fullest, and the brightest picture of the world as it is, not the world as we merely want it (or perhaps, fear it) to be? With increasing interconnectivity and information sources, do we simply hear more about violence? There can be no doubt that there were more than a handful of very high profile violent incidents in 2014, but on the other hand, the best and most reliable indicators of direct violence (homicides and battle deaths in particular) do seem to be trending sharply downwards over the last hundred years. Conversely, the focus placed on violent events is often disproportionate to their global importance, however, long term trends can also mask the potential for future violence, whilst ignoring the broader, systematic picture of rising tension and conflict. To get a fuller understanding of violence and conflict, it is necessary to draw together multiple approaches: qualitative and quantitative, short term and long term, negative peace and positive peace.

Trends in peacefulness

Have the past few years seen a troubling decrease in peacefulness? According to the Global Peace Index (GPI), published annually beginning in 2007 by the Institute for Economics and Peace, the world has in fact become less peaceful each year since 2008. The GPI is a measure of negative peace, that is, it measures the absence of violence and the absence of the fear of violence. This allows the index to capture multiple types of violence, rather than just focusing on homicide, battle deaths, and the total number of wars, and combine them into a single metric that allows for a broader and fuller understanding of peacefulness.

Decreasing levels of global peacefulness are not just the result of one off spikes in violence like the conflict in Syria, Ukraine, or Iraq, or the violence related to the drug war in Mexico. Whilst these events did significantly reduce peacefulness in those countries, the decline in peacefulness over the last eight years has occurred across a majority of both countries in the world and across indicators in the GPI. This means that there has been an increase in various types of violence across a wide range of nations. The greatest increases since 2008 have been primarily levels of internal instability and violence, including homicides, terrorist activity, the likelihood of violent demonstrations, and perceptions of societal safety. Whilst levels of violence have been trending downwards for over half a century, the sustained, year on year decreases in peacefulness over the last decade suggest at least a temporary pause, or even partial reversal of this trend, particularly given the increasing number of resources devoted to peacebuilding, and the more developed systems of international cooperation which aim to prevent the outbreak of conflict.

To get a fuller understanding of violence and conflict, it is necessary to draw together multiple approaches: qualitative and quantitative, short term and long term, negative peace and positive peace

The post 2015 development agenda

Why does this recent decrease in peacefulness matter? Aside from the intrinsic desirability of peace, there is a growing recognition from governments, leading international organisations, and NGOs, that reducing violence and promoting peace is crucial to the development process. With the international system preparing to adopt a development framework to succeed the UN Millennium Development Goals, increasing focus has been placed on the stagnating effect that violent conflict has had on development. As noted in the High-Level Panel report on the post-2015 development agenda:

"Freedom from violence, conflict, and oppression is essential to human existence, and the foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not an optional extra."

Data analysis, supplementary research, and information sharing has furthered the understanding of these complex relationships. Thanks to the arduous work of peace researchers across the globe, the inclusion of peace within proposed development frameworks is a reality. In July 2014, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals outlined 17 proposed goals, including Goal 16 which aims to 'achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective and capable institutions'. The proposed set of indicators for goal 16 aim to substantially reduce the violent death rate, reduce the number of people affected by violence, reduce violent crime and corruption, and reduce the international stresses that drive conflict, violence and insecurity, such as inequality, and irresponsible arms trading.

This progress would not be possible without discussion around common and measurable definitions of peace, the pursuit of greater empirical analysis, and the development of accountability frameworks. Peace has been grounded in the development debate in no small part through key analysis such as the World Bank's World Development Report on violence; the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the New Deal, which laid the groundwork for beginning to select indicators of development across fragile states, and our work at the Institute for Economics and Peace to put forth definitions of peace and frameworks for sustainable peacebuilding.

The data revolution

How can such lofty goals be realized? Whilst there has been an increase in the likelihood of violent revolution

There has also been a different type of revolution brewing, a nonviolent revolution which promises to broaden our understanding of violence

and conflict in recent years, there has also been a different type of revolution brewing, a nonviolent revolution which promises to broaden our understanding of violence, help us better understand the development process, and aid in future peacebuilding efforts. This is the much lauded *data revolution,* in which data related to development and well-being is increasingly collected, collated, and analysed. Much of the popular focus on the data revolution has concentrated on the growing importance of *big data*, in which millions of data points are collected continuously from public sensors, crowd sourcing, social media, machine coding of traditional media reports, and so on. Whilst big data does seem to have a role to play (albeit speculative at this stage), the impact of the data revolution on peace and development will be felt at every level, be it long data that allows for the analysis of development trends, or simply traditional small data from government statistical agencies.

The true importance of the data revolution to peace is in the recognition that data is a prerequisite for the proper measurement and understanding of peace and development. Thus, increasing statistical capacity and readiness should be a high priority for both governments and development agencies. Data, in the words of the United Nations report *A World that Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development,* is 'the lifeblood of decision making and the raw material of accountability. Without high-quality data providing the right information at the right time; designing, monitoring, and evaluating effective policies becomes almost impossible'.

The importance of *Alert!*

Whilst data is valuable in and of itself, when it comes to understanding peace, and in particular the relationship between *negative peace* (the absence of violence and the absence of the fear of violence) and *positive peace* (the attitudes, institutions, and structures that sustain peaceful societies) data by itself is not sufficient. Data does not exist in a vacuum, indicators must be chosen and tracked, and different groups of indicators must be assessed and compared. No tool or program that relies solely on data currently exists that can predict the outbreak of future conflict with absolute certainty. There are too many variables and too many unknowns when it comes to our current understanding of peace and conflict. Whilst the broad, long term factors associated with peacefulness can be tracked and modelled, it is a greater challenge to understand their short-term fluctuations and contributions to conflict.

In the face of greater threats to peace and stability, Alert! is providing a needed resource to inform, understand, and inspire work towards a more peaceful future

This is where a tool like the *Alert!* report is so valuable.

For example, in 2014 *Alert!* noted the growing presence of foreign jihadists in the ranks of ISIS, an issue that became a central fixation of global media coverage in later months, and also noted the potential for an escalation in conflict in Iraq and Syria, and the growing influence of ISIS in the area. The report took the raw conflict data, generated a measure of its own, and then justified this measure with a detailed exploration of the trigger factors that might lead to an increase in the level of conflict in the region. It is this kind of data interpretation, generation, and analysis that, in conjunction with research focusing on longer term trends (such as the GPI and the Pillars of Peace), can give us better predictive models and a better understanding of how and where conflict and violence will flare up. In doing so, such tools will do much to improve the chances of meeting many of the future development goals.

Moreover, by initiating and continuing study of peace and conflict, *Alert!* is contributing to a global knowledge base. Without information, we cannot begin to act. In the face of greater threats to peace and stability, *Alert!* is providing a needed resource to inform, understand, and inspire work towards a more peaceful future.

Executive Summary

Alert 2015! 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 four perspectives: armed conflicts, socio-political crises, peace processes and gender issues in peacebuilding. By analysing the most significant events in 2014 and the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main flashpoints of armed conflict and socio-political crisis throughout the world, we are able to offer a regional comparison and identify global trends, making it possible to highlight areas of risk and provide early warnings 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.

As regards methodology, the report is largely produced on the basis of the qualitative analysis of studies and data provided by numerous sources —the United Nations, international bodies, research centres, media outlets and NGOs, among others— as well as experience drawn from research on the ground.

Some of the most significant data and conclusions contained in this report are as follows:

- Throughout 2014, 36 armed conflicts were recorded, mostly in Africa (13) and Asia (12), followed by the Middle East (6), Europe (4) and America (1).
- During 2014, four new wars were recorded: The DRC (east-ADF), China (East Turkestan), Ukraine, and Egypt (Sinai).
- At the end of 2014 only 34 of the 36 armed conflicts during 2014 continued to be active, due to the decrease in the levels of violence and confrontation in two contexts: India (Manipur) and Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria).
- A total of 12 armed conflicts registered high levels of violence during the year, with an annual toll in each case exceeding one thousand deaths: Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the CAR, Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Palestine and Syria.
- In 2014, the situation of a large number of armed conflicts deteriorated. More than half of wars (55%) reported a worsening and escalation in levels of violence compared to 2013.
- Two thirds of the armed conflicts in 2014 (24 cases) had opposition to a particular government or to the political, economic, social or ideological system

of a state among their main causes. Furthermore, a large number of cases in 2014 had identity struggles or demands for self-determination and/or self-government among their main motivations —being present in more than half of all armed conflicts in 2014 (21 of the 36 cases).

- During 2014, armed conflicts continued to have a serious impact on civilians, including a high number of fatalities, indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, refugee camps, schools and hospitals; massacres and summary executions; arbitrary detentions; torture and other physical and psychological abuse; sexual violence; recruitment of child soldiers; and massive forced population displacement.
- The UNHCR warned that the global figure of 50 million people displaced by violence had been exceeded for the first time since the Second World War and highlighted that in recent years the numerous refugee crises had reached levels not seen since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.
- Throughout 2014, cities once again became the main setting of violent confrontation in many of the conflicts, highlighting the impact of the disputes at local level. Gaining control of cities – for their symbolic nature, strategic significance or importance in war economies– was one of the main priorities of numerous armed groups around the world.
- At the end of 2014, a total of 36 arms embargoes were still in place against 23 states and non-state armed groups –the same parties as a year previously. These embargoes were imposed by the UN, the EU, the Arab League and the OSCE.
- In 2014 there were 24 active armed conflicts and 83 cases of socio-political crisis in which neither the UN Security Council, nor the other regional organisations had imposed arms embargoes.
- During 2014, 82 international missions were recorded. Africa remained the continent with the greatest number of active international missions (34), followed by Europe (22), Asia (12), the Middle East (10) and America (4).
- Worldwide, UN peacekeeping missions involved the participation of 122,729 uniformed personnel, slightly more than the 2013 figure and approaching the maximum number reached in 2010 –the current ceiling– when 124,000 blue berets were in active service. From June 1999 –when the lowest figure since the end of the Cold War was reached with 13,000 blue berets– to 2010, the increase in the number of peacekeepers had been constant.
- In 2014, 95 flashpoints of socio-political crisis were identified worldwide, mainly located in Africa (38) and Asia (24), while the rest of the cases were distributed between Europe (14), the Middle East (14), and America (5).

- The most serious socio-political crises in 2014 were Kenya, Nigeria, Venezuela, DPR Korea-Rep. of Korea, the Philippines (Mindanao-MILF), India-Pakistan, Pakistan, Thailand, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Egypt, Israel-Syria-Lebanon, Lebanon, Syria-Turkey and Yemen.
- In line with previous years, at global level 70% of the crises were linked to opposition to domestic or international policies implemented by a given government (which led to a struggle to seize or erode power), or to opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the respective state.
- During the year, peace agreements were reached in Mozambique (RENAMO), South Sudan (SSDM-Cobra Faction) and the Philippines (MILF).
- 15.1% of the 33 negotiations examined progressed well (including those that ended successfully), a further 24.2% encountered difficulties and 57.6% ended poorly, although in several countries negotiations were expected to resume in 2015.
- 65 countries suffered serious gender inequalities, with 48 cases being worthy of note in particular, mainly concentrated in Africa and Asia. 61% of armed conflicts for which data on gender equality exists took place in settings with serious gender inequalities.
- During 2014, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war was detected in settings of armed conflict and socio-political crisis such as Syria, the CAR, Somalia, Egypt and Myanmar, among others.
- A high-level summit was held in London on sexual violence in armed conflict, with a mixed result due to the absence of representatives from civil society and the ambiguity of the commitments made by the participating governments.
- Women were actively involved in formal peace negotiations in the Philippines and Colombia with an agenda focusing on gender equality. In Colombia, a gender subcommittee was created for the negotiating table.
- The report identifies five opportunities for peace in 2015: possible progress in gender equality internationally due to the convergence of various events and the possible adoption of new international instruments during 2015; the combined efforts in 2015 of global measures against the recruitment and use of child soldiers; the opportunity to include reducing gun violence in the Post-2015 Agenda, placing this issue at the centre of debate in the international community; the renewed commitment to dialogue within the framework of the negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear programme; and the hope created by the national dialogue in Sudan regarding the situation facing the country in recent years.
- The report identifies seven other early warning signs for 2015: the risk posed by the territorial fragmentation of Libya, institutional fragility, regional disputes and increasing violence; the ISIS threat in Iraq and Syria; risks to human security and their impact at regional level; the escalation of violence in the Chinese region of Xinjiang; urban violence affecting the major Pakistani cities of Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, which pose serious challenges in terms of security and development; the poor prospects for a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine; the deterioration of the political and social crisis in Haiti and the risk of a power vacuum; and finally, increased violence and the consequences of the growth of the armed Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab in Kenya.

Structure

The report consists of six chapters. In the first two, the confrontations are analysed globally —causes, types, dynamics, evolution, actors in the armed conflicts and socio-political crises. The third chapter deals with peace processes, while the fourth analyses the gender dimension in peacebuilding —the differing impact of armed violence and peacebuilding from a gender perspective. The fifth chapter identifies opportunities for peace, settings where a climate exists that could favour conflict resolution or a move towards or the consolidation of peace initiatives in the coming year. The last chapter discusses risk scenarios for the future. In addition to the six chapters, the report also includes a fold-out map which indicates the locations of the armed conflicts, socio-political crises and negotiation processes; major international missions; arms embargoes imposed by major international organisations; and the number and location of the people displaced by violent conflicts.

Armed Conflicts

In the first chapter (**Armed Conflicts**)[1], we provide details of the evolution, types, causes and dynamics of the armed conflicts active throughout the year; we examine global and regional trends in armed conflict in 2014 and we reflect on other issues related to these conflicts, as well as arms embargoes and international missions.

Throughout 2014, 36 armed conflicts were recorded worldwide, a similar figure to that observed in recent

---

1. In this report, an armed conflict is understood as 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 fatalities in a year and/or has a serious impact on the territory (destruction of infrastructures or of natural resources) and human security (e.g. injured or displaced persons, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric, or disruption of basic services); and b) aims to achieve objectives different from those of common crime and normally related to:
   - demands for self-determination and self-government or identity aspirations;
   - opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state or the internal or international policy of a government, which in both triggers a struggle to seize or undermine power;
   - the control of resources or land.

years (35 cases in 2013, 38 in 2012). During 2014, four new cases came to light: The DRC (east-ADF) —due to intensified armed offensives by the Islamist group formed of Ugandan and Congolese combatants; China (East Turkestan) —which registered unprecedented levels of violence, thus confirming the intensification of the conflict between the Chinese authorities and Uighur insurgency organisations in recent years; Ukraine — following the escalation of armed clashes between pro-Russian and Ukrainian militia forces in the east of the country; and Egypt (Sinai) —given the increased frequency and lethality of incidents involving armed groups based in the peninsula. At the end of 2014, only 34 of the 36 armed conflicts continued to be active, due to the decrease in the levels of violence and confrontation in two contexts: India (Manipur) and Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria).

36 armed conflicts were recorded during 2014; 34 of these conflicts remained active at the end of the year

Following the trend seen in previous years in the geographic distribution of armed conflicts, most were concentrated in Africa (13 cases) and Asia (12), followed by the Middle East (6), Europe (4) and America (1). Of the total number of armed conflicts, two cases (5%) had an international dimension (the dispute between Israel and Palestine and the conflict between the Ugandan armed group, the LRA, and the military forces of several countries in central Africa) and a further nine cases (25%) involved internal conflicts. The vast majority of armed conflicts in 2014 (25 cases, equivalent to 69%) were internationalised internal, i.e. contexts in which one of the parties in the dispute was foreign or where the fighting had spread to the territory of other countries, among other factors.

During 2014, this internationalisation also became apparent in the regional and international impact of various conflicts. It was apparent, for example, in the

impact of the war in Syria on the dynamics of the conflict in Turkey between the government and the armed group PKK and in the escalation of violence in neighbouring countries; and also in the case of the crisis in Ukraine and its impact on the increasing tensions between Russia and the West, whose relations have deteriorated to the worst levels since the days of the Cold War. Overall, it is notable that most of today's conflicts are marked by a degree of internationalisation linked to elements such as population displacement due to the violence, trafficking in arms and resources, neighbouring countries' backing of one of the parties in the dispute or the participation of foreign fighters. Regarding the causes of the armed conflict, an analysis of the contexts in 2014 confirms that they are multi-causal phenomena, in which various elements converge. Nonetheless, it is still possible to identify trends in their guiding motivations. Two thirds of the armed conflicts in 2014 (24 cases) had opposition to a particular government or to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state among their main causes. Of this total, at least nine cases involved armed groups that had mobilised due to their rejection of policies adopted by the governments of their respective countries, prompting violent struggles to take over or erode power.

In the vast majority of the above-mentioned cases (19), a determining factor was the opposition to the political, economic or ideological system of the state, which caused many armed groups to engage in a violent struggle to bring about a change to the system. Among these cases, we should distinguish between those groups that mobilised as a result of a socialist-inspired ideological agenda and others whose motivations were more closely linked to the establishment of a political system based on Islamic precepts or involving a more prominent role for Islamic law in shaping the state. Among the first,

Armed conflicts in 2014*

AFRICA (13)	ASIA (12)	MIDDLE EAST (6)
Algeria (AQIM) -1992-	Afghanistan -2001-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014-
CAR -2006-	China (East Turkestan) -2014-	Iraq -2003-
Central Africa (LRA) -1986-	India (Assam) -1983-	Israel-Palestine -2000-
DRC (east) -1998-	India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Syria -2011-
DRC (east-ADF) -2014-	*India (Manipur) -1982-*	Yemen (Houthis) -2004-
Ethiopia (Ogaden) -2007-	India (CPI-M) -1967-	Yemen (AQAP) - 2011-
Libya -2011-	Myanmar -1948-	**EUROPE (4)**
Mali (north) -2012-	Pakistan -2001-	
Nigeria (Boko Haram) - 2011-	Pakistan (Baluchistan) -2005-	Russia (Dagestan) -2010-
Somalia -1988-	Philippines (NPA) -1969-	*Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria) -2011-*
South Sudan -2009-	Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf) -1991-	Turkey (south-east) -1984-
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Thailand (south) -2004-	Ukraine -2014-
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-		**AMERICA (1)**
		Colombia -1964-

*The start date of the armed conflict is shown between hyphens. Conflicts that ended in 2014 appear in italics.

notable are cases such as Colombia (FARC and ELN), the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), where the various leftist guerrillas have fought a decades-long armed struggle against government forces. In fact, these armed conflicts are among the longest-lived conflicts in the world —50, 45 and 47 years since the start of hostilities, respectively. In more than a dozen of the other cases, the aspirations of one or more armed groups were focused on giving greater prominence to Islamic precepts —or to certain organisations' particular interpretation of these precepts— within the state structure.

A large number of cases in 2014 had identity struggles or demands for self-determination and/or self-government among their motivations —with these being present in more than half of all armed conflicts in 2014 (21 of the 36 cases). In keeping with the trend in previous years, these types of factors were particularly prevalent in Asia and Europe, but were also present in other continents. Moreover, note that the struggle for control of territory and of resources was also among the major causes of armed conflicts, mostly in African contexts.

One of the most noted occurrences in 2014 was the intensification of more than half of all armed conflicts (20 cases, equivalent to 55%), which saw a deterioration in their situation and an increase in their levels of violence, while in 22% of cases (8 conflicts) the situation was similar to the previous year. In only eight cases —including the two that were no longer considered armed conflicts at the end of 2014— was a decrease in the levels of conflict observed. This general trend towards increasing levels of confrontation was also echoed by the increase in the number of high-intensity cases compared to previous years. During 2014, a total of 12 armed conflicts recorded high levels of violence, with an annual toll exceeding one thousand deaths in each case: Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the CAR, Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Palestine and Syria.

The report includes a reflection on the impact of the armed conflicts on civilians, as in previous years.

The UNHCR warned that the global figure of 50 million people displaced by violence had been exceeded for the first time since World War II

The consequences of these conflicts were not merely limited to a high number of civilian casualties in clashes between state and non-state armed groups, but rather they also had an impact in other contexts, including **indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, refugee camps, schools and hospitals; massacres and summary executions; arbitrary detentions; torture and other physical and psychological abuse; sexual violence; recruitment of child soldiers; and massive forced population displacement,** both inside and outside the borders of their respective countries. Overall, a series of acts constituting a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. In addition, **armed conflicts continued to have a direct impact on the increasing insecurity and impoverishment of millions of people.**

Forced population displacement was, for a further a year, one of the most visible consequences of armed conflict, and continued to worsen during 2014. Both the overall figures for the year 2013 and the partial data for 2014 have confirmed the upward trend in this phenomenon in recent years. According to the annual report of the UNHCR, **while in 2012 there were 45.2 million people displaced globally as a result of conflict, persecution, human rights violations and generalised violence, in late 2013 the figure had risen to 51.2 million. The UNHCR noted that the global figure of 50 million displaced people had been exceeded for the first time since World War II.** Of the total number of people forced from their homes in 2013, 16.7 million were refugees (11.7 million under the UNHCR's mandate and 5 million Palestinians under the UNRWA), while a further 33.3 million were classified as forcibly displaced persons within their own countries and 1.2 million as asylum seekers. The (non-definitive) data regarding the global forced displacement situation during the first half of 2014 indicated that these figures had increased and that at **least 5.5 million people had been forced to leave their homes due to violence between January and June 2014,** of which 1.3 million chose to leave their countries. Given these developments, the UNHCR warned that in recent years the multiple global refugee crises had reached levels not seen since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, especially against women, remained a common practice in many armed conflicts. This was noted in numerous reports by NGOs, women's organisations and the United Nations. **The report of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, on conflict-related sexual violence —published in March 2014 and covering the period from January to December 2013— noted the widespread use of sexual violence in armed conflict flashpoints around the world,** which was materialised in acts such as rape and other sexual abuse, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy and forced sterilisation, among other acts.

Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2014

Number of people internally displaced in 2013

FYR Macedonia
At least 330

Serbia
97,300

Bosnia and Herzegovina
103,400

Kosovo
At least
17,300

Cyprus
Up to 212,400

Lebanon
At least 20,000

Syria
At least 6,500,000

Turkey
At least
953,700

Georgia
Up to
206,600

Armenia
Up to 8,400

Azerbaijan
Up to
543,400

Iraq
Up to 2,100,000

Turkmenistan
At least 4,000

Uzbekistan
At least 3,400

Kyrgyzstan
Undetermined

Russian Federation
At least 34,900

Afghanistan
At least 631,000

Pakistan
At least 746,700

Nepal
Up to 50,000

Bangladesh
Up to 280,000

Palestine
146,000

Libya
At least 59,400

Sudan
At least 2,426,700

Niger
Up to 11,000

Senegal
Up to 24,000

Togo
Up to 10,000

Liberia
Up to 23,000

Côte d'Ivoire
At least 70,000

Nigeria
3,300,000

Chad
Up to 90,000

CAR
935,000

Congo
Up to 7,800

Angola
Up to 20,000

DRC
At least 2,963,700

Mexico
160,000

Guatemala
242,000

Honduras
17,000

Colombia
At least 5,700,000

Peru
150,000

Yemen
307,000

Eritrea
Up to 10,000

Ethiopia
316,000

Mali
At least 218,000

Somalia
1,100,000

Kenya
412,000

Uganda
Up to 29,800

Burundi
Up to 78,900

Zimbabwe
36,000

South Sudan
At least 383,000

Sri Lanka
Up to 90,800

Laos
Up to 4,500

India
At least 526,000

The Philippines
At least 115,800

Myanmar
640,900

Thailand
At least 35,000

Indonesia
At least 90,000

Timor-Leste
At least 900

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Overview 2013. People internally displaced by conflict and violence*, IDMC, April 2014

The impact of armed conflict on children also remained a major concern. During 2014, the UN Secretary-General published a new report on children and armed conflict —the 13th edition covered the period from January to December 2013— once again highlighting the many abuses committed by state and non-state actors in this area. Such abuses included recruiting or using children to commit acts of violence, sexual violence against children, murdering or maiming of children, and attacks on schools and hospitals. The serious consequences of these conflicts on children were particularly evident in the indiscriminate or deliberate attacks on civilian areas, which were responsible for the deaths of many children throughout 2013.

Throughout 2014, **cities once again became the main setting of violent confrontation in many of the conflicts**, laying bare the impact of these disputes at local level. **Gaining control of cities —very often provincial or national capitals— is usually a priority for many armed groups around the world due to their symbolic nature, strategic significance or importance in war economies.** Consequently, cities were a scene of fighting, bloody attacks and bombings; they suffered severe damage to their infrastructure, their historical and cultural heritage, and to their transport networks; and they experienced an

Gaining control of cities —for their symbolic nature, strategic significance or importance in war economies— is one of the main priorities of numerous armed groups

exodus of large swaths of the population, or in some cases, became makeshift camps for fleeing refugees and displaced persons, which pushed them to the limits of their ability to provide basic services to the local population and to those arriving in search of a safe haven to escape the violence. During 2014, various cities around the world played a leading role in numerous armed conflicts. Among these, the report highlights the violence in Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, in Pakistan; Donetsk and

Refugee population under UNHCR's mandate*
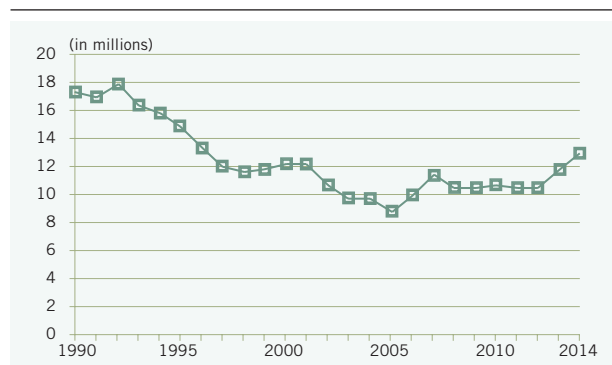
* Other 5 million Palestinians refugees were under UNRWA's mandate

Source: UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2014*, UNCHR, January 2015.

Arms embargoes by the United Nations, EU, OSCE and the Arab League in 2014

Country*	Coming into effect	Country	Coming into effect
Embargoes declared by the United Nations (13)		**Embargoes declared by the EU (23)**	
**Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities, Taliban militias **	2002	**Al-Qaeda and Taliban militias **	2002
		Belarus	2011
CAR	2013	**CAR**	2013
Côte d'Ivoire	2004	China	1989
DPR Korea	2006	Côte d'Ivoire	2004
DRC (except the Government)	2003	DPR Korea	2006
Eritrea	2009	**DRC (except the Government)**	2003
Iran	2006	Egypt	2013
Iraq (except the Government since 2004)	1990	Eritrea	2010
Lebanon (except the Government)	2006	*Guinea*	*2009 - 2014*
Liberia (except the Government since 2009)	1992	Iran	2007
Libya	2011	**Iraq (except the Government since 2004)**	1990
Somalia (except the Government)	1992	Lebanon (except the Government)	2006
Sudan (Darfur) (except the Government)	2004	Liberia (except the Government since 2008)	2001
		Libya	2011
Embargoes declared by the Arab League (1)		**Myanmar**	1991
Syria	2011	Russia[2]	2014
		Somalia	2002
Embargoes declared by the OSCE (1)		**South Sudan**	2011
Armenia - Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	1992	**Sudan**	1994
		Syria	2011
		***Ukraine*[3]**	*2014*
		Zimbabwe	2002

* In bold, country or group in armed conflict subject to embargo.
** Embargo not linked to a specific country or territory.
Source: Own work based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes and European Commission, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/index_en.htm.

Lugansk, in Ukraine; Tripoli and Benghazi, in Libya; Baghdad, Mosul and Erbil, in Iraq; and finally, special mention is given to several Syrian cities most affected by the armed conflict, such as Kobane or Aleppo, among others. In these and other contexts, **it is difficult to draw a line between political violence and violence of a criminal nature, or between actors mobilised by ideology or by criminal interest.**

The report also examines two key instruments available to the international community to address the threats to peace and security: **arms embargoes and international missions.** As regards embargoes —which constitute a major coercive measure under Chapter VII

36 arms embargoes were recorded in late 2014, imposed on a total of 23 states and non-state armed groups by the UN and other regional organisations

of the UN Charter— **36 arms embargoes were recorded in late 2014. These embargoes were imposed on a total of 23 states and non-state armed groups**, the same parties as a year previously. This includes a voluntary arms embargo imposed by the OSCE on Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992. It should be noted that 12 of the 21 embargoes imposed by the EU were a result of the implementation of UN Security Council embargoes. The remaining nine were European initiatives: Belarus, China, Egypt, Myanmar, Russia, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Of the 23 states and non-state armed groups identified by the UN, the EU, the Arab League and the OSCE, **nine**

2.   In the case of Russia, the embargo relates to the Crimea, and not to conflicts affecting the North Caucasus.
3.   The arms embargo on Ukraine was established by agreement of the countries of the EU on 20 February 2014 and lifted on July 16 of that year.

International missions of 2014*

UN (28)	EU (19)	OSCE (17)
Afghanistan (UNAMA) -2002-	Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) -2002-	Albania (OSCE Presence in Albania) -1997-
Burundi (BNUB) -2011-	Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA) -2004-	Armenia (OSCE Office in Yerevan) -2000-
Central Africa (UNOCA) -2011-	Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor) -2002-	Azerbaijan (OSCE Office in Baku) -2000-
Central African Republic (MINUSCA)** -2014-	*DRC (EUPOL RDC) -2007-2014*	Bosnia and Herzegovina (OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina) -1995-
Central Asia (UNRCCA) -2007-	DRC (EUSEC RDC) -2005-	Kazakhstan (OSCE Centre in Astana) -1998-
Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) -2004-	Georgia – Russia (EUMM Georgia) -2008-	Kyrgyzstan (OSCE Centre in Bishkek) -1999-
Cyprus (UNFICYP) -1964-	Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR) -2012-	Kosovo (OMIK, OSCE Mission in Kosovo) -1996-
DRC (MONUSCO) -1999/2010-	Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) -2008-	Macedonia, FYR (OSCE Mission to Skopje) -1992-
Golan Heights (UNDOF) -1974-	Libya (EUBAM Lybia) -2013-	Moldova (OSCE Mission to Moldova) -1993-
Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) -2010-	Mali (EUTM Mali) -2013-	Montenegro (OSCE Mission to Montenegro) -2006-
Haiti (MINUSTAH) -2004-	Mali (EUCAP SAHEL Mali) -2014-	Serbia (OSCE Mission to Serbia) -2006-
India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) -1949-	Niger (EUCAP SAHEL Niger) -2012-	Tajikistan (OSCE Office in Tajikistan) -1994-
Iraq (UNAMI) -2003-	Palestinian Territories (EU BAM Rafah) -2005-	Turkmenistan (OSCE Centre in Ashgabat) -1999-
Israel-Palestine (UNSCO) -1994-	Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) -2006-	Ukraine (OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine) -1999-
Kosovo (UNMIK) -1999-	Somalia (EUNAVFOR Somalia) -2008-	Ukraine (OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine) -2014-
Lebanon (UNIFIL) -1978/2006-	Somalia (EUTM Somalia) -2010-	Ukraine (OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk) -2014-
Lebanon (USCOL) -2007-	*South Sudan (EUAVSEC South Sudan) -2012-2014*	Uzbekistan (OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan) -2006-
Liberia (UNMIL) -2003-	Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) -2014-	**CIS (1)**
Libya (UNSMIL) -2011-	**NATO (5)**	Moldova (Transdniestria) -1992-
Mali (north) (MINUSMA) -2013-	Afghanistan (ISAF) 2001-2014, replaced by Resolute Support Mission -2015-	**OAS (3)**
Middle East (UNTSO) -1948-		Belize-Guatemala (OAS/AZ Office) -2003-
Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) -2008-2014	Horn of Africa, Gulf of Aden (Operation Ocean Shield) -2009-	Colombia (MAPP OEA) -2004-
	Kosovo (KFOR) -1999-	Colombia (MIB OEA) -2008-
Somalia (UNSOM) -2013-	Somalia (NATO assistance to the AMISOM) -2007-	**Other missions (5)**
Sudan – South Sudan (UNISFA)-2011-	The Mediterranean (Operation Active Endeavour) -2001-	*Côte d'Ivoire (Operation Licorne, France) 2003-2014[4]*
Sudan (Darfur) (UNAMID) -2007-	**AU (3)**	Egypt and Israel -1982-
		Hebron, Palestine (TPIH 2) -1997-
South Sudan (UNMISS) -2009-	Central Africa (LRA) (Regional Co-operation Initiative against the LRA, ICR/LRA) -2012-	The Solomon Islands (RAMSI) -2003-
Western Sahara (MINURSO) -1991-	*Central African Republic (MISCA)** 2013-2014*	DPR Korea and Rep. Korea (NSC) -1953-
West Africa (UNOWA) -2001-	Somalia (AMISOM) -2007-	*East Timor (ISF, Australia) -2006-2013*
	ECOWAS (2)	
	Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) -2012-	

*Starting year of the mission included. Missions completed during 2014 are shown in italics.

involve groups active in armed conflicts in late 2014 (Libya, Myanmar, the CAR, Syria, Sudan [Darfur] and South Sudan, and armed groups in Iraq, Somalia and the DRC —in the case of the DRC, it involves the two conflicts affecting the country), i.e. nine embargoes affecting 10 armed conflicts. Ukraine, between February and July, also forms part of this list. One might add **the embargo against al-Qaeda and the Taliban militias,**

---

4. Operation Licorne or Force Licorne is the name given to the French peace-keeping mission in support of the UN mission in the country, UNOCI. On 1 January 2015, the military contingent of Licorne ceased functioning as such and rejoined the French armed forces deployed in Côte d'Ivoire.

which does not relate to any particular territory, as indicated in resolution 1390.

Of the other 13 embargoes, 12 were targeted at countries that are a focus of socio-political crises of varying intensity (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Lebanon, DPR Korea, Russia, Sudan and Zimbabwe). Liberia is the only country which, despite having overcome various armed conflicts (1989-1996, 1999-2003) and while not experiencing socio-political crises at present, is still under an embargo. **In conclusion, of the 34 active armed conflicts in late 2014, there were 24 cases in which neither the UN Security Council, the EU, the Arab League nor the OSCE raised the possibility of imposing an arms embargo** as a punitive measure. Furthermore, of the current 95 cases of socio-political crisis, **there were 83 cases of varying intensity that were not subject to embargoes** in which, in many cases, the preventive nature of the measure could lead to a reduction in violence.

With regard to international missions, of the 28 UN missions during 2014, more than half (16) were in Africa, six in the Middle East, three in Asia, two in Europe and one in America. Moreover, alongside the United Nations, it is worth noting the participation of other regional organisations in military, political and peacebuilding tasks, such as the EU (19 missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East), the OSCE (17 missions in the European and Central Asian area), NATO (five missions in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East), the AU (three missions in Africa), the ECOWAS (one mission in Africa), the OAS (three missions in America), the CIS (one mission in Europe), and five multilateral operations under the umbrella of countries or groups of countries, which gives a total of 82 international missions during 2014, one mission less than the previous year. Of the total number of missions, **six completed their work throughout the year, such that by late 2014 there were 76 active** missions on five continents.

Notably, six missions completed their activities during 2014: the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL); the EU missions in the DRC and South Sudan (EUPOL DRC and EUAVSEC South Sudan, respectively); the AU mission in the CAR (MISCA), which transferred authority to the new UN mission in the country (MINUSCA); the French mission to support the UNOCI (Force Licorne); and finally, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF). In parallel, **seven new military,**

Africa remained the continent with the largest number of socio-political crises globally (40%), although most of the highest-intensity crises occurred in Asia and the Middle East

police and/or civilian missions were deployed. The UN mission, MINUSCA, began its operations in the CAR. This mission incorporated the BINUCA peacebuilding mission within its mandate (present in the country since 2009), and in September it assumed control of the AU mission in the country —MISCA—, which had received criticism due to its lack of effectiveness and in some cases military bias. Amidst a very hostile environment, the EU also began its missions in (i) Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali), a civilian mission focusing on providing training to the Malian military forces; (ii) the CAR (EUFOR RCA), where its 750 military personnel will focus on ensuring security in the capital city, contributing to international efforts to protect civilians and facilitating access to humanitarian aid; and (iii) Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), a civilian mission focusing on reforming the security sector. Furthermore, we should also mention the diplomatic efforts that prompted the OSCE to launch two new missions in Ukraine: the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk —civilian missions focusing on observing and reporting developments in the situation. Finally, in Afghanistan, the ISAF ended its activities in late 2014 and was replaced by a new NATO mission in January 2015, the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), consisting of between 12,000 and 13,000 uniformed personnel from NATO and other allied countries.

Socio-political crises

In the second chapter (**Socio-political crises**),[5] we examine the nature and the most important events related to the socio-political crises recorded during the year and take a comparative look at global and regional trends. During 2014, **95 cases of socio-political crisis were identified worldwide, which constitutes a reduction compared to the 2013 balance (99 crises). As in previous years, the largest number of socio-political crises were found in Africa (with 38 cases), followed by Asia (which reported 24 cases).** Europe and the Middle East each saw 14 cases of socio-political crisis, while America reported 5 cases. The fall in the number of crises is attributable, in part, to the fact that many cases that had previously been considered socio-political crises were reclassified as armed conflicts in 2014 —the DRC (east-ADF), China (East Turkestan) Ukraine, Egypt (Sinai)— and, moreover, to reduced tensions in various settings, which ceased to be regarded as socio-political crises. Furthermore, several contexts that in previous

---

5. A socio-political crisis is defined as that in which the pursuit of certain objectives or the failure to satisfy certain demands made by a range of 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 lead to an armed conflict under certain circumstances. Socio-political crises are normally related to: a) demands for self-determination and self-government, or identity aspirations; 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 undermine power; or c) control of resources or territory.

Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises
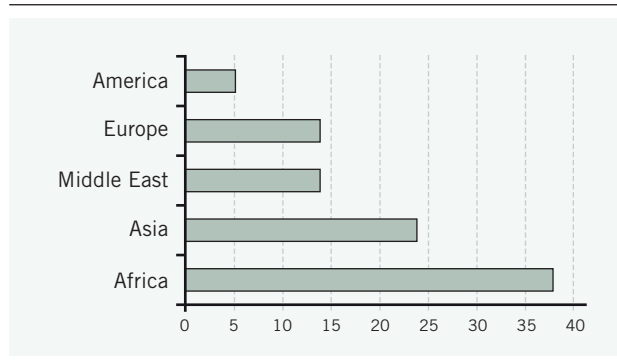
years had been considered armed conflicts, were reclassified as socio-political crises in 2014: Burundi, Russia (Chechnya) and Russia (Ingushetia).

While socio-political crises may be caused by many factors, an analysis of the scope of these crises in 2014 makes it possible to identify trends as regards their causes or motivations. In keeping with data observed in previous years, **at global level 70% of crises were mainly linked to opposition to domestic or international policies implemented by a given government** (which led to a struggle to seize or erode power), or to opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the respective state. In turn, **around half of all socio-political crises (46%) had demands for self-government and/or identity as one of their main motivations.** Note that more than a quarter of crises (27%) had disputes over control of territory and/or resources as a particularly important element, although this factor fuels the many crises in varying degrees.

In terms of the intensity of socio-political crises, **during 2014 around two-thirds (59%) displayed a low level of intensity, while a quarter of cases showed an average level of intensity** and just over one-seventh of the cases were characterised by high intensity (16%, or 15 of the 95 cases). By comparison with the previous year, the number of serious socio-political crises fell slightly in 2014 (16% in 2014 versus 20% in 2013). Asia and the Middle East were the regions with the greatest number of high-intensity socio-political crises, with five cases each. A further three high-intensity cases were located in Africa, two in America and one in Europe. **The most serious socio-political crises in 2014 were Kenya, Nigeria, Venezuela, DPR Korea-Rep. of Korea, the Philippines (Mindanao-MILF), India-Pakistan, Pakistan, Thailand, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Egypt, Israel-Syria-Lebanon, Lebanon, Syria-Turkey and Yemen.**

Beyond the impact of the lethality of many socio-political crises, the consequences for human security were wide-ranging in terms of number of wounded, population displacement and sexual violence. In any case, beyond the immediate impact, many of the crises have been accruing long-term impact in terms of human security, whether due —among other factors— to the precariousness of public systems (often as an added result of reforms imposed by international bodies during their international accompaniment in the management of current or past crises), chronic discrimination against certain sectors of the population (minority ethnic or religious groups, women, LGBTI population, among others) or the difficulties in seeking a livelihood created by factors such as militarisation, the prolonged presence of mines and policies on natural resources, among others.

With regard to developments in the levels of violence and destabilisation in 2014, a comparative analysis with the previous year revealed that **in more than half of the socio-political crises (49 cases, or 52%) the levels remained similar to 2013,** while a further 28% of cases saw a deterioration in the situation and 20% saw a slight improvement. Finally, and to some extent in keeping with the trend observed in previous years, more than half of the socio-political crises in the world were internal (58%), involving state actors operating within the same state. Additionally, slightly more than a fourth of the crises (26%) were categorised as internationalised internal, either because some of the main actors in the dispute were foreign or due to the contagion of the disputes to the territories of neighbouring countries. Only 16% of socio-political crises in 2014 were international (15 out of 95 cases).

Peace processes

In the third chapter (**Peace Processes**)[6], we examine 33 cases of peace negotiation and exploration. In addition, we also take a look at three cases that saw sporadic contacts, i.e. Ethiopia (ONLF), Somalia (al-Shabaab) and India (Assam), which do not appear in the following table because they are not initiatives or contacts that could be equated with peace negotiations (the total number of cases analysed is 33). Four cases are addressed — Eritrea-Ethiopia, Mozambique, Syria and Yemen. With the exception of Mozambique, these cases are not comparable with a consolidated and structured peace process. During the year, three groups in the Philippines, Sudan and Mozambique declared a cease-fire after reaching peace agreements with their

---

6. Negotiation is understood to be the process by which two or more opposing parties (either countries or internal actors within a country) agree to discuss their differences in a concerted effort to find a satisfactory solution to their demands. This negotiation can be direct or performed through a third-party facilitator. Normally, formal negotiations involve a preliminary or exploratory phase to define the framework (format, venue, conditions, guarantees, etc.) for future negotiations. A peace process is understood to be the formalisation of a negotiation framework, once the agenda, the procedures to be followed, the calendar and the facilitators have been defined. Negotiation, therefore, is one of the stages in a peace process.

Status of the negotiations at the end of 2014

Good (2)	In difficulties (8)	Bad (19)	At an exploratory stage (1)	Resolved (3)
Senegal (MFDC) Colombia (FARC)	Mali (several) Sudan (National Dialogue) India (NSCN-IM) Myanmar Thailand (south) Serbia-Kosovo Turkey (PKK) Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Sudan (SPLM-N) Sudan (Darfur) Sudan-South Sudan South Sudan DRC (FDLR) (*) CAR Libya Morocco-Western Sahara Afghanistan India-Pakistan Pakistan (TTP) Philippines (NDF) Philippines (MNLF) Cyprus Moldova (Transdniestria) Ukraine Georgia (Abkhazia & South Ossetia) Israel-Palestine	Colombia (ELN)	Mozambique (RENAMO) South Sudan (SSDM-Cobra Faction) Philippines (MILF)

(*) Negotiations with the FDLR, through DRC and with the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio, do not follow the conventional patterns of negotiations, in the sense that, for the time being, there is not participation of the Government of Rwanda, where the members of the FDLR are from.

respective governments, although in the case of the Filipino MILF, in 2015 problems had already emerged that could alter the implementation of the agreements. Some of the **most significant events of the year** in terms of peace processes were:

- 15.1% of the 33 negotiations examined progressed well (including those that ended successfully), a further 24.2% encountered difficulties and 57.6% ended poorly, leading to a very negative overall result, although in several countries negotiations were expected to resume in 2015.
- During the year, peace agreements were reached in Mozambique (RENAMO) and South Sudan (SSDM-Cobra Faction). In the case of Mozambique, however, the situation deteriorated later in the year.
- Several international meetings were held to attempt direct dialogue between the warring parties in Libya, with UN mediation, although at the end of the year no inclusive dialogue had been formalised.
- Negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC continued to make advances, with the prospect that the negotiation agenda could be completed by late 2015. Moreover, the exploratory contacts with the ELN guerrilla group reached an agreement on two points: the participation of society and of the victims of the conflict.
- In the Philippines, the signing of the Global Agreement on Bangsamoro took place. Described as historic, this agreement represents the culmination of 17 years of negotiations with the MILF and should end more than four decades of armed conflict in Mindanao.

- In Turkey, the Kurdish PKK leader A. Öcalan submitted a draft negotiation framework, which included several sections such as methodology, philosophy, agenda and action plan.
- In Ukraine, despite the many calls to respect the two agreements signed in September, the ceasefire was not respected; nor were any commitments made that could reduce the fighting.

Gender dimension in peacebuilding

In the fourth chapter **(Gender dimension in peacebuilding)** we examine, from a gender perspective, the various initiatives that are being promoted by the United Nations and various local and international organisations and movements in the area of peacebuilding.[7] This perspective brings to light the various effects of the armed conflicts on women and men, but also to what extent and in what way both women and men are participating in peacebuilding and the contributions that women are making to this peacebuilding process. 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 Inequality Index (GII); 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.

As regards gender equality, according to information provided by the IDG, **the gender equality situation affecting women was severe in 65 countries, with 48**

---

7. 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 been historically established in the patriarchal system. The goal of gender as an analytical category is to demonstrate the historical and situated nature of sexual differences.

Gender inequalities
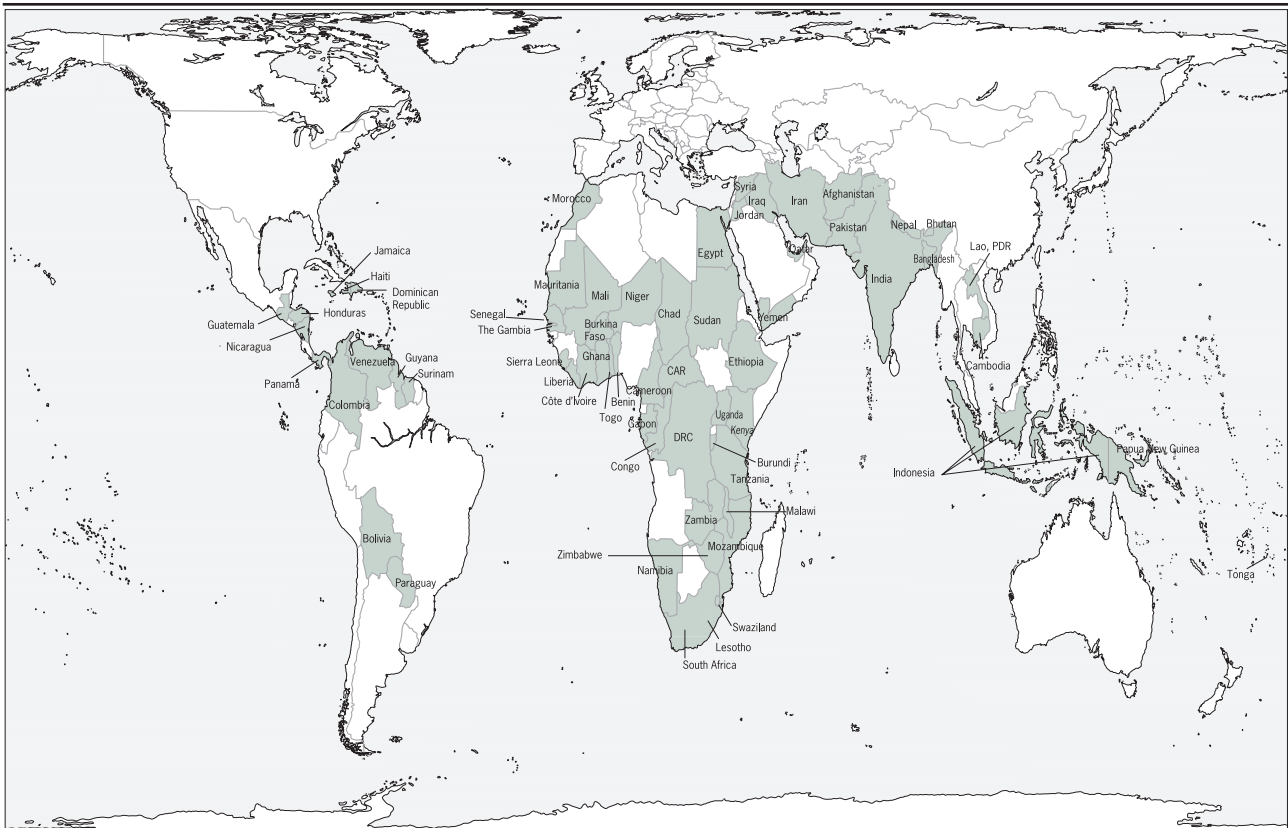
Countries with serious gender inequalities in 2014

cases being classified as particularly severe, mainly in Africa and Asia. A comparative analysis of this indicator against the same indicator in countries that are currently involved in armed conflict reveals that 12 of the 65 countries showing severe gender inequalities experienced one or more armed conflicts in 2014. We should point out that for four of the countries in which there are one or more armed conflicts, no data exists on gender equality —Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia and South Sudan. This means that **22 of the 36 armed conflicts that took place during 2014 occurred in countries where there are severe gender inequalities and that six of these conflicts took place in countries for which no data is available.** Thus, 61% of the armed conflicts for which gender equality data is available took place in contexts with severe gender inequalities. Furthermore, in 34 of the countries with severe inequalities, there were one or more cases of socio-political crisis. This means that at least 45 of the 95 active cases of socio-political crisis during 2014 took place in countries where there are severe gender inequalities, representing 56% of the cases of socio-political crisis for which data were available.

22 of the 36 armed conflicts that took place throughout 2014 occurred in countries where there were serious gender inequalities

During 2014, sexual violence as a weapon of war continued to be one of the central issues on the international agenda regarding women, peace and security. The international summit held in London in June to address this matter was a particularly important

event and ensured political and media publicity on this issue, although no significant progress was made in terms of actual commitments by governments regarding the fight against impunity and the real and effective protection of the population against this violence in armed conflict. It detected the use of sexual violence in many armed conflicts and socio-political crises active throughout the year, which had a serious impact on victims, mainly civilian women. On the other hand, at the institutional level, in addition to the previously mentioned summit in London, there were various efforts both to increase the visibility of this serious violation of human rights and to try to reduce its impact and the impunity associated with these cases.

During the year, several reports were issued in relation to **forced displacement** around the world as a result of armed conflict, violence and persecution. The data confirm the growing trend in this phenomenon, which now exceeds 50 million people and has had a strong impact on women. According to the UNHCR's annual report published in June 2014 —which presents the latest figures available at the end of 2013— there were 51.2 million forcibly displaced persons including refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers (compared with 45.2 million in 2012), of which 49% were women and girls. Note that one of every two refugees was a child, the highest figure in a

decade, which is particularly significant from a gender perspective, since the care of children falls mainly to women.

In the section on peacebuilding from a gender perspective, note that in October **the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on women, peace and security** to the UN General Assembly, complying with the provisions of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council issued in 2000. As in previous years, the report —which covers the year 2013— presents a follow-up of the implementation of this resolution based on an assessment of various indicators. The report emphasised that there had been significant regulatory developments, including the adoption of two new resolutions by the Security Council (2106 and 2122), a statement by the Peacebuilding Commission on women's empowerment, the inclusion in the Arms Trade Treaty of a criterion on gender violence and the approval of general recommendation No. 30 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Secretary-General's report detected an increased presence of women in formal peace processes. However, overall data on the participation of women in legislative and governmental political institutions indicated very limited involvement: only 22% of people who formed parliaments worldwide are women, and only 13.1% of ministerial positions were held by women. In parallel with the presentation of the Secretary-General's annual report, **the UN Security Council also celebrated the annual open debate on women, peace and security,** this time focusing on the situation of displaced women and girls.

Notably in 2014, **progress was made on gender-related issues in peace processes in countries such as the Philippines and Colombia.** Moreover, in other contexts such as Syria, there were also diplomatic efforts to get peace negotiations under way, although these were not successful. In March, the **Philippines** signed the final agreement to end the armed conflict in Mindanao, which has seen a decades-long confrontation between the Philippine government and MILF guerrillas. One of

the most important aspects of the peace process was its inclusiveness, since **women have been present on the negotiating teams in important positions, and even positions of leadership in the case of the government negotiating team.** With regard to the peace negotiations to end the armed conflict in **Colombia** between the government and the FARC, in September both parties agreed **to create a subcommittee on gender with a mandate to include women's voice and the gender perspective in all of the agreements reached at the negotiating table —both partial and in a possible final agreement.** The subcommittee, formed of five representatives from each of the parties, receives advice from national and international experts. The Senior Advisor on Gender Equality, Nigeria Rentería, who also participated in the peace negotiations, stressed the importance of making women's rights and the gender perspective a fundamental element in the peace agreements. For its part, the FARC stressed the importance for the armed group of non-discrimination on grounds of gender, highlighting that 40% of its members are women, and condemned accusations that the guerrilla group had used sexual violence in the conflict.

As regards the international agenda, it is noteworthy that the **United Nations and numerous civil society organisations have carried out preparatory work to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015**, as well as drawing up a new agenda. Some of the most important aspects of this work were the efforts to ensure that this new agenda includes a much more explicit reference to gender equality and the achievement of peace. During the celebration of its 58th session, the Commission on the Status of Women was able to ensure that the conclusions document to be agreed would include a call for the incorporation of gender equality into the new development agenda as a goal in itself, as well as the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls. In addition, it also ensured their inclusion in any other objectives established by means of targets and indicators.
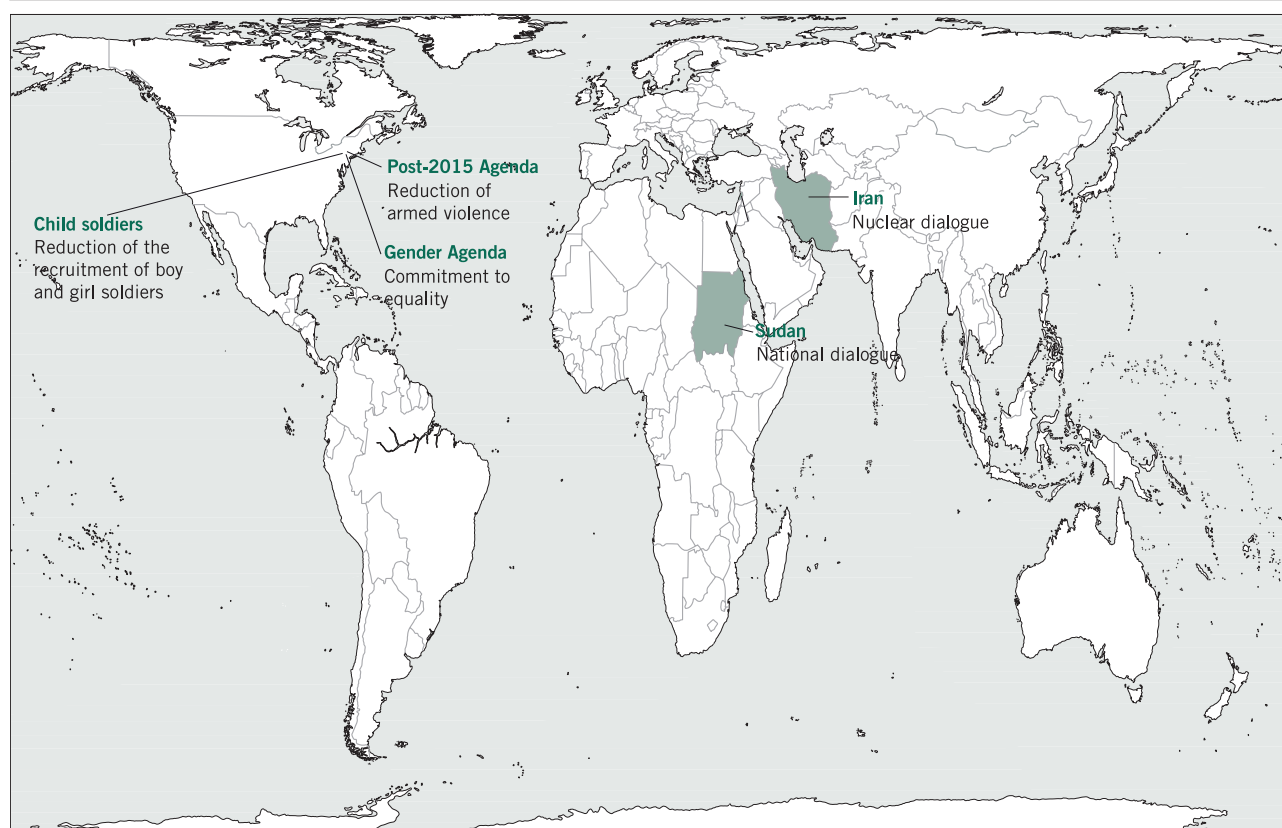
Opportunities for Peace in 2015

In the fifth chapter (**Opportunities for Peace in 2015**), the report identifies and examines five key areas likely to see positive steps towards peacebuilding in 2015. The opportunities identified in 2014 concern a number of different regions and issues.

- **Gender Agenda:** The 2015 review of resolution 1325 and the Millennium Development Goals by the Beijing Platform for Action constitutes an opportunity to move towards stronger and more substantive engagement that involves genuine sustainable development in which equality gender, the empowerment of women and peacebuilding are key elements.
- **Child soldiers:** The current combined efforts at multiple levels to prevent and reduce the recruitment and use of child soldiers through concerted mechanisms, including new action plans with governments and armed opposition groups and global awareness initiatives, among others, could see progress in 2015 and beyond, despite the many obstacles.
- **Violence Post-2015:** In recent years, a consensus has been formed on the need to include the reduction of armed violence on the

The Alert report identifies and examines five key areas likely to see positive steps towards peacebuilding in 2015

new development agenda that will replace the Millennium Development Goals. States will begin to discuss this in 2015. This represents an historic opportunity since this issue lies at the heart of the debate in the international community and creates a duty for states to mobilise their resources and take concrete and quantifiable measures.

- **Nuclear Dialogue:** Iran and the countries of the P5+1 group (USA, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany) have until mid-2015 to reach a consensus on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic. Negotiations in 2014 revealed important differences between the parties, but also yielded significant progress. The dialogue, which could lead to an historic agreement, will need to overcome many obstacles, including the suspicions of power groups in the US and Iran.
- **Sudan:** Throughout 2014, various steps have been taken towards establishing a national dialogue between the different social, political and military actors in order to comprehensively address the main problems and internal conflicts affecting the country, which could represent the most significant opportunity in recent years to build peace in the complex situation in Sudan.
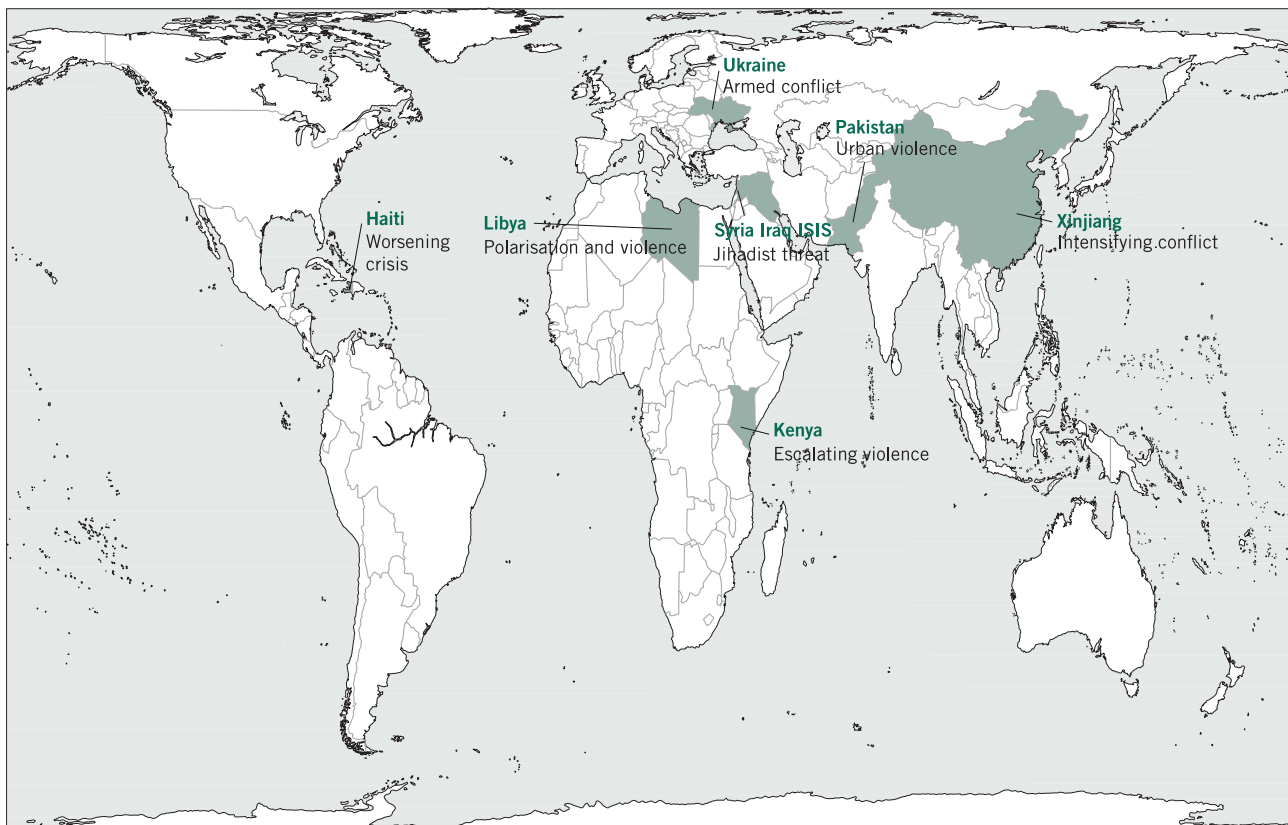
Risk scenarios for 2015

In the sixth chapter (**Risk scenarios for 2015**), the report identifies and examines seven cases of armed conflict and socio-political crisis that may worsen in light of their current conditions and become sources of even greater instability and violence during 2015.

- **Libya:** Three years after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, the situation in the country is characterised by severe polarisation, the existence of two parallel governments, intensified clashes between armed groups promoting a range of ideologies —with a serious impact on civilians— and the influence of regional rivalries. These dynamics and the difficulty in promoting opportunities for dialogue indicate that the country will remain a source of instability in 2015.

- **ISIS:** The Jihadist group has been identified as a major threat to stability in the Middle East, following a rapid rise in 2014 that has had serious consequences for civilians and has called into question the territorial integrity of Iraq and Syria. ISIS is forcing regional and international powers to make new strategic calculations, amid dilemmas on how to address a complex phenomenon that transcends mere military concerns.

The report analyses seven cases of armed conflict and socio-political crisis that may worsen during 2015 in light of their current conditions

- **Xinjiang:** In recent years, particularly in 2014, there has been an unprecedented increase in violence in Xinjiang, which has now become the main threat to national security and political and economic stability in China. The situation could be exacerbated in the future by Beijing's militarisation of the conflict and the increasing military capacity of the armed Uighur organisations.

- **Pakistan:** The provincial capitals —especially Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi— are being severely affected by violence and are at risk of becoming urban settings of increasingly severe and deadly attacks, as well as further militarisation, with serious consequences for the civilian population.

- **Kenya:** Kenya's military operation in Somalia, which began in 2011 to curb the threat of the Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab and prevent the expansion of its activities, has led to an increase in attacks by al-Shabaab and allied groups in Kenya, a controversial anti-terrorism policy by Kenya and the exacerbation of intercommunal socio-political crises, issues that could have even more serious consequences in the near future.

- **Haiti:** Both the protests and the political and institutional crisis that struck Haiti in 2014 could

worsen in early 2015, since the mandate of the bicameral Parliament expires on January 12 and this will open the door for Martelly to govern by decree. In such a setting, the opposition has already announced its intention to hold massive and continued protests, and the international community has expressed fears that outbreaks of violence could occur.

- **Ukraine:** The growing strength of armed groups during 2014, the antagonism of the parties, ambivalence regarding the implementation of the agreements reached, Russia's support for the insurgency and the serious international crisis between Russia and the West, among others, paint a worrying picture for 2015, with a continuation of the armed violence and even a worsening and expansion of the dispute and its battlefronts.

Map 1.1. **Armed conflicts**

Philippines

Russia

China

Myanmar
Thailand
India (Manipur)

India

Afghanistan
Pakistan

Russia
(Kabardino-Balkaria)

Yemen
Somalia

Ukraine

Turkey
Syria
Iraq
Israel-Palestine
Egypt
Sudan
Ethiopia
South Sudan
Libya
CAR
DRC
Nigeria
Algeria
Mali

Colombia
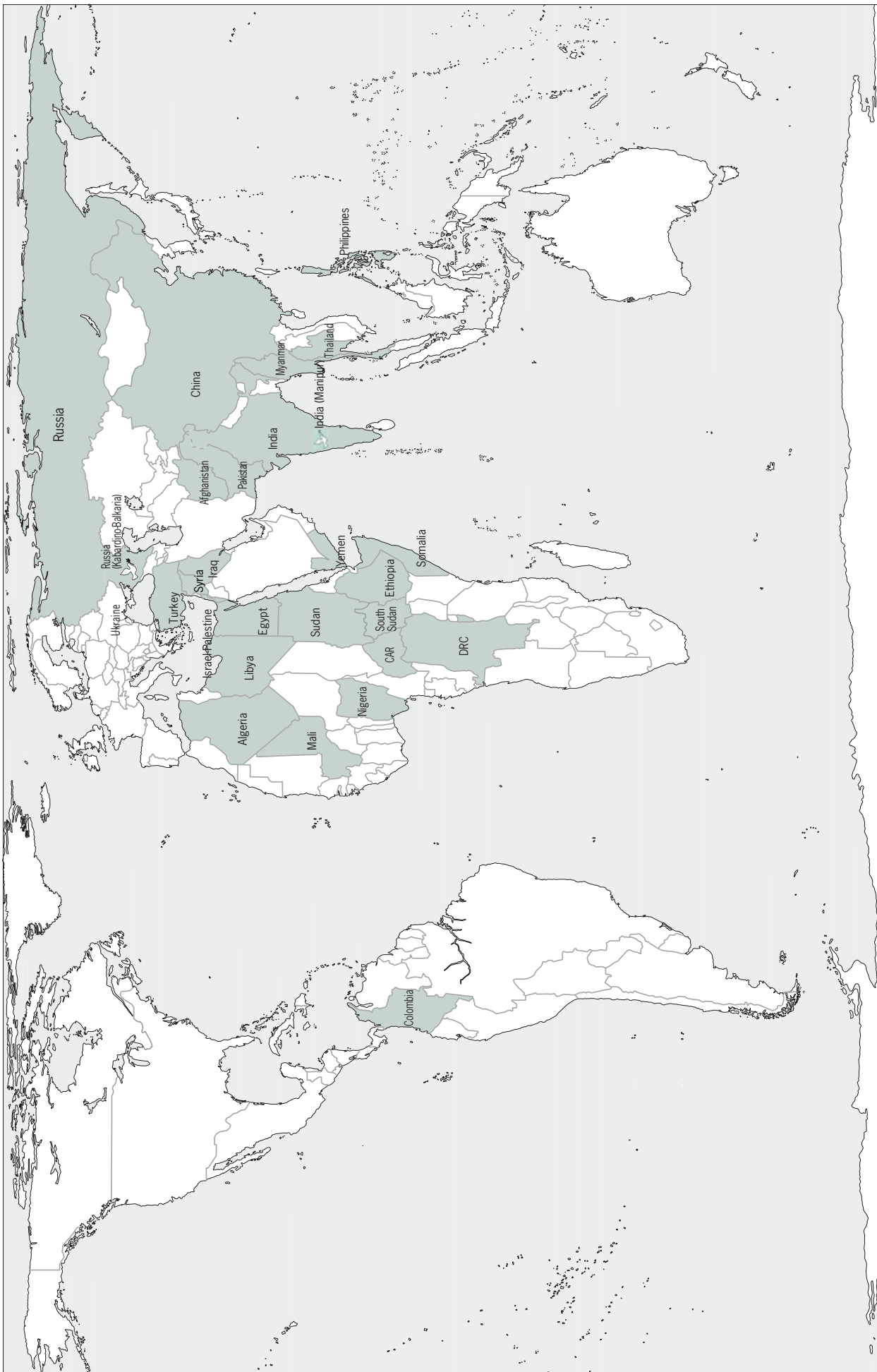
End of armed conflict in 2014

Countries with armed conflicts in 2014

1. Armed Conflicts

- 36 armed conflicts were recorded in 2014, mainly in Africa (13) and Asia (12), followed by the Middle East (six), Europe (four) and America (one).
- The conflict between the armed group Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces escalated to levels unprecedented since the outbreak of hostilities in 2009.
- The violence intensified in Libya and claimed over 1,000 lives in a context of growing fragmentation and political polarisation.
- Systematic ethnically motivated attacks were carried out on the civilian population in South Sudan, claiming several thousand lives.
- 2014 was a decisive year in Afghanistan with the holding of presidential elections and the change in the international military missions deployed in the country in a context of increasing armed violence with a growing impact on the civilian population.
- The conflict in east Ukraine between the security forces of the post-Yanukovych regime and the pro-Russian insurgency caused over 4,700 fatalities and forced the displacement of around one million civilians.
- For the first time since the Chechen wars of the 1990s, the leadership of the North Caucasus insurgency was held by a non-Chechen, Ali Abu Muhammad, a native of Dagestan.
- The violence in Iraq was at its most intense since 2007 and caused between 12,000 and 17,000 fatalities in a year marked by the offensives by the Islamic State group (ISIS).
- The escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2014, especially in Gaza, claimed over 2,000 lives, most of them Palestinians.
- The armed conflict in Syria remained a source of instability in the Middle East, claiming over 76,000 lives and causing the mass forced displacement of people both inside and outside the country.

The present chapter analyses the armed conflicts that occurred in 2014. It is structured 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 2014, including global and regional trends and other issues related to international conflicts, such as arms embargoes and international missions. 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 2014.

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.

Table 1.1. **Summary of armed conflicts in 2014**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties[3]	Intensity[4] / Trend[5]
Africa			
Algeria (AQIM) -1992-	Internationalised internal	Government, AQIM (formerly GSPC), MUJWA, Signatories in Blood, Jund al-Khilafa (Soldiers of the Caliphate), Governments of Libya, Mauritania, Mali and Niger	1
	System		↓
Central Africa (LRA) -1986-	International	AU Regional Task Force (RTF, comprising Ugandan, Congolese and Southern Sudanese armed forces), self-defence militias from DRC and South Sudan, LRA	1
	Resources		=
CAR -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, demobilised members of the former rebel coalition Séléka (splinter groups of the former CPJP, UFDR and CPSK groups), anti-balaka militias, France (Operation Sangaris), MICOPAX/FOMAC (transformed into the AU mission MISCA, in turn transformed into the UN mission MINUSCA), EUFOR, groups linked to the former government of François Bozizé, other residual forces from armed groups (former armed forces), LRA armed Ugandan group	3
	Government		↑
DRC (east) -1998-	Internationalised internal	Government, Mai-Mai militia, FDLR, M23 (formerly CNDP), APCLS, Ituri armed groups, Burundian armed opposition group FNL, Ugandan armed opposition groups ADF-NALU, Rwanda, MONUSCO	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↓
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Internationalised internal	DRC, Mai-Mai militia, armed opposition group ADF-NALU, MONUSCO	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↑
Ethiopia (Ogaden) -2007-	Internationalised internal	Government, ONLF, OLF, pro-government militias	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Libya -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government with headquarters in Tobruk, government with headquarters in Tripoli, armed factions linked to the "Operation Dignity", armed groups linked to "Operation Dawn", Islamist militias, Ansar al-Sharia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates, among other countries	3
	Government, Resources		↑
Mali (north) -2012-	Internationalised internal	Government, MNLA, MAA, HCUA, CMFPR, CPA, GATIA, Ansar Dine, MUJWA, AQIM, al-Murabitoun, ECOWAS, France, Chad, MINUSMA	2
	System, Self-government, Identity		=

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. This last option is used in cases involving more than one armed conflict in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
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 2014 with those that of 2013. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2014 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			
Nigeria (Boko Haram) - 2011 -	Internationalised internal	Government, Boko Haram (BH) radical Islamist group, Ansaru, Cameroon	3
	System		↑
Somalia -1988-	Internationalised internal	Federal government, pro-government militias and warlords, USA, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, al-Shabaab, Eritrea	3
	Government, System		↑
South Sudan -2009-	Internationalised internal	Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), community militias, Uganda, Sudan	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		↑
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Janjaweed pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, JEM, LJM coalition, several factions of the SLA and other armed groups	2
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		↑
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, SPLM-N armed group, Sudan Revolutionary Forces (SRF) armed coalition, PDF pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, South Sudan	2
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		↑
America			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, FARC, ELN, paramilitary groups	2
	System		↓
Asia			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, international coalition (led by the USA), ISAF (NATO), Taliban militias, warlords	3
	System		↑
China (East Turkestan) -2014-	Internal	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition	2
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		↑
India (Assam) -1983-	Internationalised internal	Government, ULFA, NDFB, KPLT, KLO, MULTA, HUM	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)	2
	System		↓
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
India (Manipur) -1982-	Internal	Government, PLA, UNLF, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KNF, KNA, KYKL, RPF, UPPK, PCP	1
	Self-government, Identity		End
Myanmar -1948-	Internal	Government, armed groups (KNU, SSA-S, KNPP, UWSA, CNF, ALP, DKBA, KNU/KNLA, SSNPLO, KIO)	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Taliban militias, tribal militias, USA	3
	System		=
Pakistan (Baluchistan) -2005-	Internal	Government, BLA, BRA, BLF, BLT, Jundullah, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	3
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		=
Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		=
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, secessionist armed opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
Europa			
Russia (Dagestan) -2010-	Internal	Federal Russian Government, Government of the Republic of Dagestan, armed opposition groups	2
	System, Self-government, Identity		↓
Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria) -2011-	Internal	Federal Russian Government, Government of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups	1
	System, Self-government, Identity		End
Turkey (south-east) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Ukraine -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-Russian armed actors in eastern provinces, Russia, EU, USA	3
	Government, Identity, Self-government		↑
Middle East			
Egypt (Sinai) -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, security forces, ared groups based in Sinai (including Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM), Ajnad Misr, and Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya), Israel	1
	System		↑
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Iraqi and Kurdish (Peshmerga) military and security forces, Islamic State (ISIS), Shiite militias, Sunni armed groups, USA, international anti-ISIS coalition, Iran	3
	System, Government, Identity		↑
Israel-Palestine -2000-	International	Israeli Government, settler militias, ANP, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, PFLP, DFLP, Popular Resistance Committees	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Syria -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Islamic Front, al-Nusra Front, Islamic State (ISIS), Kurdish militias (PYD), USA, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE)	3
	Government, System		↑
Yemen (AQAP) - 2011 -	Internationalised internal	Government, AQAP/Ansar Sharia, USA, Saudi Arabia, tribal militias (popular resistance committees)	2
	System		↑
Yemen (Houthis) -2004-	Internationalised internal	Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabab al-Mumen), tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias, armed sectors linked to the Islamist party Islah, Saudi Arabia	2
	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

1.2. Armed conflicts: analysis of trends in 2014

This section offers an analysis of the global trends of armed conflicts in 2014 –including their impact on civilians and cities, arms embargoes and international missions– as well as the main trends of armed conflicts at a regional level.

1.2.1. Global trends

Throughout 2014, 36 armed conflicts were recorded worldwide, a similar figure to that observed in recent years (35 cases in 2013, 38 in 2012). During 2014, four new cases were reported: The DRC (east-ADF) —due to intensified armed offensives by the Islamist group formed of Ugandan and Congolese combatants; China (East Turkestan) —which registered unprecedented levels of violence, thus confirming the intensification of the conflict between the Chinese authorities and Uighur insurgency organisations in recent years; Ukraine —following the escalation of armed clashes between pro-Russian militia and Ukrainian forces in the east of the country; and Egypt (Sinai) —given the increased frequency and lethality of incidents involving armed groups based in the peninsula. At the end of 2014, only 34 of the 36 armed conflicts continued to be active, due to a decrease in the levels of violence and confrontation in two contexts: India (Manipur) and Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria). Both cases confirmed the reduction in violent incidents reported in previous years.

Following the trend seen in previous years in the geographic distribution of armed conflicts, most were concentrated in Africa (13 cases) and Asia (12), followed by the Middle East (6), Europe (4) and America (1). Of the total number of armed conflicts, two cases (5%) had an international dimension (the dispute between Israel and Palestine and the conflict between the Ugandan armed group, the LRA, and the military forces of several countries in central Africa) and a further nine cases (25%) involved internal conflicts. The vast majority of armed conflicts in 2014 (25 cases, equivalent to 69%) were internationalised internal, i.e. contexts in which one of the parties in the dispute was foreign or where

the fighting had spread to the territory of other countries, among other factors. **This internationalisation of the conflicts was especially evident in the involvement of third parties, including states**. In this sense, several countries were singled out for their involvement in the conflict in Libya; France maintained its military deployment in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and the CAR; the US continued its involvement in Yemen and, in coalition with other allies, in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and Russia became involved in Ukraine, among other cases. It was also evident in **armed groups' expansion of their activities beyond their state borders and/or in the regional dimension acquired by these activities** (such as AQIM in the Sahel; Boko Haram, which extended its offensive from Nigeria to Cameroon; and Islamic State (ISIS), which extended its attacks in Iraq and Syria); in the presence of **missions led by the UN** (including MINUSMA in Mali and MONUSCO in the DRC) **or by other regional organisations** (such as NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan or the missions EUFOR (EU) and MISCA (UA) in the CAR), **in addition to international ad-hoc coalitions** (such as the US-led anti-ISIS alliance).

During 2014, 36 armed conflicts were reported around the world, mostly in Africa (13) and Asia (12). At the end of the year, only 34 remained active

During 2014, this internationalisation also became apparent in the regional and international impact of various conflicts. It was apparent, for example, in the impact of the war in Syria on the dynamics of the conflict in Turkey between the government and the armed group PKK, and in the escalation of violence in neighbouring countries; and also in the case of the crisis in Ukraine and the latter's impact on the increasing tensions between Russia and the West, whose relations have deteriorated to the worst levels since the days of the Cold War. Overall, it is notable that the internationalisation of most of today's conflicts manifests in phenomena such as population displacement as a result of violence, trafficking in arms and resources, neighbouring countries' backing of one of the parties in the dispute and the participation of foreign fighters. In this regard, the case of ISIS in 2014 was of particular relevance due to the huge capacity of the armed group to recruit foreign fighters, who were attracted by the organisation's advance in Iraq and Syria, but also by its

Graph 1.1. **Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2014**

extensive propaganda campaign. In the case of ISIS, it is also worth noting that following the declaration of the Caliphate in the areas under its control in Syria and Iraq, armed groups from various countries declared their sympathy or loyalty to the organisation and/or began to claim responsibility for some of their acts in the name of ISIS. Militia groups from a number of countries closer to home (including groups from Algeria, Egypt and Libya), but also from more distant areas (such as Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar in Pakistan, or some insurgent factions in the North Caucasus —in Russian republics such as Dagestan and Chechnya— among other cases) publicly declared their commitment or loyalty to ISIS. Regardless of whether these constitute a partnership in the true sense of the word or are merely an ideological affiliation, many analysts have linked this phenomenon to the global competition between the Jihadist projects of ISIS and the al-Qaeda network —which became evident in 2014— leading many organisations to align themselves with the franchise perceived to be the most successful and powerful (ISIS), in an attempt to gain the upper hand in their own local projects.

Regarding the causes of the armed conflict, an analysis of the contexts in 2014 confirms that they are multi-causal phenomena, in which various elements converge. Nonetheless, it is still possible to identify trends in their guiding motivations. **Two thirds of the armed conflicts in 2014 (24 cases) had opposition to a particular government or to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state among their main causes.** Of this total, at least nine cases involved armed groups that had mobilised due to their rejection of policies adopted by the governments of their respective countries, prompting violent struggles to take or to erode power. This dimension was instrumental in contexts such as the CAR, a country subject to a *de facto* division into a northern central area, partially controlled by several Seleka factions, and another area in the south that shows a stronger presence by the government and anti-balaka militias; Libya, where the dispute resulted in the formation of two parallel governments and multiple armed-clashes; Ukraine, where eastern areas came to be controlled by pro-Russian armed groups opposed to the new pro-European government; or Yemen, where the al-Houthists challenged the authorities and forced a change of government. Opposition to the government was also an important factor in the cases of the DRC (east), Somalia, South Sudan, Iraq and Syria.

In the vast majority of the above-mentioned cases (19), a determining factor was the opposition to the political, economic or ideological system of the state, which caused many armed groups to engage in a violent struggle to bring about a change to the system. Among these cases, we should distinguish between groups that were motivated by a socialist-inspired ideological
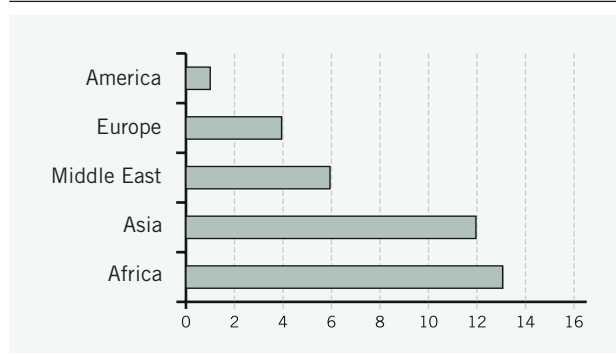
agenda and others whose motivations were more closely linked to the establishment of a political system based on Islamic precepts or involving a more prominent role of Islamic law in shaping the state. Among the first, notable are cases such as Colombia (FARC and ELN), the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), where the various leftist guerrillas have fought a decades-long armed struggle against government forces. In fact, these armed conflicts are among the longest-lived conflicts in the world —50, 45 and 47 years since the start of hostilities, respectively. In more than a dozen other cases, the aspirations of one or more armed groups focused on giving greater prominence to Islamic precepts —or to certain organisations' particular interpretation of these precepts— within the state structure. This type of agenda was present in cases such as Algeria (AQIM), Mali (Jihadist groups in the north), Nigeria (Boko Haram), Somalia (al-Shabaab), Afghanistan and Pakistan (al-Qaeda and Taliban), the Philippines (Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao), Russia (insurgencies in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria), Yemen (AQAP and al-Houthists), Iraq (ISIS) and Syria (ISIS and al-Nusra Front, among others). In the case of ISIS, the organisation made this ambition apparent when it declared a "caliphate"[6] in the areas under its control in Iraq and Syria.

A large number of cases in 2014 had identity struggles or demands for self-determination and/or self-government among their motivations —with these being present in more than half of all armed conflicts in 2014 (21 of the 36 cases). In keeping with the trend in previous years, these types of factors were particularly prevalent in Asia and Europe, but were also present in other continents. Among the conflicts motivated by identity and self-government issues, we find cases such as that of Sudan, which during 2014 faced an escalation of the conflict in the regions of Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile; that of China (East Turkestan), which experienced a significant increase in the violence perpetrated by armed groups linked to the Uighur minority and the Chinese security forces; or that of India (Assam), a setting that was also the scene of increased violence mainly due to the actions of the Bodo armed group NDFB(S), a faction opposed to the peace negotiations with the government. In contrast, the case of the Indian state of Manipur —where government forces have been fighting several armed groups demanding independence since the 1980s— was noteworthy due to the fall in the levels of violence. Two other armed conflicts where identity and self-determination issues have a crucial role are Myanmar, where dozens of insurgent groups are fighting against the Government; and Turkey (southeast), where the Kurdish issue is pending a resolution. Both cases raised certain hopes due to positive developments in 2013; however, throughout 2014 both conflicts reported a worsening of the situation, which has laid bare the hurdles yet to be overcome in addressing the transformation of long-running conflicts of this type —more than six decades in

the case of Myanmar and 30 years for Turkey (southeast). It is notable that identity and self-determination aspirations were also present in the armed conflicts in Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), the DRC (east), South Sudan, the Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf), Pakistan (Balochistan), Thailand (south), Russia (Dagestan), Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria), Iraq and Yemen (al-Houthists). In some cases, such as in Mali (north), actors with identity and self-government agendas —such as various Tuareg armed groups— coexisted alongside other Jihadist organisations (AQIM, Ansar Dine, MUJWA), which lean more heavily towards a total change in the system.

In this sense, note that the struggle for control of territory and of resources was also among the major causes of armed conflicts, mostly in Africa. Disputes over the various resource types was relevant in settings such as Libya, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan and Central Africa (LRA). In the latter case, disputes over resources such as ivory, gold and diamonds played a key role in the dynamics of the conflict. Without necessarily constituting one of the main motivations of the conflict, the attempt to control resources and territories was present in many other cases, and fuelled the dynamics of the conflict. For example, in 2014 it was observed that the Boko Haram group in Nigeria had opted for a new *modus operandi* that led to a growing commitment to establish its dominance in some areas and, by the end of the year, it already controlled more than twenty cities in the northeast of the country. Disputes over territory and particularly for the control of certain strategic locations was also an instrumental factor in the armed conflict in Ukraine. Meanwhile, in the case of ISIS, the group's territorial expansion and its strategy to control oil wells in Iraq and Syria were fundamental to the objective of procuring a source of finance for the organisation and in order to support the caliphate.

One of the most striking features in the range of conflicts in 2014 was the large number of settings which suffered a deterioration during the year. More than half of all armed conflicts (20 cases, equivalent to 55%) saw a deterioration in their situation and an increase in their levels of violence, while in 22% of cases (eight conflicts) the situation was similar to the previous year. In only eight cases —including the two that were no longer considered armed conflicts at the end of 2014— was there a decrease in the levels of the conflict. This general trend towards increasing levels of conflict was also echoed by the increase in the number of high-intensity cases compared to previous years. During 2014, a total of 12 armed conflicts recorded high levels of violence, with an annual toll exceeding one thousand deaths in each case: Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the CAR, Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Ukraine, Iraq, Israel-Palestine and Syria. In many of these cases, the tally

---

6.   A "Caliphate" is a type of Islamic government led by a caliph, an individual who is considered a political and religious successor of the Prophet Muhammad and a leader of the Muslim community of believers.

Graph 1.2. **Intensity of the armed conflicts in 2014**

Low **33%**   High **34%**

Medium **33%**

Graph 1.3. **Intensity of the armed conflicts by region**

☐ Low   ☐ Medium   ■ High
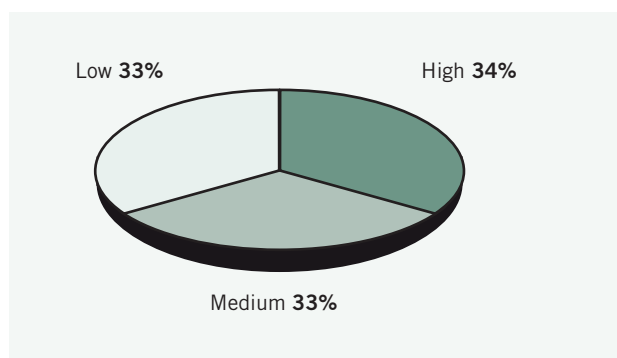
of persons killed in the conflict greatly exceeded one thousand people; for example, 3,699 civilian casualties in Afghanistan; more than 11,500 fatalities in Pakistan; and between 12,000 and 17,000 fatalities in Iraq in 2014, according to sources. In a further two cases, the levels of violence were exceeded even more significantly. In Syria, it is estimated that the war killed more than 76,000 people in 2014, bringing the total number of fatalities since the start of the crisis in 2011 to 200,000 people. In South Sudan, preliminary death tolls indicate that between 50,000 and 100,000 people lost their lives as a result of the conflict in 2014. As regards the remaining conflicts, they were distributed equally (12 cases each) between medium- and low-intensity conflicts.

In general, we should also mention that several countries were host to more than one armed conflict —of varying intensities and based on specific rationales and dynamics— including the DRC, Sudan, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia and Yemen. Regarding the duration of the armed conflicts, the average duration of the cases reported in 2014 was 15.7 years, slightly below last year's figure, partly due to the emergence of new conflicts during the year. However, this average figure should be interpreted in relative terms, and taking into account various factors, including the difficulty in determining the start of the armed conflict in many cases and, furthermore, the fact that some cases involve disputes that were subject to prior phases of violence and war, as in the case of Israel-Palestine and Afghanistan. Despite these limitations, it is interesting to note that some of the longest running conflicts are concentrated in Asia, including the conflict between the Burmese authorities and various insurgent groups in Myanmar (66 years), the dispute between government forces and the Naxalite insurgency in India (47) and the dispute between the government and the NPA armed group in the Philippines (45). Outside of Asia, notable is the long-running conflict in Colombia, which appeared to be moving towards a negotiated settlement in 2014 following five decades of confrontation between the government and the guerrillas.

One of the most salient features of the range of conflicts in 2014 was that more than half of cases (55.5%) reported a deterioration in the situation and increased levels of violence compared to 2013
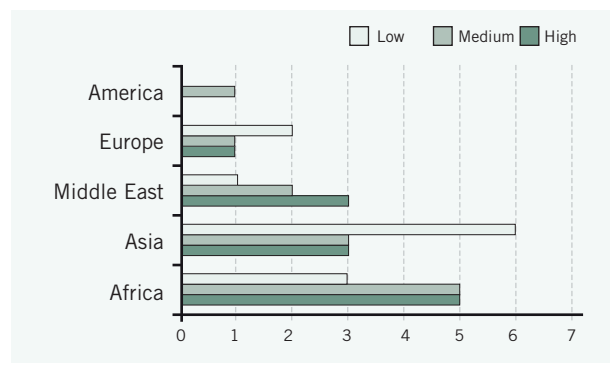
Impact of conflict on civilians

As in previous years, in 2014 armed conflicts continued to have a serious impact on civilians. The consequences of these conflicts were not merely limited to a high number of civilian casualties in clashes between state and non-state armed groups, but rather they also had an impact in other contexts, including **indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, refugee camps, schools and hospitals; massacres and summary executions; arbitrary detentions; torture and other physical and psychological abuse; sexual violence; recruitment of child soldiers; and massive forced population displacement,** both within and outside the borders of their respective countries. Overall, a series of acts constituting a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Armed conflicts caused severe damage to infrastructure and hindered access by civilian populations to basic services. In many settings, armed actors deliberately blocked access to humanitarian aid and in some cases, such as Syria or the Kordofan region in Sudan, the use of "hunger" as a weapon of war was detected against populations considered hostile or supporters of the opposing side. In addition, **armed conflicts continued to have a direct impact on the increasing insecurity and impoverishment of millions of people.** Proof of this was the case in Syria, where data for 2014 indicated that 75% of the population was living in poverty, more than half in extreme poverty, and 20% in a state of abject poverty which did not even permit them to attend to their most basic needs. More than half of children of school age had ceased to attend school, relegating Syria to second place among the list of countries with the lowest school enrolment rate worldwide. In Ukraine, the civilian population was not only directly affected by hostilities, but also by other measures such as the decision of the Ukrainian government to suspend state funding in areas considered to be in rebellion, in a bid to prevent resources falling into the hands of insurgent forces. The move left thousands of people in a state

of severe vulnerability, particularly children, the elderly and those dependent on social aid.

Forced population displacement was, for a further a year, one of the most visible consequences of armed conflict, and continued to worsen during 2014. Both the overall figures for the year 2013 and the partial data for 2014 have confirmed the upward trend in this phenomenon in recent years. According to the annual report of the UNHCR, **while in 2012 there were 45.2 million people displaced globally as a result of conflict, persecution, human rights violations and generalised violence, in late 2013 the figure had risen to 51.2 million. The UNHCR noted that the global figure of 50 million displaced people had been exceeded for the first time since World War II.**[7] Of the total number of people forced from their homes in 2013, 16.7 million were refugees (11.7 million under the UNHCR's mandate and 5 million Palestinians under the UNRWA), while a further 33.3 million were classified as forcibly displaced persons within their own countries and 1.2 million as asylum seekers.[8] The (non-definitive)

The UNHCR warned that the global figure of 50 million people displaced by violence had been exceeded for the first time since World War II

data regarding the global forced displacement situation during the first half of 2014 —also compiled by the UNHCR— indicated that these figures had increased. **At least 5.5 million people more had been forced from their homes by violence between January and June 2014.** Of these, 1.3 million chose to flee their countries.[9] Given these developments, the UNHCR warned that in recent years the multiple global refugee crises had reached levels not seen since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Predictably, the definitive data on forced displacement for the year will increase the final tally for 2014, especially considering the impact of several crises that gained particular prominence in the first half of the year. Among them, the outbreak of violence in late 2013 in the CAR, which led to an exodus of more than 143,000 people to neighbouring countries in the early months of 2014, as well as the war in Syria. According to UNHCR estimates, half of all people who became new refugees worldwide between January and June 2014 were of Syrian origin. In total, the Syrian refugee population numbered more

Map 1.2. **Number of people internally displaced in 2013**
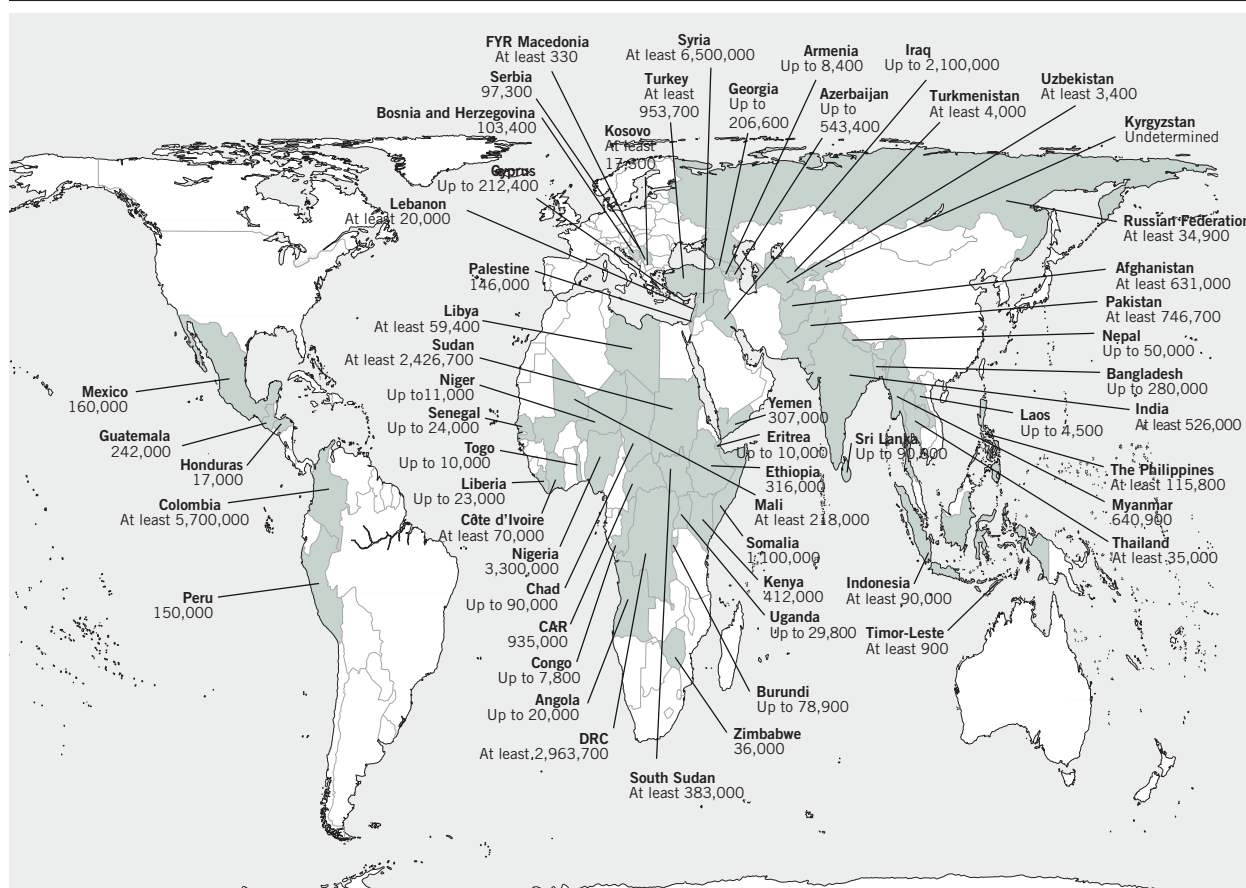
Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Overview 2013. People internally displaced by conflict and violence*, IDMC, April 2014

7. UNHCR, "World Refugee Day: Global forced displacement tops 50 million for first time in post-World War II era", *UNHCR News Stories*, UNHCR, 20 June 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html.
8. UNHCR, *War's Human Costs: UNHCR Global Trends 2013*, UNHCR, June 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/5399a14f9.html.
9. UNHCR, *UNHCR: Mid-Year Trends 2014,* 7 January 2015, UNHCR, http://unhcr.org/54aa91d89.html.

Graph 1.4. Refugee population under UNHCR's mandate*
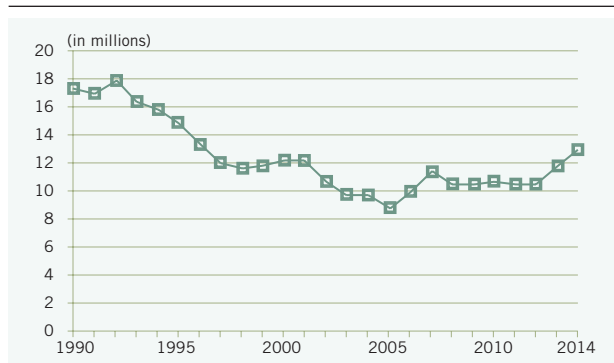
(in millions)

* Other 5 million Palestinians refugees were under UNRWA's mandate

Source: UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2014*, UNCHR, January 2015.

than three million people, while the people displaced within the country amounted to over 6.5 million. In other contexts that suffered a severe deterioration, such as Iraq, it was estimated that the number of internally displaced people had risen to almost two million by the end of 2014. In Ukraine, the armed conflict that erupted in 2014 displaced about one million people within the borders of the country while another 600,000 sought asylum or other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries, mainly in Russia.

Note that the countries neighbouring the conflict areas continued to be the leading receivers of refugees. According to UNHCR data, only one industrialised country (Sweden) appeared among the top ten host countries (based on an indicator expressing the number of refugees as ratio of the total population). In some cases, the presence of refugees became a particularly visible problem, as in the case of Lebanon, which in mid-2014 was the country with the largest refugee population density in the world with 257 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants. **Forced displacement continued to expose millions of people around the world to violence, discrimination, vulnerability, insecurity, limited access to jobs and basic services and often further abuse, including trafficking, forced recruitment or sexual violence.**

The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, especially against women, remained a common practice in many armed conflicts. This was noted in numerous reports by NGOs, women's organisations and the United Nations. **The report of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, on conflict-related sexual violence —published in March 2014 and covering the period from January to December 2013— noted the widespread use of sexual violence in armed conflict flashpoints around the world,** which materialised in acts such as rape and other sexual abuse, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy

International reports noted the widespread use of sexual violence in conflicts worldwide, particularly against women, including rape, sexual slavery and forced prostitution, among other abuses

and forced sterilisation, among other acts. The report detailed the particular impact of this phenomenon on women and girls and provided hard data —although not exhaustive data, due to the difficulties in investigating such abuse— for twenty countries, including conflict-affected areas such as Afghanistan, the CAR, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan (Darfur), Syria and Yemen; plus several cases considered by the UN to be post-conflict situations, including Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. During 2013, the case of the DRC was once again noted for the prevalence of the phenomenon in the eastern part of the country, in which more than 15,000 cases of sexual and gender violence were documented. Throughout 2014, various reports pointed to new episodes of sexual violence in the DRC and in other armed conflicts, including severe cases in countries such as Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, among others.

The impact of armed conflict on children also remained a major concern. During 2014, the UN Secretary-General published a new report on children and armed conflict —the 13th edition covered the period from January to December 2013— once again highlighting the many abuses committed by state and non-state actors in this area.[10] Such abuses included recruiting or using children to commit acts of violence, sexual violence against children, murdering or maiming of children, and attacks on schools and hospitals. A range of practices that contravene international law. The serious consequences of these conflicts on children were particularly evident in the indiscriminate or deliberate attacks on civilian areas, which were responsible for the deaths of many children throughout 2013. The report singled out several cases, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, for the increased deaths and maiming of children in these countries; Syria, due to the impact on children of the intensification of the hostilities and the worsening humanitarian crisis; Nigeria, due to the growing actions of the armed group Boko Haram against schools in the northeast of the country; and the CAR and South Sudan, due to the extensive recruitment of children in these countries. **Regarding the use of children in conflicts, the report noted that the UN had achieved more than 4,000 documented cases of recruitment of children, although it is estimated that the magnitude of this phenomenon at global level is much higher.** The report also warned of the particular vulnerability of children to sexual attacks and denounced the frequent detention of children for alleged links with armed groups.

The report, which analyses twenty cases, condemned nearly 60 state and non-state armed groups in 15 countries

---

10. UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary-General,* A/68/878-S/2014/339, 15 May 2014, http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2014/339.

for recruiting or using children and/or committing serious abuses against children (death, maiming, sexual abuse, attacks on schools) in 2013. Including members of the military, police and security services in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, and 53 non-state actors. Of the total number of forces reported for being responsible for these types of abuse, over half —a total of 31— were considered persistent perpetrators, due to their having displayed a continuous pattern of violence and aggression against children for a period exceeding five years.

In addition to the overview for 2013 presented in the Secretary-General's report, multiple violations of the human rights of children were reported in various armed conflicts during 2014. Several of these episodes gained particular notoriety, such as the assaults committed by the armed group Boko Haram in Nigeria, including the kidnapping of more than 200 girls from a school in April; the deaths of over a hundred children in an attack on a school in the city of Peshawar in Pakistan towards the end of the year; and the multiple abuses by the organisation Islamic State (ISIS), including murders, child recruitment and sexual violence, particularly —but not exclusively— against girls from the Yazidi minority. In this context, **in late 2014 UNICEF warned that more than one in ten children in the world (230 million) were living in countries experiencing armed**

Table 1.2 **Actors in conflict which violate children's rights, according to the UN**[11]

Conflict	Recruitment and use of children	Killing and mutilation	Rape and other forms of sexual violence	Attacks on schools and hospitals
Afghanistan	**-Afghan National Police, including Afghan Local Police*** **-Haqqani network** **-Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar** **-Taliban forces, including the Tora Bora Front, the Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia and the Latif Mansur Network**	**-Haqqani network** **-Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar** **-Taliban forces, including the Tora Bora Front, the Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia and the Latif Mansur Network**	--	**-Taliban forces, including the Tora Bora Front, the Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia and the Latif Mansur Network**
Central Africa (LRA)	**-LRA**	**-LRA**	**-LRA**	--
CAR	- Ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP)*, the Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix Fondamentale (CPJP-Fondamentale), Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC), Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR)* - Local defence militias known as the anti-Balaka	- Ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including CPJP*, CPJP-Fondamentale, FDPC, UFDR* - Local defence militias known as the anti-Balaka	- Ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including CPJP*, CPJP-Fondamentale, FDPC, UFDR*	- Ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including CPJP*, CPJP-Fondamentale, FDPC, UFDR*
Colombia	**- Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)** **- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)**	--	--	--
DRC	- Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) **- Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** **- Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)** **- Front de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI)** - Mayi Mayi Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), and "Colonel Janvier" **- Mayi Mayi "Lafontaine" and former elements of the Patriotes résistants congolais (PARECO)** - Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan" - Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) - Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga - Nduma Defence Coalition (NDC)/Cheka - Mayi Mayi Nyatura	- Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) - Nduma Defence Coalition (NDC)/Cheka	**- Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** **- Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)** **- Front de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI)** - Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan" - Mouvement du 23 mars (M23)	**- Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)** **- Front de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI)**

---

11. The information in this table has been extracted from the 13th annual report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, covering the period between January and December 2013. UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary-General*, A/68/878-S/2014/339, 15 May 2014. The list identifies the actors that recruit or use children, kill or maim children, commit rape or other forms of sexual violence against children or carry out attacks on schools and/or hospitals in contexts of armed conflict from among those included in the agenda of the UN Security Council. The report of the Secretary-General (and the table in this chapter, based on appendices I and II) includes only information verified by the UN, meaning that in practice there may be many more cases of perpetrators of such violations that are not reflected in the report for a number of reasons. such violations that are not reflected in the report for a number of reasons.

Conflict	Recruitment and use of children	Killing and mutilation	Rape and other forms of sexual violence	Attacks on schools and hospitals
Iraq	**- Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)/Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I)**	**- Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)/ Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I)**	--	**- Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)/ Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I)**
Mali	- Mouvement national de liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA) - Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) - Ansar Dine		- Mouvement national de liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA) - Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) - Ansar Dine	
Myanmar	**- Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA)** **- Kachin Independence Army (KIA)** **- Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA)** **- Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council** **- Karenni Army (KNPP/KA)** **- Shan State Army South (SSA-S)** **- Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forcesa,•** **- United Wa State Army (UWSA)**	--	--	--
Nigeria		- Boko Haram	- Boko Haram	
Philippines	**- Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)** - Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) **- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)*** **- New People's Army (NPA)**	--	--	--
Somalia	**- Al Shabaab** - Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah (ASWJ) **- Somali National Army***	**- Al Shabaab** - Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah (ASWJ) **- Somali National Army***	--	--
South Sudan	**- Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)** - Opposition armed groups, including former SPLA in opposition - White Army	**- Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)** - Opposition armed groups, including former SPLA in opposition	--	--
Sudan	- Government forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) and the Sudan police forces (Border Intelligence Forces and Central Reserve Police) **- Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)** **- Pro-Government militias** **- Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid** **- Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi** - Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N)	--	--	--
Syria	- Ahrar al-Sham al-Islami - Free Syrian Army (FSA)- affiliated groups - Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) - Jhabat Al-Nusra - People Protection Units (YPG)	- Ahrar al-Sham al-Islami - Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and the Shabbiha militia - Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) - Jhabat Al-Nusra	- Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and the Shabbiha militia	-Government forces, including the Armed Forces, the intelligence forces and the Shabbiha militia
Yemen	- Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah - Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula (AQIP)/Ansar al-Sharia - Government forces, including the Yemeni Armed Forces, the First Armoured Division, the Military Police, the special security forces and Republican Guards - Pro-Government militias, including the Salafists and Popular Committees	--	--	--

- The armed groups in this table are indicated with the designation used in the English version of the report of the UN Secretary-General, which may or may not be the same as that used for these groups in the Alert report.
- Identified in bold are those actors who have appeared for more than five consecutive years in the appendices to the annual reports of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, and are therefore considered to be persistent perpetrators.
- Those actors that have agreed an action plan with the United Nations are identified by the symbol *.

conflict and that many of the systematic violations of the rights of children took place in a climate of impunity.[12] In this context, the organisation warned that there is a risk that for an entire generation of children these high levels of violence will become normalised.

On a positive note, it is notable that in 2014 a global campaign launched by the UN got under way in order to stop the recruitment of children and the use of children by official security forces in armed conflicts by 2016. Although the campaign —known as *Children, Not Soldiers*— focuses on state actors, it also seeks to obtain a commitment from non-state armed actors and has managed to increase the number of these groups that have made express commitments to avoid affecting children with their practices. According to the report of the Secretary-General, in 2013 at least nine non-state armed groups publicly declared that they would prohibit the recruitment of children.[13]

Cities and armed conflict

Throughout 2014, cities once again became the main setting of violent confrontation in many of the conflicts, laying bare the impact of these disputes at local level. **Gaining control of cities —very often provincial or national capitals— is usually a priority for many armed groups around the world due to their symbolic nature, strategic significance or importance in war economies.**[14] Consequently, cities were a scene of fighting, bloody attacks and bombings; they suffered severe damage to their infrastructure, their historical and cultural heritage, and to their transport networks; and they experienced an exodus of large swaths of the population, or in some cases, became makeshift camps for fleeing refugees and displaced persons, which pushed them to the limits of their ability to provide basic services to the local population and to those arriving in search of a safe haven to escape the violence.

Throughout 2014, several cities around the world played a leading role in numerous armed conflicts, including Peshawar in Pakistan, Donetsk and Lugansk in Ukraine, and Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya

During 2014, various cities around the world —to their dismay— played a leading role in numerous armed conflicts. Examples can be found on every continent. In Asia, for example, **the city of Peshawar was one of the epicentres of the many conflicts affecting Pakistan. The city captured international attention at the end of the year when it was the scene of an attack on a school that killed over a hundred children.** Capital of the province of Khyber Pahktunkhwa, Peshawar's importance in the

conflict is determined by its strategic location on the route to Afghanistan and its proximity to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), making it an area of interest to insurgent groups operating on both sides of the border. But its situation is not unique, since two other Pakistani provincial capitals, Quetta (Balochistan) and Karachi (Sindh), have also emerged as key settings for the multiple conflicts and socio-political crises affecting the country. The three cities share a common element, i.e the fact that they have become operational and financial bases for armed groups and the criminal networks often linked to these groups, as well as being implicated in growing sectarian strife —mainly between communities of Sunnis and Shiites— and record high levels of militarisation.[15] In the Americas, **the situation of many cities in Colombia served as a reminder of the continuing violence and the challenges of conflict transformation in the long term,** even in a context where there were formalised peace negotiations and where the level of fighting had fallen compared to previous years. Thus, in late 2014 a report by the ICRC warned of the humanitarian situation in 39 Colombian cities affected by the armed conflict and armed violence by criminal gangs.[16] In Europe, the case of Ukraine was particularly notable, where several cities in the east of the country became targets for securing control as part of the struggle between government forces and pro-Russian militias. **Towns such as Lugansk, Sloviansk, the port cities of Mariupol and Novoazovsk, and the industrial city of Donetsk, were several of the main scenes of fighting and of a struggle to secure control of key infrastructure.** The dispute over the emblematic Donetsk airport —which was left in total ruin— had a counterpart thousands of miles away in North Africa, in the intense fighting between militias of varying ideologies for control of the airport in Tripoli, the capital of Libya.

During 2014, Tripoli became a symbol of the instability and political fragmentation of the country, due to the escalating violence in the city (the most severe levels since 2011) and for being home to one of the two parties claiming authority over Libya. The other parallel government —recognised internationally— sought refuge in the east, in the town of Tobruk. Additionally, **Tripoli —and also Benghazi (east)— were severely affected by the conflict, given the indiscriminate use of violence in these cities by multiple armed groups operating in the country.** UN reports specifically warned of the impact on these cities (and of the consequences

---

12. Nick Cumming-Bruce, "Unicef, Seeking More Aid, Points to Children Touched by Armed Conflict", *The New York Times*, 29 January 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/30/world/unicef-seeking-more-aid-points-to-children-touched-by-armed-conflict.html?_r=0, and Lucy Wescott, "Why UNICEF Needs $3 Billion", *Newsweek*, 29 January 2015, http://www.newsweek.com/head-why-uns-childrens-fund-needs-3-billion-302827.
13. See "Combined global efforts against child recruitment" in Chapter 5 (Opportunities for peace in 2015).
14. Jo Beall, Tom Goodfellow and Dennis Rogers, *Cities and Conflict*, Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics, June 2010, http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/Policy%20Directions/Cities%20and%20Conflict.pdf.
15. See "Urban violence in Pakistan: Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, settings of conflict and socio-political crisis" in Chapter 6 (Risk scenarios for 2015).
16. EFE, "ICRC warns of the humanitarian situation in 39 cities in Colombia", *EFE,* 29 January 2015, http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/cicr-alerta-sobre-situacion-humanitaria-39-ciudades-de-articulo-486416.

for the inhabitants and infrastructure) of air strikes and the use of a wide variety of light and heavy weapons, including mortars, anti-aircraft guns and tanks in densely populated areas.[17] In Tripoli, the escalation of violence also led to significant cuts in electricity, water, gas and a lack of basic food supplies. The fighting in the capital caused significant damage to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, residential buildings and shops. Beyond Tripoli and Benghazi, other localities became literal "ghost towns". This was the case in Bin Jawad, a coastal city near the main oil port of Libya (Sidra), which was caught in the frontline between the two rival governments. The entire population of Bin Jawad —some 11,000 inhabitants, according to estimates— left the city following the intensification of bombing raids designed to expel militias allied with the government of Tripoli from the area.[18]

In the Middle East, numerous cities highlighted the magnitude of the conflicts at local level. Divided cities, such as Jerusalem and Hebron, continued to evidence the split between Palestinians and Israelis and the impact of occupation policies. In mid-2014, Gaza once again became a flashpoint for disturbances, with levels of lethality and destruction not seen in years, as a result of the recurring cycle of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In Iraq, Baghdad remained one of the leading scenes of recurring violence in the country (especially the Shiite neighbourhoods of the city, which suffered numerous and violent attacks), although international attention shifted northward to focus on the Islamic State's (ISIS) advance towards the second largest city in the country, Mosul, and the massive population displacement which pushed to the limits the capabilities of Erbil and other receiving cities in Iraqi Kurdistan. In Syria, the city of Kobane, which shares a border with Turkey, emerged as a symbol of the struggle to contain ISIS —led mainly by Kurdish forces during the second half of 2014. The attacks led to very high levels of destruction in the town.

However, Aleppo was perhaps one of the cities which best demonstrated throughout the year what it means for a city to be stuck in the crossfire of the different sides in the conflict. In mid-2012, Aleppo (Syria's largest city and the economic driver of the country prior to the start of the war, together with Damascus) became one of the main battle grounds between various rebel armed groups and the forces of the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Since then, the city has remained

In the Middle East, Aleppo was one of the cities most affected by the violence, which has led to high levels of destruction, the fleeing of a large number of people and incalculable damage to the historical and cultural heritage of the city

divided into areas controlled by government troops (mostly in the west) and areas under rebel control (in the eastern sector of the city). Throughout 2014, regime forces tried to consolidate their positions from the north, but by year's end they had failed to encircle the city as they had done with the second rebel stronghold, Homs, which was almost fully controlled by the troops of al-Assad during 2014.[19] In late 2014, large areas of **Aleppo were in ruins, riddled with the debris of destroyed buildings, especially in the eastern part of the city, where the regime intensified its campaign of aerial barrel bombings. According to press reports, most of the residents had left the area,** but between 200,000 and 300,000 people continued to live in the area because they did not want —or could not— leave. Paradoxically, many people who remained in the city preferred to stay close to the battle lines. From their point of view, it was preferable to seek a way to protect themselves from snipers and stay in an area where air strikes were less frequent, as regime forces avoided dropping bombs near their own troops.[20] The encircled areas faced problems in finding access to food and medicine; in many areas there was no electricity and little fuel, which led many people to cut down trees in public spaces to be used as a source of energy.

Aleppo has also suffered severe damage to its archaeological heritage, an incalculable loss considering that the city is one of the oldest in the world (it appears mentioned in Egyptian texts dating from 2000 BC) and has more than 2,000 sites of historical significance, including its central area, which is declared a World Heritage Site.[21] The collapse of the minaret of the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo in April 2013 led to increased appeals to the parties to prevent the destruction and looting of archaeological sites (a phenomenon also observed in other contexts, such as the destruction of religious sites, mausoleums and precious manuscripts in Timbuktu in Mali in 2013, or in Mosul in 2014, by ISIS). During 2014, Aleppo was also the focus of efforts to reach a political solution to the Syrian crisis. The special UN envoy, Staffan de Mistura, attempted to get the parties to reach a compromise to halt the hostilities and turn the city into a model for a truce that could then be emulated in other areas. At the end of the year his efforts had not yet borne fruit.

It should also be noted that **in many contexts it is difficult to draw a line between political violence**

17. UNSMIL and UNHCR, *Overview of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law During the Ongoing Violence in* Libya, 4 September 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LY/OverviewViolationsLibya_UNSMIL_OHCHR_Sept04_en.pdf.
18. IRIN, "Inside Libya's ghost town", *IRIN*, 27 January 2015, http://www.irinnews.org/report/101052/inside-libya-s-ghost-town
19. Martin Chulov, "Syrian rebels prepare to defend ruined Aleppo as troops and militias close in", *The Guardian*, 23 December 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/23/syria-battle-for-aleppo.
20. Christopher Reuter, "Waiting to Die in Aleppo", *Der Spiegel*, 24 September 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/death-and-dying-in-aleppo-as-syria-civil-war-rages-on-a-993123.html.
21. Heritage for Peace, *Protection of Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflict Situation Report: The Aleppo No Strike List*, 4 July 2013, http://www.heritageforpeace.org/news/no-strike-list-for-aleppo/.

and violence of a criminal nature, or between actors mobilised by ideology or by criminal interest.[22] **This diffusion of the boundaries is particularly noticeable in urban settings and explains why international concern regarding the impact of violence in cities contemplates, yet also goes beyond, the dynamics of political violence or armed conflict in the conventional sense.**[23] In this context, from a theoretical perspective concepts such as "fragile cities" have emerged, which have addressed the challenges faced by cities when it comes to providing security, development and welfare to the public, breakdowns in the social contract between the local government and population, and the implementation of parallel structures of governance and control in the absence of the local authority, among other topics.[24] Drawing on the reflections regarding fragile or failed states, this "fragility" applied to cities is construed as a continuum rather than as a static concept, since within a given city stable and functional areas may coexist along side areas severely affected by the violence. And this fragility is not confined to cities in countries affected by armed conflict or which are experiencing periods characterised as post-war or "post-conflict". In fact, it is estimated that 46 of the 50 most violent cities in the world in 2013 were not in countries affected by armed conflict. Overwhelmingly, these cities were located in the Americas. This city-level perspective is directly correlated with the global reality in terms of violence since, according to studies, only one in ten deaths occurring as a result of violent action takes place in the context of armed conflict or terrorist attacks. It is estimated that the vast majority of the fatalities from armed violence occur as a result of murders and homicides. [25]

Beyond the nature of the violence in each particular context, an approach to the conflicts from the point of view of cities highlights the importance of viewing cities as a scaled space (in conflicts of all types) in order to identify challenges, but also opportunities to promote

46 of the 50 most violent cities in the world were not located in countries affected by armed conflict and, for the most part, were found in the Americas

transformations and changes that make it possible to break the cycle of violence.[26] **Cities may become the starting point in order to find common ground and launch mediation initiatives, truces and rehabilitation or violence prevention programmes.** Paying attention to cities in postwar contexts is particularly important, some analysts warn, because for a time the fatigue caused by the conflict may suppress other social strains, but these may re-emerge when expectations are thwarted and may once again lead to violence.[27] In this sense, political solutions require a long-term vision as regards urban spaces, which enhances the city's capabilities to manage the consequences of the conflict and to promote the recovery of the city in its physical, economic, political and social dimensions.

Arms embargoes

Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council can take enforcement measures to maintain or restore international peace and security, ranging from economic sanctions or other such measures to international military intervention.[28] The use of mandatory sanctions is intended to put pressure on a state or body to comply with the objectives set by the Security Council without resorting to the use of force.[29] The sanctions may be economic and trade-based, in a broad sense; or more targeted measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans, financial or diplomatic restrictions, or a combination of both targeted and general sanctions. Arms embargoes are imposed by UN resolutions adopted under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter. At least nine of the 15 Member States of the UN Security Council must support the resolution, and none of the permanent members (USA, Russia, China, France and the UK) may veto it. There are two types of Security Council embargoes: voluntary and mandatory. UN Member States must comply with mandatory arms embargoes.

This section refers only to arms embargoes imposed

---

22. Ekaterina Stepanova, "Armed conflict, crime and criminal violence", chapter 2, *SIPRI Yearbook 2010,* SIPRI, 2010, http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2010/02.

23. The definition of armed conflict at the Escola de Cultura de Pau excludes common crime and focuses on violence dynamics linked to demands for self-determination and self-government, identity issues, opposition to the political, economic or ideological system of a state or to the policies of a government, and control of resources and territories.

24. Robert Muggah, "Deconstructing the fragile city: exploring insecurity, violence and resilience", *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol.26, no2, pp. 345-358, 2014.

25. Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, *Global Burden of Armed Violence: Lethal Encounters*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

26. CinC, *Why research cities that experience ethno national conflict? Conflict in Cities and the Contested State,* Cambridge Universities, Queen's Belfast and Exeter, November 2012, http://www.urbanconflicts.arct.cam.ac.uk/downloads/briefing-paper-1.

27. Jo Beall, Tom Goodfellow and Dennis Rogers, *Cities and Conflict*, Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics, June 2010, http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/Policy%20Directions/Cities%20and%20Conflict.pdf.

28. Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council, http://www.un.org/spanish/sc/committees.

29. Sanctions mechanisms —arms embargoes, in particular— have been used inconsistently since the creation of the United Nations. Between 1945 and 1989, they were used only in two contexts linked to decolonisation processes: (i) in the former Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), between 1968 and 1979 (due to internal instability), and (ii) in South Africa, between 1977 and 1994 (due to South African intervention in neighbouring countries, violence and internal instability, and the system of racial apartheid). The limited use of these mechanisms during the Cold War was framed —much like other UN instruments— within the policy of competing blocks, such that the end of this era led, as in other areas, to growing activity by the organisation in this area, thereby making it easier to impose arms embargoes. Its use also made it possible to strengthen the UN's role as the guarantor of international peace and security. Moreover, arms embargoes were progressively seen as a more effective kind of sanction than economic sanctions, as they focused on the elites of the states and non-state armed groups, limiting their humanitarian impact.

Table 1.3. Arms embargoes by the United Nations, EU, OSCE and the Arab League in 2014

Country*	Coming into effect	Country	Coming into effect
Embargoes declared by the United Nations (13)		**Embargoes declared by the EU (23)**	
Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities, Taliban militias **	2002	**Al-Qaeda and Taliban militias****	2002
		Belarus	2011
CAR	2013	**CAR**	2013
Côte d'Ivoire	2004	China	1989
DPR Korea	2006	Côte d'Ivoire	2004
DRC (except the Government)	2003	DPR Korea	2006
Eritrea	2009	**DRC (except the Government)**	2003
Iran	2006	Egypt	2013
Iraq (except the Government since 2004)	1990	Eritrea	2010
Lebanon (except the Government)	2006	*Guinea*	*2009 - 2014*
Liberia (except the Government since 2009)	1992	Iran	2007
Libya	2011	**Iraq (except the Government since 2004)**	1990
Somalia (except the Government)	1992	Lebanon (except the Government)	2006
Sudan (Darfur) (except the Government)	2004	Liberia (except the Government since 2008)	2001
		Libya	2011
Embargoes declared by the Arab League (1)		**Myanmar**	1991
Syria	2011	Russia[30]	2014
		Somalia	2002
Embargoes declared by the OSCE (1)		**South Sudan**	2011
Armenia - Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	1992	**Sudan**	1994
		Syria	2011
		Ukraine[31]	*2014*
		Zimbabwe	2002

* In bold, country or group in armed conflict subject to embargo.
** Embargo not linked to a specific country or territory.
Source: Own work based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes and European Commission, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/index_en.htm.

—or in force— by international organisations, and does not include embargoes and sanctions unilaterally imposed by states. In addition to the United Nations, organisations such as the Arab League and the EU also impose binding arms embargoes for the Member States of their own organisations, which in some cases reflect the arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations (such as those imposed on the CAR in 2013), while in other cases they are a result of their own initiatives, such as the measures taken by the EU against Syria in 2011 and Russia in 2014. EU embargoes are imposed by means of Common Positions adopted unanimously by the EU Council in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In the case of the OSCE, the embargoes are voluntary. Other regional organisations such as the AU and the ECOWAS have similar mechanisms but currently there are no arms embargoes in effect that were imposed by these organisations.

In total, 12 countries and the organisation al-Qaeda (and the organisations and individuals associated with it, such as the Taliban militias) were subject to arms embargoes by the UN Security Council in 2014, unchanged from the year before. In six of these countries (the DRC, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan) the embargoes only affected certain non-state actors —not the government. With regard to the EU, in April 2014 the organisation decided to lift the arms embargo on Guinea, dating back to 2009, following the escalation of violence and repression that year by the military junta against pro-democracy demonstrators in which over 150 people died and 1,700 were injured. During 2014, there

30. In the case of Russia, the embargo relates to the Crimea, and not to conflicts affecting the North Caucasus.
31. The arms embargo on Ukraine was established by agreement of the countries of the EU on 20 February 2014 and lifted on July 16 of that year.

was an improvement in the situation which led the EU to lift the embargo.[32] A the same time, developments in Ukraine and Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian conflict[33] prompted the EU to impose an arms embargo on Ukraine in February 2014, lifted in July; and on Russia in July of the same year. Consequently, **at the end of 2014 there were 21 arms embargoes imposed by the EU still in force against 20 countries, the al-Qaeda network and Taliban militias**. The latter embargo was not linked to any particular country or territory. In four of these countries, in addition to the one imposed on al-Qaeda and the Taliban forces, the EU embargo only affected non-state actors (the DRC, Iraq, Lebanon and Liberia). The **Arab League** maintained its arms embargo on **Syria** —imposed in 2011— and the **OSCE** did the same with the voluntary arms embargo imposed on **Armenia and Azerbaijan** in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

In total, the number of embargoes imposed by the various organisations in late 2014 **stood at 36. These embargoes were imposed against a total of 23 states and non-state armed groups**,[34] the same parties as a year previously. It should be noted that 12 of the 21 embargoes imposed by the EU were a result of the implementation of UN Security Council embargoes.[35] The remaining nine were European initiatives: Belarus, China, Egypt, Myanmar, Russia, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.[36]

Of the 23 states and non-state armed groups identified by the UN, the EU, the Arab League and the OSCE, **nine involve groups active in armed conflicts in late 2014** (Libya, Myanmar, the CAR, Syria, Sudan [Darfur] and South Sudan, and armed groups in Iraq, Somalia and the DRC —in the case of the DRC, it involves the two conflicts affecting the country), i.e. nine embargoes imposed in 10 armed conflicts. Ukraine, between February and July, also formed part of this list. We should note here **the embargo against al-Qaeda and Taliban forces,** but although the majority of both of these organisations are located in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the arms embargo does not correspond to any particular territory, according to resolution 1390.

Of the other 13 embargoes, 12 were targeted at countries that are a focus of socio-political crises of varying intensity (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Belarus, China,

In 2014 there were 24 active armed conflicts and 83 cases of socio-political crisis in which neither the UN Security Council, nor the other regional organisations had imposed arms embargoes.

Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Lebanon, DPR Korea, Russia, Sudan and Zimbabwe). Liberia is the only country which, despite having overcome various armed conflicts (1989-1996, 1999-2003) and while not experiencing socio-political crises at present, is still under an embargo. **In conclusion, of the 34 active armed conflicts in late 2014, there were 24 cases in which neither the UN Security Council, the EU, the Arab League nor the OSCE raised the possibility of imposing an arms embargo** as a punitive measure. Furthermore, of the current 95 cases of socio-political crisis, **there were 83 cases of varying intensity that were not subject to embargoes** in which, in many cases, the preventive nature of the measure could lead to a reduction in violence.

International missions

Another dimension worthy of note in relation to the global conflict during 2014 concerns international missions and their impact on contexts of conflict and socio-political crisis. **During 2014, 28 UN missions were recorded worldwide,** including 16 UN peacekeeping operations, one political mission directed and supported by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, and 11 political peacebuilding operations supported by the UN Department of Political Affairs. With regard to international missions, of the 28 UN missions during 2014, more than half (16) were in Africa, six in the Middle East, three in Asia, two in Europe and one in America.

Moreover, alongside the United Nations, it is worth noting the participation of other regional organisations in military, political and peacebuilding tasks, such as the EU (19 missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East), the OSCE (17 missions in the European and Central Asian area), NATO (five missions in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East), the AU (three missions in Africa), the ECOWAS (one mission in Africa), the OAS (three missions in America), the CIS (one mission in Europe), and five multilateral operations under the umbrella of countries or groups of countries, which gives a total of 82 international missions during 2014, one mission less than the previous year. Of the total number of missions, **six completed their work throughout the year and another seven were implemented, such that by the end of the year there were 76 active missions** on five continents. If we add the United Nations' presence to that of other

---

32. Please see the summary on Guinea in Chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
33. See summary on Ukraine in this chapter.
34. This includes a voluntary arms embargo imposed by the OSCE on Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992.
35. In the case of Sudan, the EU established the embargo on the entire country in 1994, and the UN Security Council on the Darfur region in 2004, to which the arms embargo on South Sudan was added in 2011. In the case of Iran, the embargoes established by both organisations correspond to different types of weapons.
36. This does not include countries subject to other types of sanctions, such as the freezing of funds and other economic resources; nor restrictions on entry and travel bans on any of their citizens, such as Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Moldova and Tunisia. European Commission, *Restrictive measures in force (Article 215 TFEU),* January 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/docs/measures_en.pdf.

Table 1.4. **International missions in 2014***

UN (28)	EU (19)	OSCE (17)
Afghanistan (UNAMA) -2002-	Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) -2002-	Albania (OSCE Presence in Albania) -1997-
Burundi (BNUB) -2011-	Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA) -2004-	Armenia (OSCE Office in Yerevan) -2000-
Central Africa (UNOCA) -2011-	Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor) -2002-	Azerbaijan (OSCE Office in Baku) -2000-
Central African Republic (MINUSCA)** -2014-	*DRC (EUPOL RDC) -2007-2014*	Bosnia and Herzegovina (OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina) -1995-
Central Asia (UNRCCA) -2007-	DRC (EUSEC RDC) -2005-	Kazakhstan (OSCE Centre in Astana) -1998-
Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) -2004-	Georgia – Russia (EUMM Georgia) -2008-	Kyrgyzstan (OSCE Centre in Bishkek) -1999-
Cyprus (UNFICYP) -1964-	Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR) -2012-	Kosovo (OMIK, OSCE Mission in Kosovo) -1996-
DRC (MONUSCO) -1999/2010-	Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) -2008-	Macedonia, FYR (OSCE Mission to Skopje) -1992-
Golan Heights (UNDOF) -1974-	Libya (EUBAM Lybia) -2013-	Moldova (OSCE Mission to Moldova) -1993-
Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) -2010-	Mali (EUTM Mali) -2013-	Montenegro (OSCE Mission to Montenegro) -2006-
Haiti (MINUSTAH) -2004-	Mali (EUCAP SAHEL Mali) -2014-	Serbia (OSCE Mission to Serbia) -2006-
India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) -1949-	Niger (EUCAP SAHEL Niger) -2012-	Tajikistan (OSCE Office in Tajikistan) -1994-
Iraq (UNAMI) -2003-	Palestinian Territories (EU BAM Rafah) -2005-	Turkmenistan (OSCE Centre in Ashgabat) -1999-
Israel-Palestine (UNSCO) -1994-	Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) -2006-	Ukraine (OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine) -1999-
Kosovo (UNMIK) -1999-	Somalia (EUNAVFOR Somalia) -2008-	Ukraine (OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine) -2014-
Lebanon (UNIFIL) -1978/2006-	Somalia (EUTM Somalia) -2010-	Ukraine (OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk) -2014-
Lebanon (USCOL) -2007-	*South Sudan (EUAVSEC South Sudan) -2012-2014*	Uzbekistan (OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan) -2006-
Liberia (UNMIL) -2003-	Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) -2014-	**CIS (1)**
Libya (UNSMIL) -2011-	**NATO (5)**	Moldova (Transdniestria) -1992-
Mali (north) (MINUSMA) -2013-	Afghanistan (ISAF) 2001-2014, replaced by Resolute Support Mission -2015-	**OAS (3)**
Middle East (UNTSO) -1948-		Belize-Guatemala (OAS/AZ Office) -2003-
Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) -2008-2014	Horn of Africa, Gulf of Aden (Operation Ocean Shield) -2009-	Colombia (MAPP OEA) -2004-
	Kosovo (KFOR) -1999-	Colombia (MIB OEA) -2008-
Somalia (UNSOM) -2013-	Somalia (NATO assistance to the AMISOM) -2007-	**Other missions (5)**
Sudan – South Sudan (UNISFA)-2011-	The Mediterranean (Operation Active Endeavour) -2001-	*Côte d'Ivoire (Operation Licorne, France) 2003-2014[4]*
Sudan (Darfur) (UNAMID) -2007-		Egypt and Israel -1982-
	AU (3)	Hebron, Palestine (TPIH 2) -1997-
South Sudan (UNMISS) -2009-	Central Africa (LRA) (Regional Co-operation Initiative against the LRA, ICR/LRA) -2012-	The Solomon Islands (RAMSI) -2003-
Western Sahara (MINURSO) -1991-	*Central African Republic (MISCA)** 2013-2014*	DPR Korea and Rep. Korea (NSC) -1953-
West Africa (UNOWA) -2001-	Somalia (AMISOM) -2007-	*East Timor (ISF, Australia) -2006-2013*
	ECOWAS (2)	
	Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) -2012-	

*Starting year of the mission included. Missions completed during 2014 are shown in italics.

organisations, Africa remained the continent with the greatest number of active international missions during 2014 (34), followed by Europe (22), Asia (12), the Middle East (10) and America (4). These figures show that since the late 90s of the twentieth century Africa has become the laboratory of ideas of the international community in the field of peace, human rights, development cooperation and international security since the end of

---

37. Operation Licorne or Force Licorne is the name given to the French peace-keeping mission in support of the UN mission in the country, UNOCI. On 1 January 2015, the military contingent of Licorne ceased functioning as such and rejoined the French armed forces deployed in Côte d'Ivoire.

the Cold War, with a steady increase that is not without its critics. At the same time, it should be noted that more than **half of the interventions on the African continent had a clear political-military dimension, while in the rest of the world interventions of a civil and policing nature prevailed**, except in Haiti, Afghanistan, India-Pakistan, Cyprus, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Transdniestria and the Middle East. Note that the MONUSCO became the first UN operation to deploy drones to conduct surveillance tasks; a decision that created a certain degree of controversy. NATO, however, has been using them for years in its combat actions in Afghanistan.

In this sense, the growing application of Chapter VII of the UN Charter in designing UN peacekeeping missions is leading to greater participation in contexts of violence, with a mandate that increasingly involves the use of force offensively rather than defensively. These missions, which present a multi-dimensional character, are deployed in increasingly violent contexts, with increasingly complex mandates and agendas, as evidenced by the fact that **the average death toll of soldiers on UN missions has multiplied since the end of the Cold War, rising from 866 between 1948 and 1991 to 3,315 between 1991 and the end of 2014**. During 2014, 125 blue berets were killed, a figure that exceeds the annual average of 106 blue berets killed during the period from 1991 to 2014, five times higher than the annual average of 20 blue berets killed in the previous period between 1948 and 1991. However, this increase must be qualified since, although these figures represent an increase in deaths among the ranks of UN missions, when compared to operations such as the AMISOM (AU) in Somalia and the ISAF (NATO) in Afghanistan, among others (where hundreds of troops have died), the conclusion that must be reached is that UN missions are less deadly than the operations of other regional organisations and *ad hoc* coalitions. According to several analysts, it is other factors —such as the nature of the mission, the context of violence and safety and security measures— that may shed some light on the lethality of missions.

Notably, six missions completed their activities during 2014: the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL); the EU missions in the DRC and South Sudan (EUPOL DRC and EUAVSEC South Sudan, respectively); the AU mission in the CAR (MISCA), which transferred authority to the new UN mission in the country (MINUSCA); the French mission to support the UNOCI (Force Licorne); and finally, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF). The countries which gained the most international attention in terms of peacekeeping were Afghanistan, Mali, the CAR and Ukraine. **In parallel, seven new military, police and/or civilian missions**

Africa remained the continent with the greatest number of active international missions during 2014 (34)

were deployed. The UN mission, MINUSCA, began its operations in the CAR. This mission incorporated the BINUCA peacebuilding mission within its mandate (present in the country since 2009), and in September it assumed control of the AU mission in the country — MISCA—, which had received criticism due to its lack of effectiveness and in some cases military bias, particularly the Chadian contingent, which was withdrawn from the country. It is expected that MINUSCA, which is composed of 11,820 soldiers and police personnel, will engage in protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian access, providing support for the transition process, protecting human rights and extending state authority and the territorial integrity of the country. Amidst a very hostile environment, the EU also began its missions in (i) Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali), a civilian mission focusing on providing training to the Malian military forces; (ii) the CAR (EUFOR RCA), where its 750 military personnel will focus on ensuring security in the capital city, contributing to international efforts to protect civilians and facilitating access to humanitarian aid; and (iii) Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), a civilian mission focusing on reforming the security sector. Furthermore, we should also mention the diplomatic efforts that prompted the OSCE to launch two new missions in Ukraine: the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk —civilian missions focusing on observing and reporting developments in the situation. Finally, in Afghanistan, the ISAF ended its activities in late 2014 and was replaced by a new NATO mission in January 2015, the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), led by NATO with the objective of providing training, consultancy and assistance to the Afghan Armed Forces. It will consist of between 12,000 and 13,000 soldiers from NATO and certain other of the organisation's allies.

Worldwide, UN peacekeeping missions involved the participation of 122,729 uniformed personnel,[38] slightly more than the 2013 figure and approaching the maximum number reached in 2010 —the current ceiling— when 124,000 blue berets were in active service (September of that year). From June 1999 —when the lowest figure since the end of the Cold War was reached with 13,000 blue berets— to 2010, the increase in the number of blue berets had been constant. If we add to this figure the 3,440[39] uniformed personnel from the UN political and peacebuilding missions, the total number of troops on UN missions amounted to 126,169. Of the total, in early December 104,062 of these were military and police personnel, while 3.82% of this figure (3,983 military and police personnel) were women.[40] This figure is in addition to the contingents from NATO (from 12,000 to 13,000 troops, according to the organisation itself),[41] from the

38. The figures correspond to 31 December 2014.
39. Figure updated by the UN to 31 August 2014.
40. This figure represents a negligible percentage increase over 2013, when it stood at 3.81% (3,753 military and police personnel); and 2012, when it stood at 3.74% (3,521). In 2011, this figure stood at 3.76%; and in 2010, at 3.33%. Data as of 8 January 2015. United Nations, www.un.org.
41. Data as of 12 January 2015. NATO, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52060.htm.

EU (more than 5,000 personnel including police, military and civilian personnel on its 17 missions),[42] from the CIS (more than 1,000 troops in Trandsniestria), from the AU (3,500 in MISCA, 22,000 in AMISOM and around 5,000 in the ICR/LRA), from the ECOWAS (600), from the OSCE (more than 300) and another five operations in various other countries (over 3,000).[43] Overall, the number of troops on international missions amounted to 180,000 personnel worldwide. This figure is significantly lower than the estimated figure for the year 2013 (259,000 troops) and 2012, which was around 281,000 uniformed personnel, due to a reduction of the ISAF in the last three years and its definitive substitution for the RSM. The completion of operations in Iraq (2011) and Afghanistan (2014) were the main causes of the reduction in the global figure.

Globally, the UN peacekeeping missions were composed of 122,729 troops, slightly higher than the ceiling reached in 2010 of 124,000 uniformed personnel

1.2.2. Regional trends

As for the features and trends in the armed conflicts at regional level, it should be noted that Africa continued to be host to armed conflicts of great complexity, motivated by multiple factors, with the participation of numerous armed actors and with important repercussions at the regional level. This last element was evident in the fact that nearly all of the conflicts on the continent were internationalised internal, while one (between the armed group LRA and several central African countries) was international, a classification that it rightly acquired after having become a predominantly cross-border matter. In this sense, the internationalisation dimension in many conflicts in Africa resulted, among others, in the perpetration by armed groups and militias of attacks beyond their national borders (among them AQIM, MUJWA, Boko Haram, ADF, al-Shabaab); and also in the presence of missions of regional or international organisations (UN), including UNSMIL in Libya, MINUSMA in Mali, MONUSCO in the DRC, MINUSCA and EUFOR in the CAR, AMISOM and EUNAVFOR in Somalia. It also resulted in the involvement of third countries, as in the case of France in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and the CAR; the involvement of several countries (including Egypt and the UAE) in Libya and the participation of Cameroon in Nigeria (against Boko Haram targets).

As for the causes of the armed conflicts in Africa, the majority of contexts (9 out of 13 cases) involved the presence of factors relating to the opposition to a particular government or to a desire to transform the political, economic, ideological or social system of a state. Regarding the first

During 2014, the most serious armed conflicts in Africa were found in Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the CAR, Somalia and South Sudan

element, in five cases there were armed groups fighting for or to erode power, who were motivated by their opposition to domestic and international policies promoted by the governments in their respective countries (Libya, the CAR, the DRC (east), Somalia and South Sudan); while in a further five cases, the central aim was the desire to change the system, mostly with the intention of establishing a state based on the Islamic creed and a particularly rigid interpretation of this religion: Algeria (AQIM), Nigeria (Boko Haram), Mali (north) —linked to the presence of groups such as AQIM, MUJWA, Ansar al-Dine and Murabitoun—, the DRC (east-ADF) and Somalia (al-Shabaab). In six of the 13 armed conflicts on the continent, the root causes of the disputes were related to claims for self-government or identity issues. This was the case of the conflict in the Ogaden region in Ethiopia, and applies to the various armed actors in northern Mali, the DRC, the regions of Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile in Sudan, and also in South Sudan. In the latter case, during 2014 there were numerous attacks against the civilian population based on ethnic criteria and the country's army (SPLA) was also split along ethnic lines based on historical grievances. In a total of eight of the 13 African armed conflicts, competition for the control of territories and resources was also a highly relevant issue, acting as a trigger or aggravating factor in the disputes —Central-Africa (LRA), Libya, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile) and South Sudan. As mentioned in the section on global trends, the mobilisation of state and non-state armed groups for the control of territory and resources had a more prominent presence in conflicts in Africa than in any other region of the world, although this is a dimension that often permeates many conflicts globally.

In terms of the evolution of armed conflicts in Africa, it is noteworthy that during 2014 more than half of cases (8 out of 13) worsened, reporting higher levels of violence, while three had similar levels in comparison to the previous year and only two —Algeria (AQIM), DRC (east)— had a relatively better year compared to 2013. Those cases that worsened during the year included all of the most high-intensity cases on the continent, including Libya (which experienced the worst escalation of violence since the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011); as well as Nigeria (Boko Haram), the CAR, Somalia and South Sudan —four cases which were considered severe contexts in 2013. Africa was the focus of the largest number of high-intensity armed conflicts in the world (5 of the 12 cases, equivalent to

42. Data as of 12 January 2015. EU, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/index_en.htm.
43. As regards the figures for CIS troops and those of the five other operations in various countries, we have used the latest figures available from the various regional organisations and information from news media. In some cases there are no official figures, and in other cases they are estimates, such that these figures must be viewed as an approximation and not as definitive data.

41.6%), including some of the bloodiest, such as South Sudan. It should also be noted that during 2014 Africa continued to be the scene of serious crises relating to forced displacement as a result of armed conflict, which forced tens of thousands of people across the continent to seek refuge from the violence within and outside their countries. **Some of the contexts that triggered massive displacement of civilians during the year in Africa were Libya (over 450,000 people), the CAR (more than one million people displaced by fighting, half of them refugees, according to the OCHA) and South Sudan (with two million people forced to flee their homes, according to UNHCR figures).**

In the case of Asia, as in previous years the region showed a pattern of conflict marked by the prevalence of disputes of an identity nature and/or linked to demands for self-government and self-determination, which were present in two thirds of the cases in the continent (8 out of 12 cases). These contexts included protracted conflicts, such as those in Myanmar, India (Manipur), India (Assam), India (Jammu and Kashmir), the Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf); others which emerged in the 2000s, such as Pakistan (Balochistan) and Thailand (south); and the case of China (East Turkestan), which came to be regarded as an armed conflict in 2014 due to the intensification of the frequency and lethality of the dynamics of violence in the region, in the context of the confrontation between the Chinese authorities and Uighur insurgencies espousing a secessionist agenda. Overall, the desire for change in the ideological, political or economic system of the state was a determining factor in half of the Asian cases (6 out of 12 cases), whether due to the activity of groups promoting an Islamist project —Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines (Mindanao) or Taliban groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan— or a communist agenda, as in the case of the NPA in the Philippines or the case of the Naxalite group, CPI-M, in India.

Asia displayed a pattern of conflict characterised by the prevalence of disputes related to identity issues and/ or linked to demands for self-determination and self-government

Another characteristic feature of the conflicts in Asia was the relevance of internal fighting (7 of 12 cases), representing the highest proportion of such cases globally. In fact, the Asian cases accounted for 77% of the total number of internal conflicts around the world. The region reported no international conflicts, although nearly half of Asian cases (5 out of 12) were of an internationalised internal nature. This internationalisation was evident, among others, in the presence of international military missions, such as the forces from the operation Enduring Freedom (led by the USA) and those of the ISAF (led by NATO) in Afghanistan. It was also evident in attempts by local organisations to link their struggles to those of foreign or global Jihadist projects (as in the case of Abu Sayyaf, based in the Philippines, which closed ranks with ISIS),

and in the impact of the violence on border areas (as in the case of the dispute in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, on the border between India and Pakistan).

Notably, Asia was host to three high-intensity contexts in 2014, which were already considered severe cases the previous year: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Pakistan (Balochistan). The two cases in Pakistani territory experienced no significant changes with respect to the trends observed in 2013, while **Afghanistan reported a deterioration in the levels of violence in 2014; a year that was marked by the completion of the combat mission of international troops deployed there since the invasion of the country following the September 11 attacks in 2001.**[44] Three other armed conflicts had an average intensity —China (East Turkestan), India (Assam) and India (CPI-M)— while most (6 out of 12) were considered low-intensity contexts. Overall, in terms of the evolution of the armed conflicts, most of the cases in Asia (5 out of 12) showed levels of violence and conflict comparable to 2013, a third had worsened (4 out of 12) and one quarter saw a downward trend in hostilities (3 out of 12). Only one of the latter cases —Thailand (south)— saw its conflict levels fall as a result of contacts between the authorities and armed groups wishing to revive peace negotiations. Both in the case of India (CPI-M) and India (Manipur), which was no longer considered an active armed conflict in 2014, the decline in violence was not linked to the dispute being channelled through political means or to a peace agreement, but rather to the dynamics of the conflict itself which resulted in a reduction of clashes and attacks.

In Europe, the case of Ukraine was particularly notable, which was reclassified as a severe conflict due to developments in the situation and increased violence during 2014, with a toll of at least 4,700 deaths, according to figures up to mid-December. This context was the only high-intensity conflict in the region, while another one —Russia (Dagestan)— displayed average intensity levels and a further two —Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria) and Turkey (southeast)— evidenced low levels of intensity. Half of the conflicts in Europe (2 out of 4) worsened during 2014. Besides the case of Ukraine, the conflict between the Turkish authorities and the Kurdish armed group, the PKK, also experienced a reduction in intensity compared to the previous year. While negotiations between the parties during 2014 were held, the dispute was directly affected by regional dynamics and, in particular, by the impact of the war in Syria. Armed conflicts in the Russian republics of Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, meanwhile, evolved towards a reduction in episodes of confrontation compared to 2013. In both cases, this trend was the result of the dynamics of the conflict between the Russian authorities

---

44. See the section on international missions in this chapter.

and the Islamist insurgencies operating in this area of the Caucasus, and not the result of negotiations or agreements to curb the violence or address the root causes of the dispute. Despite the ongoing fighting, in the case of Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria) the reduction in the frequency and lethality of armed incidents in recent years led to this case ceasing to be considered an active armed conflict in late 2014.

As in Asia, Europe was notable for its internal conflicts (2 out of the 4 cases), both of them in the Caucasus republics in Russia; while the remaining contexts, Ukraine and Turkey (southeast), showed significant elements of internationalisation. As previously mentioned, in the case of the Kurdish issue in Turkey, this dimension became particularly evident in 2014 in the form of the impact of the war in Syria, mainly due to the different positions adopted by the parties vis-à-vis the Kurdish crisis in the neighbouring country —as a result of the advance of ISIS, and particularly with regard to the fighting in the border town of Kobane. In the case of Ukraine, the internationalisation of the conflict materialised in Moscow's involvement in the fighting (in the form of support to rebel forces and its decision to annex Crimea, in a context of instability), in the approach taken by the US and several European countries in the face of the crisis, and in the increased socio-political tensions between Russia and the West as a result of this dispute.

A common element in all the armed conflicts in Europe was the importance of issues of identity and/or self-government, which mobilised non-state armed actors in all the cases reported in the continent. In the case of the Russian republics of Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, the insurgencies' desire to transform the state system and to further their Islamist agenda were also predominant factors. In the case of Ukraine, on the other hand, opposition to the Government's policies at national and local level also had great relevance, as was evident in the military challenge made to the new state authorities in the east of the country.

As regards the **Middle East, note that the region was host to three high-intensity armed conflicts, which represented half of all cases in the region. Proportionally, this was the area of the world most affected by serious conflicts and was a focal point for a quarter of all the high-intensity cases around the world.** These included two of the bloodiest cases globally (Iraq, with between 12,000 and 17,000 deaths as a result of the violence in the country; and Syria, with more than 67,000 fatalities in 2014), in addition to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which experienced the worst escalation of violence in several years, with more than 2,000 people killed, the

Proportionally, the Middle East was the area of the world that saw the highest percentage of high-intensity armed conflicts; among them, Iraq, Syria and Israel-Palestine

vast majority Palestinian. Two other medium-intensity cases occurred in Yemen; one led by al-Houthist forces in the north and the other by the al-Qaeda affiliate in the country, AQAP. A notable element in these cases is that both conflicts converged during the second half of 2014. What in the past had merely been sporadic skirmishes between the al-Houthists and AQAP militants (who had previously focused their fighting against government forces or other armed actors), became bloody and periodic clashes, which laid bare the overlapping of conflict dynamics in the country. Notably, although it was low in intensity, the case of Egypt (Sinai) was classified as an armed conflict in the region for the first time, due to increased patterns of violence between Egyptian security forces and armed groups based on the peninsula.

A notable trend in the conflict in the Middle East during 2014 was the fact that all cases reported a decline compared to the previous year. This evolution was determined in part by the general worsening of the situation in the region, the interconnection between the different contexts in the area, the increasing sectarian tensions, the proliferation of armed groups in recent years and the high degree of militarisation of the disputes. In this regard it is noteworthy that of all the conflicts in the region, one was international in nature (Israel-Palestine), while the rest were internationalised internal disputes. This international dimension manifested in various ways. They included activities by armed groups which transcended national borders (as attested by the case of ISIS, which expanded and consolidated positions in Iraq and Syria; but also in the case of AQAP, which undertook certain operations in Saudi Arabia); the presence of foreign fighters, some of whom came to the area to support Jihadist groups such as ISIS or the al-Nusra Front, while others gave support to government forces (as in the case of the Hezbollah militias and Iranian agents in support of Damascus). They also included cross-border contacts between armed organisations in the region (as in the case of Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) in Egypt, which at the end of the year declared its loyalty to ISIS); the intervention of regional and international actors in the disputes (as evidenced by the intervention of the US-led international coalition in support of Arab countries to combat ISIS in Syria and Iraq). As regards the triggers of the disputes in the Middle East, the armed conflicts in the area had multiple causes, including a desire to change a state's political, social and ideological

The conflict in Colombia evolved relatively positively in 2014, taking into account the progress of negotiations between the government and the FARC and the prospects of talks with the ELN, although violent incidents continued to occur

system, which was present in most cases (5 out of 6) and was linked to the strong presence of armed groups with an Islamist agenda based on a particularly rigid interpretation of this religion, denounced by Muslim sectors as a perversion and manipulation of Islam.

Finally, in the case of the American continent it should be mentioned that the region continued to be host to the long-running armed conflict in Colombia. **The Colombian conflict, which has historically had a deep impact on the civilian population, evolved relatively positively over the past year, taking into account the progress of the negotiation process between the government and the FARC, the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the guerrillas at the end of the year and the prospects of a possible start to talks between the government and the armed group the ELN.** However, throughout the year the country continued to be affected by periodic violence linked to the conflict, as well as the long-term impact of the hostilities, following 50 years of conflict.

1.3. Armed conflicts: annual evolution

1.3.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Central Africa (LRA)[45]	
Start:	1986
Type:	Resources[46]
	International
Main parties:	AU Regional Task Force (RTF, comprising Ugandan, Congolese and Southern Sudanese armed forces), self-defence militias from DRC and South Sudan, LRA
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=

Summary:

The opposition armed group LRA, moved by the religious messianism of its leader, Joseph Kony, was created in 1986 with the aim of overthrowing the government of Uganda, introducing a regime based on the Ten Commandments of the Bible and releasing the northern region of the country from its marginalisation. The violence and insecurity caused by the attacks of the LRA against the civil population, the kidnapping of minors to add to its ranks (about 25,000 since the beginning of the conflict) and the confrontations between the armed group and the armed forces (together with the pro-governmental militia) have led to the death of some 200,000 people and the forced displacement of some two million people at the most acute moment of the conflict. The growing

military pressure carried out by the Ugandan armed forces obliged the group to take refuge first in South Sudan, later in DR Congo and finally in the Central African Republic. Thus, the LRA increased its activities in the neighbouring countries where it set up its bases, due to the inability to stop it in DR Congo, Central African Republic and the complicity of Sudan. Between 2006 in 2008, a peace process was held that managed to establish an end to hostilities, although it was a failure and in December 2008, the Ugandan, Congolese and South Sudanese armies carried out an offensive against the LRA, which caused the breaking up of the group towards the north of DR Congo, the southeast of the Central African Republic and the southwest of South Sudan, where the offensive continued. In November 2011, the AU authorised the creation of a cross-regional force composed of military contingents from these three countries, which deployed in September 2012 and has US logistical support.

The activities of the armed group LRA continued throughout the year in Central Africa, concentrated particularly in the south-east of CAR and, above all, the north-east of DRC, where there was a **pronounced increase in looting and attacks on the civilian population, poaching in Garamba National Park related to ivory trafficking, raids and stealing of vehicles to transport looted goods, along with the exploitation of diamond and gold mines to obtain arms and munitions, food and other supplies**. At the end of June the Environmental Crime Crisis[47] report was published, drawn up by the UNEP and Interpol. It highlighted the need to combat global environmental crimes, which are estimated to bring in between 70 and 213 billion dollars each year, and which contribute to funding transnational criminal actors and armed groups. Ivory trafficking is apparently the major source of revenue of the LRA, one of the groups referred to in the report. The UN and the organisations Enough Project, Resolve and Invisible Children pointed out that the group has between 150 and 200 fighters, split into several units, who mainly act in the south of the Central African provinces of Haut Mbomou and Mbomou, and in the north of the Congolese province of Orientale (Haut Uélé and Bas Uélé districts). Although its capacity to destabilise remains intact, its lethality has been reduced in recent years, according to the data provided by the organisations Resolve and Invisible Children,[48] according to which 2014 saw 20 fatalities and the forced recruitment of over 600 people, although the same organisations pointed out that these figures might be higher (both the number of fatalities and the number of victims of forced recruitment) since

---

45. This name refers to the armed conflict known as "Uganda (north)" in previous reports. Since the end of 2008, the scenario of operations in this conflict has been the border triangle with DR Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Therefore, the armed conflict is considered international, although it shares some elements included in the internationalised internal type.
46. In recent years, the demands voiced by the LRA on its emergence (Identity, Self-Government) have been watered down; the group's current objective would be mere survival (Resources).
47. Christian Nellemann, Rune Henriksen, Patricia Raxter, Neville Ash, Elizabeth Mrema (eds.), *The Environmental Crime Crisis – Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources. A UNEP Rapid Response Assessment*, UNEP and GRID-Arendal, Nairobi and Arendal, June 2014, http://www.unep.org/unea/docs/rracrimecrisis.pdf.
48. The two organisations created the LRA Crisis Tracker in 2012, a mapping platform and data gathering system on the actions carried out by the LRA, on the basis of community radio stations, local and international NGOs, governments and UN agencies. See Invisible Children – Resolve, *LRA Crisis Tracker*, http://www.lracrisistracker.com.

no responsibility has been claimed for the attacks and other armed groups are operating in the area. One example of this were the sporadic clashes between Séléka members and Ugandan soldiers, in which several people were killed, including one that took place in June, in which 15 Central African fighters and between one and three Ugandan soldiers lost their lives. Since 2008, there have been over 2,300 fatalities in total and 5,000 kidnappings. According to the figures published by the UN in November regarding forced displacement, some 113,000 people have been displaced in the province of Orientale, along with 21,000 people in CAR.

According to a new report, the LRA carried out this illegal trade with various armed groups (with which it has established tactical alliances and non-aggression pacts), including members of the Central African former armed coalition Séléka, sectors of the Sudanese armed forces and farmers from the region (members of the Mbororo community).[49] Uganda accused Séléka of supporting the LRA, which was denied by the Central African former armed coalition. Although the collective initiatives of a regional nature and the regional political coordination have succeeded in weakening the group in recent years, the UN pointed out in November that it still constitutes a threat to the civilian population. In these areas, the institutions and security forces of both states have a negligible or non-existent presence. Furthermore, the UN stated in its most recent report on the situation in the area[50] that the leader himself and his senior commanding officers were located in the Sudanese enclave of Kafia Kingi, next to the border between South Sudan and CAR, from where he was leading the group and overseeing its illegal trading activities, although Sudan denied this information and stated that it was not sheltering the group. According to the deserters, the group's leader, **Joseph Kony, still retains effective leadership and control over most of the group**. At the start of January 2015, the Ugandan army confirmed that one of the leaders of the LRA, Dominic Ongwen, wanted by the ICC for crimes against humanity, had deserted. The AU saw its regional military initiative reduced due to the withdrawal by South Sudan of its troops as a consequence of the critical situation on its own soil, while the UN warned that a series of challenges continued to hinder the efficiency of the AU's Regional Task Force (regional military initiative), in particular the crises in CAR and South Sudan, along with the fact that not all the countries that form part of the task force, in particular DRC, have granted it authorisation to carry out cross-border military operations. As such, **the regional instability hindered the search and capture of the LRA, a situation that benefited the remaining members of the group**. According to the Invisible Children organisation,

Ivory trafficking is one of the main sources of revenue of the LRA, according to the UNEP and Interpol

between eight and ten attacks were perpetrated every month over the last year, mainly aimed at obtaining supplies for survival. It is worth highlighting Uganda's refusal at the end of September to join the peacekeeping mission in CAR, since the UN wanted the 4,000 Ugandan soldiers deployed under the mandate of the AU to abandon the search for the rebels of the LRA.

CAR	
Start:	2006
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, demobilised members of the former rebel coalition Séléka (splinter groups of the former CPJP, UFDR and CPSK groups), anti-balaka militias, France (Operation Sangaris), MICOPAX/FOMAC (transformed into the AU mission MISCA, in turn transformed into the UN mission MINUSCA), EUFOR, groups linked to the former government of François Bozizé, other residual forces from armed groups (former armed forces), LRA armed Ugandan group
Intensity:	3
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 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 and a regional mission intervened militarily to reduce the clashes.

---

49. Enough Project, The Resolve, Invisible Children, *Kony to LRA: bring me ivory, gold and diamonds,* 19th November 2014, http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/LRA-Trafficking-Presser-Enough-TheResolve-InvisibleChildren-Nov2014.pdf.
50. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas* , S/2014/812, 13th November 2014, http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2014/812.

2014 saw an intensification of the climate of violence and disorder in which the country has been immersed in recent years. A serious outbreak of violence took place in early December 2013 when anti-balaka militias attacked the capital, triggering a military response by Séléka and inter-religious clashes that claimed over 1,000 lives between December 2013 and January 2014. **Clashes occurred throughout the year, causing hundreds of civilian and military fatalities. The fighting involved the international missions present in the country (European mission EUFOR, African mission MISCA and French operation Sangaris), along with the Central African armed forces, anti-balaka militias and the former Séléka coalition**. The OCHA stated that over one million people had fled as a consequence of the clashes, half of whom had sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Around 2.5 million people needed humanitarian aid; that is, over half the country's population. The violence and clashes increased in rural areas, above all in the centre and west, due to disputes and attacks on the Fulani community (mostly Muslim and herdsmen), seen as allies of the Séléka and targeted by anti-balaka militias, according to data provided by the International Crisis Group.[51] The country is de facto divided, with a central-northern area mainly controlled by the various Séléka factions and a southern area with a large presence of anti-balaka militias and in which the government and the international missions attempt to guarantee security. The former Séléka coalition and the anti-balaka militias do not constitute homogeneous political-military units but rather are split into factions riven by infighting related to grievances and community, leadership and local issues. In this respect, the divisions in Séléka became more acute in 2014, despite attempts to restructure and the meeting held in July by the various groups that made up Séléka, which changed its name to "Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique". These attempts ended in failure and the formation of three political-military movements was confirmed. In September the split began to take place when four leaders left the coalition, including General Mahamat Al Khatim and its head of operations, General Ali Daras, of the Fulani community, who stated that they were opposed to dividing the country, that the time for war had ended and that they aimed to push for peace and talks, although they would continue to fight "for the right of each Central African to live in freedom in the country". Other sectors even suggested dividing the country. In this respect, October saw the creation of Unité pour la Centrafrique (UPC), led by Al Khatim and Ali Daras, based in Bambari. The second faction, the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique (FPRC) emerged, met in Kaga-Bandoro in early November. The third faction, comprising members

of the former Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR) and members of the Goula community, gathered in Bria.

Given the failure of the AU force MISCA to control the situation and in light of the controversial role played by some of its troops (the Chadian troops were accused of partiality), in March the UN Secretary-General proposed the transfer of responsibilities of the African mission to one with a UN mandate. The UN Security Council approved the proposal (despite the opposition voiced by the AU) but the transfer did not take place until September with the establishment of the MINUSCA. However, this transfer had few or no repercussions on the ground, where the situation remained highly unstable. Only two thirds of the authorised number of troops (12,000) were deployed and it is estimated that the full force will not be on the ground until April 2015, a delay that was met with criticism. The UN Security Council established an international commission of inquiry to investigate the human rights violations committed in the country since January 2013. In July the UN Sanctions Committee published a report by the Panel of Experts on CAR in which it listed the involvement of armed groups and individuals in the commission of serious human rights violations. The report highlighted the funding and weapons sources of all the groups, along with those responsible for the trafficking of arms and natural resources, mainly gold and diamonds, but also ivory, woods and livestock.[52] It also named several political actors who were making the most of the security vacuum to fund, organise or manipulate armed groups with the goal of gaining an advantageous position in the national transition process or in order to promote the division of the country. **The report also referred to the death of at least 2,424 civilians, including 14 humanitarian workers, executed between December 2013 and April 2014 in 444 incidents**. This was considered a conservative figure. The Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, stated before the UN Security Council that sexual violence was being committed by all the parties involved in the conflict.[53] Another noteworthy development was the involvement in the conflict of the Ugandan armed forces, present on CAR soil in search of units of the Ugandan armed group LRA. They clashed with members of groups linked to Séléka, whom they accused of collaborating with the LRA.[54]

As far as the political transition process is concerned, January 2014 saw the resignation of the president, Michel Djotodia, bowing to internal and regional pressure, and the election by the National Transitional Council of Catherine Samba-Panza as interim president on 20th January. Samba-Panza has a civil society background

51. International Crisis Group, *The Central African Republic's Hidden Conflict*, Africa Briefing no.105, 12th December 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/b105-la-face-cachee-du-conflit-centrafricain-english.

52. UN Security Council, *Report by the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) of the Security Council*, S/2014/452, 1st July 2014, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/452&referer=http://www.un.org/sc/committees/2127/panelofexperts.shtml&Lang=S.

53. See chapter 4 (The gender dimension in peacebuilding).

54. See the summary on Central Africa (LRA) in this chapter.

and was the mayor of Bangui. Her provisional mandate was characterised by her inability to control the serious situation given the difficult challenges facing the country. A regional conference was held in Brazzaville in July, entitled Forum for National Reconciliation and Political Dialogue, at which a cessation of hostilities agreement was signed. However, the agreement was breached by the parties.[55] Faced with this situation, the government requested a six-month extension to the transitional period that began in January 2014 and that was originally scheduled to be completed in February 2015. The Congolese president and official mediator in the crisis affecting the country, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, approved the extension, by virtue of which the transitional period is set to continue until in August 2015. The UN and US imposed sanctions on the country's former president, François Bozizé, on the anti-balaka leader Lévi Yakité and on the military leader of Séléka, Noureddine Adam. The US even imposed sanctions on the former leader of Séléka and former president of the transitional government, Michel Djotodia, and on the leader of the FDPC, Abdoulaye Miskine.

DRC (east)	
Start:	1998
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Mai-Mai militias, FDLR, M23 (formerly CNDP), APCLS, Ituri armed groups, Burundian armed opposition group FNL, Ugandan armed opposition groups ADF-NALU, Rwanda, MONUSCO
Intensity:	2
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 and the setting up of a transitional government and later an elected government, in 2006, but 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.

2014 saw a slight **reduction in violence in the east of the country and the start of the voluntary disarmament process of the FDLR**. The government's military victory over the M23 in December 2013 led to a period of less armed activity. The most serious escalation of violence involved the conflict related to the ADF.[56] Clashes continued sporadically throughout the year and the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) carried out several military offensives with MONUSCO support in an attempt to neutralise some of the armed groups present in the east. Nevertheless, several Mai Mai militias remained active in North Kivu and South Kivu, such as Cheka, Yakutumba, Nyatura, Nduma Defence of Congo, and Raia Mutomboki, among others. They carried out actions sporadically throughout the year that caused dozens of fatalities. In October the armed forces of Burundi withdrew from Kiliba, in Uvira territory (South Kivu), in compliance with an agreement in force since 2011, in order to prevent incursions by the Burundian armed group FNL from DRC into Burundi. The withdrawal was followed by an increase in insurgent activity in the area. In the district of Ituri (province of Orientale, bordering North Kivu) the Mai Mai Simba militia and the armed group FRPI continued to carry out attacks on the civilian population, along with acts of looting and extortion. In November, around 1,000 fighters of the FRPI regrouped with their leaders, Cobra Matata and Mbadu Adirudu, in order to prepare to surrender to the authorities. However, the negotiations between the government and the FRPI stalled after the latter demanded a general amnesty for any crimes committed and the integration of its members in the armed forces, with the equivalent rank. By December only 64 fighters had handed themselves in. The UN stated that seven million people needed humanitarian aid in the country, including 2.7 million internally displaced people. 85% per cent of the displaced population lived with host families, while the rest lived in camps set up for this purpose. There were still 420,000 Congolese refugees or asylum seekers in neighbouring countries, while DRC itself hosted 122,000 refugees, over half of whom were from CAR, with the rest arriving from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

In July the government presented its plan for the demobilisation and reintegration of insurgent forces but needed around 85 million dollars according to the ministry of defence in order to implement it. The ministry agreed to provide ten million dollars while MONUSCO pledged a further eight million for the reinsertion stage. The World Bank and other donors pledged 35 million dollars. This would enable the government to demobilise the armed groups and militias, of which there are over 40, and provide them with education and training in order to find jobs and become reintegrated in civilian life. However, in December the government had still not released its part of the funds, which endangered the release of funds by other donors. The repatriation

---

55. See the summary on CAR in chapter 3 (Peace processes).
56. See the summary on DRC (east – ADF) in this chapter.

and demobilisation of the M23 group was also slow and faced several obstacles throughout the year. In October, HRW published a report stating that 100 people, comprising demobilised combatants, their wives and children, had died from starvation and disease in the remote Kotakoli military camp in the province of Equateur, where they had been placed as part of the disarmament programme established by the government. These deaths were acknowledged by the government but its spokesman, Lambert Mende, denied that the government had been negligent.

The process of disarmament of the FDLR rebels in DRC stalled when the rebels restated the precondition of political dialogue with Rwanda, a proposal ruled out by Rwanda

The most noteworthy development in 2014 was the announcement in April of the voluntary disarmament of the FDLR rebels following regional pressure and talks with the guerrilla group. On 30th May a public ceremony took place, attended by regional representatives, to mark the start of the process with the demobilisation of dozens of fighters and the surrender of their arms. Nevertheless, the process stalled in June and only a few hundred of the group's fighters had been demobilised of a total estimated at between 1,300 and 1,500 members. On 2nd July a joint ministerial meeting was held between the SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), in which the FDLR rebels were urged to complete the full and unconditional disarmament of the group within six months or face military reprisals. At a summit of the SADC in mid-September the insurgent group was once again urged to complete its disarmament according to schedule, but the process remained stalled. In October, a delegation comprising representatives of the government, SADC, MONUSCO, ICGLR and AU met with the vice president of the FDLR, Victor Rumuli Byiringiro. The delegation urged Byiringiro to meet the deadline for disarmament or face military consequences. However, he insisted that **any progress in the disarmament process of the FDLR was conditional on political dialogue taking place with Rwanda**. On 20th October a new ministerial summit was held between the SADC and the ICGLR in Luanda, in which the lack of progress in the process was restated, with the deadline of 2nd January 2015 looming ahead, and at which the government and MONUSCO were called on to create the conditions necessary for the disarmament process. On 3rd November, Byiringiro sent a letter to President Joseph Kabila, the ICGLR, MONUSCO and the SADC in which he restated the group's commitment to continuing the disarmament process and called for a mission composed of representatives of the government, MONUSCO, the SADC and the FDLR to verify the Kisangani transit camp. This mission took place in mid-November and in early December 820 fighters, including 190 former fighters, were transferred voluntarily from the cantonment camps in Kanyabayonga (North Kivu) and Walungu (South Kivu) to Kisangani. As far as the M23 is concerned, the process also stalled due to a lack of political will on the part of the Congolese government to facilitate the conditions in order for the M23 to join

the process. The ICGLR stated that the government had until October to offer the organisation a detailed road map of the amnesty and of the repatriation of members of the former insurgent group. The M23 expressed its frustration at the slow progress made in putting in place the measures necessary for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration of December 2013, in which the group pledged to disarm, become a political movement and demobilise its fighters. In October, Uganda issued a three-month ultimatum to DRC to complete the repatriation of the ex-rebel fighters, after which time they could apply for refugee status. In December around 120 fighters were repatriated to DRC but 1,000 former fighters refused to initiate the process and fled from the cantonment camp of Bihanga, making their way to the Rwamwanja refugee camp.

DRC (east - ADF)	
Start:	2014
Type:	System, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	DRC, Mai-Mai militia, armed opposition group ADF-NALU, MONUSCO
Intensity:	2
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.

Over the course of 2014 **the Ugandan armed group ADF launched a wave of attacks in the east of DRC that led to a serious increase in instability at the end of the year**. In mid-December the Congolese armed forces and MONUSCO initiated a joint military operation in the north of the

province of North Kivu in order to combat the ADF, accused of committing serious human rights violations over the preceding months. In this respect, it is estimated that the ADF was responsible for the death of around 250 civilians in the city of Beni and Beni territory (North Kivu), in a wave of attacks that began in early October. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General stated that it was essential for the armed forces, MONUSCO and the civilian population to collaborate more actively in order to put an end to the violence and rebuild trust between the various actors. The government and the political opposition accused each other of political complicity in relation to the wave of violence of the ADF. The civilian population repeatedly accused the army and MONUSCO of passivity and incompetence. Following this wave of violence MONUSCO was targeted by violent demonstrations in Beni territory, in which it was called on to leave the country given its failure to fulfil its mandate. A few months earlier, in June, the army had eased up on its operations against the ADF, considering that the group and its core support had been completely destroyed. However, according to several analysts and civil society sources, this decision gave the ADF an opportunity to regroup. The operation apparently achieved the dismantling and control of the main strongholds of the ADF.

In 2013 the group had increased its armed activity and, according to several analysts, had acquired a regional dimension, although no alliances were detected with the Islamist insurgent groups al-Shabaab (Somalia) or Boko Haram (Nigeria). Since January 2014, following the victory over the M23 rebels, the Congolese army, in conjunction with MONUSCO's intervention brigade, carried out Operation Sokola (clean-up) against the fighters of the ADF. Several sources stated that the group had between 800 and 1,200 fighters. Meanwhile, other analysts and members of civilian society added that the ADF may have been significantly bolstered by the recruitment of young men in Uganda, where the former fighters of the M23 had sought refuge. M23 sources denied that the group's members were participating in the ADF and pointed out that the M23 remained in cantonment in Uganda. Beni territory lends itself to insurgent activity due to its landscape of dense forest and mountainous territory, along with its wealth of natural resources. This area has traditionally been plundered by armed groups for its wood and minerals (especially gold).

The ADF stepped up its attacks on the Congolese civilian population, especially in the final quarter of the year

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), community militias, Uganda, Sudan

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, who has the support of some of these disaffected soldiers and militias.

The year saw a continuation of the **serious clashes that began in December 2013 between forces loyal to the government of Salva Kiir and the rebels led by former vice president Riek Machar, known as SPLM/A-in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), while successive attempts at negotiation between the parties failed due to their intransigence concerning power sharing.** Generally speaking, the government forces maintained control of all the state capitals and other strategic cities, while the SPLM/A-IO had control of isolated areas in some parts of the states of Upper Nile and Unity, as well as northern areas of Jonglei state. Meanwhile, tensions ran high in some UNMISS civilian protection sites, with serious outbreaks of violence taking place. Systematic ethnically-motivated attacks on the civilian population took place throughout the year. **Many thousands of people died in the clashes** and humanitarian organisations faced serious difficulties in reaching the population due to the insecurity and indiscriminate violence, which also affected humanitarian workers. **In this respect, the International Crisis Group estimated that there had been between 50,000 and 100,000 fatalities in the conflict in 2014, making it one of the most lethal of the year.**[57] **The UN and the US warned of the risk of genocide and famine in the country.** The international organisation

---

57. Peter Martel, "50,000 and not counting: South Sudan's war dead", *AFP*, 16th November 2014, http://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/newsworld/50000-and-not-counting-south-sudans-war-dead/ar-BBdY9Zs.

accused both sides of committing several massacres based on criteria of ethnicity and nationality. Uganda participated actively in the conflict by supporting the South Sudanese government, while the Darfur armed group JEM also supported pro-government forces. Atrocities were committed on both sides, initially in Juba and later spreading to Jonglei, Lakes, Upper Nile and Unity. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which is the army of South Sudan, split into factions on the basis of ethnicity and historical grievances. As such, although both leaders had supporters and opponents in the country's various ethnic groups, regions and movements, **the dispute between the two factions led to inter-communal clashes** in which the government soldiers of the president, Salva Kiir, attacked members of the Nuer community (to which Riek Machar belongs), while the rebels led by Riek Machar's supporters focused on persecuting the Dinka community (to which Kiir belongs). The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Bangura, warned that sexual violence was a recurring characteristic in the current conflict in South Sudan and that it was perpetrated by all the parties involved.[58]

In South Sudan systematic ethnically-motivated attacks were carried out on the civilian population, claiming many thousands of lives in 2014

Meanwhile, the report of the UN Secretary-General published at the end of the year warned of the continuing inter-communal clashes in several parts of the country, especially in Lakes state, where there was ongoing violence between Dinka Agar subgroups, fuelled by long-standing feuds; the arming of local defence forces by state authorities following the eruption of the national crisis in December 2013; an influx of weapons from the neighbouring states most affected by the conflict between the government and SPLM/A-IO; and the absence of law enforcement and justice mechanisms. Incidents included serious human rights violations, acts of sexual violence, cattle raiding and revenge attacks. In November, the UNHCR reported that around two million people had been obliged to flee their homes, of whom 1.5 million were internally displaced and the rest were refugees in neighbouring countries. Humanitarian organisations had access to over 3.5 million people (92%) of the almost four million people estimated to need humanitarian aid in 2014. The UN warned of the risk of a situation of famine, which was denied by the government. The FAO warned about new patterns of disease and an intensification of clashes over access to grazing land due to the loss of cattle, which in South Sudan plays a crucial role. Around 70% of the displaced population was located in areas threatened by flooding and with a high risk of catching malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and measles.

As far as the peace process was concerned, **the parties systematically violated the various ceasefire agreements that were signed during the year, promoted by the regional organisation IGAD**. The EU and the US imposed sanctions on the commanders of both sides for their systematic violation of the various peace agreements. Despite threatening both sides on several occasions with the imposition of sanctions, the UN Security Council and the IGAD decided not to take this step. In turn, China halted the sale of weapons to the government and in September confirmed its military participation in the UNMISS mission, in particular in the protection of the civilian population and of oil facilities. Meanwhile, the electoral commission of South Sudan announced the holding of elections in June 2015, a date that could change if the South Sudanese government reached a peace agreement with the rebels led by the former vice president Riek Machar, although by the end of December the peace talks had been postponed indefinitely.[59]

Sudan (Darfur)	
Start:	2003
Type:	Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Janjaweed pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, JEM coalition, LJM, several factions of the SLA and other armed groups
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:

The conflict in Darfur arose in 2003 around the demands for greater decentralization and development settled by several armed groups, mainly the SLA and the JEM. The government responded to the upraising by sending its armed forces and forming Arab militias, known as *janjaweed*. The magnitude of the violence against civilians carried out by all the armed actors led to claims that genocide was ongoing in the region. 300,000 people have already died in relation to the conflict since the beginning of the hostilities, according to the United Nations. After the signing of a peace agreement between the government and a faction of the SLA in May 2006, the violence intensified, the opposition armed groups started a process of fragmentation and a serious displacement crisis with a regional outreach developed in the region due to the proxy-war between Chad and Sudan. This dimension is compounded by inter-community tension over the control of resources (land, water, livestock, mining), in some cases instigated by the government itself. The observation mission of the African Union –AMIS– created in 2004, was integrated into a joint AU/UN mission in 2007, the UNAMID. This mission has been the object of multiple attacks and proven incapable of complying with its mandate to protect civilians and humanitarian staff on the field.

---

58. See chapter 4 (The gender dimension in peacebuilding).
59. See the summary on South Sudan in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

In 2014 the **Darfur region witnessed continued violence and an escalation in attacks and human rights violations due to the magnitude of the actions carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the pro-government Janjaweed Arab militia**. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, voiced his concern about the activities of the RSF, although he pointed out that the activities of armed groups, criminality and inter-communal clashes also contributed to the escalation of the violence. The operations were scaled down between July and September, possibly due to the rainy season, but throughout the rest of the year the actions of armed groups and the attacks and aerial bombardments carried out by the Sudanese armed forces were constant. The competition for resources continued to complicate the security situation and led to inter-communal clashes and a rise in criminality and banditry, which had an impact on the civilian population. In the last few months of the year, the military presence and influence of the SLA-AW was reduced in the areas located beyond its Jebel Marra stronghold, an area at the junction of North, South and West Darfur. The internal struggle between the group's factions, triggered by the prolonged absence of Abdul Wahid, weakened it both politically and militarily, according to the report of the UN Secretary-General published in November 2014. SLA-MM, based mainly in South and East Darfur with traditional strongholds in Shearia, Labado and Muhajeria, bore the brunt of the campaign led by the Rapid Support Forces in the early part of the year. The report pointed out that unlike SLA-MM, whose members are Zaghawa, or SLA-AW, which is predominantly Fur, JEM-Gibril has a diverse membership, which in the past contributed to boosting its influence throughout Darfur. However, following the split in its ranks after JEM-Bashar signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) and a large number of JEM-Gibril combatants started fighting in South Kordofan and South Sudan, JEM-Gibril has not been active in Darfur except in the Um Baru and Tine areas. Meanwhile, inter-communal clashes also took place in 2014, mainly between ethnic Arab tribes over access to resources (principally the Rizeigat and Ma'alia tribes), which continued to affect and displace civilians.

At the end of the year, the OCHA announced that although the number of people who needed humanitarian aid had fallen by half a million between November 2013 and October 2014, there were still 6.6 million people who depended on it, of whom 3.1 million were internally displaced people, 700,000 were refugees and 1.2 million were children under five years old. Furthermore, 1.6 million people were the victims of food insecurity. Last of all, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the mission in the country

In Darfur the actions of armed groups and the attacks and aerial bombardments of the Sudanese armed forces were constant

by another 10 months, until June 2015. UNAMID voiced its concern about the attacks carried out by the Sudanese government on refugee camps. The UN and the government disagreed on the number of fatalities caused by the conflict since it began. The UN stated that around 300,000 people had died, while the government reduced this figure to 10,000 people. The UN Security Council extended by 13 months the mandate of the group supervising the sanctions imposed on the country in February. As regards the peace process between the government and the armed groups, one of the year's most important developments were the peace talks held on 23rd November between the actors outside the framework of the DDPD, under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), which attempted to coordinate this peace process with the one between the government and the SPLM-N regarding the situation in the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), with the goal of them converging in the National Dialogue that was being prepared throughout the year.[60]Last of all, it is worth highlighting that in December the ICC announced the suspension of its investigations into the serious human rights violations committed in Darfur due to the lack of support it had received from the UN Security Council for its actions.

Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	
Start:	2011
Type:	Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, SPLM-N armed group, Sudan Revolutionary Forces (SRF) armed coalition, PDF pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, South Sudan
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The national reconfiguration of Sudan after the secession of the south in July 2011 aggravated the differences between Khartoum and its new border regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which during the Sudanese armed conflict supported the southern rebel forces of the SPLA. The need for democratic reform and an effective decentralisation, which would permit the economic development of all the regions that make up the new Sudan, are at the root of the resurgence of violence. The lack of recognition of the ethnic and political plural nature, within which political formations linked to the southern SPLM are included, would also be another of the causes of the violence. The counter position between the elite of Khartoum and the states of the central Nile region, which control the economic wealth of Sudan, and the rest of the states that make up the country are found at the centre of the socio-political crises that threaten peace.

---

60. See "The Sudanese national dialogue, the penultimate hope for peace in Sudan" in chapter 5 (Opportunities for peace in 2015).

In the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, humanitarian access remained blocked throughout the year, while military operations and attacks on the civilian population continued and the peace process stalled. During the early part of the year there was a progressive escalation of violence and fighting between the SPLM-N and the Sudanese armed forces, mainly in the state of South Kordofan, causing hundreds of fatalities, in the context of a new military operation launched by the government known as Decisive Summer, with the goal of putting down the rebellions in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur. The operation involved the deployment of the much feared paramilitary units known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), to serve as back-up to the Sudanese armed forces. These units were responsible for atrocities and serious human rights violations. In this respect, the US special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan accused Sudan of employing excessive violence that included aerial bombardments and attacks on the civilian population in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur. **In a report published at the end of June, Amnesty International (AI) claimed that the increase in attacks on the civilian population by government forces may constitute war crimes**. In its report the organisation pointed out that the aerial bombardments targeted homes, markets, hospitals and schools. Furthermore, this offensive coincided with the planting season in South Kordofan, between May and August, a key period for guaranteeing the food necessary for the population's survival. With the population unable to plant crops for fear of being bombed, the humanitarian crisis that already existed in the region became even more acute. The pattern of planned attacks during this period suggested a deliberate use of hunger as a weapon of war, which constitutes a war crime. Moreover, the SPLM-N reported that the government forces had recruited over 3,000 children in the Nuba Mountains region, in the state of South Kordofan. This group had allegedly been transferred to military bases of the armed forces in order to be trained and integrated in the RSF. At the end of the year, the OCHA stated that almost one million people were stranded and depended on humanitarian aid in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, of whom over half a million had been displaced as a consequence of the violence. A further 220,000 people from these regions had managed to seek refuge in neighbouring South Sudan.

In respect of the evolution of the peace process, following almost a year of stalemate, peace talks resumed in Addis Abeba in February under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and continued in April, although no progress was made. The SPLM-N had first of all requested an agreement to resolve the grave humanitarian crisis in

Amnesty International reported that the attacks on the civilian population in South Kordofan and Blue Nile by the government could be classified as war crimes

the area to be followed by a political solution involving all the Sudanese political forces and civil society. The process had remained stalled for a year and was finally reactivated in September, thanks to the work of the AU. The government agreed to resume talks in October, although they did not actually take place until November. Indirect contacts between the parties resumed on 12th November on direct talks took place on 14th November. This was the 7th round of talks under the auspices of the AUHIP. In these negotiations the government and the SPLM-N backed the framework draft agreement presented by the AUHIP. This agreement covered the provision of a road map for the participation of the insurgency in the national dialogue promoted by the government since January, general elections and a period of transition. Nevertheless, new clashes took place in the state of Blue Nile on 24th November and the parties accused each other of being responsible for the resumption of hostilities. A few days later the violence increased in South Kordofan, which led to the breakdown of peace talks at the start of December.[61] Up until then, Omar al-Bashir's government had attempted to separate the negotiations on the Two Areas (as the peace process of South Kordofan and Blue Nile is known) from the negotiations on Darfur, as well as from the national dialogue promoted by the government itself, while the SPLM-N wished to include aspects of the national dialogue (the Paris Declaration) in the peace talks, as well as to incorporate the Darfur peace in a single peace process with two tracks, one for Darfur and one for the Two Areas, which should converge and culminate in the national dialogue. **The government had planned to hold general elections in April 2015 but the political opposition refused to take part in the electoral process and proposed the formation of a transitional government and the holding of a national conference** with the participation of all the armed groups to discuss a negotiated solution to the conflicts in the region of Darfur and the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia (Ogaden)	
Start:	2007
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ONLF, OLF, pro-government militias
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Summary:	

Ethiopia has been the object of movements of a secessionist

---

61. See the summary on Sudan in chapter 3 (Peace processes) and "The Sudanese national dialogue, the penultimate hope for peace in Sudan" in chapter 5 (Opportunities for peace in 2015).

nature or of resistance against the central authority since the 1970s. The ONLF emerged in 1984 and operates in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, in the south east of the country, demanding a greater level of autonomy for the Somali community that lives in this region. On various occasions, the ONLF has carried out rebellious activities beyond Ogaden, in collaboration with the OLF, which has been demanding greater autonomy from the government for the region of Oromia since 1973. The Somali government has supported the ONLF against Ethiopian, which it confronted for control over the region between 1977 and 1978, a war in which Ethiopian defeated Somalia. The end of the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000, led to the increase of the government operations to put an end to the rebel forces in Ogaden. Since the elections that were held in 2005, the confrontations between the armed forces and the ONLF increased, although in recent years the intensity of the conflict has declined.

The year was a continuation of the **difficult humanitarian situation and the climate of low intensity violence in the region of Ogaden**, with attacks and sporadic actions carried out by the armed forces and the Ogaden insurgency, the ONLF, although it was impossible to confirm these actions due to the government's ban on media presence in the region. The army continued its policy of displacing the farming-pastoralist population from the area in order to clear zones where oil companies could carry out exploration operations, according to pro-independence sources. In December, the armed wing of the ONLF, the ONLA, announced that 14 members of the army had died and a further 16 had been injured in actions carried out in different locations in Ogaden. In October the ONLF called on the international community to provide humanitarian aid for the affected population and to make practical decisions to ensure that the aid reached the neediest population rather than being used by the government for political ends. According to the insurgent movement, the population and its livestock (its main means of subsistence) are dying due to the drought for the second year in a row, and as a consequence of the economic blockade and the manipulation of aid and trade in the region. Meanwhile, Kenya voiced its concern about the spread of the conflict on to Kenyan soil. In this respect, one of the year's most important developments was the killing in June and July of five Ethiopian nationals with refugee status in Garissa (Kenya) who may have been linked to the Ogaden insurgency. At least two other people were injured. The Garissa local police force arrested five people related to the incidents, three of whom were Ethiopian.

In a statement made in October, the ONLF voiced its concern about the start of oil and gas exploration

Pro-independence sources reported that the Ethiopian army was continuing to displace the population in order to clear areas where oil companies could carry out exploration operations

activity by a Chinese company and the Ethiopian government in the Jeexdin gas fields, without the local population's consent. The ONLF threatened reprisals for the exploitation of the region's natural resources until an agreement was reached on the political conflict. It is not known whether new contacts took place with the mediation of Kenya. Several demonstrations were organised around the world in August to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the ONLF. The 19th Ogaden Diaspora Conference was held from 12th to 14th September in London, with the participation of the ONLF leader, Mohamed Omar Osman. He reiterated the group's commitment to seeking a peaceful and lasting outcome to the conflict, underlining his group's acceptance of the Kenyan mediation efforts, which were scuppered by Ethiopia when two of the mediators of the armed group were kidnapped in early 2014, allegedly on the orders of the Ethiopian government. In mid-September, UN experts urged the government to stop using anti-terrorism legislation to curtail human rights in Ethiopia and expressed their concern about the growing number of arrests of journalists and bloggers in the country. In June the Somalian Islamist armed group al-Shabaab denied that it had any links to the ONLF.

Somalia	
Start:	1988
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Federal government, pro-government militias and warlords, US, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, al-Shabaab, Eritrea
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.

Over the course of 2014 **the violence intensified with a stepping up of actions by al-Shabaab and of joint operations by the Somalian army and the AU mission, AMISOM. The pressure exerted on al-Shabaab fed the tensions within the group and triggered disputes over its leadership**. Meanwhile, the federal government was paralysed by political infighting, leading to a new change in government in December. The process of federal construction continued with the creation of a new state, the South West State of Somalia. The number of clashes and military actions increased in 2014. Al-Shabaab was particularly active during Ramadan (between 28th June and 28th July), while AMISOM and the Somalian armed forces launched a new offensive at the end of August. This offensive, named Operation Indian Ocean, took place in the Lower Shabelle region, with strong attacks being launched on the towns of Bulo-Marer and Barawe. Barawe, one of the last important port towns to be controlled by al-Shabaab, was captured by the armed forces and AMISOM in October. It had provided the Islamist group with millions of dollars of revenue through the charcoal trade, and was the operational base from which it launched its main attacks on the capital. Another port, Adale, located to the north of Mogadishu, was also captured by the government in September, along with several other towns, although al-Shabaab continued to control the rural areas in the centre and south of the country. Mogadishu also witnessed numerous raids and attacks on public and government buildings, such as the airport or the presidential palace, in which several members of parliament, senior officials and other public figures were killed. Serious violations of human rights were carried out during the clashes and HRW published a report in September stating that AMISOM soldiers were committing sexual abuse and called on the AU and donor countries to shoulder their responsibilities. In August the Shabelle Media Network, one of the country's main media outlets, was attacked by the government, which accused it of slander. The network has been subjected to pressure and threats by both the government and the Islamist groups. Al-Shabaab also stepped up its attacks in the Puntland region, partly due to the military pressure that has pushed it northwards. The US carried out drone operations and acknowledged the presence of US military advisers in the Somali army and a continued presence through secret operations since 2007. Meanwhile, Kenya carried out aerial bombardments that

The joint pressure exerted by AMISOM and the Somali army on al-Shabaab triggered tensions within the group and disputes concerning its leadership

killed al-Shabaab members, including its leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, in September. The group was affected by internal tensions, military defeats and a growing number of desertions, especially after the amnesty decreed by the government in September following Godane's death. Two important leaders surrendered in 2014: Mohamed Saed "Sheikh" Atom (in June) and Zakariya Ismail Ahmed Hersi (in December). Several analysts pointed out that the silence of Godane's successor, Ahmed Omar Abu Ubayda, was a sign of his lack of leadership within the group. In January the 4,000 Ethiopian soldiers present in Somalia were incorporated in ANISOM, authorised by the UN Security Council in its resolution 2124 of November 2013, increasing the number of ANISOM troops to 22,126.

In the political sphere, the activity of the federal government was paralysed by infighting between the supporters of the president and those of the prime minister. The situation came to a head in December when the parliament gave its support for the **dismissal of the prime minister, Abdiweli Sheikh Mohamed, the third person to occupy the post under the mandate of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in two years, and on 24th December unanimously endorsed the appointment of Omar Abdirashid Ali Shamarke**, former prime minister of Somalia (2009-2010) and former Somali ambassador to the US. In December 2013, Abdiweli's predecessor, Shirdon, had also been dismissed by parliament. The new prime minister was expected to appoint a more inclusive cabinet in order for the international community (Somalia's main financial backer) to support the electoral calendar scheduled for 2016. Major negotiations also took place that led to the formation of the South West State of Somalia (SW3), comprising the provinces of Lower Shabelle, Bay and Bakool. Two factions initially competed for the control of the administration but ended up joining forces. In June, the federal government, the UN mission in the country (UNSOM) and the regional organisation IGAD recognised SW3 as a new state of Somalia. In December, following a negotiation process, the SW3 merged with the SW6, an unrecognised parallel administration resulting from various negotiation processes, which in addition to representatives of Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle, comprised the provinces of Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba. An agreement reached in Baidoa stipulated that the SW6 leader would hold the vice presidency of the federal state and would be the parliament spokesman. Meanwhile, the president of the South West State (SW3), Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, reached an agreement with the president of the administration of Jubaland, Ahmed Mohamed Islam (Madobe). Jubaland or Azania, proclaimed an autonomous state in 2010, comprises the provinces of Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba, and had the recognition of the federal government. The bilateral agreement reached on 30th December concerns the construction of a federal state, security, the general

elections of 2016, trade relations and the constitution. Both administrations agreed to work together and with the federal authorities.

Maghreb - North Africa

Algeria (AQIM)	
Start:	1992
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, AQIM (formerly GSPC), MUJWA, Signatories in Blood, Jund al-Khilafa (Soldiers of the Caliphate), Governments of Libya, Mauritania, Mali and Niger
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓

Summary:

The armed conflict has pitted the security forces against various Islamist groups since the beginning of the 1990s following the rise of the Islamist movement in Algeria due to the population's discontent, the economic crisis and the stifling of political participation. The conflict began when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was made illegal in 1992 after its triumph in the elections against the historic party that had led the independence of the country, the National Liberation Front. The armed struggle brought several groups (EIS, GIA and the GSPC, a division of the GIA that later became AQIM in 2007) into conflict with the army, supported by the self-defence militias. The conflict caused some 150,000 deaths during the 1990s and continues to claim lives, although the levels of violence have decreased since 2002, after some of the groups gave up the armed fight. At present, the conflict is led by AQIM, which has become a transnational organisation extending its operations beyond Algeria and affecting the Sahel countries. Algeria, together with Mali, Mauritania and Niger, has attempted to formulate a regional response to the group and to one of its offshoots, MUJWA, which focuses its activities in West Africa.

The armed conflict continued to trigger periodic outbreaks of violence in the country, although with a smaller impact than in 2013, a year marked by the mass kidnapping in the gas treatment plant near In Amenas (south-east). Estimates based on press reports and official data indicate that over 100 people died in incidents related to this conflict in 2014. The pattern of violence continued to be characterised by clashes between militia fighters and the security forces, military operations against insurgent cells and ambushes. One of the most serious incidents of the first half of the year occurred in April, when an attack on military personnel in Tizi Ouzou, in the Kabylie area (north-west) left 14 soldiers dead, the most lethal incident for the Algerian army in many years. The attack, for which AQIM claimed responsibility, was followed by a series

of military operations against alleged militia fighters, causing over ten fatalities, including several in the area on the border with Mali. During the second half of the year, **the incident with the greatest international impact was the decapitation of a French citizen in Kabylie by a new splinter group of AQIM calling itself Jund al-Khalifa (Caliphate Soldiers)**. Led by Abdelmalek Gouri and with between 50 and 100 fighters, this faction decided to split from AQIM and announced its loyalty to Islamic State (ISIS), which in mid-2014 proclaimed a caliphate in the areas under its control in Iraq and Syria.[62] According to several experts, the international rivalry between the jihadist organisations al-Qaeda and ISIS also generated disagreements within AQIM, although the organisation's leader, Abdelmalek Droukdel, reaffirmed his loyalty to the leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and refused to recognise the authority of the leader of ISIS and self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Jund al-Khalifa, on the other hand, declared its allegiance to ISIS and called on followers around the world to act against the interests and citizens of the western countries that joined the international coalition against Islamic State. The organisation had warned that it would execute the French hostage Hervé Gourdel unless France ended its participation in the campaign of aerial bombardments of ISIS targets in Iraq and made good on its threat in September. The decapitation triggered the launch of an intense air and ground operation by the Algerian armed forces in the north-east of the country, which claimed several lives over the following weeks. According to provisional figures made public by the ministry of defence, 69 insurgent fighters had been killed by government troops between January and September. At the end of December, the Algerian authorities announced the death of the leader of Jund al-Khalifa and two other members of the group in an army ambush. According to press reports, Abdelmalek Gouri had served a prison sentence in his youth for support of terrorism and had been freed in an amnesty in 1999. After spending a period in Lebanon the leader returned to Algeria and became military adviser to the leader of AQIM. He had been tried in absence and sentenced to death in 2012 for his involvement in attacks in Boumerdès and Algiers that caused dozens of fatalities.

It should also be pointed out that **in 2014 one of the main concerns of the Algerian authorities was the strengthening of the country's borders in order to prevent the cross-border flow of fighters and arms, especially in the areas along the border with Tunisia and Libya**. Algeria and Tunisia intensified their cooperation on security matters following an incident in the border area in which 14 Tunisian soldiers were killed.[63] The two countries launched a joint operation in which 8,000 Algerian troops took part. In respect of Libya, over the course of the year the Algerian authorities implemented several measures, such as border closures and putting the air force on a state of alert along the border. Furthermore, it is worth

---

62. See the summary on Iraq and the summary on Syria in this chapter.
63. See the summary on Tunisia in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

mentioning that at the start of the year, US functionaries warned about the funding of AQIM, stating that its main source of income was the payment of ransoms for the release of hostages and that it was necessary to adopt measures to address this situation. At the end of January, the UN Security Council approved resolution 2133, in which it calls on states to prevent armed groups from benefiting directly or indirectly from the payment of ransoms or from political concessions in exchange for the release of hostages. According to the African Centre for the Study and Research on terrorism (ACSRT), set up by the AU and with headquarters in Algiers, 35% of the kidnappings in 2013 took place in Africa. The growth of this phenomenon in Africa, particularly in the Sahel region, is partly attributed to the proliferation of autonomous branches of al-Qaeda (or groups claiming links to the terrorist network) that are searching for their own sources of funding. Finally, it is worth highlighting that AQIM adopted a position in respect of the elections held in Algeria in April, in which the veteran leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika was re-elected. On the eve of the elections the armed group broadcast a video in which it criticised the president for corruption, the levels of poverty in the country and the broken promises of Bouteflika.

Libya	
Start:	2011
Type:	Government, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government with headquarters in Tobruk, government with headquarters in Tripoli, armed factions linked to the "Operation Dignity", armed groups linked to "Operation Dawn", Islamist militias, Ansar al-Sharia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates, among other countries
Intensity:	3
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. They include 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, the persistent clashes between anti-Gaddafi groups and supporters (or alleged collaborators) of the old regime, frequent tribal disputes and the widespread availability of weapons. Instability, episodes of revenge and abuses of human rights coexist with attempts of Libyan society by defining the new institutional framework of the country, in a context of political and regional divisions.

The situation in Libya seriously deteriorated in 2014, with the country facing its most serious political and security crisis since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011. **The levels of violence escalated significantly in a scenario of polarisation and fragmentation in which over 1,000 people were killed and a further 450,000 people were displaced.** This fragmentation was embodied by the creation of two parallel governments halfway through the year. During the first half of the year, the armed conflict in Libya was characterised (as in previous years) by the intensive activity of several armed groups mobilised by a wide variety of interests, in a context of wide-ranging conflict. The violence manifested itself in tribal clashes; rivalries over the control of traffic routes; clashes between supposedly pro-Gaddafi groups and government and militia forces; feuds between pro-federalism and pro-unity sectors, and between Islamist and non-Islamist groups; attacks with explosives; assassinations of politicians, activists, judges, police officers and foreign citizens. Added to this, a serious crisis arose when militias occupied several oil ports in the country, triggering a military response by the government. One of the most noteworthy incidents during this period was the offensive launched in May by the retired general Khalifa Hifter against the Islamist militias that operate in Benghazi (east), including Ansar al-Sharia. He headed an air and land campaign christened "Operation Dignity", with the support of several military units and sectors of the government. General Hifter (who had spent several years in exile in the US and who was accused of having links to CIA), justified his campaign as an attempt to correct the course of the revolution and to address the security challenges in the country given the inaction of the authorities. Militias close to the general also attacked the headquarters of the General National Congress (GNC) in Tripoli and demanded the suspension of its activities, continuing the constant pressure and attacks on institutions by various militias that has characterised the Libyan transition.

These incidents exacerbated the severe political crisis in the country, which since the start of the year had been marked by the election of the panel entrusted with drafting the new constitution (in elections with a low turnout, give the climate of violence, scepticism and frustration), by demonstrations and criticism of the management of the transition by the GNC (which decided to extend its mandate, originally scheduled to end on 7th February) and by the succession of prime ministers in the space of a few months. The prime minister, Ali Zeidan, received a vote of no confidence in March after being accused of mismanaging the oil and security crisis. Zeidan was replaced as prime minister by his defence minister, Abdullah al-Thinni, who in turn stepped down a few weeks later when armed men attacked his home and family. He was succeeded by Ahmed Maiteeq, who had to face the objections of General Hifter and other political

actors. His election was finally ruled illegal by the supreme court, forcing him to stand down. Al-Thinni returned to the post, despite the misgivings of several sectors of the GNC. In this climate of instability and persistent violence, elections were held on 25th June to elect a new parliament, with a low turnout. While 2.8 million people had registered to vote in 2012, only 1.5 million people registered to take part in these elections, fewer than half of whom voted on the day. The results, which constituted a setback for the Islamist forces and a step forward for the politicians close to Hifter, triggered an escalation of violence, the epicentre of which was in Tripoli. An alliance with a significant presence of Islamist forces, bringing together militias from the capital and from Misrata, launched the so-called "Operation Dawn" and took control of the city after intense fighting with armed groups from Zintan, which since the fall of Gaddafi controlled strategic areas of the city, including the airport. Faced with the growing intensity of the violence and the government's announcement that it had lost control of several ministries, the new legislative body (the House of Representatives) decided to move its headquarters from Tripoli to Tobruk (on the border with Egypt). The militias of Operation Dawn objected to this decision and demanded the reinstatement of the GNC, where there was a greater presence of Islamist forces. This led to **the formation of two parliaments and two governments in Libya: the House of Representatives in Tobruk, which reappointed al-Thinni as prime minister, and the GNC, which elected Omar al-Hasi to head the government**. The Tobruk government was internationally recognised but its status was questioned after the Tobruk parliament was declared unconstitutional by Libya's supreme court.

During the second half of the year the violence intensified, affecting several areas of the country. The total number of victims is difficult to determine due to the difficulties involved in investigating the incidents, especially after the UN mission in the country, UNSMIL, withdrew all its personnel halfway through the year because of the violence.[64] Nevertheless, according to incomplete data gathered by the UN, some of the most serious incidents occurred in Tripoli (where at least 214 people were killed between May and August, along with an undetermined number between September and December), in the Warshafana region, located to the west of the capital (over 100 fatalities), in the Nafusa Mountains region (at least

The serious political and security crisis in Libya led to the formation of two parliaments and two governments in mid-2014; one with headquarters in Tobruk and the other with headquarters in Tripoli

170 fatalities), in Benghazi (450 fatalities between October and December) and in the south of Libya (over 140 fatalities in the last quarter).[65] Reports by the UNSMIL highlighted the **serious impact on the civilian population due to the indiscriminate attacks carried out in residential areas by various armed actors, attacks on hospitals, arbitrary arrests, kidnappings and torture**. In December the UNSMIL warned that dozens of victims had been affected due to tribal, family or religious loyalties, and that many of the committed abuses constituted war crimes. It should also be pointed out that the Libyan conflict was influenced by the projection in the country of regional tensions, which was evident in the support received by both sides. As such, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates were accused of taking part in the attack on Islamist forces in Tripoli and Benghazi, while Qatar, Sudan and Turkey were singled out for their alleged support of Islamist factions in Libya. Meanwhile, the Tobruk authorities and General Hifter also attempted to frame the conflict with their adversaries within the discourse of the "war on terror", adopting a narrative similar to the one used by Abdel Fatah al-Sisi in Egypt in his persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood and the insurgency based in Sinai. Mention must also be made of the lack of success of the calls for a cessation of hostilities (the UN Security Council unanimously resolution 2174 in August urging an end to the violence and the start of political dialogue) and of the mediation efforts made by the UNSMIL, by the special envoy to Libya, Bernardino León and by certain countries. Although rival parliamentary groups met at the behest of the UN in Ghadames at the end of September, the main armed groups were not involved in these talks and rejected a ceasefire. The second round of talks was postponed on several occasions due to disagreements between the actors on conditions for dialogue and was finally scheduled for early 2015. **In the international sphere, one of the main concerns was that the instability in Libya would continue to facilitate the flow of fighters and arms, and that the country would become a training base for jihadist militia fighters** related to groups such as ISIS. In November, two Libyan jihadist groups, Ansar al-Sharia of Benghazi and its sister group Ansar al-Sharia-Derna, were included by the UN in its list of terrorist organisations due to their alleged links to al-Qaeda and ISIS, while another local militia group began to claim responsibility for certain incidents, presenting itself as the Libyan branch of ISIS.

---

64. In the UNSMIL report published in September, the mission warned that the official figures presented by the authorities underestimated the real impact of the violence in Libya, that the data was not broken down into civilian victims and fighters, and that no organisation was carrying out a systematic count of the conflict victims. UNSMIL and UNHCR, *Overview of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law during the ongoing violence in Libya*, UNSMIL and UNHCR, 4th September 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LY/OverviewViolationsLibya_UNSMIL_OHCHR_Sept04_en.pdf.
65. UNSMIL and UNHCR, *Update on violations of international human rights and humanitarian law during the ongoing violence in Libya*, UNSMIL and UNHCR, 23rd December 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LY/UNSMIL_OHCHRJointly_report_Libya_23.12.14.pdf.

West Africa

Mali (north)	
Start:	2012
Type:	System, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, MNLA, MAA, HCUA, CMFPR, CPA, GATIA, Ansar Dine, MUJWA, AQIM, al-Murabitoun, ECOWAS, France, Chad, MINUSMA
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=

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 a number of 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.

The armed conflict in the north of Mali continued to be characterised by periodic violent incidents involving the many armed groups that operate in the area (Tuareg and Arab fighters, jihadist organisations, pro-government militias), the Malian security forces, the French troops and the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA) troops deployed in the area. Despite the start of peace talks between the government and several of the armed factions halfway through the year, there was no end to the violence, which claimed many lives and continued to affect mainly the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.[66] In the first few months of 2014, progress proved difficult in the talks between the government and northern armed groups such as the National Movement

The violence continued in Mali despite the start of peace talks between the government and several armed factions through the year

for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), in the framework of the process initiated after the signing of the Ougadougou agreement in 2013. This was partly due to the lack of coordination between the various actors involved in the mediation. Amid persistent instability, one of the most serious incidents occurred in May, when the prime minister, Moussa Mara (who had been appointed to the post in April following the resignation of Oumar Tatam Ly) visited the Malian troops detached in the city of Kidal. Contradictory versions exist on the source of the fighting, which continued for several days between the Malian troops and fighters of the MNLA and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA). During the clashes the governor's building was taken by the armed groups and the security forces were forced to withdraw from Kidal and from other cities in the north of the country. The hostilities (which caused dozen of fatalities and forced the displacement of 3,000 people) were brought to an end by the mediation efforts led by the head of the MINUSMA, Bert Koenders, and the chairman of the AU and president of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz. **Following the events in Kidal, which were widely seen as a military defeat of the government, a new negotiation process was initiated, led by Algeria**, with the support of the MINUSMA, the ECOWAS, the OIC, the AU, the EU, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Chad.

During the second half of the year, as part of a parallel process, four rounds of talks were held in the framework of a parallel process between the government and two separate coalitions of armed groups from the north: the Coordination, comprising the MNLA, the MAA and the HCUA; and the Platform, comprising the Coordination of Patriotic Resistance Movements (CMFPR), the Coalition of the People for Azawad (CPA) and a faction of the MAA. From the second round of talks, these coalitions were joined by new groups, including the pro-government Imghad and Allies Tuareg Self-Defence Group, which began operating in the north of Mali in 2014. The negotiations led to the adoption of a road map, a declaration of cessation of hostilities and the drawing up of a document designed to serve as the basis for a final agreement. Nevertheless, at the end of 2014 the parties still disagreed on key issues (the government and the Platform are in favour of a formula based on regionalisation while the Coordination supports a federal system). The process highlighted the significant fragmentation of the actors in the north of the country and, according to analysts, led several sectors to see the creation of new armed groups as an effective means for ensuring a place at the negotiating table.[67] Furthermore, the government was criticised for its handling of the

---

66. See the summary on Mali in chapter 3 (Peace processes).
67. International Crisis Group, *Mali: dernière chance à Alger*, Briefing Afrique no.104, ICG, 18th November 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/regions/afrique/afrique-de-louest/mali/b104-mali-last-chance-in-algiers.aspx.

process. From the start of the negotiations led by Algeria, and despite the ceasefire agreements, clashes continued to take place between the various armed groups and with the Malian security forces. According to reports by the UN, the various armed groups shifted their positions and clashed on several occasions.[68]

Meanwhile, throughout the year **several jihadist organisations (which are not involved in the negotiations) carried out numerous offensives, one of their main targets being the MINUSMA**. A large number of attacks took place throughout 2014 (including suicide attacks and other attacks with explosives), intensifying from September. According to military sources, the jihadist groups had perfected the use of explosive devices, had a landmine supply network in place and acted after identifying the routes of the MINUSMA. In this respect, the most important developments in 2014 were the death at the start of the year of one of the senior leaders of the MUJWA, Omar Ould Hamah, alias "Red Beard", for whom the USA was offering a reward running into millions of dollars; the execution of a French hostage in April by the MUJWA; several armed actions for which the armed group al-Mourabitoun claimed responsibility; and numerous operations carried out by the French troops, which claimed the lives of dozens of militia fighters. Furthermore, it was widely reported that the violence of several armed groups (including al-Qaeda) was also targeted against individuals accused of collaborating with the MINUSMA and France. In this context, it should be pointed out that the French government reduced the number of its troops in the country from 2,500 to 1,600 and incorporated changes in its Mali mission (Operation Barkhane, the successor of Operation Serval), with the goal of intensifying cooperation in security matters with various countries in the Sahel region in addition to Mali, including Mauritania, Chad and Niger. Meanwhile, MINUSMA's mandate was renewed until June 2015. According to the UN's own diagnosis, the withdrawal of the Malian security forces from the north, the lack of effective control over the many armed groups operating in the area and the reconfiguration of the French mission facilitated the increase in the activities of extremist groups.[69] Coinciding with this evaluation, other analyses underlined the precarious nature of the situation in the north, the frustration of the population, the lack of services and the risks associated with the proliferation of armed actors. As 2014 drew to a close, the climate of violence continued to impede access to humanitarian aid in the north of Mali. According to the IOM, over 80,000 people remained in a situation of forced internal displacement due to this conflict, while the UNHCR data shows that over 143,000 were living as refugees

in neighbouring countries. The UN also condemned the recruitment of child soldiers by several armed groups, including the MNLA, the HCUA and the MAA.

Nigeria (Boko Haram)	
Start:	2011
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Boko Haram (BH) radical Islamist group, Ansaru, Cameroon
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:

The Islamist 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 and 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.

Following the trend recorded the previous year, the armed conflict involving Boko Haram (BH) and the Nigerian security forces escalated in 2014 to levels unprecedented since the outbreak of hostilities in 2009. Thousands of people died as a consequence of this conflict, although the exact number of deaths was difficult to establish due to the scenario of violence itself. According to Amnesty International, 4,000 people died in the first half of the year alone. The International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that **around 5,000 civilians had died in attacks by BH between May and October**.[70] Meanwhile, towards the end of the year, the Nigerian government stated that over 13,000 people had died as a result of the violence over the last five years. The violence of BH also caused the internal forced displacement of 1.5 million people, while a further 150,000 people had sought refuge en Chad, Niger and Cameroon, according to data of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).[71] At the end of 2014, humanitarian organisations warned that almost

68. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali*, S/2014/943, 23rd December 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/943.
69. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali*, S/2014/692, 22nd September 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/692.
70. International Crisis Group, *Nigeria's Dangerous 2015 Elections: Limiting the Violence*, Africa Report no.220, ICG, 21st November 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria/220-nigeria-s-dangerous-2015-elections-limiting-the-violence.aspx.
71. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Nigeria: multiple displacement crises overshadowed by Boko Haram*, IDMC, December 2014, http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/2014/nigeria-multiple-displacement-crises-overshadowed-by-boko-haram/.

half a million people required aid urgently. Several violent incidents occurred over the course of the year, including attacks with explosives, suicide attacks, the setting alight and destruction of homes, looting, sexual violence and clashes with the security forces. BH also carried out attacks on military barracks, police stations and prisons, freeing dozens of its militants. Several of these attacks took place in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. Nevertheless, **one of the actions of BH that had the greatest impact was the kidnapping of over 200 girls in the town of Chibok in Borno state in mid-April**. The kidnapping was widely condemned all over the world and several demonstrations were organised by local groups, in particular women's groups, in order to demand the return of the girls. BH stated that it would only release the girls (who remained in captivity at the end of 2014) if all of the group's militants were released from prison.[72]

It is worth highlighting that, from mid-2014 in particular, **there was a shift in the modus operandi of BH, which increasingly focused on gaining control of territories** rather than on carrying out attacks and then withdrawing, which had been its usual tactic until then. As such, by the end of the year BH controlled over 20 cities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, the three states most affected by the conflict and in which the state of emergency declared by the Nigerian authorities had been in force since mid-2013. According to local press reports, the radical group controlled an area equivalent to 20,000 km². This development in the strategy of BH provoked comparisons with Islamic State (ISIS), the armed group that in mid-2014 declared a caliphate in the territories under its control in Iraq and Syria. In fact, BH released a video in July in which it stated its support of ISIS, al-Qaeda and the Taliban, while in August it announced the imposition of a caliphate in the town of Gwoza. However, some experts were of the opinion that BH was merely seeking to gain more international attention through these actions. Another important trend of the conflict in 2014 was its growing impact on neighbouring countries, in particular Cameroon. A series of security incidents took place in the border area in the second half of the year, leading to attacks by the Cameroon army on BH targets. In December, Cameroon launched an air offensive against the group after BH fighters attacked five towns and a military base in the north of Cameroon. Moreover, the Cameroon authorities were obliged to transfer around 5,000 Nigerian refugees to towns further away from the border. In this context, on a regional and international level some cooperation initiatives were implemented in the fight against BH, including a Paris meeting between Nigerian authorities and representatives of the EU and the US in order to design a response to the group; an agreement for the creation of a joint task force composed of troops

The armed conflict involving Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces intensified in 2014 and claimed at least 5,000 lives, as well as triggering mass displacements of the population

from Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon; and the establishment of a regional intelligence unit to intensify border controls.

The strategy adopted by Goodluck Jonathan's government to fight BH continued to draw criticism from several sectors. Regional leaders criticised the fact that the government had not adopted effective measures for the containment of BH, while the response of the security forces to the group was also called into question, along with its inability to prevent the actions of the militia in the north-west of the country. Some local leaders demanded extraordinary measures, a greater deployment of troops and better equipment for the security forces. Human rights organisations also warned about the policies of the Nigerian authorities in the fight against BH. Amnesty International reported the discovery of mass graves in a prison in Maiduguri where several BH members had been executed after attempting to escape. Other groups warned about the death sentences handed down to dozens of soldiers who refused to take part in the fight against BH on the grounds of the lack of equipment. National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria also held members of the security forces responsible for causing civilian deaths during operations against BH. Meanwhile, at the start of the year Jonathan made changes to the leadership of the armed forces and in public declarations insinuated that the fight against BH had been affected by divisions within the security forces. The government also adopted other measures, such as extending the state of emergency in the areas most affected by the conflict, offering an amnesty to BH fighters in May and announcing a ceasefire in October that supposedly included an agreement to release the kidnapped girls. The decision of BH to release 10 Chinese hostages and 17 Cameroon nationals was presented as an initial gesture marking a cessation of hostilities, despite the fact that BH never confirmed the ceasefire. In reality, the supposed ceasefire never occurred. The successive attacks that continued to take place in the country led to growing criticism from opposition groups, which considered the announcement of the ceasefire as a stunt to boost Jonathan's electoral prospects, given the proximity of the elections, due to be held in February 2015. In this respect, several analysts warned that **the situation in the states in the north-west of the country affected by the conflict with BH may prevent large sectors of the population from participating in the elections**. This might have an extremely destabilising effect, since this is an area in which many supporters of the opposition to Jonathan are concentrated. If the marginalisation of sectors of the Nigerian electorate is confirmed in the elections, the opposition may not recognise the results, which would exacerbate an already highly unstable situation in Nigeria.

---

72. See chapter 4 (The gender dimension in peacebuilding).

1.3.2. America

Colombia	
Start:	1964
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, FARC, ELN, new paramilitary groups
Intensity:	2
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.

The Colombia Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out that despite the progress made by the state in assisting the population affected by the conflict, such as through the Victims Law, the violence of illegal groups (guerrilla and paramilitary groups) claimed more lives while human rights defenders and those calling for the restitution of land were the victims of threats and attacks. The UN report also warned about the government's attempts to extend military jurisdiction and the impunity enjoyed by guerrilla and paramilitary groups, along with certain agents of the state. In March, the leader of the FARC, "Timochenko", called on the government to sign a mutual ceasefire agreement leading to a peace agreement, in order to end impunity for war crimes. **Coinciding with the election campaign in the second quarter of the year, there was a reduction in the fighting between the Colombian security forces and the guerrilla groups,** this being the quarter with the smallest number of recorded violent incidents in recent years. The holding of elections may have contributed to the lower levels of violence, to the position adopted by the two main candidates in favour of the peace process and to the progress made in the negotiation processes. In this respect, peace negotiations continued between the government and the FARC, and in June the government and the ELN revealed the existence of exploratory talks. The FARC and the ELN issued a joint statement declaring an eight-day unilateral ceasefire during the presidential campaign. Meanwhile, the ELN announced its willingness to reconsider its attacks on oil infrastructures, which had

suffered greatly at the hands of the guerrilla group in the preceding months, if the government pledged to accept its proposals regarding the management of the country's hydrocarbon resources in the framework of peace talks. The developments described above contributed to the re-election as president of Juan Manuel Santos in the second round of presidential elections on 15th June, as did the various endorsements obtained by Santos for the second round, which led to a higher turnout and greater support for his re-election bid.

During the third quarter, clashes continued to take place between the armed forces and the FARC and ELN guerrilla groups. July was the hardest month for the guerrilla groups, while the armed forces suffered very few casualties. The government remained steadfast in its refusal to decree the ceasefire called for by the guerrilla groups until the signing of the "end of conflict" item of the Agenda of Havana, where the negotiations with the FARC were taking place. There was a notable increase in the number of threats issued by criminal groups related to paramilitary and drug trafficking organisations against human rights defenders, demobilised former guerrilla fighters and analysts in favour of the negotiations. However, the last few months of the year saw several encouraging developments and gestures of good will on the part of the FARC, followed by the government, which enabled a scaling down of confrontations, the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire by the FARC and positive declarations by the ELN, which stated its willingness to start formal talks with the government.

1.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

East Asia

China (East Turkestan)	
Start:	2014
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Xinjiang, also known as East Turkestan or Uyghuristan, is China's westernmost region. It contains significant hydrocarbon deposits and has historically been inhabited by the Uyghur population, which is mainly Muslim and boasts important cultural ties with Central Asian countries. Following several decades of acculturation policies, the exploitation of natural resources and intense demographic colonisation, which has substantially altered the population structure and caused community tensions since the 1950s, several armed secessionist groups began armed operations against the Chinese government, especially in the 1990s. Beijing classifies such groups, including the ETIM or the ETLO, as terrorist organisations and has attempted to link its counter-insurgency strategy to the so-called global war

on terrorism. In 2008, when the Olympic Games were being held in Beijing, there was an increase in armed attacks by insurgent groups, while 2009 saw the most fierce community clashes in recent decades. Over the following years the violence became more intense, frequent and complex, which is why the case was reclassified as an armed conflict.

Xinjiang experienced an unprecedented level of violence in 2014, confirming the escalation of the conflict in recent years. It is estimated that around 340 people were killed in various episodes of violence. However, the figure is higher if the dozens of people sentenced to death for their participation in the various attacks are taken into account. Some press reports claimed that over 400 people died in Xinjiang en 2014 as a result of the conflict, while Uyghur organisations in exile stated that the figure was even higher. Beijing has made it complicated for independent media outlets to gain access to the area, which means that it is difficult to verify the information. In addition to the episodes of violence, throughout the year several organisations reported a substantial increase in human rights violations, as well as the growing militarisation of the counterinsurgency strategy implemented by the government. As regards the dynamics of the conflict, it is worth highlighting some violent incidents that had a significant political and media impact. On 1st March, 33 people were killed and over 140 were injured when a group of eight people (who according to the government belonged to the ETIM) carried out a knife attack on a crowd in the railway station in the city of Kunming, capital of the southern province of Yunnan. At the end of May, 43 people were killed and a further 90 were injured in Urumqi when, according to Beijing, two vehicles drove into a crowded market and detonated explosives. Some local sources attributed to the attack to ETIM but there was no official confirmation from the government. In early August, the government stated that around 100 people (59 fighters and 37 civilians) had been killed in an attack carried out by a group of masked individuals in the cities of Elixku and Huangdi on 28th July, coinciding with the end of Ramadan. 215 people were arrested following the attack. The 37 civilians who died were all civil servants, almost all of whom belonged to the Han ethnic group. The attack, which occurred just after the fifth anniversary of the clashes in which 200 people were killed and a further 1,700 were injured, was attributed by the government to a group linked to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and to foreign terrorist organisations. The government declared that it had been carefully planned in advance.

Several other violent episodes that were less widely reported in the media also occurred in 2014: an attack with explosive devices on a market and police station in the county of Xinhue (Aksu prefecture, close to the border with Kyrgyzstan), in which 12 people were killed; a clash with the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan in a border region of Xinjiang the day before, in which 11 alleged fighters were killed; clashes in mid-February between the police and what the government described as terrorist cell, again in Aksu prefecture, in which 15 people were killed; an attack on a police station in the county of Yecheng (Kashgar prefecture) at the end of June, in which 13 alleged insurgency fighters were killed; another attack a few days later on a police station in Qaraqash (Hotan prefecture), in which five fighters were killed; four simultaneous attacks carried out at the end of September on two police stations, a market and a warehouse in the county of Luntai, in which 50 people were killed and a further 100 were injured; an attack with knives and explosives on a market in Kashgar in mid-October, in which 22 people were killed; and an attack with explosive devices carried out by an unidentified group of individuals at the end of November in a crowded street in the county of Shache.

The Chinese province of Xinjiang experienced an unprecedented level of violence in 2014, confirming the escalation of the conflict in recent years

Faced with the sharp escalation of the violence in Xinjiang, the government adopted a multifaceted counterinsurgency strategy. First of all it doubled the budget assigned to the fight against terrorism, notably increased the military and police presence in the region and increased the frequency of military exercise in the area. Furthermore, hundreds of people were given sentences (death sentences in dozens of cases) for charges related to the conflict. In this respect, one of the most high profile cases was that of Ilham Tohti, a well-known Uyghur intellectual, who was given a life sentence for promoting separatism. Secondly, at the end of May, the Chinese government initiated a one-year campaign with the goal of reducing the level of violence and weakening the armed organisations in Xinjiang. In November, state-linked media outlets reported that since May 115 terrorist cells had been dismantled (40% thanks to the information obtained during interrogations of arrestees), 117 religious education centres had been closed (and 238 individuals responsible for the centres had been arrested) and around 18,000 documents had been seized that condoned religious extremism. Several human rights organisations pointed to an unprecedented increase in the religious restrictions imposed on the Muslim community, especially during Ramadan. As part of the same campaign, the government announced a reform of the intelligence system aimed at improving the gathering of information and its sharing between various departments, controlling the Internet, monitoring the transportation of hazardous goods, guarding borders and strengthening international cooperation. In this respect, **it is worth highlighting the increased cooperation of countries that share a border with China in the fight against armed Uyghur groups**. By way of example, at the start of the year clashes took place between Uyghur fighters and the armed forces within Kyrgyzstan's territory; halfway through the year the Pakistani government carried out an operation in North Waziristan

in which several Uyghur fighters were killed and at the same time pledged to redouble its efforts to weaken Uyghur armed organisations and expel them from its territory; and at the end of the year the governments of China and Afghanistan signed several agreements through which, among other commitments, Kabul pledged to combat ETIM and to cooperate closely with the counterinsurgency strategy implemented by Beijing.

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, international coalition (led by the USA), ISAF (NATO), Taliban militias, warlords
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

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, the USA invaded the country and defeated the Taliban regime. After the signing of the Bonn agreements, an interim government was established, led by Hamid Karzai and subsequently ratified at the polls. In 2014 a new government was formed with Ashraf Ghani as president. Since 2006, there has been an escalation of violence in the country caused by the reformation of the Taliban militias. In 2011 the international troops began their withdrawal, and at the end of 2014 the combat mission was formally ended and replaced with a new, much smaller assistance and training mission.

2014 was a decisive year for the future of the country in both political and security terms. **The situation in the country was marked by two major developments: the presidential and provincial elections that were held on 5th April (first round) and on 14th June (second round), and the conclusion of the combat mission of the international troops deployed in the country since its invasion by the US and its allies after the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001.** Both developments occurred in a scenario of huge insecurity and growing violence, which led to an increase in the number of fatalities among both the civilian population and the Afghan security forces. Despite the fact that the Taliban insurgency remained very active throughout the year, carrying out several

2014 was a key year for Afghanistan with the holding of elections, which led to the formation of a new government, the transformation of the international military missions in the country, and the growing violence and increase in the number of civilian victims of the conflict

attacks, the violence did not prevent the holding of the elections, which took place amid accusations of fraud. Nonetheless, 200 people died on the two days of elections alone. The lack of agreement on the election results triggered a major political crisis between the top two presidential candidates. Although in the first round Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani had obtained 44.94% and 31.5% of the votes, respectively, the tables were turned in the second round and the electoral commission endorsed Ghani's victory. Following several months of disagreement over the vote count, at the end of September the two candidates reached an agreement for the formation of a national government in which Ashraf Ghani would serve as president and Abdullah Abdullah as chief executive officer. Nevertheless, no details were revealed on the vote count and the extent of the electoral fraud was not made public either, despite the fact that the head of the independent electoral commission resigned after some recordings were made public that revealed his alleged involvement in the said fraud. Although the agreement for the formation of a government represented a step forward of enormous importance, a fact underlined by several analysts, the subsequent difficulties in forming a cabinet and appointing senior officials highlighted the fragility of the political situation in the country, along with the huge challenges facing Afghanistan in terms of governance. It is worth highlighting that three women were appointed as ministers of higher education, cultural affairs and information, and women's affairs, respectively.

In parallel, the formation of a new government paved the way for solving a key issue that had remained stalled throughout the electoral and post-electoral period: the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the US, which regulates the presence of foreign troops in the country following the international military withdrawal. The president at the time, Hamid Karzai, refused to sign it, which triggered a major crisis with the US and led the US president, Barack Obama, to restate that he was planning the full withdrawal of US troops from the country. The BSA was finally signed after the formation of the new government. **A ceremony was held in December to mark the formal conclusion of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan, the ISAF, and the withdrawal of troops. The mission was replaced by a follow-on NATO-led mission christened Resolute Support, designed to provide training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces. Meanwhile, the US also concluded its Enduring Freedom mission, replacing it with Operation Freedom's Sentinel, which will form part of the NATO-led mission.** Finally, and although the purpose of the US mission is to provide support, Obama granted authorisation for combat operations to be carried out against any forces that threaten US or

Afghan troops, and the clauses signed with the Afghan government also provide for self defence. In total, 10,800 US troops will remain deployed in Afghanistan. Once they are joined by the soldiers deployed by other NATO countries, there will be 13,500 foreign troops in the country, although the final figure may be higher.

With regard to the evolution of the armed conflict over the course of the year, there was an **increase in violence and in the number of victims killed in clashes and attacks. The UN mission in the country reported that in 2014 there were a total of 10,548 civilian victims, 3,699 of whom were killed, which represents an increase of 22% in respect of the previous year.** The UNAMA highlighted the significant increase in the number of children and women among civilian casualties. Furthermore, it identified ground clashes and attacks with improvised explosive devices as the main causes of civilian deaths. In the last eight years, over 20,000 civilians have died as a result of the armed conflict and the number of casualties has increased year on year, except in 2012 when a decrease was recorded.[73] Throughout 2014 the increasingly internal nature of the armed conflict became ever more apparent as the number of clashes between the Taliban insurgency and the Afghan security forces rose and the involvement of foreign forces grew smaller, in line with their partial withdrawal from the country. One of the most important battlegrounds in 2014 was Helmand province, where in June the insurgency launched a strong offensive against the Afghan forces, which by then were in charge of security in the area. In the province of Faryab, the Taliban insurgency even gained control of the Qaisar district for several weeks. In the province of Kunduz the Taliban forces also gained control of certain areas. As such, it appears that one of the preferred strategies of the insurgency is to gain control of the territory and it may enjoy even greater success in achieving this control in 2015 given the smaller presence of foreign troops. Meanwhile, Kabul witnessed serious attacks in 2014, especially during the last few months of the year. Targets included international facilities, such as French cultural centre, the British embassy and a guest house housing mainly foreign guests.

The armed conflict in the Indian state of Assam escalated with several massacres carried out by the Bodo armed group NDFB(S)

Summary:
The armed opposition group the ULFA emerged in 1979 with the aim of liberating the state of Assam from Indian colonisation and establishing a sovereign State. The demographic transformations the state underwent after the partition of the Indian subcontinent, with the arrival of two million people from Bangladesh, are the source of the demand from the population of ethnic Assamese origin for recognition of their cultural and civil rights and the establishment of an independent State. During the 1980s and 1990s there were various escalations of violence and failed attempts at negotiation. A peace process began in 2005, leading to a reduction in violence, but this process was interrupted in 2006, giving rise to a new escalation of the conflict. Meanwhile, during the eighties, armed groups of Bodo origin, such as the NDFB, emerged demanding recognition of their identity against the majority Assamese population. Since 2011 there has been a significant reduction in violence and numerous armed groups have laid down their arms or began talks with the government.

The situation in the Indian state of Assam deteriorated notably in respect of the previous year and several extremely violent incidents were recorded. According to the figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 305 people died in 2014 as a consequence of the armed conflict affecting the state, three times more than in 2013, when 101 people were killed in the violence related to the conflict. **The most serious incidents of the year involved the Bodo opposition armed group NDFB(S), a faction of the armed group NDFB, which is opposed to peace negotiations with the government and which itself is a splinter faction of the original group, NDFB(R).** The group remained very active throughout the year. In January it launched a three-day wave of attacks on the Hindi-speaking population in the Kokrajhar district, in which eight people were killed. In one incident, five people were shot in a bus stopped by members of the NDFB(S) after being identified as Hindi speakers. An insurgent fighter was later killed in a revenge attack carried out by the security forces. **One of the year's most serious incidents occurred in May, when 45 Bengali-speaking Muslims were shot dead and 70 homes were set on fire in the town of Narayanguri, in the Baksa district, which forms part of the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD).** Furthermore, another ten people disappeared. The massacre was attributed by the government to the NDFB(S), although the group's involvement was not clear since it denied responsibility and various witnesses stated that among the attackers there were former insurgent fighters who following their surrender had been working as forest guards. In this respect, the Centre for Policy Analysis, which carried out an investigation into the incident, which took place in an area that has witnessed several serious incidents of inter-communal violence, stated that the massacre may have been politically motivated. In the days leading up

India (Assam)	
Start:	1983
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Gobierno, ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(S) KPLT, KLO, MULTA, HUM
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

---

73. The UNAMA began to record the figures of civilian victims of the armed conflict in 2007.

to the murders (which occurred right in the middle of the Indian electoral process) various political leaders stated that the Muslim population of the BTAD had not voted for the Bodo candidate, which may have triggered the attacks. The members of the Bodo tribe constitute just under one third of the area's population, although 30 of the 46 representatives of the Bodo Territorial Council are reserved for Bodo members in accordance with the rights of indigenous peoples recognised in the Indian Constitution, along with the various agreements reached with Bodo insurgent organisations since the start of the armed conflict in Assam. The Bengali-speaking Muslim population is considered foreign and its presence in the state has been one of the insurgency's recurring arguments for justifying its armed activity. The massacre was preceded by other violent incidents: the rape and murder of a Bodo girl (allegedly by Muslim men); the killing of a police officer by a group attempting to carry away a ballot box; sexual violence; the burning of homes; and beatings carried out by the police.

In December the NDFB(S) carried out three simultaneous attacks in the districts of Sonitpur, Kokrajhar and Chirang, opening fire indiscriminately and killing 72 members of the Adivasi community (an indigenous people from India). This was a revenge attack for a police operation carried out against the armed group a few days earlier, in which two Bodo insurgent fighters had been killed. Seven people later died, four of whom were killed in a series of revenge attacks in which the Bodo population was targeted by members of the Adivasi community. Another three people died as a consequence of the shots fired by the police during demonstrations in which thousands of members of the Adivasi community took part to protest against the killings. As a consequence of the violence, 2,500 people left their homes to seek refuge in shelters. In addition to the two major violent incidents that occurred in 2014, over the course of the year several sporadic attacks were carried out by various armed groups that operate in the state, while clashes took place between insurgent groups and the security forces. Another noteworthy incident occurred in August in the Golaghat district, on the border with Nagaland, when nine people died after being attacked by an armed Naga group, which also set around 200 homes on fire. Six more people were killed over the following days, three of whom were shot dead by the police, while a further 10,000 people were displaced to shelters. The borderland between the states of Assam and Nagaland has frequently witnessed disputes over land ownership and over the demarcation of the territory, since the Naga insurgent groups consider that part of the administrative territory of Assam belongs to the so-called "Greater Nagaland". At the end of August, the chief ministers of both states reached an agreement to establish a joint coordination mechanism to prevent the outbreak of violence in border areas.

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 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.

There was a reduction in the violence of the armed conflict between the Indian security forces and the Naxalite insurgency in 2014, with fewer fatalities. According to the figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 314 people died as a consequence of the armed conflict, compared with 421 in 2013. The civilian population was most affected by the armed violence, given that 128 of the victims were civilians, 87 were members of the Indian security forces and 99 were members of the armed group. **The states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand bore the brunt of the armed violence** with 113 and 97 fatalities, respectively, in line with the trend of previous years in which they were also greatly affected by the conflict. Clashes and attacks of varying intensity were recorded throughout the year and the insurgency was able to carry out several major attacks on the security forces, such as the one that took place in the state of Chhattisgarh in March, in which 20 members of the Indian security forces were killed. This large-scale ambush launched by the insurgency, in which at least 300 members of the Naxalite armed group took part, occurred just a few days after another attack in the Dantewada district, in which five police officers were killed. A further 13 members of the security forces were killed in one of the year's other major attacks in December, which also occurred in the state of Chhattisgarh. The Maoist insurgency pointed out that the attack occurred as a response to the policy of military expansion adopted by the new government headed by Narendra Modi.

After the new government took office, the interior minister, Rajnath Singh, made a statement on the new strategy of the Indian government to tackle the Naxalite insurgency. The Modi government explained that an approach based on peace talks would be ruled out unless the Naxalite group met the government's demand to abandon armed violence. The government stated that its main target would be the insurgent leaders, that additional security forces would be deployed and that intelligence efforts would be stepped up. It also affirmed that its priorities would include the infiltration of the Naxalite insurgency and the creation of elite fighting units in the states most affected by the armed conflict. Some analysts pointed out that these strategies were very similar to the ones implemented by previous governments, which had proved largely ineffective. Many of the violent incidents were concentrated in the electoral period. Various attacks took place during the electoral period in April and May. One of the most serious occurred in Chhattisgarh on 12th April, in which 14 people were killed in a bus and ambulance in which electoral staff and members of the security forces were travelling after the day of voting in the Bastar district.

India (Jammu and Kashmir)	
Start:	1989
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
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 level of violence in the armed conflict affecting the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in 2014 was similar to that recorded the previous year, with clashes between the Indian security forces and the various armed opposition groups that operate in the state, along with other violent incidents. According to the figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 193 people died in 2014 as a consequence of the violence related to the armed conflict. Although the improvement

in relations between India and Pakistan in the first few months of 2014 led to a certain improvement of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the trend throughout the rest of the year was not as positive and violent incidents occurred on a regular basis. The areas close to the Line of Control, the de facto border separating India from Pakistan, were periodically affected by incidents of armed violence and throughout the year insurgent fighters continued to cross from India to Pakistan. A series of clashes between the security forces and insurgent groups were recorded, causing dozens of fatalities. According to the figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, most of the victims were members of the armed opposition groups (110 insurgents and 51 members of the security forces). Furthermore, human rights and civil society organisations continued to report the commission of serious human rights violations by the security forces. In February seven people died in an operation launched by the security forces. Although the police and the government argued that the victims were all insurgents, the local population claimed that they were civilians and held protests that led to clashes between demonstrators and the security forces. Several violent incidents occurred in April and May, coinciding with the holding of the Indian general elections. Nevertheless, the turnout in the elections was higher than on previous occasions. The electoral violence caused several fatalities. Three of the victims (two local leaders and the son of one of them) were shot dead in the Pulwana district by members of the armed opposition group Hizbul Mujahideen. Another victim died in clashes with the security forces during protests against the elections. Meanwhile, with the goal of preventing protests the security forces carried out major raids during the electoral period that led to the arrest of 500 people. Furthermore, serious flooding took place in September which led to a significant deterioration in the humanitarian situation of the state and to the postponement of the state elections. They finally took place in November and December, with the People's Democratic Party emerging victorious. It should be pointed out that in November several Kashmir pro-independence leaders were arrested. According to human rights organisations, the goal of this measure was to suppress the anti-Indian vote. Once again, the arrests triggered social protests.

India (Manipur)	
Start:	1982
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, PLA, UNLF, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KNF, KNA, KYKL, RPF, UPPK, PCP
Intensity:	1
Trend:	End

Summary:
The armed conflict which 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.

Much lower levels of violence were recorded in the armed conflict in the Indian state of Manipur, in line with the trend reported in 2013 and previous years, as a result of which it was no longer considered an active armed conflict. According to the figures compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, 54 people were killed in 2014 as a result of the armed violence, a very similar figure to that of 2013, when 55 people died. Sporadic attacks and clashes were registered during the year between the various insurgent groups that operate in the state and the Indian security forces. Nevertheless, despite the reduction in violence, the level of militarisation in the state remained high; a large number of security forces remained deployed and exceptional measures remained in place. As in previous years, several violent incidents occurred on Republic Day, and although there were no fatalities on this occasion, attacks were reported next to various public institutions. In addition to the attacks with explosive devices, there were reports of extortion and several arrests were made of insurgents over the course of the year. Meanwhile, the activist Irom Sharmila, who has been on hunger strike for the last 15 years (undergoing force-feeding) in protest at the anti-terrorism legislation in force in Manipur, was rearrested two days after being freed following a court order.

The breakdown in peace talks between the Pakistani government and the insurgency led to escalating violence in the form of a major military operation and attacks with a huge impact on the civilian population

Pakistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Taliban militias, tribal militias, USA
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

Summary:
The armed conflict that affects the country is linked to the armed conflict in Afghanistan after the US bombings of 2001. Initially, the main setting of the conflict was the area that includes the Federally Administered Tribal Areas

(FATA) –which had remained inaccessible to the Pakistan government until 2002, when the first military operations were started in the area– and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa region (formerly known as North West Frontier Province). Nevertheless, it has gradually spread throughout the territory with continuous attacks by the Taliban rebel forces. After the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan at the end of 2001, members of the Taliban militias, with alleged connections to al-Qaeda, took refuge in the north west of Pakistan, which led to large-scale military operations of the Pakistani armed forces (almost 50,000 soldiers were deployed) with the support of the USA. The local population, mainly of Pashtun ethnic origin, have been accused of offering support to combatants from Afghanistan. Since the first operations in 2002, the violence has been on the increase.

The armed conflict in Pakistan saw high levels of violence in 2014, especially after the breakdown of peace talks between the government and the insurgency in April. In the first few months of the year, the peace talks led to a certain reduction in the violence, although attacks and clashes continued to take place. **The last few months of the year saw a sharp escalation of the violence with an enormous impact on the civilian population. The most serious incident was the attack on an army-run school in the city of Peshawar, in which 145 people were killed, 132 of whom were children who attended the school.** According to the figures compiled by the Center for Research and Security Studies of Pakistan, 11,596 people were killed as a consequence of the armed conflicts and socio-political crises affecting the country. In the early part of the year, several direct and indirect meetings took place between the insurgency and the Pakistani government, leading to a ceasefire agreement between the two sides. Consequently, there was a significant decrease in the violence and the number of fatalities caused by the armed conflict. However, the internal divisions with the insurgency movement regarding the peace talks with the government led to several violations of the ceasefire agreement and in the months prior to and following the signing of the agreement a series of violent incidents took place, some of which were of notable intensity, such as the attack in January on an army convoy close to the city of Bannu, in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in which 20 soldiers were killed and 24 were injured. It was not only the insurgency that remained active; the security forces did not completely halt its counterinsurgency operations either: January and February in particular saw a number of aerial bombardments, mainly in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency, in which dozens of people were killed.

Once the ceasefire had been broken the violence escalated sharply, especially in the tribal areas of the country, where the armed conflict is at its most intense. **The security forces launched the counterinsurgency operation entitled Zarb-e-Azb, which intensified over the course of the year.** Although the government initially claimed that the military operation was solely focused on the factions opposed to the peace talks, the ground and

air military offensive later expanded in North Waziristan. The attack that took place in June on Karachi airport, in which 38 people were killed, was a key factor in the decision to step up the activity of the Pakistani security forces. In September, Operation Zarb-e-Azb intensified notably and the chief of staff of the Pakistani army stated that the aim was to finally put an end to terrorism in the country. The aerial bombardments had a serious impact, forcing the displacement of almost one million people from their homes. The stepping up of military activity led the insurgency to transfer most of its operational bases to Afghanistan, from where it responded to the offensive of the armed forces with various attacks. One of the most serious attacks was the one carried out by the TTP in December on an army-run school in the city of Peshawar, in which 145 people were killed, 132 of whom were children who attended the school (mostly children of army personnel). The insurgents ambushed the school and opened fire indiscriminately in revenge for the military operations against the insurgency and for the death of hundreds of militia fighters in North Waziristan, South Waziristan and Khyber Agency. After the attack, the Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, lifted the moratorium on the death penalty for cases of terrorism and December saw an intensification of the clashes with the security forces and of bombings by US drones. An important factor in the intensification of the armed conflict and the breakdown in negotiations between the government and the insurgency was the split that occurred in the latter and the emergence of various factions opposed to dialogue. In May an important split occurred in the TTP, led by Ameer Khalid Mehsud. September saw the emergence of another breakaway armed opposition group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, which declared its loyalty to the armed organisation ISIS and carried out a suicide bombing at the Wagah crossing on the India-Pakistan border, killing at least 60 people.

Meanwhile, in June the US resumed the drone strikes that it had ceased in December 2013 as a consequence of the peace talks between the Pakistani government and the Taliban insurgency, along with the negotiations between the US government and the Afghan insurgency for the release of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, the only known US prisoner of war in Afghanistan, who was released at the end of May. According tot the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 25 drone strikes were carried out in 2014, killing between 115 and 186 people, of whom two might have been civilians.

Pakistan (Balochistan)	
Start:	2005
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, BLA, BRA, BLF, BLT, UBA, Jundullah, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Jaish-ul-Islam and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Intensity:	3
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. The violence in the province has been exacerbated by the growing presence of the Taliban insurgency, as well as the increase in sectarian violence.

2014 was a very violent year in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, affected by a series of conflicts and socio-political crises. According to the figures compiled by the Center for Research and Security Studies of Pakistan, 752 people were killed during the year as a consequence of the armed violence, which consisted of clashes between the security forces and the various armed insurgent groups that operated in the state, sectarian violence and attacks on public and private infrastructures. The Pak Institute for Peace Studies stated that 375 people died as a consequence of the attacks by the insurgency in the province. **The security forces carried out several operations during the year in which dozens of insurgents were killed.** One of the most noteworthy operations took place in June. Official sources reported that 30 alleged insurgents who formed part of the nationalist armed opposition group BRA, including two commanders, were killed in an operation launched by the armed forces in Sui, although the figures could not be independently verified. The government stated that the operation was a response to a series of attacks carried out by the insurgency against official facilities and various infrastructures in the province. Two attacks took place on consecutive days in April in response to the operation for which the armed opposition group United Baloch Army (UBA) claimed responsibility, although this was not recognised by the Pakistani government. The first attack involved the explosion of an explosive device on a train as it entered the city of Sibbi, killing 17 people, several of whom were children. The second attack occurred in a market in Islamabad, causing the death of at least 22 people. Several sources linked the attacks to the death of 30 insurgents during an operation by the security forces in the Kalat region in early April on hideouts of the armed Baloch groups BLA and BRA, who were held responsible for various attacks on railway infrastructures. Over the following months other serious incidents occurred, such as the clashes that took place on 22nd August between the security forces and alleged members of the BLA. As a consequence, 12 insurgents died. In September

the armed opposition group BLF shot dead 11 people accused of being police informants in the Kech district. Furthermore, the explosion of a bomb killed one person and injured another 22 in a commercial district of the city of Sibbi, although no group claimed responsibility for the incident. Over the last few months of the year several clashes took place between the security forces and insurgent groups in which dozens of people were killed. One of the other important matters of the year was the issue of enforced disappearances, repeatedly reported by local and international human rights and victims' organisations. The discovery in September of four mutilated bodies in the Panjgur district (one of the most affected by the armed conflict) triggered protests by various nationalist organisations, which attributed responsibility for the deaths to government agents. Human rights organisations have reported that over 2,000 bodies of murdered Baloch activists have been found over the last five years.

Meanwhile, incidents of sectarian violence continued to be registered in the province. The most serious attack in 2014 occurred in January, when the Sunni armed opposition group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi killed 29 Shiite pilgrims travelling back from a pilgrimage on a bus, on the road that connects Iran to Pakistan. Another 31 people were injured in the attack, which triggered major protests throughout the country condemning the government's response to sectarian violence. It should be pointed out that relatives of the victims protested in the street with the victims in their coffins, refusing to bury them until the government agreed to act. This was a very serious form of protest since, generally speaking, Muslims are buried as soon as possible after death. Another serious incident involved the armed group Jaish-ul-Islam, which opened fire on a group of Shiite pilgrims returning from Iran. 23 pilgrims and four insurgents died in the shooting.

South-east Asia and Oceania

Myanmar	
Start:	1948
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed groups (KNU/ KNLA, SSA-S, KNPP, UWSA, CNF, ALP, DKBA, KNPLAC, SSNPLO, KIO, ABSDF, AA, TNLA)
Intensity:	1
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.

The security situation in the country deteriorated over the course of the year with an increase in clashes between the armed forces of Myanmar and the various insurgent groups that operate in the country, despite the ongoing peace negotiations and the various ceasefire agreements in force.[74] Several episodes of violence were recorded in 2014. Although they were mostly sporadic in nature, their intensity increased over the course of the year. The most serious incidents occurred in November when the armed forces attacked a training camp of the Kachin armed opposition group KIA, killing 23 members of various armed organisations that were receiving training at the facilities of the KIA. The victims belonged to the armed groups All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Arakan Army (AA), Chin National Front (CNF) and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA). Four commanders of the KIA were also injured. The armed forces stated that the attack had been carried out in response to a previous offensive by the KIA, although the insurgent organisation denied this information. This was the most deadly incident since armed hostilities were renewed between the KIA and the army in 2011, which led to increased warnings about a possible escalation of the armed conflict. Following the attack on the training camp, other armed forces operations also took place targeting positions of the KIA and camps of displaced persons. Prior to this, the army had intensified its armed activity in the state of Kachin, in the strategic area of Hpakant, which is rich in mineral resources and the epicentre of the clashes between the army and the Kachin insurgency. There were also constant clashes throughout the year between the armed forces and the Palaung armed opposition group TNLA (which has yet to sign a ceasefire agreement with the government) and the Palaung Women's Organization (PWO) highlighted the serious impact that the growing militarisation of the area had on the civilian population. Since 2012, around 4,000 people have been displaced from their homes, fleeing from the violence, from forced conscription in the army and from sexual harassment. The Palaung territory has been greatly affected by major economic development projects (in particular oil and gas projects) carried out by Chinese companies. In October, 17 soldiers died in clashes with the TNLA.

---

74. See the summary on Myanmar in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

There were also an undetermined number of fatalities in subsequent clashes with this group. The insurgent groups denounced the growing presence of government troops in the areas inhabited by different ethnic minorities in Shan state. In this state, the insurgent group SSA-N stated in March that after several days of bombardments and attacks, the armed forces had gained control of two posts of great strategic value for the organisation in military and economic terms. The armed group also claimed that since early 2012, when the ceasefire agreement was signed, it had been involved in over 100 clashes with the army, which had gained control of five of its training camps.

There was an increase in the number of clashes between the armed forces and insurgent groups in Myanmar

One of the most important causes of tension in 2014 was the carrying out of a census by the government in collaboration with the UN agency UNFPA, triggering several episodes of violence in the country, including some involving the KIA.[75] The armed group was firmly opposed to the census being carried out in territory under its control and there was a major army presence in the areas where it was conducted. Although there was a reduction in violence in May and a resumption of peace talks between the armed group and the government, in which they even agreed the establishment of a peace monitoring committee to monitor the troop movements of both sides, new clashes took place in June in the Manwing area, in the south of the state of Kachin. At some points during the month the clashes took place on a daily basis.

Philippines (Mindanao-Abu Sayyaf)	
Start:	1991
Type:	Self-government, Identity, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Abu Sayyaf
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=

Summary:
Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Abu Sayyaf group has been fighting to establish an independent Islamic state in the Sulu Archipelago and the western regions of Mindanao (south). Although it initially recruited hostile members of other armed groups such as the MILF or the MNLF, it later moved away ideologically from both organisations and more systematically resorted to kidnapping, extortion, decapitating and bomb attacks, which led it to be included in the list of the USA and EU terrorist organisations. The government conceded that its counterinsurgency strategy of recent years had greatly weakened the group's leadership and military capacity, however at the same time it warned that Abu Sayyaf continued to be a threat for the state due to the numerous resources that it obtains from kidnapping and from its alleged alliance with organisations that are considered to be terrorist ones, such as Al Qaeda or Jemaah Islamiyah.

In 2014 several clashes took place between the armed forces and Abu Sayyaf, especially in the context of the special operations launched to rescue people kidnapped by the group, and **the government acknowledged on several occasions the group's capability to carry out major attacks and expressed its concern about Abu Sayyaf's attempts to link its activity to that of ISIS**. The main episodes of violence in 2014 were the clashes that occurred in April in the region of Patikul, in the province of Sulu (in which 24 fighters and one soldier were killed and a further 40 people were injured) and those that took place at the end of June, soon after the arrest of Khair Mundos, one of the group's spiritual leaders and one of the individuals on the most wanted list of the US (in which ten fighters and seven soldiers were killed and a further 24 soldiers were injured). Furthermore, intelligence reports stated that Isnilon Hapilon (one of the main leaders of Abu Sayyaf, known as the Emir of Basilan, also one of the people for whom the US government is offering the largest reward) survived a gunshot wound sustained during clashes with the armed forces on Basilan Island in late June. The same intelligence sources also stated that there was a power struggle within Abu Sayyaf, which meant that Hapilon's death would probably lead to the split of Abu Sayyaf into two factions. Two other major episodes of violence occurred at the end of July when Abu Sayyaf launched an ambush in Basilan, killing five people, followed by an attack just a few days later in the town of Talipao (province of Sulu), in which 19 people were killed and 13 were injured. Last of all, it is also important to highlight the high-intensity offensive launched by the government in the main strongholds of Abu Sayyaf on the island of Jolo in mid-October, days after the armed group released two German hostages. This offensive involved the deployment of around 2,500 additional troops and the use of combat helicopters and heavy weapons to recover and capture several of the group's camps, especially in the jungles of Patikul. The objective was to decimate Abu Sayyaf and pressure it into releasing its other hostages, ten of whom were foreign. By the end of the offensive, 30 people had died, dozens had been injured and hundreds had been forced to abandon their homes. The armed forces have acknowledged on more than one occasion that despite several years of counterinsurgency offensives that have weakened the group, it has a significant capacity to replace its casualties.

In addition to the episodes of violence that occurred throughout the year, the government voiced its concern on several occasions in 2014 that Abu Sayyaf might increase its terrorist activity. For example, at the end of June the president himself, Benigno Aquino, warned about possible terrorist attacks in several cities in Mindanao, especially in Davao. According to

---

75. See the summary on Myanmar in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

intelligence sources, these threats could be linked to the military setbacks suffered by the armed group in June. Furthermore, in early September the government announced that it had thwarted a plan by Abu Sayyaf to detonate explosive devices in the country's main airport and in a nearby shopping centre. Soon after, the government placed the armed forces on maximum alert after receiving intelligence reports pointing to the possibility of both Abu Sayyaf and the BIFF (splinter group of the MILF opposed to the peace process) increasing their attacks if the air offensive against ISIS in Iraq and Syria continued. Soon after, Abu Sayyaf threatened to execute one of the German hostages unless it received 5.6 million dollars and the German government withdrew its support for the US-led offensive against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. **In July, Abu Sayyaf began to release videos in which it stated its loyalty to ISIS.** During the quarter, some press reports claimed that around 100 people from the south of the Philippines had recently joined the ranks of ISIS. Despite this, and the information on the emergence of Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao as an umbrella organisation for the various jihadist groups that operate in the south of the country, the government stated that Abu Sayyaf was attempting to use an alleged link to ISIS to increase its political status.

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.

As in previous years, the peace negotiations between the government and the NDF remained stalled,[76] while clashes continued to take place between the armed forces and the NPA in several provinces throughout the country, along with mutual accusations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Manila stated that its current counterinsurgency strategy (called Oplan Bayanihan) had weakened the NPA and had led to a large number of surrenders and desertions, leaving it with 3,000 members at the end of the year, a significant reduction when compared with the 5,000 fighters that formed part of the group a decade ago or the 25,000 members it had in the 1980s. At the end of the year **the armed forces declared that eastern Mindanao was the epicentre of the insurgent activity of the NPA and that the key for defeating the NPA nationally was to weaken it in this region.** Although several prominent leaders of the NPA were captured during the year, **one of the most important developments in 2014 was the arrest in Cebu at the end of March of the Benito Timzon and his wife Wilma Austria, who most analysts and the government itself consider to be main leaders of the NPA in the Philippines.** Benito Timzon was the president of the Communist Party of the Philippines (political arm of the NPA), while Wilma Austria was the secretary general. The president, Benigno Aquino, declared that their arrest a significant setback for the organisation given that all the armed and political activity of the NPA revolved around these two people. Military sources considered that the group would take a long time to rebuild its leadership on the ground and to fill the leadership vacuum left in the NPA by the aforementioned arrest. The NPA leadership in exile issued a statement in which it claimed the arrest was illegal, considering that Timzon and Austria were covered by safe conduct provisions as "advisers" to the NPA and key players in the ongoing peace process. However, the government flatly denied that the arrestees were covered by the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees signed in 1995. As regards the impact that the aforementioned arrest may have on the peace process, the government considered that it might strengthen the sectors within the NPA, the PCE and the NDF who openly advocate a political and negotiated outcome to the conflict. Nonetheless, some analysts were of the opinion that the arrest might trigger reprisals by the NPA, along with a certain splintering of the group, with the consequent risk that certain factions of the armed organisation would make their own decisions, leading to an escalation of the violence in some regions of the country. Other analysts felt that the couple's arrest might strengthen the position of the founder of the NPA, Jose Maria Sison, who has been living in exile in Holland since the mid-1980s and who, according to some sources, had clashed and disagreed with the couple on various issues.

In respect of the dynamics of the conflict and episodes of violence, one the year's most noteworthy incidents was the death of 18 people (13 fighters of the NPA, one soldier and four guards of the Manobo ethnic group) in mid-July in the municipality of Prosperidad (province of Agusan del Sur) when around 70 fighters of the NPA attacked the home of a former member of the NPA who

---

76. See the summary on the Philippines (NDF) in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

had become the owner of a mining company and a prominent supporter of the counterinsurgency efforts. A few days earlier, the NPA had issued a statement claiming that eight soldiers had been killed and a further ten had been injured in clashes in the provinces of Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte. In mid-September, four people died in the municipality of Kapalong (province of Davao del Norte, in Mindanao) in clashes between the NPA and the Alamara tribal militia, which has 100 members and had already stated its willingness to fight the NPA since it considers that the group violates human rights and does not respect the indigenous culture of the region, rich in wood resources. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the unilateral ceasefires declared by the government (from 19th December to 20th January) and by the NPA (from 24th to 26th December, from 31st December to 1st January, and from 15th to 19th January) were longer than in previous year due to the visit by Pope Francis, scheduled from 15th to 19th January 2015. The Christmas ceasefires normally last around three weeks (except from 2011 to 2013, when the NPA shortened the length of the cessation of hostilities). However, on this occasion some media outlets considered that Pope Francis' visit had obliged the government to redeploy in Manila and the surrounding area some of the military and police resources that are usually deployed in the areas of influence of the NPA. Although the two sides had tacitly agreed the resumption of peace talks for early 2015, at the end of their respective unilateral ceasefires they accused each other of violating the cessation of hostilities.

Thailand (south)	
Start:	2004
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, secessionist armed opposition 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.

To a certain extent, the socio-political crisis affecting the country and the coup d'état perpetrated by the armed forces at the end of May eclipsed the developments in the south of the country. However, **the government stated on several occasions that the level of violence had been reduced considerably thanks to the military junta's policy of maintaining discreet contacts with the armed opposition groups with the goal of resuming the peace talks that had been stalled since the end of 2013**. The new prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, along with the defence minister and the vice prime minister, stated that if the current circumstances persisted it would be possible to put an end to the violence in the south of the country towards the end of 2015. In this respect, the government declared that 212 people had died in 2014 in incidents related to the conflict, compared with 326 fatalities in 2013 and 322 in 2012. Furthermore, the number of municipalities placed on the maximum security level fell from 319 in 2013 to 136 in 2014, while the number of municipalities placed on an intermediate security level also dropped from 517 to 234 in the same period. As regards the overall number of victims since the resumption of the armed conflict in early 2004, the government stated that 3,961 had died (2,610 civilians, 509 soldiers, 365 police officers, 138 teachers, 18 monks and 321 insurgents), while a further 9,625 people had been injured in this 11-year period, during which almost 17,000 episodes of violence had taken place involving the insurgency. These included over 3,000 attacks with explosive devices. Nevertheless, these figures differ somewhat from those published by other sources. According to information offered by analysts and media outlets, at the end of 2014 the total number of fatalities since 2004 was 6,200, while those injured numbered 12,000. Meanwhile, the Deep South Watch research centre highlighted that between early 2004 and April 2014 over 14,000 episodes of violence had been recorded, in which 6,097 people had been killed and 10,908 had been injured, 90% of whom were civilians. According to Deep South Watch, 39% of those who died were Buddhists and 59% were Muslims, while in the case of those who were injured the percentages were inverted: 59% were Buddhists and 32% were Muslims. The same report also stated that there had been 97 episodes of violence per month between 2012 and 2014. Although the number of episodes of violence had decreased since 2007, they had become more deadly, which meant that the number of victims had not varied ostensibly. Over the last ten years, some 4,000 people have been arrested, although most of them have been released immediately or after a short time.

One of the main changes in the patterns of violence in 2014 was the **increase in the number of attacks on the civilian population in respect of 2013**. In 2013, which saw the start of the peace talks, the government had asked the armed groups to reduce the level of violence against the civilian population, which means that in

percentage terms the violence against soldiers, police officer and paramilitary fighters increased. Once the peace talks stalled there was a resumption of the patterns of violence that existed prior to the start of the talks, with the civilian population bearing the brunt of the violence in the south of the country. In this respect, the three reports published by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) should be highlighted. The first condemned the deliberate attacks on teaching personnel. The murder of three teachers during the first quarter of 2014 brought the total number of murder victims in the teaching profession in the south of Thailand up to 171. Furthermore, since the resumption of the armed conflict in 2014, alleged secessionist armed groups have attacked over 300 public schools, which for these groups embody the aim of the Thai government to culturally homogenise the entire population of Thailand. According to some of these groups, Sharia law permits attacks on the civilian population under certain circumstances. However, HRW points out that international humanitarian law, which is binding for both state and non-state actors, clearly prohibits attacks on the civilian population. Another report published in early April warned that some of the armed groups are attempting to spread terror among the population through practices such as the burning and mutilation of the bodies of Buddhist women. Three cases were reported in February and March. In the same report, HRW also accused the government of committing rights violations under the shield of the state of emergency imposed on the south of the country, which has been repeatedly extended over the last few years and which, according to HRW and other organisations, provides blanket immunity to the state security forces. HRW called on the government to urgently deal with the violations of human rights or international humanitarian law committed by the army, the police or the militias acting in connivance with the state in the south of the country. In this respect, at the end of October it published a third report in which it condemned the fact that, ten years after the resumption of the violence, those responsible for the Tak Bai incident, in which seven demonstrators were shot dead by soldiers and a further 78 died of suffocation or were crushed to death while being transported to a military detention camp, had still not been put on trial. HRW considered in this report that the impunity with which the state security forces operate exacerbated the causes of the conflict.

As regards other dynamics of the conflict in 2014, another important development was the distribution of 2,700 assault rifles mostly among "community defence volunteers". Hundreds of paramilitary fighters operate in the south of the country in addition to the 60,000 police officers and soldiers deployed in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat (almost one for every 30 inhabitants).

Thailand's new military junta declared that the violence in the south of the country had been reduced thanks to the discreet contacts maintained with the armed opposition groups with the goal of resuming peace talks

Another important factor in the evolution of the conflict was the announcement made by the government in June regarding the extensive restructuring of the institutions entrusted with channelling and resolving the conflict, giving the armed forces clear control over the course of potential peace talks, as well as over the bureaucratic-institutional apparatus. In recent years, significant shortfalls have been detected regarding the civilian and military institutions involved in dealing with the armed conflict, as well as concerning the planning of policies from central government and their execution in the south of the country.

1.3.4. Europe

Caucasus and Russia

Russia (Dagestan)	
Start:	2010
Type:	System, Self-government, Identity, Internal
Main parties:	Federal Russian Government, Government of the Republic of Dagestan, armed opposition groups
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓

Summary:
Dagestan, which is the largest, most highly populated republic in the north of the Caucasus, and with the greatest ethnic diversity, has been facing an increase in conflicts since the end of the 1990s. The armed rebel forces of an Islamic nature which defend the creation of an Islamic state in the north of the Caucasus, confront the local and federal authorities, in the context of periodical attacks and counterinsurgency operations. The armed opposition is headed by a network of armed units of an Islamist nature known as Sharia Jamaat. The armed violence in Dagestan is the result of a group of factors, including the regionalisation of the Islam rebel forces from Chechnya as well as the local climate in Dagestan of violations of human rights, often set within the "fight against terrorism". All of this takes place in a fragile social and political context, of social ill due to the abuses of power and the high levels of unemployment and poverty, despite the wealth of natural resources. This is made even more complicated by interethnic tensions, rivalry for political power and violence of a criminal nature.

The Republic of Dagestan continued to be the epicentre of the violence between security forces and the Islamist insurgency that affects the North Caucasus, although the number of fatalities was lower. According to the figures published by Caucasian Knot, at least 208 people died and a further 85 were injured (in 2013 there were 341 fatalities and at least 300 injury victims, according to the same source). The patterns of violence of previous periods continued, with incidents on a daily basis, attacks, armed clashes,

counterinsurgency operations, murders, kidnappings and other violent practices, all within a structurally fragile context with regard to human rights. In addition to the fatalities, almost 100 people were injured in 2014. One of the year's most significant developments was the **announcement in March by the insurgency of the North Caucasus that its most senior leader, the Chechen Doku Umarov, had died (in autumn 2013) and had been succeeded by Ali Abu-Muhammad (Aliaskhab Kebekov), an ethnic Avar from Dagestan** who since October 2010 has been a judge in Islamic law (qadi) of the Caucasus Emirate, which is the name adopted by the political-military-religious project of the insurgency. The change reflected Dagestan's emergence in recent years as the main scenario of armed activity, in contrast to the Chechen predominance in the leadership of the insurgency until now, although analysts offered different interpretations regarding the implications of the change and the strength of the armed groups. Abu-Muhammad prohibited attacks on the civilian population, a measure that the insurgency had already decreed in previous periods (February 2012 - July 2013, among others). The insurgency leader also urged women not to take part in armed actions, banning them from carrying out suicide attacks.

The security forces carried out several operations over the course of the year. One of the year's most noteworthy developments, due to its impact on the civilian population, was a major "anti-terrorist" operation that involved cordoning off the settlement of Vremenny in the district of Untsukul from mid-September to early December. In fact, some measures remained in place for eight months. The operation led to the displacement of 1,000 people from the settlement. The local population denounced the isolation of the settlement, house searches, arrests of local men, damage to homes and infrastructures, and the closure of health and education services. The complaints led the Russian authorities to set up a commission to evaluate the damage. Furthermore, a "counter-terrorist regime" was in force in the Buynaksk district for 75 days before being lifted in early December. Meanwhile, in December the authorities reported the death of several leading members of the insurgency in different operations, including the leader of the Makhachkala sector, Emir Usman (Ruslan Darsamov), and the leader Murat Zalitinov (Emir Abutakhir), considered leader of the central sector of the insurgency in Dagestan and previously leader of the Kadar rebel unit. Four other people allegedly linked to the insurgency died

In 2014 the insurgency of the North Caucasus announced that its most senior leader, the Chechen Doku Umarov, had died the previous year and had been succeeded by Ali Abu-Muhammad, from Dagestan

together with Zalitinov in this operation in Gurbuki, in the Karabudakhkent district. Other incidents during the year included a counterinsurgency operation in January in the town of Semender, in which seven alleged insurgents were killed, one of whom was a local leader, Makhmud Aliyev; the explosion of a bomb in capital city Makhachkala in January, in which nine people were injured, including two police officers; a special operation in April in Derbent, in which five alleged insurgents were killed; and a macro-operation affecting several towns in the district of Untsukul, in which several houses were bombed and several alleged militia fighters were killed.

Another important development at the end of the year was the information that appeared concerning **internal divisions within the insurgency, due to opposing views on relations with the jihadist armed group Islamic State (ISIS)**, which is fighting in Syria and Iraq.[77] As such, several senior and middle-ranking members of the Dagestan insurgency pledged their loyalty to the ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, including the insurgent leader of Dagestan, Emir Abu Muhammad (Rustam Aseldarov), the former leader of the Shamilkala sector, Abu Muhammad Agachaulsky (Arsanali Kambulatov), the emir of the southern sector, Abu Yasir, and his right-hand man, Abu Sumaya. The most senior leader of the insurgency in the North Caucasus, Ali Abu-Muhammad (Aliaskhab Kebekov), criticised those who had pledged their loyalty to the leader of ISIS and urged any Dagestan rebels who were followers of al-Baghdadi to leave Dagestan, warning that he was the sole authority in the area. Furthermore, the emir of Dagestan was dismissed and replaced by Said Arakansky. Meanwhile, **Dagestan continued to be affected by human rights violations and repressive practices carried out by the authorities. The harassment of Salafist civilians increased**, with mass arrests being carried out in their places of assembly, such as mosques, at various points during the year. For example, according to local witnesses, over 100 people were arrested in April in the town of Shaumyan and released the same day, while around 20 people were arrested in May in Jasaviurt. Local activists were also persecuted, such as Zarema Bagavutdinova, of the Pravozaschita ("Support") organisation. At the start of the year, experts and activists of the Russian human rights organisation Memorial, the local NGO Mothers of Dagestan and the international organisations Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group warned of the fragile human rights situation in Dagestan.

---

77. See the summary on Syria and the summary on Iraq in this chapter.

Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria)	
Start:	2011
Type:	System, Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Federal Russian Government, Government of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups
Intensity:	1
Trend:	End

Summary:

The violence and instability that characterise the Federal Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria are related to the armed groups that since the turn of the 21st century have been fighting against Russian presence and defending the creation of an Islamic emirate, along with other armed movements in the North Caucasus, and reflecting the regionalisation of the violence that affected Chechnya in the 1990s. The network of groups that operates in Kabardino-Balkaria, Yarmuk, began operations in 2004 although it was in 2005 when it began to show its offensive capability, with several simultaneous attacks on the capital that claimed dozens of lives and led in turn to the intensification of the counter-insurgent operations of the Russian and local authorities. In 2011, this situation of armed violence escalated significantly. Periodical insurgent and counterinsurgent attacks are launched, the extortion of the civilian population is carried out by rebel forces and human rights violations are committed by the armed forces. There are also underlying tensions linked to the influence of religious currents not related to the republic, problems of corruption and human rights violations, and the disaffection of the local population towards the authorities.

The violence between the security forces and the Islamist insurgency continued, although the low intensity of recent years raised the prospect of an end to the armed conflict. Around 50 people were killed in 2014 and a further 20 were injured (in 2013 there were 92 fatalities and 31 injury victims). The patterns of violence included periodic clashes, special "anti-terrorist" operations, and occasional attacks by the insurgency, among other incidents. **In one of these operations, in March, the leader of the Kabardino-Balkaria insurgency, Tengiz Guketlov, was killed**. Guketlov himself had claimed responsibility for the murder of six civilians in early January in the Stavropol region in southern Russia. Other local leaders were killed during the year, such as Al-Bara (Astemir Berkhamov), in a special operation in May, who was succeeded by Emir Salim (Zalim Xebjuzov). Meanwhile, the authorities announced the death of four insurgents, including the alleged local leader Adam Shigalugov, killed in a bomb explosion during a shooting in June. The changes in the leadership of the North Caucasus insurgency following the death of Doku Umarov in 2013 (not announced until 2014) and his replacement by Ali Abu-Muhammad (Aliaskhab Kebekov) also had implications for the Kabardino-Balkaria insurgency. The new leader announced that attacks on civilians were prohibited. Meanwhile, the human rights situation in the republic remained fragile. The most serious incidents included the disappearance and murder in

August of the journalist and human rights activist Timur Kuashev, who had criticised the authorities on several occasions and had received threats, including from security agents. At the beginning of the year, dozens of activists were arrested when they demonstrated in the capital, Nalchik, against the holding of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, ancestral land of the Circassian population, which was massacred in the 19th century.

Eastern Europe

Ukraine	
Start:	2014
Type:	Government, Identity, Self-government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, pro-Russian armed actors in eastern provinces, Russia, EU, USA
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:

Considered in transition since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and a country of great geostrategic importance, Ukraine is undergoing a major socio-political crisis and armed conflict in its eastern regions as the scenario of the most serious crisis between the West and Russia since the Cold War. Preceded by a cluster of hotspots across the country (mass pro-European and anti-government demonstrations, the fall of President Viktor Yanukovich and his regime, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, anti-Maidan protests and the emergence of armed groups in the east), the situation in eastern Ukraine degenerated into armed conflict in the second quarter of 2014, pitting pro-Russian separatist militias, supported by Moscow, against state forces under the new pro-European authorities. Over time, issues such as the status of the eastern provinces were added to the international geostrategic dimension (political, economic and military rivalry between Russia and the West in Eastern Europe and Russia's demonstration of force for the benefit of its own public opinion, among other issues). Affecting the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, the war has had great impact on the civilian population, especially in terms of forced displacement. The parties to the conflict are participating in negotiations led by the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia and Ukraine).

The situation in Ukraine was turned on its head in 2014 when mass protests led to the ousting of the pro-Russian president, Victor Yanukovych, the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation and the outbreak of an armed conflict in April in the east of the country between pro-Russian militias and the security forces, all against the backdrop of the most serious crisis between the West and Russia since the Cold War. The protests began in the capital, Kiev, in November 2013 when Yanukovych refused to sign the anticipated Association Agreement with the EU. The protests soon spread to others places, growing in size and frequency, partly as a reaction to the violent repression carried out by the security forces. The situation became more acute between January and February 2014, with serious clashes taking

place between the security forces and demonstrators, including incidents that were not cleared up involving snipers, the occupation of government buildings, mass arrests and legislation that seriously restricted freedom of assembly, association and expression, among other elements. It also emerged that neo-Nazi and ultra-nationalist militia groups and sectors had also taken part in the protests, highlighting the heterogeneous nature of the so-called Maidan movement (in reference to Kiev's Independence Square, the epicentre of the pro-European protests). Several failed attempts were made to negotiate and reach a consensus. Following the agreement signed on 21st February (agreement between the Ukrainian government and the opposition, with the mediation of an EU delegation and Russian backing, which included the restoration of the 2004 constitution and the creation of a government of national unity, among other aspects), considered insufficient by sectors of the Maidan movement, buildings were once again occupied, the presidential building was taken over and Yanukovych was forced to flee. In turn, Yanukovych was dismissed by parliament (a measure denounced by him as a coup d'état) and an interim government was appointed. The change was supported by the West and condemned by Russia. Around 100 people died during the months of protests leading up to Yanukovych's dismissal. A series of anti-Maidan protests were then staged by pro-Russian sectors in the east and south of the country. The instability immediately spread to Crimea (a region handed over by the USSR to Ukraine in 1954, where most of the population is Russian, 24.3% is Ukrainian and 12.5% is Tatar), where the government and parliament were taken over by armed men, the local government was dismissed by parliament, a referendum was called on the status of the region, and the territory was taken over in a mostly bloodless operation by unidentified forces (which the Russian president, Vladmir Putin, later admitted were Russian). After the referendum held on 16th March (turnout of 83.1% and 96.77% of votes in favour of joining Russia, according to figures provided by the regional authorities), Crimea and Russia signed a treaty annexing Crimea to Russia as a republic and Sevastopol as a federal city. The UN General Assembly declared the referendum invalid, while the EU and US agreed the imposition of sanctions on Russia, which were extended over the course of the year. The Crimean crisis highlighted the international dimension acquired by the Ukrainian crisis, while subsequent developments in eastern Ukraine raised the stakes between Russia and Euro-Atlantic institutions and Western governments.

The Maidan protests, the fall of the Yanukovych regime and the Crimean crisis were followed by the deterioration of the situation in the eastern and

An armed conflict took place in eastern Ukraine between the state's security forces and pro-Russian militias, seriously affecting the civilian population and sparking fears of a new Cold War between the West and Russia

southern regions of the country. Partly in response to the Maidan demonstrations, anti-Maidan protests and actions by pro-Russian activists and sectors were carried out in towns of provinces such as Donetsk, Lugansk, Odesa and Jarkov. Buildings were seized, alternative authorities were proclaimed and there was an ever-growing presence of armed actors. The Ukrainian interim government launched a military campaign, presented as an anti-terrorist operation, to dismantle the checkpoints. The failure of the agreement of 17th April (reached between Ukraine, Russia, the EU and the US, which included the disarmament of all the illegal groups, the vacating of seized buildings and squares, and the drawing up of a constitution with greater powers for the regions and the supervision of the OSCE) was a strong indication of how difficult it would be to reach agreements. **An armed conflict subsequently broke out in eastern Ukraine that continued throughout the year, in parallel with attempts at dialogue**.[78]

The areas under rebel control in the provinces of Donetsk and Lugansk held a referendum on self-determination on 11th May, without government authorisation and despite the calls for Russia to postpone the referendums. The conflict became progressively restricted to the two provinces, despite serious incidents in other areas, such as the death of over 40 people when a trade union building in which pro-Russian demonstrators were sheltering was set on fire in Odesa in May. Several attacks and clashes took place, including the downing of a dozen military transport planes and helicopters by the pro-Russian insurgency between May and early July. A unilateral ceasefire declared in June by the Ukrainian president, Petro Porosenko (who emerged victorious in the elections held at the end of May, with 54.7% of the votes), to which the militias signed up, was not renewed after the government accused the rebels of failing to implement it. On resuming its military offensive, the army forced the withdrawal of the insurgency from its Sloviansk stronghold (Donetsk). **One of the most deadly incidents was the downing of a Malaysia Airlines passenger plane on 17th July as it was flying over the Donetsk region, killing all 298 occupants** (passengers and crew, including 145 Dutch nationals, 45 Malaysian citizens and 27 Australians). The aircraft was allegedly hit by a missile fired from the area under rebel control. The clashes increased in August when the Ukrainian army surrounded the rebels, who became strengthened and threatened to extend their control over the port city of Mariupol after capturing Novoazovsk, on the southern coast. Ukraine and NATO denounced Russia's support of the militias over the course of the year in terms of the supply of arms and the deployment of troops within

---

78. See the summary on Ukraine in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

Ukraine, while Russia only acknowledged the presence of Russian volunteers. Press reports and several analysts also focused on Russia's support of the insurgency.

The serious deterioration of the conflict led the two sides to sign a ceasefire deal on 5th September. Other progress was also made (decentralisation legislation; memorandum, which gave the green light to the creation of a demilitarised zone) although the violence continued throughout the rest of the year, highlighting the lack of commitment to the implementation of the agreements and the difficulty in making progress in the dialogue process. Subsequent attempts to renew the ceasefire or agree partial ceasefires mostly ended in failure. The parliamentary elections held in Ukraine in October were won by pro-EU parties, although voting was not possible in the areas under rebel control. Meanwhile, elections were held in these areas in November. They were not recognised by the international community but Russia stated that it respected the results. Partly in response to the holding of these elections, the Ukrainian president ordered the end of state funding in these areas, including the payment of pensions, social benefits, and education and health payments. He also ordered the withdrawal of state companies and the suspension of services by the central bank, which he justified as a measure to prevent funds from falling into rebel hands. **The figures on the conflict in mid-December confirmed its serious impact: around one million displaced people, including internally displaced people and refugees; some 4,700 fatalities and over 10,300 injury victims; reports of human rights violations by both sides, including cases of sexual violence; and a growing number of civilians in a situation of vulnerability**, mainly the elderly, retired people, children and people dependent on social benefits.

South-east Europe

Turkey (south-east)	
Start:	1984
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, PKK, TAK
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The PKK, created in 1978 as a political party of a Marxist-Leninist nature and led by Abdullah Öcalan, announced 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 Turkey, 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 Turkey. 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. The expectations that had built up since 2009 were dashed by increasing political and social tension and the end of the so-called Oslo talks between Turkey and the PKK in 2011. In late 2012, the government announced the resumption of talks. The war in Syria, which began as a revolt in 2011, 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.

The armed conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK remained at a low level of intensity in 2014, although it was affected by the situation of crisis in the region, which hampered the dialogue process somewhat. Nevertheless, it remained active and saw some positive developments at the end of the year.[79] In security terms, **the unilateral ceasefire of the PKK, which began in March 2013 (and to which the army responded with a de facto ceasefire) was generally respected in 2014**, a year marked in Turkey by both local elections (March) and general elections (June). This facilitated a climate of relative calm in respect of the high level of violence prior to 2013. Nevertheless, the conflict remained active and there were several focal points of tension. In the military sphere, the **PKK denounced the process of militarisation and the construction of new military outposts in the south-east of the country**, stating its intention to attack them. IHD, a Turkish human rights NGO, reported in 2014 that 341 military outposts had been constructed in 2013 and that 2,000 new rural guards had been recruited (state-funded paramilitary force). The first fatality in combat since the start of the ceasefire occurred in March, when a soldier died in an explosion in Uludere (Sirnak province). There were several conflict-related fatalities during the year. As such, in a context of renewed tension, three Turkish soldiers and a paramilitary fighter were murdered in October, allegedly by the PKK. The PKK carried out various kidnappings in 2014. Victims included civilians (for example, 20 teachers in June), who were later released. The Turkish army carried out four bombardments against the PKK in the south-east of the country, considered the first since the start of the ceasefire. Other incidents included the blocking of a road between Diyarbakir and Bingol by members of the PKK in June, or the hunger strike initiated by 4,000 prisoners linked to the PKK in 90 prisons across Turkey.

The Kurdish crisis in Syria had a strong impact on the dynamics of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, increasing the level of mistrust between the Kurdish

---

79. See the summary on Turkey (south-east) in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

nationalist movement and the Turkish government. In the neighbouring country, the Kurdish population and its leading Kurdish politicians and military officers (PYD, YPG, with links to the PKK) were increasingly besieged by the armed jihadist group Islamic State (ISIS), especially in the town of Kobane.[80] The PKK accused Turkey of supporting ISIS, allowing weapons and jihadist fighters to cross the border into Syria, as well as permitting the training of fighters. However, the Turkish government denied supporting ISIS and voiced its concern that the international support given to the Kurds in Syria might lead to a strengthening of the PKK. Meanwhile, the PKK urged Kurds everywhere to join the armed ranks defending the Kurdish areas of Syria and accused Turkey of preventing those attempting to join the fighters who were defending Kobane from crossing the Turkish-Syrian border. **This blockade and the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in the Kurdish areas of Syria triggered demonstrations by Kurdish civilians on the Turkish side of the border and clashes between demonstrators and the security forces**. As such, the social tension was high in 2014 (in contrast to the lower level of direct combat-related violence in Turkey). Numerous protests and clashes took place with several fatalities, partly due to the construction of new military outposts, but mainly due to the spread of the Syrian crisis. In addition to the incidents on the border related to this issue, there were also **clashes in October between Kurdish demonstrators sympathetic to the PKK and members of the Kurdish Islamist party Hüda-Par** (Free Cause Party, ISIS supporter and an affiliate of Kurdish Hezbollah, with no relation to the Hezbollah of Lebanon). The clashes between Kurdish groups and with the security forces in October left dozens dead and hundreds injured. In response, the government imposed a curfew in several cities and deployed the army to implement it, including the mobilisation of tanks. These exceptional measures were reminiscent of the situation in the south-east of the country in the 1990s. In December there were more clashes between militants of the youth wing of the PKK (Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement, YDG-H) and Hüda-Par, with several fatalities, once again raising alarm bells about the risk of a drift towards intra-Kurdish civilian violence.

Despite the serious tension between the Kurdish movement and the government, mainly motivated by their respective positions concerning the Syrian Kurdish crisis, which led to the stalling of peace talks in October, the process remained active in 2014 and received a boost at the end of the year in the form of a mutual commitment to make substantial progress in 2015. The ceasefire and dialogue mutually

The conflict between Turkey and the PKK was seriously affected by the Kurdish crisis in Syria, with an increase in social tension, although the ceasefire was generally respected

strengthened each other over the course of the year. Nonetheless, some analysts highlighted the highly fragile nature of the process, the deep-seated mistrust between the two sides and electoral pressure (general elections scheduled for June 2015), among other obstacles.

1.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

Egypt (Sinai)	
Start:	2014
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, security forces, ared groups based in Sinai (including Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM), Ajnad Misr, and Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya), Israel
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑

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.

The dispute between the Egyptian government and various jihadist armed groups based in Sinai became more deadly over the course of 2014, with an increase in the number of episodes of violence, leading the situation to be classified as an armed conflict. The total number of fatalities is difficult to confirm but over 100 people were killed in the many incidents that occurred during the year. The armed group involved in the highest number of actions and those with the greatest impact was Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM), although responsibility

---

80. See the summary on Syria-Turkey in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) and the summary on Syria in this chapter.

for some offensives was claimed by other insurgent organisations, such as Ajnad Misr. **The first few months of 2014 were marked by spectacular attacks launched by ABM.** In January, the group carried out an attack with explosives on the police headquarters in El Cairo and, not long after, shot down an Egyptian military helicopter flying over Sinai with a surface-to-air missile. ABM then claimed responsibility for an attack of international notoriety carried out in February on a tourist bus in Sinai, close to the border with Israel, in which three South Korean citizens and one Egyptian national were killed. This series of incidents confirmed ABM's capacity to act beyond Sinai and to gain access to a sophisticated arsenal of weapons. It also revealed the extent of its targets, since until then the group had focused its offensives on the Egyptian security forces and Israeli interests. ABM justified its attack on the tourist bus (an incident unprecedented in many years) in the context of the "economic war" it is waging against the Egyptian government, which from June was officially headed by the former general Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, leader of the army coup that overthrew the government of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). On taking office, the president promised to put an end to terrorism and remained intent on establishing links between the armed actions of groups based in Sinai with the MB. This approach, together with the lack of information provided on the insurgent activity taking place on the peninsula, made it difficult to independently confirm the incidents related to this conflict and the authorship of the various attacks. Some experts pointed to the government's interest in linking the Sinai conflict to the MB with the goal of discrediting the organisation, which has been declared a terrorist group by the authorities but which officially remains committed to advancing its political agenda through peaceful means. However, according to other analysts, it could not be ruled out that ABM had recruited some members of the MB who had become disenchanted and radicalised by the aggressive campaign of persecution instigated by the government.

Over the course of the year, the conflict continued in the form of armed attacks and bombings on roads and army checkpoints, suicide operations, murders of police officers, attacks on gas pipelines (connected to Israel and Jordan) and clashes. According to the figures published by the Egyptian interior ministry, **from the overthrow of Mohamed Mursi's government in mid-2013 to October 2014, over 500 soldiers and police officers had died in violent episodes involving jihadist groups**. Several jihadist fighters or individuals suspected of belonging to these Sinai-based organisations were killed in government incursions against the groups and in tracking operations. Additionally, according to press reports, ABM also executed over then people accused of collaborating with the Egyptian security forces and/or Israel. **One of the most serious episodes in the second half of the year took place at the end of October, when a double attack on Egyptian troops**

ABM launched actions of great international notoriety in early 2014, including the downing of a military helicopter and an attack on a tourist bus in Sinai

in Sinai left 31 soldiers dead, the highest number of victims for the Egyptian army in "peacetime". Following the offensive, for which ABM claimed responsibility, the government decreed a state of emergency for a period of three months in several parts of the peninsula, closed the Rafah border crossing and displaced dozens of families from their homes in order to create a buffer zone along the Egypt/Gaza border. Meanwhile, the government approved new powers for the army regarding the control of infrastructures, energy plants, bridges and roads, among other areas. Towards the end of the year, other key developments in the evolution of this conflict occurred. In November ABM pledged its loyalty to the armed group Islamic State (ISIS), which in mid-2014 announced the establishment of a caliphate in the areas under its control in Syria and Iraq. According to several reports, the rapprochement with ISIS generated internal debate within ABM, given the reluctance of some sectors to link the group's struggle with interests beyond the Sinai border. As such, in December an armed faction calling itself Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya announced its split from ABM, due to disagreements over the group's relations with ISIS. Furthermore, in a context of periodic episodes of violence, ABM claimed responsibility for the kidnapping and subsequent execution of a US engineer. This was the first action of this nature to be perpetrated by the group and appeared to emulate similar actions carried out by ISIS in the previous months. Finally, it should be noted that in 2014 the US added ABM to its list of terrorist organisations and resumed military aid to Egypt in order to provide resources for the fight against extremist groups in Sinai, on the border with Israel.

Iraq	
Start:	2003
Type:	System, Government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Iraqi and Kurdish (Peshmerga) military and security forces, Islamic State (ISIS), Shiite militias, Sunni armed groups, USA, international anti-ISIS coalition, Iran
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, led to the beginning of 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 persisted, with a significant impact on the civilian population. The armed conflict intensified in 2014 as a consequence of the rise of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS) and the military response of the Iraqi government, supported by a new US-led international coalition.

The armed conflict in Iraq saw its sharpest escalation since 2006-2007, considered the deadliest period of the war that began in 2003. According to the figures published by the UN mission in the country, UNAMI, there were 12,282 people killed and 23,126 wounded in 2014, although it pointed out that these figures should be considered as the absolute minimum due to the difficulties involved in verifying and documenting the results of many episodes of violence.[81] **According to the figures provided by the organisation Iraq Body Count (IBC), the numbers are much higher. According to its calculations there were 17,049 civilian victims, almost double the number calculated in 2013** (9,743) which in turn was twice as high as the 2012 figure (4,622).[82] The intensification of the violence in 2014 was due to a series of factors, some of the most important of which were the rise of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS), the military response of the Iraqi government and the involvement of a US-led international coalition in the offensive against ISIS. Over the course of the year, and in previous periods, the episodes of violence included attacks with explosive devices; suicide attacks in markets and mosques, among crowds of pilgrims and in Shiite neighbourhoods, especially in Baghdad; offensives against the security forces; clashes between various armed actors; and politically-motivated murders (especially leading up to the April elections), among others. The deadliest episodes were linked to the rise of ISIS from the end of 2013. The dismantling of a Sunni protest camp in Ramadi in December 2013 and the subsequent withdrawal of security forces led to a major offensive by ISIS, which took control of Ramadi and Fallujah. The Iraqi security forces were unsuccessful in their attempts to regain control of these areas. In fact, ISIS consolidated its positions in the strategic province of Anbar (the largest in the country and bordering with Syria) and, in June, launched a surprise offensive in the city of Mosul (the second largest in the country) and in Tikrit (Saddam Hussein's home city), advancing on Baghdad. **In some areas, such as Mosul, the Iraqi forces fled from the advancing ISIS militias, while**

The violence in Iraq escalated to its worst level since 2007 and caused the death of between 12,000 and 17,000 people or more over the course of 2014

in others, such as the Baiji area (where the country's largest oil refinery is located) fierce fighting took place. The taking of Mosul, in alliance with disaffected Sunni sectors (including sectors linked to disbanded Baath party of Saddam Hussein) marked a turning point. It not only enabled the group to seize a significant amount of resources and weapons arsenals, but also paved the way for the declaration of a caliphate by ISIS in the areas under its control in Iraq and Syria.[83] The group, known until then as "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant" adopted a new name, "Islamic State", as a sign of its aim to become a new political entity and cross the established boundaries.[84]

The attacks by Islamic State had a huge impact on the population. Several NGOs and UN bodies reported on the multiple human rights violations committed by the jihadist group, some of which are considered war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. As it advanced through Iraq, **Islamic State carried out massacres and summary executions, deliberate attacks on the civilian population, the forced recruitment of children and serious acts of sexual violence against women and girls**.[85] The minorities in the area, including Assyrian Christians, Yazidis and Turkmen, were the main targets of the organisation. In this respect, one of the episodes with the greatest impact was the advance of ISIS on the town of Sinjar, which forced 200,000 people to flee in August, many of whom ended up surrounded in a mountainous area. In light of these episodes and faced with the possibility of ISIS reaching the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, Erbil, the US decided to become militarily involved in Iraq once again (with the consent of the Iraqi government), three years after withdrawing its troops from the country. The US air campaign halted the advance of ISIS towards Erbil and was then extended to other strategic objectives, such as recapturing Mosul from the armed group. The US also lent its support to the Kurdish (Peshmerga) armed forces (which acted in conjunction with Shia militias and Iraqi troops supported by Iran) in order to break Islamic State's siege on the Shiite Turkmen city of Amerli. It should be pointed out that, prior to this, the Kurdish forces had occupied the city of Kirkuk (rich in oil resources) in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of ISIS and to consolidate its control over one of the main territories disputed between the Kurdish regional government and the Baghdad authorities.[86] The US promoted the formation of an anti-ISIS coalition (composed of 30 countries), which focused on providing support and increasing the supply of arms to the Kurdish

81. UN News, "2014 one of Iraq's bloodiest years as casualty rates soar, UN mission reports", *UN News*, 2nd January 2015, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49725#.VL_Gf9KG92E.
82. Iraq Body Count, *Iraq 2014: Civilian deaths almost doubling year on year*, Iraq Body Count, 1st January 2015, https://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2014/
83. See the summary on Syria in this chapter.
84. See "The threat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the risks for human security and its impact on regional stability" in chapter 6 (Risk scenarios for 2015).
85. See chapter 4 (The gender dimension in peacebuilding).
86. See the summary on Iraq (Kurdistan) in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

forces and the Iraqi army, as well as carrying out air strikes, which from the end of September also targeted ISIS positions in Syria. Islamic State reacted by calling on its followers to act against the interests of the member countries of the coalition and with the beheading of hostages, which including several US and British citizens. Although the US government insisted that it would not redeploy ground troops in Iraq, in November it authorised the deployment of additional forces, bringing the total number of US troops in the country up to over 3,000, tasked with supporting the local forces.

The security crisis in Iraq also had important political repercussions. During the first half of the year, the prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki (whose party had won the April elections) ruled out forming a government of national unity to deal with the instability in the country and maintained the focus on a military response, requesting military support (which he received from the US and Iran), purchasing new arsenals of weapons and promoting the creation of militias, which mobilised thousands of Shia volunteers. However, al-Maliki faced growing criticism of his role in the intensification of sectarian tensions in Iraq and for using the crisis in Anbar to marginalise the Sunni political opposition still further. **In August, pressure from Washington and the lack of support from Iran obliged the prime minister to step down after eight years in office**. He was succeeded by Haider al-Abadi, who took on the challenge of forming a more inclusive government and tackling the serious crisis in the country. Together with the formation of a new cabinet, one of the measures adopted by al-Abadi was the demotion of around thirty senior military officers (close to al-Maliki, according to press reports), as part of his initial efforts to reform the security forces, which had also been heavily criticised. The criticism focused on the corruption and networks of patronage in the armed forces and police, as a result of which many of the weapons supplied to these forces have found their way onto the black market. The government forces have also been accused of committing many abuses, such as the indiscriminate use of force in some areas, with serious consequences for the civilian population, and the execution of prisoners in revenge for actions by ISIS. Towards the end of the year, the situation on the ground was characterised by constant clashes between ISIS fighters and Peshmerga fighters, Iraqi troops, Shia militia and Sunni armed factions in the north, in the province of Anbar and in the area surrounding Baghdad. In addition to the air offensives carried out by the coalition, the US planned to spend millions of dollars in training and supplying arms to Sunni militias in order to combat ISIS. Meanwhile, Islamic State continued to put down any attempts at an uprising, as well as slaughtering members of tribes and communities who offered resistance. The serious impact on the population was reflected in the increase in the number of forced displacements. It is estimated that 1.8 million people fled from their homes due to the violence in 2014. As such, three million people have been internally displaced since the start of the conflict, while almost half a million Iraqis have become refugees.

Israel-Palestine	
Start:	2000
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International[87]
Main parties:	Israeli Government, settler militias, ANP, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, PFLP, DFLP, Popular Resistance Committees
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 Israeli-Palestinian conflict seriously deteriorated in 2014 due to the stalled negotiations between the two sides, the growing violence in Jerusalem and in several parts of the West Bank and, above all, as a consequence of the escalating violence in Gaza, which left over 2,000 people dead in July and August. **The situation in the first half of the year was marked by the breakdown in the negotiations promoted by the US in 2013, and in which the deadline of 29th April 2014 had been set to reach an agreement**.[88] The talks stalled at the start of the year due to a series of factors, including Israel's decision to condition the release of a fourth group of Palestinian prisoners (whose release had been agreed in the pact that enabled talks to get under way) on the extension of the talks, and Israel's insistence on continuing with its settlement-building policies in the occupied West Bank territories. Faced with this situation, the Palestinian Authority (PA) decided to go ahead with measures to

---

87. Despite the fact that Palestine (whose Palestine National Authority is a political association linked to a given population and to a territory) is not an internationally recognised state, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered "international" and not "internal", since it is a territory that is illegally occupied and its intended ownership by Israel is not recognised by International Law or by any UN resolution.
88. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 3 (Peace processes).

facilitate the international recognition of Palestine and to sign up to international treaties, defying Israel's disapproval of actions of this kind. Despite US diplomatic efforts, and before the deadline of 29th April, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced the suspension of the negotiations after Fatah and Hamas announced the formation of a government of national unity.[89] The Palestinians set about forming a technocratic government without Islamist ministers but the Israeli government insisted that it would not negotiate with any Palestinian government backed by Hamas. Meanwhile, during the first few months of the year, periodic episodes of violence continued to take place in which dozens of people were killed and wounded, including clashes between Palestinians and Israelis in Jordan Valley, incidents in Hebron and Jerusalem, the launch of rockets from Gaza and Israeli offensives in the Gaza strip.

However, the most destabilising incidents occurred in June. The murder of three Israeli settlers (two aged 16 and one aged 19 years old), captured in the outskirts of Hebron, triggered the most intense search operation and the largest number of arrests in the West Bank since 2003. The Israeli security forces arrested hundreds of people linked to Hamas, the organisation held responsible by Israel for the murder of the settlers. The Israeli campaign and the response of Palestinian sectors exacerbated the violence, which became even more intense after the murder of a Palestinian teenager (16 years old) in East Jerusalem in an apparent act of revenge for the death of the young Israelis. After launching several air strikes in Gaza, killing Hamas militants, **in early July Israel announced the start of a military operation called "Protective Edge"**, which initially consisted of an air campaign, but which was followed by the deployment of ground troops and attacks from the sea. Meanwhile, Hamas forces responded with rocket attacks on Israeli territory and were involved in clashes with the Israeli troops, who focused most of their efforts on the destruction of the Gaza tunnel network. The escalation in violence shook the Gaza Strip for over a month and a half, with a serious impact on the civilian population. The vast majority of the fatalities were Palestinian. According to UN data, between 8th July and 26th August (when a ceasefire agreement was reached), **2,104 Palestinians were killed in the offensive on Gaza, of whom 1,462 (69%) were civilians, including over 250 women and almost 500 children. Another 66 Israeli soldiers and seven civilians were killed during the clashes or in the Palestinian attacks.** Israel received strong international criticism for the excessive and indiscriminate use of force, in particular for its attacks on schools that had been turned into shelters and its attacks on UN facilities. The Israeli offensive forced the displacement of half a million Palestinians (a quarter of the population

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict became more acute in 2014 due to the breakdown in negotiations and the escalation of violence in Gaza, in which over 2,000 people were killed, most of whom were Palestinian

of the Gaza Strip), aggravating the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories. Following a series of failed ceasefire agreements, the cessation of hostilities finally took place at the end of August after a long-term ceasefire agreement was brokered under the auspices of Egypt. This agreement postponed the debate on the thorniest issues (Hamas' demands regarding the release of prisoners and the construction of a port in Gaza, and the Israeli demands for Gaza to become a demilitarised territory) for future rounds of talks. Although there were some indirect contacts in September, the new rounds of talks were repeatedly postponed. Nevertheless, the agreement enabled the lifting of some of the restrictions imposed by Israel, which meant that materials for the reconstruction of Gaza were allowed in.

Over the following months, armed incidents continued to occur in Gaza and the West Bank but the main focus of the conflict shifted to Jerusalem. Although disputes and tension were constantly present throughout the year in the city, the final quarter of 2014 saw an escalation in the episodes of violence, including a deadly hit-and-run attack. an attack on a synagogue and incidents related to the granting of entry to the site that houses the al-Aqsa mosque, referred to by Muslims as Haram al-Sharif and by Jews as Temple Mount. Meanwhile, Israel gave the green light for the construction of new settlements in East Jerusalem and resumed its policy of demolishing the homes of Palestinians involved in attacks against Israelis. **The Israeli government also passed a law that defines Israel as a Jewish state. This legislation was heavily criticised since it discriminated against the Arab minority (20% of the total Israeli population of eight million people) and caused a cabinet crisis**.

In early December, Netanyahu dismissed two ministers from his cabinet who had criticised the measure (Yair Lapid and Tzipi Livni), began the procedure for the dissolution of the Knesset (parliament) and called elections for 17th March 2015. Meanwhile, faced with the stalemate in the negotiations, the PA maintained its strategy of garnering international support and achieved some symbolic victories. There was a majority vote in the European Parliament in favour of recognising Palestine, while the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain and France approved non-binding initiatives in this respect, and Sweden officially recognised Palestine as a state. At the end of the year, the PA presented a resolution to the UN that called for the end of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories by the end of 2017 and the adoption of a comprehensive peace agreement within one year. However, the initiative did not obtain the necessary number of votes in the Security Council. The response of the PA to this diplomatic failure was to sign up to the Rome Statute, thus initiating the process to form part of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which may enable the Palestinian authorities to lodge complaints against Israel.

---

89. See the summary on Palestine in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

Syria	
Start:	2011
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Islamic Front, al-Nusra Front, Islamic State (ISIS), Kurdish militias (PYD), USA, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE)
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, internationally the regime has been characterised by its hostile policies towards Israel and, internally, by its 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 crisis in the country which led to the beginning of an armed conflict with serious consequences for the civil population.

The armed conflict in Syria continued to be a focal point of instability in the Middle East, with a significant intensification of violence in 2014 as a result of the constant clashes between government and opposition forces, a growing number of clashes between the various rebel groups, the expansion of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS) in the country, and the involvement of a US-led international coalition in the offensive against ISIS, among other factors. The death toll is difficult to calculate due to the nature of the conflict and the difficulty in gaining access to many areas, but **according to the organisation Syrian Observation for Human Rights (SOHR), 2014 was the deadliest year since the start of the war in 2011**. The SOHR, which makes its calculations on the basis of information supplied by a network of local informants, estimates that at least 76,000 people were killed in the conflict, of which almost 18,000 were civilians. This figure is higher than the one provided for 2013 and means that over 200,000 people have been killed in the conflict since 2011. Furthermore, according to the WHO, one million people have been injured in this conflict. Several reports by the UN and local and international NGOs singled out the many armed actors in the conflict as being responsible for a wide

It is estimated that over 76,000 people died as a result of the violence in Syria in 2014 and that half the country's population had fled their homes as a consequence of the conflict

variety of human rights violations that constitute war crimes, including massacres, summary executions, the indiscriminate use of weapons, arbitrary arrests, torture, child recruitment, forced disappearances, mutilations of bodies and sexual violence.[90] The government forces were repeatedly condemned for indiscriminate air strikes, for their use of barrel bombs in areas favourable to the opposition, for their use of hunger as a weapon of war in besieged areas, and for their torture and execution of hundreds of prisoners. Although progress was made in dismantling the chemical weapons arsenals of the regime, the government was also accused of using poison gases in its offensives. Meanwhile, some insurgent groups were singled out in particular for their launch of attacks with explosives, suicide attacks and mortar attacks in residential areas, among other incidents. Despite the magnitude of the human rights violations, the proposal to bring the Syrian case before the International Criminal Court failed to prosper due to the vetoes cast by China and Russia in the UN Security Council.

It should be pointed out that the year began with some (slender) expectations following the holding of the first direct negotiations between sectors of the Syrian government and the opposition. The meeting, held at the end of January in Geneva, was at risk of being cancelled until the very last moment due to the reluctance of both sides to budge on their preconditions. The climate of scepticism regarding the talks was accentuated by the absence at the negotiating table of key actors (such as Iran), by the rejection of dialogue voiced by several armed actors in Syria, by the weaknesses in the composition of the delegations (especially in respect of the participation of women and civil society) and by the fact that the parties involved in the conflict attempted to strengthen their positions leading up to the talks, which led to an intensification of the violence. Both the first round of talks and the second round held in February (preceded by the evacuation of 1,400 people from the city of Homs following an agreement promoted by the UN) ended with no commitments or agreements. No date was set for a third round of talks, and faced with the stalemate, the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, resigned in May after two years of fruitless diplomatic efforts to find a way out of the crisis.[91] As regards the armed conflict, **one of the main trends in 2014 was the intensification of the clashes between the various armed actors of the opposition**. The struggle between several factions became more acute in 2014, especially after the advances of ISIS in Syria and after the group was accused of murdering various leaders of organisations affiliated with the Islamic Front, the largest coalition of rebel forces in Syria. Thousands of people were killed in the first few months of the year in the fierce fighting between these groups, which

---

90. See chapter 4 (The gender dimension in peacebuilding).
91. See the summary on Syria in chapter 3 (Peace processes).
92. For more information on the relations between ISIS, the al-Nusra Front and al-Qaeda, see "The threat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the risks for human security and its impact on regional stability" in chapter 6 (Risk scenarios for 2015).

did not stop despite the attempts by other jihadist armed groups, such as the Islamic Front, to promote a ceasefire and the mediation of an Islamic court. In fact, the al-Nusra Front (considered the Syrian affiliate of al-Qaeda) ended up becoming involved in the clashes with ISIS and with other Syrian opposition forces.[92] Meanwhile, ISIS extended its control of territories, military bases, and oil and gas wells. Furthermore, after consolidating its positions in Iraq, it declared the establishment of a caliphate in the areas under its control in Syria and Iraq.[93] The al-Nusra Front stated its intention to proclaim its own caliphate and concentrated its offensives in the province of Idlib.

At the end of September, the US decided to expand its air campaign against ISIS to Syria, having initiated it in Iraq. The US air strikes on the group's positions in Syria were supported by a group of Arab countries (Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE) and took place without the consent of Damascus, which was merely informed of the operations. This development met with the criticism of the Syrian government and Russia, although the diplomatic protests went no further since ISIS is in practice considered a common enemy. Nevertheless, some reports highlighted that although clashes took place between the government forces and ISIS, the general pattern of the two armed actors was the avoidance of direct fighting, and that Damascus had exploited the infighting between the rebel forces in order to attempt to recover positions. It should be pointed out that, **during the second half of the year, one of the focal points of the conflict was the town of Kobane, on the border with Turkey**, where Kurdish forces attempted to halt the advance of ISIS. The escalation in violence in this area led the Turkish government to be questioned about its approach to the Syrian crisis and triggered demonstrations by Kurdish sectors in Turkey.[94] Towards the end of the year, several reports warned about the impact of the actions of ISIS in the territories under its control. Based on 300 reports by victims and witnesses, the investigation by an independent international commission under the auspices of the UN denounced the brutal regime imposed by ISIS and the multiple human rights violations carried out by the organisation, including massacres, mutilations and other physical punishments, and sexual slavery. Meanwhile, the SOHR had gathered information on a total of 1,878 executions carried out by Islamic State between the end of June and the end of December, although it warned that the figure might be much higher. The victims included at least 1,175 civilians (including women and children), who were either shot dead, hanged or stoned to death in the provinces of Deir-Ezzor, al-Raqqam al-Hassakah, Aleppo, Homs and Hama.[95] The

SOHR also estimated that at least 1,170 people had lost their lives during the three-month campaign of air strikes launched by the US-led coalition. According to UN data, at the end of 2014 over 12 million people required urgent humanitarian aid and almost half the population had been displaced from their homes due to the violence. There were 7.6 million internally displaced Syrians and 3.2 Syrian refugees who had fled from the country.[96] The difficulties in gaining access to humanitarian aid persisted despite the unanimous approval of UN resolution 2139 and UN resolution 2165, the second of which authorised the dispatch of aid to rebel-held areas without the permission of Damascus. At the end of the year, the new UN Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, persisted with his action plan aimed at achieving a cessation of hostilities in some parts of the country, starting with Aleppo.

The Gulf

Yemen (AQAP)	
Start:	2011
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, AQAP/Ansar Sharia, US, Saudi Arabia, tribal militias (popular resistance committees), Houthi militias
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
With a host of conflicts and internal challenges to deal with, the Yemeni government is under intense international pressure –mainly the USA and Saudi Arabia– to focus on fighting al-Qaeda's presence in the country, especially after the merger of the organisation's Saudi and Yemeni branches, through which al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was founded in 2009. Although al-Qaeda is known to have been active in Yemen since the 1990s and has been responsible for high profile incidents, such as the suicide attack on the US warship USS Cole in 2000, its operations have been stepped up in recent years, coinciding with a change of leadership in the group. The failed attack on an airliner en route to Detroit in December 2009 focused the world's attention on AQAP. The group is considered by the US government as one of its main security threats. Taking advantage of the power vacuum in Yemen as part of the revolt against president Ali Abdullah Saleh, AQAP intensified its operations in the south of the country and expanded the areas under its control. From 2011 the group began to carry out some of its attacks under the name Ansar Sharia (Partisans of Islamic Law). More recently, particularly since mid-2014, AQAP has increasingly been involved in clashes with Houthi forces, which have advanced their positions from the north of Yemen.

---

93. See the summary on Iraq in this chapter.
94. See the summary on Syria-Turkey in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) and on Turkey (south-east) in this chapter.
95. United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic: Rule of terror: living under ISIL in Syria*, 14th November 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/HRC_CRP_ISIS_14Nov2014.pdf
96. United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014)*, S/2014/840, 21st November 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/840.

The conflict involving the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen escalated in 2014 and caused an undetermined number of fatalities, although according to estimates hundreds of people were killed. In line with the trend of recent years, **AQAP continued its attacks and clashes with the Yemeni security forces. However, from mid-2014 in particular it also carried out several offensives against Houthi militias**, in an attempt to block their advance from the north towards the centre of the country.[97] As such, during the first half of the year the conflict involved armed offensives against military checkpoints and offices, attacks with explosive devices, attacks on infrastructures and the murder of senior political and security officials, including the governor of Bayda province and a general in charge of the restructuring of the army. The most affected areas were Maarib (centre), al-Bayda (south) and Hadramawt (south-east), which is an oil production area and considered a stronghold of AQAP. Some of the year's most bloody episodes occurred in this area, such as the attack on a military checkpoint in Shibam in January, in which 17 soldiers were killed, and a similar attack in the Reida area, close to the provincial capital, Mukallah, in March, in which 20 soldiers were killed. Other serious incidents took place in the province of Shabwa, where an attack with explosives left 15 soldiers dead, and in the southern port city of Aden, where 11 soldiers were killed in a suicide attack on an army base. In April, the Yemeni authorities decided to launch an offensive (described as an "unprecedented operation") against AQAP, involving aerial bombardments followed by a ground campaign. The Yemeni president, Abdo Rabo Mansour Hadi, warned that the government was at war with AQAP, and the campaign led to fighting and reprisals that caused over 100 fatalities, including both soldiers and militia fighters of the al-Qaeda affiliate. As further proof of US involvement in this conflict, the Yemeni air campaign was supported by US drones, killing dozens of AQAP militants over the course of the year. The drone attacks, in which several civilians have been killed, sparked new demonstrations in the country, including protests led by the National Organisation for Drone Victims.

Over the course of the second half of the year, AQAP continued its campaign of attacks against military personnel (the murder of a group of 15 unarmed soldiers who were travelling in a bus caused particular consternation in August) while at the same time escalating its armed actions against Houthi forces, which after gaining control of the capital (Sanaa) and forcing a change of government in September, attempted to advance into other areas of the country. **AQAP attempted to frame its conflict with the Houthis as a sectarian struggle, in line with the increase in hostilities between Sunnis and Shiites in the region**. The Houthis, the armed group that controls the north of Yemen, are adherents of Zaidi Islam, which is very close to Shia Islam, and have been accused of having close links to Iran. AQAP was determined to halt their advance and,

in some areas, this objective facilitated alliances with certain tribal groups who were critical of the Houthis' offensive. In this context, the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen claimed responsibility for several attacks on Houthi interests, including an attack on a hospital run by the group in the province of Maarib (centre); a suicide attack during a meeting of Houthis in Sanaa in October, in which 47 people were killed; attacks on vehicles transporting members of the organisation; and an attack with explosives during Houthi religious celebrations in December, in which dozens of people were killed, including 15 girls. Furthermore, there were direct clashes between fighters of the two formations, in which hundreds of people were killed. In November, the Houthi forces managed to gain control of the town of Radaa, considered an AQAP stronghold, and intensified their efforts to gain control of the province of Maarib (centre), a Sunni-majority area. It is worth highlighting that two hostages of AQAP were killed in December (one US national and a South African citizen) in a failed rescue mission launched by the US, and that several militia fighters of the group wearing the *niqab* (full veil worn by many women in Yemen) were shot dead by the Yemeni security forces when attempting to cross the border to Saudi Arabia. Finally, it should be pointed out that in the international sphere AQAP acknowledged the advances made by the jihadist group Islamic State (ISIS), which proclaimed a caliphate in parts of Syria and Iraq. However, unlike other jihadist organisations in the region, it did not pledge its loyalty to the leader of ISIS. After the start of the international US-led campaign against ISIS, AQAP declared its solidarity with Islamic State and joined the calls to attack Western interests.

Yemen (Houthis)	
Start:	2004
Type:	System, Government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabab al-Mumen), tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias, armed sectors linked to the Islamist party Islah, Saudi Arabia
Intensity:	2
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 re-establish 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 al-Houthi accused the government of corruption, of not attending to the northern mountainous regions and they opposed the Sanaa alliance with the US in the so-called fight against terrorism. The conflict has cost the lives of thousands of

97. See the summary on Yemen (Houthis) in this chapter.

victims and has led to the forced displacement of more than 300,000 people. Various truces signed in recent years have been successively broken with taking up of hostilities again. In August 2009, the government promoted a new offensive against the rebel forces that led to the most violent stage of the conflict, the internationalisation of which became evident after the direct intervention of Saudi Arabian forces against the followers of al-Houthi on the border area. The parties agreed on a new ceasefire in February 2010, however, the situation in the area is highly volatile. 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 and have been increasingly involved in clashes with other armed actors, including tribal militias, sectors sympathetic to Salafist groups and to the Islamist party Islah, military units linked to General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, and fighters of AQAP, the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen.

In 2014 Yemen saw the most serious episodes of violence since the overthrow of Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime in 2011. The armed conflict involving the Houthi forces escalated sharply over the course of the year. It is difficult to provide precise data on the number of fatalities, but hundreds of people were estimated to have died.[98] During this period, the Houthis advanced and consolidated positions beyond their habitual stronghold, the northern province of Saada, and gradually stepped up their challenge to the central government, which had a decisive impact on the transition process in the country.[99] In line with the trend observed since the end of 2013, in the first few months of the year the Houthis clashed on several occasions with their various opponents, including the tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, sectors linked to Salafist groups and to the Islamist party Islah, and some army units loyal to General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar (not related to the clan), a senior military officer with a long history of fighting the Houthis, leading the campaign against the group during Saleh's regime. The fighting enabled the Houthis to consolidate their control of the entire province of Saada and make significant inroads into the province of Amran. The group achieved an especially symbolic victory in February, when it defeated the forces of the al-Ahmar clan in its home city, Khamir, forcing its members to flee to the Yemeni capital, Sanaa. The clashes, in which dozens of people were killed, were interrupted by a series of ceasefire initiatives promoted by the central government and by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar. Nevertheless, neither the efforts to make the various armed actors commit to a ceasefire nor the contacts between the Yemeni president and the Houthi leader

The advance of the Houthis from the north of the country and the increase in the number of clashes between the group and various armed actors (including the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen) intensified the climate of instability and threatened the weak transition in the country

prospered.[100] Indeed, the hostilities intensified from May (with bloody fighting taking place between Houthis and members of the 310th Armoured Brigade allied with General Ali al-Ahmar, with the support of tribal militias and Islah) and especially from June, when the Yemeni air force attacked Houthi positions on the main road linking Amran to Sanaa. The spiral of reprisals and violence caused many fatalities (over 120 in a single day, 2nd June, according to official reports) and forced the displacement of thousands of families.

In this context of instability and growing violence, the government's decision to suspend fuel subsidies triggered demonstrations and led the Houthis to openly defy the authorities. Amid this popular discontent, the group called for civil disobedience and organised demonstrations attended by thousands of people in the Yemeni capital. In parallel, mass counter-demonstrations were organised by Islah supporters. **The climate of polarisation led to clashes in Sanaa and, in September, to the taking of the capital by the Houthis** (who came up against little resistance and even collaboration on the part of the security forces), forcing the resignation of the government of the prime minister, Mohamed Basindwa. Given this scenario, several analysts pointed out that one of the achievements of the Houthis in recent years has been to widen its support base beyond the north of the country on being perceived as an organisation far removed from the practices and corruption of the traditional elites. Nevertheless, the group has also been criticised for aligning itself (out of convenience) with the former president, Saleh, and his supporters, who are opposed to Hadi's government. Those opposed to the Houthis accuse them of wishing to impose a theocracy, of aspiring to become a kind of Yemeni Hezbollah and of having links to Iran, given the proximity of the branch of Islam practised by the Houthis (Zaidism) to Shia Islam. Despite the signing of a peace agreement promoted by the UN at the end of September and the formation of a new government in November, over the course of the following months the conflict continued with high levels of violence and constant clashes between the Houthi forces and their adversaries in different parts of the country. AQAP, the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen, become increasingly involved in the clashes with the group and carried out bloody attacks on Houthis, including several attacks with explosive devices.[101] AQAP justified its actions as an attempt to the halt the advance of the Houthis and framed the conflict as a sectarian struggle. This formed part of its strategy to stoke the growing tension between

---

98. According to some estimates, over 1,500 people died over the course of 2014 as a consequence of the many political conflicts that plague the country. This was the highest figure since 2011. IRIN, "Yemen: What's next?", *IRIN*, 22nd December 2014, http://www.irinnews.org/report/100965/yemen-what-next.
99. See the summary on Yemen in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
100. See the summary on Yemen in chapter 3 (Peace processes).
101. See the summary on Yemen (AQAP) in this chapter.

Sunnis and Shiites in the Middle East. By the end of the year, the Houthis had strengthened their control over Sanaa (establishing military checkpoints, surrounding official buildings and harassing political rivals in the capital), controlled several strategic ports along the Red Sea coast and had become the main authority in at least nine of the country's 21 provinces.[102] Several analysts highlighted the fact that the Houthis were acting as a shadow government or as a virtual state within the state, supervising the actions of the authorities, collecting taxes and administering justice.[103] **The situation led the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Houthi leaders and on the former president, Saleh**. Despite this, the Houthis became increasingly hostile to President Hadi. In December, one month after taking office, the new government threatened to step down. In this climate of extreme fragility, Saudi Arabia's decision to suspend financial aid to Yemen in light of the advances made by the Houthis (perceived as allies of its regional adversary, Iran) threatened to destabilise the country still further.

---

102. April Longley Alley, *Yemen's Houthi Takeover*, Middle East Institute, 22nd December 2014, http://www.mei.edu/content/article/yemens-houthi-takeover.
103. International Crisis Group, *The Houthis: From Saada to Sanaa*, Middle East Report no.154, ICG, 10th June 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/yemen/154-the-huthis-from-saada-to-sanaa.aspx.

Map 2.1. **Socio-political crises**

Countries with socio-political crises

2. Socio-political Crises

- 95 socio-political crises were reported during 2014, most of them in Africa (38) and Asia (24). The other crises took place in Europe (14), the Middle East (14) and Latin America (five).
- Despite the signing of the peace agreement in Mozambique, the irregularities detected in the elections in October caused tension to escalate.
- Burkina Faso was the scene of popular protests against extending the presidential term limit, followed by the Army's seizure of power and the beginning of a transition process.
- In Kenya, there was an escalation in the number and intensity of acts of violence committed by groups that support the Somali al-Shabaab insurgency.
- Relations between India and Pakistan were very tense and marked by continuous ceasefire violations by both countries' militaries, killing dozens of people.
- Political tension worsened in Sri Lanka, with many episodes of violence and a tense political atmosphere that led to the announcement of the presidential election.
- There was an increase in ceasefire violations by Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, which raised the death toll and calls of alarm.
- The climate of upheaval claimed dozens of lives in Egypt as the military expanded its influence over political life.
- The transition process in Yemen was severely affected by an atmosphere of polarisation and growing violence that pushed the country to the brink of civil war.
- The repercussions of the war in neighbouring Syria continued to seriously affect Lebanon, where various acts of violence caused the deaths of over 200 people in 2014.

The present chapter analyses the socio-political crises that occurred in 2014. It is organised into three sections. The socio-political crises and their characteristics are defined in the first section. In the second section an analysis is made of the global and regional trends of socio-political crises in 2014. The third section is devoted to describing the development and key events of the year in the various contexts. A map is included at the start of chapter that indicates the socio-political crises registered in 2014.

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 2014

Socio-political crisis[1]	Type[2]	Main parties	Intensity[3] / Trend[4]
Africa			
Angola (Cabinda)	Internal	Government, armed group FLEC-FAC, Cabinda Forum for Dialogue	1
	Self-government, Resources		=
Burkina Faso	Internal	Government, political opposition, state security forces, civil society	1
	Government		↑
Burundi	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FNL	3
	Government		↑
Chad	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Comoros	Internal	Government of the Union of the Comoros ruled by Grande Comore, Armed Forces, political and social opposition (political parties and authorities from the islands of Anjouan, Mohéli and Grande Comore), AU mission	1
	Self-government, Government		=
Congo	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↓
Djibouti	Internal	Government, armed opposition (FRUD), political and social opposition (UAD)	1
	Government		=
DRC	Internal	Government, political and social opposition and former armed opposition groups	2
	Government		=
DRC – Rwanda[5]	International	Governments of DRC, Rwanda, armed groups FDLR and M23 (former CNDP)	1
	Identity, Government, Resources		=
DRC – Uganda	International	Governments of DRC and Rwanda, ADF-NALU, M23, LRA, armed groups operating in Ituri	1
	Identity, Government, Resources, Territory		=
Equatorial Guinea	Internal	Government, political opposition in exile	1
	Government		=
Eritrea	Internationalised internal	Government, internal political and social opposition, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups	2
	Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Eritrea – Ethiopia	International	Eritrea, Ethiopia	1
	Territory		↓

---

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 socio-political 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 2014 with 2013, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2014 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. This title refers to international tensions between DRC–Rwanda–Uganda that appeared in previous editions of the Alert! report. Though they share certain characteristics, DRC–Rwanda and DRC–Uganda are analysed separately in Alert 2015!

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity	Trend
Africa				
Ethiopia	Internal	Government (EPRDF coalition, led by the party TPLF), political and social opposition	1	
	Government			=
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Internal	Central government, regional government, political opposition (OFDM, OPC parties) and social opposition, armed opposition (OLF, IFLO)	1	
	Self-government, Identity			=
Guinea	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, trade unions	1	
	Government			↓
Guinea-Bissau	Internationalised internal	Transitional government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, international drug trafficking networks	1	
	Government			↓
Kenya	Internationalised internal	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties and civil society organisations), SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups that support al-Shabaab in Kenya	3	
	Identity, Government, Resources, Self-government			↑
Madagascar	Internal	High Transitional Authority, opposition leaders, state security forces, dahalos (cattle rustlers), self-defence militias, private security companies	2	
	Government, Resources			↓
Malawi	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1	
	Government			=
Mali	Internal	Government, former military junta, groups loyal to former President Amadou Toumani Touré	1	
	Government			=
Mauritania	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, AQIM, MUJAO	1	
	Government, System			=
Morocco – Western Sahara	International[6]	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	1	
	Self-government, Identity, Territory			=
Mozambique	Internal	Government, former armed group RENAMO	2	
	Government			=
Niger	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition (Coordination of Forces for Democracy and the Republic) and social opposition, MUJAO, Those Who Sign in Blood	1	
	Government			=
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias	3	
	Identity, Resources, Government			↑
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF and NDV, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from 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 governing party RPF, Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West	1	
	Government, Identity			↑
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, armed group MFDC and its various factions	1	
	Self-government			=
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State	1	
	Territory			=
Sudan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2	
	Government			↑
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Sudan, South Sudan	2	
	Resources, Identity			=

6. 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.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
Africa			
Swaziland	Internal	Government, political parties, trade unions, NGOs defending human rights and pro-democracy movements	1
	System		=
The Gambia	Internal	Government, Army groups, political opposition	1
	Government		↑
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, Ansar al-Sharia	2
	Government		=
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
America			
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition (political parties, authorities and civil society organisations from the eastern regions, indigenous groups)	1
	Government, Self-government, Resources		=
Haiti	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, MINUSTAH, former military officers	2
	Government		↑
Paraguay	Internal	Government, EPP	1
	Government		=
Peru	Internal	Government, armed opposition (remnants of Shining Path), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations)	2
	Government, Resources		↓
Venezuela	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Asia			
Bangladesh	Internal	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal	2
	Government		↓
China (Tibet)	Internationalised internal	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile, political and social opposition in Tibet and in neighbouring provinces and countries	2
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China – Japan	International	China, Japan	2
	Territory, Resources		↓
India (Nagaland)	Internal	Government, NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (Khole-Kitovi), NNC, ZUF	1
	Identity, Self-government		↓
India (Tripura)	Internal	Government, armed opposition (NLFT, ATTF)	1
	Self-government		=
India – Pakistan	International	India, Pakistan	3
	Identity, Territory		=
Indonesia (West Papua)	Internal	Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition (autonomist or secessionist organisations, indigenous and human rights organisations), indigenous Papuan groups, Freeport mining company	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↓
Indonesia (Aceh)	Internal	Indonesian government, regional government of Aceh, political opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		=
Kazakhstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups	1
	System, Government		=

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity Trend
Asia			
Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea[7]	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	2
	Government		=
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	International	DPR Korea – Rep. of Korea	3
	System		↑
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity Resources, Territory		=
Lao, PDR	Internationalised internal	Government, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin	1
	System, Identity		=
Myanmar	Internal	Government, political and social opposition (opposition party NLD), 969 group	2
	System		=
Nepal	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, UCPN(M) and CPN(UML) political parties, former Maoist armed opposition group PLA	1
	System		↓
Nepal (Terai)	Internal	Government, Madhesi political organisations (MPRF) and armed organisations (JTMM, MMT, ATLF, among others)	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias)	3
	Government, System		=
Philippines (Mindanao-MNLF)	Internal	Government, factions of the armed group MNLF	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Philippines (Mindanao-MILF)	Internal	Government, MILF, BIFF	3
	Self-government, Identity		=
Sri Lanka (northeast)	Internal	Government, Tamil political and social opposition	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition (Islamic Renaissance Party) and social opposition (regional groups: Gharmis, Pamiris), former warlords, illegal Islamist groups (Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU]), Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	1
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		=
Thailand	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Thailand – Cambodia	International	Thailand, Cambodia	1
	Territory		↑
Uzbekistan	Internationalised internal	Government, social and political opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	1
	Government, System		=
Europe			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Government of Azerbaijan, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Azerbaijan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Belarus	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Internationalised internal	Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, high representative of the international community	1
	Self-government Identity, Government		↑

7. 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			
Cyprus	Internationalised internal	Government of Cyprus, government of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Greece, Turkey	1
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Internationalised internal	Government of Georgia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Georgia (South Ossetia)	Internationalised internal	Government of Georgia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Moldova, Rep. of (Transdniestria)	Internationalised internal	Government of Moldova, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Russia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups from northern Caucasus	1
	Government		↓
Russia (Chechnya)	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Chechen Republic, armed opposition groups	2
	Self-government, Identity, System		↑
Russia (Ingushetia)	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Republic of Ingushetia, armed opposition groups (Jamaat Ingush)	1
	System, Government, Identity		↓
Russia (Karachay-Cherkessia)	Internal	Government of Russia, government of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, armed opposition groups	1
	System, Identity, Government		↓
Russia (North Ossetia)	Internal	Government of Russia, government of the Republic of North Ossetia, armed opposition groups	1
	System, Identity, Government		↓
Serbia – Kosovo	International[8]	Government of Serbia, government of Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Middle East			
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Identity		=
Egypt	Internal	Government, Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the Armed Forces, National Salvation Front coalition, Salafist al-Nour party, Tamarod movement, April 6 movement, Islamist coalition Alliance to Support Legitimacy	3
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political, social and religious opposition	1
	Government		=
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, PJAK, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraq	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), Jundallah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran, Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran – USA, Israel[9]	International	Iran, USA, Israel	2
	System, Government		↓
Iraq (Kurdistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↑

8. 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.
9. 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
Middle East			
Israel – Syria – Lebanon	International	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Lebanese group Hezbollah and its armed wing (Islamic Resistance)	3
	System, Resources, Territory		=
Lebanon	Internationalised internal	Government, Hezbollah, opposition March 14 Alliance (led by Future Movement), Amal, Free Patriotic Movement, Arab Democratic Party (Alawi), Hizb ul-Tahrir, militias, Abdullah Azzam Brigades (linked to al-Qaeda)	3
	Government		↑
Palestine	Internal	PNA, Fatah, armed group al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades	1
	Government		=
Saudi Arabia	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, AQAP, ISIS	2
	Government, Identity		↑
Syria - Turkey	International	Syria, Turkey	3
	Government		=
Yemen	Internal	Government, security forces, pro-government militias, military deserters, armed tribal groups, political and social groups	3
	Government		↑
Yemen (south)	Internal	Government, secessionist and autonomist opposition groups from the south (including the South Yemen Movement/al-Hiraak al-Janoubi)	2
	Self-government, Resources, Territory		=

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 this chapter.

# 2.2. Socio-political crises: analysis of trends in 2014

This section is devoted to a global and regional analysis of the trends observed in contexts of sociopolitical crises in 2014.

2.2.1. Global trends

95 scenarios of socio-political tension were identified around the world in 2014. As in previous years, the highest number of these crises was in Africa, where 38 cases were reported, followed by Asia, with 24 cases. Europe and the Middle East were each the scene of 14, while five were identified in the Americas. **The total figure represents somewhat of a dip compared to the year before, when there were 99 socio-political crises**. The decline in the number of crises may partially be explained by the fact that several of them came to be considered as armed conflicts in 2014. This was the case with DRC (ADF-east), China (East Turkestan), Ukraine and Egypt (Sinai). The decline is also attributable to lowered tensions in various contexts that are no longer considered socio-political crises. Meanwhile, some cases that were considered armed conflicts in previous periods were analysed as socio-political crises in 2014, such as Burundi, Russia (Chechnya) and Russia (Ingushetia).

While socio-political crises may owe to multiple factors, our analysis of the landscape of crises in 2014 identifies trends in their main causes or motivations. In line with data observed in previous years, **70% of the socio-political crises around the world were caused mainly by opposition to domestic or international policies implemented by the governments**, which led to conflict to achieve or erode power, or opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the respective states. In turn, **one of the main causes of nearly half the socio-political crises (46%) were demands related to self-government and/or identity**. Disputes over control of land and/or resources were especially relevant in over a quarter of them (27%), though this is a factor that fuels many situations of tension to varying degrees.

Graph 2.1. **Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2014**
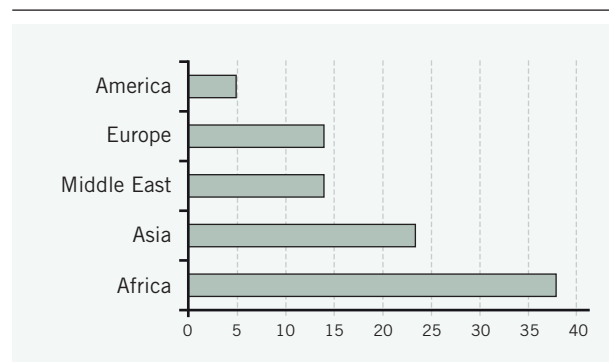
Nearly two thirds of the socio-political crises in 2014 were of low intensity (59%), while one fourth were of medium intensity and just over one sixth were marked by high levels (16%, or 15 of the 95 cases). Compared to the previous year, the number of serious socio-political crises dropped slightly in 2014 (16% in 2014, compared to 20% in 2013). Asia and the Middle East were the regions with the highest-intensity strain, with five cases apiece. Three other high-intensity socio-political crises were located in Africa, two were in the Americas and one was in Europe. **The most serious crises in 2014 were in Kenya, Nigeria, Venezuela, North Korea-South Korea, the Philippines (Mindanao-MILF), India-Pakistan, Pakistan, Thailand, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Egypt, Israel-Syria-Lebanon, Lebanon, Syria-Turkey and Yemen**. Some of these high-intensity socio-political crises were scenes of violence that claimed over 100 lives, as was the case of intercommunal violence in Nigeria over access to resources, with several hundred killed; the serious multidimensional crisis affecting Pakistan, including in urban settings like Karachi, where around 2,000 people were murdered, most of them in targeted killings, in addition to the active armed conflicts in the country; clashes between the Philippine Army and the BIFF, a dissident MILF faction in the region of Mindanao, which left more than 100 dead; acts of violence in Egypt throughout the year, including clashes between dissident groups and security forces and internal repression against both the Islamist and non-Islamist opposition, with over 100 mortal victims; and several hundred people killed in Lebanon, primarily in battles involving Hezbollah militiamen, armed groups based in Syria and the Lebanese Army, in addition to other actors.

Beyond the lethal impact of many socio-political crises, they had widespread consequences for human safety and also resulted in a high number of people wounded in serious acts of violence, as well as new displacements of populations and sexual violence.[10] During the year,

Africa remained the continent with the highest number of socio-political crises overall (40%), while most of the highest-intensity socio-political crises took place in Asia and the Middle East

injuries were especially serious in the crises in Venezuela (over 850 people injured in incidents stemming from the largest protests in recent years), Thailand (over 700 wounded in clashes between security forces and demonstrators for various causes) and Bosnia (several hundred injured in protests in around 30 cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the start of the year). In any case, beyond the direct effects, many of the crises, whether of high, medium or low intensity, accumulated long-term impacts on human safety. This was related in somes cases to the precariousness of public systems, often as an additional consequence of reforms imposed by international bodies when providing international support for managing current or past crises, chronic discrimination against certain groups (ethnic and religious minorities, women and the LGTBI population, among others) and the difficulties that processes such as militarisation, the prolonged existence of mines and policies regarding natural resources posed for people's livelihoods.

Regarding the evolution of violence and destabilisation during 2014, our analysis compared to the previous period revealed that **over half the socio-political crises (49 cases, or 52%) maintained levels similar to those of 2013**, 28% of them showed a deterioration in the situation and 20% improved to some degree. Finally, and staying somewhat consistent with the trend observed in previous years, more than half the crises in the world were domestic (58%), involving state actors operating internally. Also, a bit more than one fourth of the crises (26%) were catalogued as internationalised internal, whether because some of the main parties to the dispute were foreign or due to its extension to neighbouring countries. Only 16% of the socio-political crises in 2014 were international in nature (15 of the 95 cases).

2.2.2. Regional trends

As in previous years, **in 2014 Africa remained the main scene of socio-political crises worldwide**. Forty percent of the socio-political crises took place in Africa (38 of the 95 cases), a proportion similar to that of 2013 (39%). Still, despite being the scene of some of the most serious armed conflicts, the continent only had three of the 15 most intense crises around the world in 2014: Burundi, Kenya and Nigeria, compared to the five identified in Africa in 2013. One of these five from the year before (DRC [ADF-east]) was catalogued as an armed conflict in 2014 due to the serious escalation of violence, while two others (Madagascar and DRC-Rwanda) lost some intensity during the year. Moreover, **nearly three fourths of the crises in Africa in 2014 were of low intensity** (27 of the 38 cases, or 71%). In turn, compared to the many crises that tended to deteriorate

Graph 2.2. **Intensity of the socio-political crises by region**
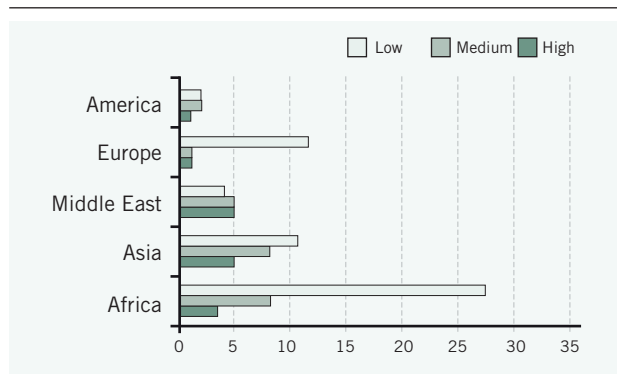
10. See chapter 4 (The Gender Dimension in Peacebuilding).

in Africa in 2013 (44%), in 2014 only a little more than one fourth of them (eight of the 38 cases) worsened significantly, while the prevailing trend was stabilisation (24 cases or 63%).

Regarding the setting of the crises and the origin of the actors involved, the vast majority of the tensions in Africa were domestic in nature (66%), in line with previous years. Just over one fifth of the crises showed internationalised aspects (21%), including the presence and action of foreign actors. These included different types of non-state armed groups (like the Somali armed organisation al-Shabaab in Kenya, the actions of jihadist groups in Niger and Mauritania and mercenaries from Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire in the latter) and international troops (like the UNOCI and France's Force Licorne in Côte d'Ivoire), as well as influence from diaspora groups, like in Eritrea or Rwanda, for example. Only five of the 38 socio-political crises in Africa were international: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Morocco-Western Sahara, DRC-Rwanda, DRC-Uganda and South Sudan.

The causes of the socio-political crises were multi-faceted, in line with the global trend. At the same time, **a significant prevalence of opposition to the policies of the governments may be observed. This opposition was present in 29 of the 38 crises detected in Africa 2014 (76% of all cases)**. This dissatisfaction with the government materialised in various ways during the year, including protests against the authorities over political or social issues (like in Burkina Faso and DRC, with demonstrations against the attempts of their presidents to eliminate term limits; threats by the opposition in Guinea to organise new anti-government demonstrations; protests against policies to budget cuts in various areas in Chad, among other matters; some governments' restriction of political space, with increased pressure against the opposition in Burundi and a resulting cascade of asylum applications abroad in the case of Eritrea; armed activity and threats of violence in a context of institutional fragility and political conflict, such as RENAMO's threats that it would return to violence in Mozambique if the results of elections that it considered fraudulent were validated; and attempted coups d'état, like the failed one in The Gambia at the end of the year or the military's seizure of power in Burkina Faso after popular demonstrations and riots, giving rise to a transition process under the joint leadership of various groups.

Furthermore, demands related to identity and/or self-government were some of the primary causes of 37% of the crises in Africa. Important in this regard were threats of large-scale attacks against the Eritrean Army by the armed wing of the opposition group RSADO for discrimination against the Afar community, in addition to other cases. Another main cause was the struggle for

The causes of most of the socio-political crises in Africa included disputes and opposition to governments' domestic or international policies, as was the case with protests in DRC, Burkina Faso and Burundi

control of resources, present in 11 of the 38 crises in Africa (29% of all contexts). This was also one of the factors present in two of the three high-intensity crises reported on the continent (Kenya and Nigeria).

Socio-political crises in **Asia** were characterised by a great diversity of type. In terms of intensity, **one third of the most serious crises in the world took place in Asia** (five of 15). This also amounted to one third of all crises in Asia. High-intensity contexts were observed in North Korea-South Korea, the Philippines (Mindanao-MILF), India-Pakistan, Pakistan and Thailand. Of these five, tensions between Pyongyang and Seoul and the situation in Thailand worsened in 2014, while developments in the others were relatively stable compared to the already serious situation the year before. Overall, there were no significant changes in most of the socio-political crises in Asia during 2014 (54% of the cases), regardless of their intensity, while in nearly 30% of the contexts the situation underwent some change and in 17% it worsened (four of the 24 cases). In addition to the escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the crisis in Thailand, the situation also deteriorated in Sri Lanka (northeast) and between Thailand and Cambodia.

Following the trend in recent years, **one of the characteristic traits of the tensions in Asia was the importance of aspirations linked to identity and self-government**. This was one of the main causes of half the crises, a proportion only surpassed by tensions in Europe. Many of these crises in Asia were contexts with armed groups present, though the degree of armed activity and resources varied. Furthermore, like in the rest of the regions, opposition to government policies or to the state's political, economic, social or ideological system was another main cause, present in half the contexts (13 of 24 cases). Over half the tensions were domestic in nature (54%), one fourth were internationalised internal crises (when one of the parties to the dispute is foreign and/or when the tension extends to neighbouring countries) and one fifth were international. The international crises were North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea (and other actors); North Korea-South Korea; India-Pakistan; and Thailand-Cambodia.

The least amount of socio-political crises in the world took place in the Americas, with five cases in total in 2014, in line with previous years. Only one of them reached high levels of intensity during the year. This was in Venezuela, which saw the most intense protests in recent years, with more than 40 people killed, around 850 wounded and over 3,000 arrested, mainly in the first quarter. Two of the other socio-political crises had medium levels of intensity (Haiti and Peru) and the remaining two were low (Bolivia and Paraguay). The main causes of these five crises included opposition

to government policies, which took shape in protests of different intensity and character, such as those in Venezuela. In some cases, this combined with other causes, like in identity- and/or self-government-related demands (Bolivia) or in disputes about access to or use of resources (Bolivia and Peru). Notable among the medium-intensity crises was the deteriorating situation in Haiti, with many anti-government protests and new delays in the elections, while the situation in Peru improved and no significant clashes took place between the Peruvian Army and the remaining Shining Path factions, though the state kept up military, political and legal pressure against the group. Haiti was the only context of internationalised internal tension in the Americas due to the role of MINUSTAH in the country, while the rest of the socio-political crises were domestic in nature. Although no contexts of tension were identified within the USA, the country was involved in international crises outside the Americas (in both Asia and the Middle East). The USA was a major player in the international tension surrounding the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programmes, in addition to various armed conflicts and other situations.[11]

In 2014, Venezuela was the scene of the most intense protests in recent years

In accordance with the trend in recent years, overall the contexts of tension in Europe were characterised by the predominance of low-intensity situations, which represented around 85% of the cases (12 of 14), while only one high-intensity situation was reported: the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was the scene of a significant escalation of ceasefire violations during the year. These lower levels of instability and violence contrasted with the potentially destabilising impact that the armed conflict in Ukraine had on Europe. **The pseudo Cold War between the Euro-Atlantic institutions and Russia stemming from the war in Ukraine had an influence on different socio-political crises in Europe, like in Moldova (Transdniestria), on the border with Ukraine, where the main actors put their forces on alert**. Just over half the socio-political crises worsened in 2014 (eight of the 14 cases), while 28% of the disputes reported some improvement and 14% continued with no significant change. **The main causes of nearly four fifths of the disputes in Europe included demands linked to identity and/or self-government (11 of the 14 cases). Opposition to government policies was another prominent factor, present in more than two thirds** of the cases, or 10. In 2014, this dimension became more important in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with protests early in the year in around 30 cities, a dynamic distant from the usual sectarian axis, focused on demands for greater welfare and rejections of the privatisation of businesses and its social effects. Anti-government protests were

The war in Syria had a negative influence on many of the most intense socio-political crises in the Middle East, with the situation deteriorating gravely in Lebanon

also important in Abkhazia, with demonstrations that forced a change of government, further strengthening relations with Russia. In Kosovo, domestic disputes over political power worsened after the general elections. Furthermore, half the socio-political crises in Europe were internal (seven of the 14 cases), while 36% were internationalised internal and 14% were international (two cases).

Finally, **for another year the Middle East was the region with the highest percentage of high-intensity socio-political crises** (36%, or five of the 14 cases). Affected by the dynamics set in motion in the region since 2011, these crises were aggravated by how events developed in the wars in Syria and Iraq in 2014, which had an impact on many existing tensions during the year. **The most violent and unstable socio-political crises were in Egypt, Israel-Syria-Lebanon, Lebanon, Syria-Turkey and Yemen**. Thus, Egypt was the scene of continuous demonstrations and clashes between dissident groups and government forces, with over 100 fatalities and the Army's growing influence over political life. Incidents and acts of violence increased in Israel-Syria-Lebanon, with attacks, incursions and skirmishes in an increasingly unstable security environment. Lebanon was the scene of an extension of the war in Syria, with frequent battles pitting Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army against armed groups based in Syria, with more than 200 killed, according to partial counts. The border area between Syria and Turkey also witnessed an escalation of tension, with incidents and mutual accusations between both countries, in addition to other events. Tensions skyrocketed in Yemen, with soaring levels of polarisation, violence and instability, including the Houthis' capture of the capital, which forced a change in government and displayed greater interrelation among the various conflicts in the country.

In terms of their evolution, most of the crises in the Middle East (57%) maintained levels of violence and instability similar to those in 2013 (eight of 14 crises) and the situation worsened in 36% of them (five of 14 cases). **Contexts where the dynamics of the conflict worsened included Saudi Arabia, Iran (Sistan and Balochistan), Iraq (Kurdistan), Lebanon and Yemen**. Only one crisis improved: the one between Iran and various countries of the international community over its nuclear programme due to diplomatic progress in line with the year before. Overall, the vast majority of the socio-political crises in the Middle East were domestic (43%, or six of the 14 cases) or internationalised internal (36%, or five of the 14 crises). Like in the other regions, tensions in the Middle East had multiple causes. The most common factor was opposition to internal or international policies of the governments,

---

11. See chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

occurring in 71% of the cases (10 of 14). Demands related to identity and/or self-government were another main cause, present in 42% of the cases.

2.3. Socio-political crises: annual evolution

2.3.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Burundi	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FNL

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 attempt to lay the foundations for overcoming a conflict that began in 1993, constituting 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 upcoming presidential election, the government's growing authoritarianism and reduction of political space and insurgent and counter-insurgent actions marked developments in the situation in the country. The atmosphere of impunity continued, with threats against journalists and restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and expression. The government also arrested members of the political opposition and pressured it in other ways. This included the arrest warrant for Alexis Sinduhije, founder of the radio station RPA and chairman of the party MSD (which went underground in March and later surfaced in Belgium asking for asylum in May) and the arrest in March of about 70 militants after clashing with police; the trial in September of the head of the opposition coalition ADC-Ikibiri, Léonce Ngendakumana (sentenced to one year in prison); and the arrest and trial of Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa, president

Social mobilisation increased as a result of the growing authoritarianism of the Burundian government and the shrinking political space

of the human rights advocacy organisation APRODH. The detention of and proceedings against Mbonimpa triggered an international solidarity campaign that pressured the government to release him provisionally for health reasons in September. In this regard, in July Amnesty International denounced the shrinking political space in the country, the limitations on the exercise of the freedoms of expression, assembly and association and the rise in political violence in the country linked to the ruling CNDD-FDD party. However, there were less cases of extrajudicial killing, torture and mistreatment as the year went on. Politically motivated incidents involving the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD, the Imbonerakure ("those who see far", in Kirundi), also decreased, going from an average of 14 per month from January to July to three per month from August to December, according to the UN. Amnesty International stressed that the political tension has increased due to the president's attempts to amend the Constitution to allow him to run for a third term. It also stated that the Imbonerakure had been responsible for intimidation, pressure and acts of violence that included attacking and killing members of the political opposition with impunity. A confidential UN cable leaked in April caused a major stir since it claimed that the Imbonerakure had received weapons and uniforms from part of the security forces. Various UN representatives and rapporteurs also stated that the situation had worsened during their visits to the country, such as Adama Dieng, the UN special advisor for the prevention of genocide; Michel Forst, the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and Ivan Simonovic, the UN assistant secretary-general for human rights and director of OHCHR. Special representatives of the UN, AU, EU and USA jointly denounced the obstacles to liberties, the freedom of expression and political opposition activities in the country. The UN established an electoral mission in the country (MENUB). The international community was torn between exerting friendly pressure and imposing sanctions to correct this deteriorating situation. The Netherlands, one of the country's main donors, made its aid of 1.3 million USD for the elections conditional on keeping commitments to political openness and an absence of political violence.

With regard to the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for May and June 2015, **significant social mobilisation continued against the constitutional reform backed by the government** to allow current President Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term of office. The electoral law was passed unanimously on 25 April, although it excluded the issue of constitutional reform. On 24 November, **voter registration began, which was described as massively fraudulent by civil society, the political opposition as a whole and independent media after detecting many irregularities** such as the mass delivery of false national identity documents to groups close to the

ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, including children. Thus, they demanded that the registration process start over and that the electoral commission (CENI) resign. The minister of the interior and the CENI acknowledged that irregularities had taken place, but ruled out cancelling the process and announced it closed on 10 December with 3.7 registered voters. The CENI was also accused of a lack of transparency in following the election schedule. This situation raised political tension throughout the country and the international community expressed its concern about the serious deterioration of the political climate. The Tutsi UPRONA party announced that it was leaving the government and rejected Nkurunziza's new appointments coming from an UPRONA faction close to power to maintain ethno-political balances in the government as required by the Constitution resulting from the agreements that ended the war in the country. However, unlike in 2010, all the parties repeated their desire to participate in the electoral process.

Clashes between government forces and armed groups dropped off substantially, since 11 were reported in the first quarter of 2014 compared to only three after August, according to the UN. However, between 30 December 2014 and 3 January 2015, there was fierce fighting in the northwestern province of Cibitoke between the Burundian Armed Forces and an armed rebel group coming from DRC. Information about this attack was shrouded in confusion. **According to an anonymous military source, 105 members of the armed group had been killed in the fighting** and four others had been captured out of a total of 121 combatants. The Burundian Army seized weapons of different calibre, a mortar and a grenade launcher. The anonymous source said that two soldiers had been killed during the fighting, although other military sources claimed that at least 12 had died. According to official sources, the Burundian Army and police, supported by civilian militias, intercepted a group of around 200 combatants trying to reach the Kibira forest in the central northern part of the country to seek refuge. Kibira had been the sanctuary of various armed groups in the recent conflict that affected the country starting in the 1990s. The security forces surrounded the group in the commune of Murwi, where they attacked it relentlessly. The opposition and civil society have denounced various cases of rebels that were arrested, disarmed and later killed extrajudicially. The government denied these accusations, saying that it wanted to stop this group and that it would serve as a lesson to other groups, like the FLN of Aloys Nzabampema. The area bordering DRC was the scene of other previous attacks of less intensity claimed by a dissident faction of the FLN, while the FLN itself denied any connection to them. In October, MONUSCO confirmed that the Burundian Armed Forces had entered the Congolese province of South Kivu, where they had entered into combat with FLN fighters, though the death toll remained unknown. There were also clashes in June between the Burundian Army and remnants of the FLN near Sangé, in South Kivu, which

took place four months after the Army executed three suspected rebels in the same area. In December 2013, DRC and Burundi renewed an agreement whereby the Burundian Army could access Congolese territory in pursuit of the FNL. This agreement was later withdrawn.

Chad	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised Internal
Main parties:	Government, social and political opposition

Summary:
The foiled coup d'état of 2004 and the constitutional reform of 2005, boycotted by the opposition, sowed the seeds of an insurgency that intensified over the course of 2006, with the goal of overthrowing the authoritarian government of Idriss Déby. This opposition movement is composed of various groups and soldiers who are disaffected with the regime. Added to this is the antagonism between Arab tribes and the black population in the border area between Sudan and Chad, related to local grievances, competition for resources and the overspill of the war taking place in the neighbouring Sudanese region of Darfur, as a consequence of the cross-border operations of Sudanese armed groups and the janjaweed (Sudanese pro-government Arab militias). They attacked the refugee camps and towns in Darfur, located in the east of Chad, and this contributed to an escalation of tension between Sudan and Chad, accusing each other of supporting the insurgence from the opposite country, respectively. The signature of an agreement between both countries in January 2010 led to a gradual withdrawal and demobilisation of the Chadian armed groups, although there are still some resistance hotspots. In parallel, Idriss Déby continued controlling the country in an authoritarian way.

The situation in Chad worsened over the course of the year. First, there was **growing unease regarding the cost of living**. University professors and legal professionals held a strike on 10 November as a result of unpaid wages. Students joined in the strike. The situation set off protests on 11 November against cuts in the petrol supply and rising prices. The security forces cracked down harshly on the protests and demonstrations, in which several people were injured and at least five were killed in November. The main sites of protest were in the cities of Sarh, Moundou and the capital, N'Djamena, in the south. The protests continued in December, and whereas the professors continued with their strike, the lawyers ended theirs. Various university students were arrested for their participation in the mobilisations. Meanwhile, Chadian troops withdrew from the Central African Republic due to allegations of collusion with armed groups and militias of the Séléka coalition, turning the Chadian mission into a target of attacks by anti-balaka militias. The final catalyst was the accusation of having opened fire on anti-balaka groups

and civilians in late March. Meanwhile, following the deaths of five Chadian soldiers of the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in mid-September, the Chadian government accused the UN of using its soldiers as human shields.[12] In May, Idriss Déby's government ordered the border closed to stop outbreaks of cross-border violence, but the international community criticised the move for abandoning the civilian population fleeing the armed conflict in the Central African Republic. Also in mid-May, the Chadian government declared that it was ready to combat the armed Islamist group Boko Haram (BH) at a regional summit held in Paris in which the countries neighbouring Nigeria participated. In June, BH threatened to carry out attacks in N'Djamena.[13] Chad reinforced its border patrols due to the growing instability.

DRC	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition and former armed opposition groups

Summary:

Between 1998 and 2003, what has been called "Africa's First World War" took place in DRC.[14] The signing of a series of peace agreements between 2002 and 2003 involved the withdrawal of foreign troops and the creation of a National Transitional Government (NTG), incorporating the former government, the political opposition, the RCD-Goma, RCD-K-ML, RCD-N and MLC armed groups, and the Mai Mai militias. From June 2003, the NTG was led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice presidents, two of whom belonged to the former insurgency: Azarias Ruberwa of the RCD-Goma and Jean-Pierre Bemba of the MLC. The NTG drew up the constitution, on which a referendum was held in December 2005. Legislative and presidential elections were held between July and October 2006, in which Kabila was elected president and Jean-Pierre Bemba came second, amid a climate of high tension and accusations of electoral fraud. The formation of the new government in 2007 failed to bring a halt to the instability and disputes taking place in the political sphere. The elections of November 2011, in which a series of irregularities were committed, fuelled the instability.

The climate remained tense President Joseph Kabila's desire to reform Article 220 of the Constitution, which would extend the presidential term limit and pave the way for him to stay in power. The political opposition

The Catholic Church in DRC supported demonstrations to stop a constitutional amendment that would enable Kabila to extend his rule

organised various mobilisations throughout the year and the Catholic Church in the country and the USA repeated their calls for President Kabila to leave office in 2016. Kabila wants to extend his term of office for the election that will be held in 2016, when his second term will end at the helm of the country (2006-2011, 2011-2016), in additional to the transition period when he was also its leader (2003-2006). The country has been experiencing a serious political crisis after the legislative and presidential elections of 2011, the results of which were rejected by the opposition. None of the elections that should have occurred since those in 2011 have taken place. In order to complete the electoral cycle of the presidential election planned for 2016, the authorities revoked the electoral calendar and announced that local elections would be held in 2015, before the provincial and senatorial elections. The opposition and many civil society activists denounced the change and rebelled against the proposed constitutional reform. Throughout the year, there were continuous reports that the government and security forces had restricted the activities of some political parties. International partners and donors continued to make their support conditional upon the publication of a calendar and global budget for the elections.

In compliance with one of the recommendations of the national dialogue held between 7 September and 5 October 2013, on 7 December Joseph Kabila appointed a new, widely anticipated "national cohesion" government formed by 47 members of the governing coalition and of the political opposition. This remodelling brought several leaders of the key political parties in the governing coalition back to the forefront of power. For example, Evariste Boshab, the secretary general of Kabila's party, the PPRD, was appointed deputy prime minister and minister of security and the interior, an office from where he can supervise the electoral cycle. The new cabinet included seven women (14% of the ministers and deputy ministers) and 10 members of the opposition were co-opted by the new government, including the secretary general of the MLC party, Thomas Luhaka, who was expelled from the MLC automatically. In a speech on the state of the nation on 15 December, Kabila unveiled the main points of focus of the recently remodelled government, including implementation of the decentralisation process and socio-economic reforms. In order to restore his image in domestic public opinion, he also said that the country would not yield to foreign pressure related to the 2016 presidential election and that the situation in DRC no longer justified the presence of the MONUSCO mission at its current size, so the time had come to discuss reducing it. Finally, insecurity persisted in the region of Katanga throughout the year, and specifically

---

12. See the summary on Mali (north) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
13. See the summary on Nigeria (Boko Haram) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
14. See the summary on DR Congo (east) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

in the "triangle of death" between the territories of Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba, where the Congolese Armed Forces carried out an offensive to break up the Mai Mai Bakata Katanga militia. In mid-December, the UN Secretary-General's last report of the year stated that 580,000 people had been displaced by violence and insecurity in the region. Finally, on 23 May the International Criminal Court sentenced warlord Germain Katanga to 12 years in prison after convicting him of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the district of Ituri in 2003.

DRC – Rwanda	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Identity, Government, Resources International
Main parties:	Governments of DRC, Rwanda, armed groups FDLR and M23 (former CNDP)

Summary:

The tense relations between DRC and Rwanda date from the beginning of the nineties, when the Zaire dictator Mobutu supported the Rwandan regime of Juvenal Habyarimana to stop the offensive of the RPF, the insurgence led by Paul Kagame, who after the 1994 genocide came to power in Rwanda. Since then, Kagame tried to overthrow Mobutu and persecute those responsible for the 1994 genocide that had escaped to DRC. In 1996 he supported Laurent Désiré Kabila to overthrow Mobutu, which he managed to do in 1997. After that, Kabila halted the relations with Rwanda, a country he fell out with because he intended to continue persecuting those responsible for the genocide. From 1998 to 2003 there was the "first African world war", given this name because there were up to eight countries participating, either supporting or against the Congolese Government, as is the case of Rwanda. The signing of a series of peace agreements between 2002 and 2003 led to the withdrawal of hostile foreign troops of Rwanda. They justified their presence on the basis of the existence of insurgent groups in Congolese territory, which they aimed to eliminate, given the lack of willingness shown by the Congolese armed forces to do so. In the meantime, they controlled and pillaged the natural resources in the east of the country directly or through armed groups protected by Rwanda and other countries. With the goal of furthering its own interests, DRC has supported these hostile groups in Rwanda, mainly the FDLR, which caused the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Relations between the two countries have been made difficult due to the existence of these groups and the failure to implement the agreements to demobilise or eliminate them, have experienced ups and downs.

The climate of tension persisted between both parties and a clash in the first half of the year set off alarms. The most notable events of the year took place in June, when several exchanges of fire and cross-border clashes between the Armed Forces of both countries killed five Congolese soldiers. The area where the clashes occurred, Kanyesheja, is disputed by both countries.

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), an organisation that joins together different countries in the area, conducted an investigation into the events. Undertaken at Rwanda's request, the investigation validated the Congolese version of events and contradicted Kigali's story, which held that the deaths had been due to a violation of Rwanda's territorial integrity. The Congolese maintained that the soldiers died after being captured by the Rwandan Armed Forces in Congolese territory, transferred to Rwanda and later executed. The regional investigators asked for an autopsy of the soldiers' bodies. Rwanda questioned the credibility of the report, which it has not signed but has been accepted by eight countries of the region and MONUSCO. The investigators recommended holding a regional meeting to discuss border disputes between both countries to reduce tension. Thus, the process to demarcate the border between DRC and Rwanda was revived in August. With regard to the conflict with the Rwandan Hutu armed group FDLR, its process of voluntary disarmament remained stalled throughout the second half of the year, which prompted warnings from Rwanda and the international community.[15]

Rwanda	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the governing party RPF, Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West

Summary:

The arrival of Belgian colonialism in 1916 exacerbated the ethnic differences between the majority Hutu community and the Tutsi minority. The latter was considered superior and held political, economic and social power in the country with the blessing of Belgium to the detriment of the majority of the population. This situation stirred up great resentment and by 1959 the first outbreaks of ethnic-political violence against the Tutsi community had taken place. Following independence in 1962, the Hutu community took power. 1990 marked the start of an armed conflict between the RPF armed group, led by the Tutsi community in Uganda, having fled in 1959, and the Hutu government, although an agreement was reached in 1993. This agreement was not respected. Between April and June 1994, extremist Hutu groups carried out the genocide of around one million people, mostly Tutsi but also moderate Hutu, abandoned by the international community, which withdrew the UN mission that was supposed to supervise the agreement. The RPF managed to overthrow and expel the genocidal government, committing serious violations of human rights. Some sectors of the population refer to this as a second internal genocide, in addition to the crimes committed by the

---

15. See the summary on DRC (east) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

RPF in Congolese territory as it persecuted those responsible for the 1994 genocide (the former Rwandan armed forces and the Interahamwe militias, rechristened as the FDLR) and the two million Rwandan refugees who had fled to DR Congo. Since then, the president, Paul Kagame, has ruled in an authoritarian manner, repressing political dissidence.

Repression and persecution intensified against the political opposition and dissident groups within the ruling party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Some former senior RPF officials were publicly accused of plotting against the RPF, including the president's former Chief of State Protocol Rose Kabuye, former Permanent Secretary Mary Baine and former Ambassador to the Netherlands Immaculée Uwanyirigira. President of the Senate Jean-Damascène Ntawukuriryayo resigned after facing allegations of embezzlement and supposedly for meeting with diplomats without having informed the government. In August, several retired senior military officers were arrested such as General Franck Rusagara, Captain David Kabuye and Colonel Tom Byabagamba. Earlier in the year, **diplomatic tensions between Rwanda and South Africa intensified** due to an attack by three armed men on the home of the former chief of the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF, current Armed Forces in the country) and former right-hand man of President Paul Kagame, General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, in exile in South Africa. In early March, South Africa decided to expel three Rwandans and a Burundi diplomat, charging them with complicity in the attempted murder. Rwanda responded by expelling six South African diplomats from its territory and accused South Africa of harbouring terrorists. It is worth noting that previously, in January, the former intelligence chief and co-founder of the opposition group Rwanda National Congress (RNC), Patrick Karegeya, had been killed in South Africa. In February, the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, criticised Paul Kagame's government, describing it as a dictatorial regime. On 15 February, six opposition political parties met in Brussels to study a potential alliance. Also noteworthy was the controversial ruling of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UNICTR), which acquitted two senior Rwandan security force officers in February. The decision was condemned by the Ibuka association, composed of survivors of the genocide. In October, the first political debate was held on the potential review of the Rwandan Constitution concerning a constitutional amendment that would allow Kagame to run for a third term. The minor parties allied to the Kagame government began the public debate on a pro-government website. Bernard Ntaganda, who had headed the opposition party PS-Imberakuri (currently an ally of the RPF) and was later ejected from the party and imprisoned in 2010 for

Repression and persecution intensified in Rwanda against the political opposition and dissident groups within the ruling party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)

threatening state security, Leith prison in June and declared that these parties, mere puppets of the RPF, were saying aloud what the RPF was thinking. Only one recently created party, the Democratic Green Party, said that it was against extending the presidential term limit. During the US-Africa summit held in Washington in August, US Secretary of State John Kerry called on Africa's political leaders not to reform their constitutions for political or personal benefit. In December, the Committee to Protect Journalists published a critical report on freedom of expression and self-censorship of the media in the country.

Sudan	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:

Sudan has been immersed in a long-standing conflict stemming from the concentration of power and resources in the centre of the country. Besides the conflicts in the marginalised regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the rest of the country is also undergoing governability problems stemming from the authoritarian regime of President Omar al-Bashir, who came to power after a coup in 1989 and who uses strict control and repression against dissidents through the State's security forces. Tensions worsened in the country with the secession of South Sudan in 2011, since this severely affected the country's economy, 70% of which depended on revenues from oil, mainly located in the south. The Sudanese State coffers saw revenue plummet with the loss of control over oil exports and, later on, due to the lack of agreement with South Sudan over how to transport oil through the oil pipelines crossing Sudan. A financial situation with a high inflation and the devaluation of its currency contributed to the outbreak of significant protests in the Summer of 2012 in several cities around the cities that were put out by the security forces.

In addition to the armed conflicts active in peripheral regions of the country, a serious political and social crisis has arisen in recent years and persisted in 2014. However, the pressure exerted by different civil society organisations and political parties, as well as part of the international community, led President Omar al-Bashir to call on the political parties and insurgents to commit to a national dialogue process to build peace in the country and discuss potential constitutional reform on 27 January 2014. Though this offer was not without its calculations, it was hailed inside the country and by part of the international community.[16] However, preparations for the process during the year were slow and

16. See "Sudan's National Dialogue, one of the last hopes for peace in the country", in chapter 5 (Opportunities for Peace in 2015).

various opposition parties accused the ruling party, the National Congress Party (NCP), of deliberately delaying the national dialogue in order to hold the elections in April 2015 and resume them later. The opposition parties demanded that the elections be postponed until the national dialogue process ended. However, the government rejected these demands and accusations and stressed its commitment to the process, stating that it should not exceed three months. In December the process had still not begun, though some preparatory meetings had taken place. The student protests of recent years continued and even intensified during 2014 in response to the austerity measures imposed by the government. The authorities harassed and detained members of the political opposition, civil society leaders and journalists, as reported by HRW, which also denounced press censorship in the country.

The hopeful Sudanese national dialogue promoted by the president was repeatedly delayed while harassment of the political opposition and the press continued

Uganda	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:

President Yoweri Museveni has been in power since 1986, when an insurgent movement he commanded succeeded in overthrowing the government of Milton Obote, and has since ruled the country using authoritarian means and a political system controlled by the former rebel movement, the NRM (the Movement). In the 2001 presidential elections Museveni defeated his main opponent, Kizza Besigye, a former colonel in the NRM, amid allegations of fraud. In a referendum held in July 2005 Ugandans voted to return to a multiparty system. Following an amendment to the Constitution in 2005 to increase the existing limit of two consecutive terms to three, Museveni won the 2006 elections, amid serious allegations of fraud. They were the first multiparty elections that had been held since he had come to power. In the February 2011 presidential elections, Museveni again beat his eternal rival and former ally Kizza Besigye amid new allegations of fraud, which has led to an escalation of social tension and Government repression of the demands for democratic change and protests against the rising cost of living. In parallel, Uganda's military intervention in Somalia increased the threats of the Somali armed group al-Shabaab against Uganda. Finally, various parts of the country are affected by periodic inter-community conflicts over land ownership.

The country remained immersed in a climate of political and social crisis. The security forces continued to enjoy a climate of widespread impunity that led to practices of torture, mistreatment and extrajudicial executions.

The government of President Yoweri Museveni banned and blocked demonstrations by the political opposition, intimidated journalists and members of civil society working in the fight against corruption, the exploitation of natural resources like petrol and land, and especially sexual rights. On 31 July, the Constitutional Court ruled that the controversial Anti-Homosexuality Law, approved by the president in February, was invalid because there was no quorum in Parliament on the day it was passed. Homosexual relations were already criminalised under the Criminal Code, but the new law was much more repressive and lengthened prison sentences. Many governments and international human rights organisations condemned the law.

Furthermore, there was an outbreak of violence in the western part of the country in July. **The deaths of around 100 people were confirmed in July as a result of attacks on different police stations and barracks** located in the districts of Kasese, Ntoroko and Bundibugyo, in the area bordering DRC and Uganda. Most of the victims were killed in the police action to repel the attack, in which five soldiers and 12 policemen were killed. HRW investigators said that the events could be linked to police brutality and the authorities rejected the possibility that supporters or members of the group ADF could be behind them.[17] Days later, three mass graves were found in the district of Bundibugyo with at least 30 bodies. Several sources said that the victims could be from intercommunal clashes linked to the previous attacks and stemming from government management of land ownership in these three districts, where various multinational oil companies are about to begin extracting crude from reserves that could contain up to 3.5 billion barrels. Finally, with respect to Uganda's involvement in Somalia, the threat of reprisals from al-Shabaab intensified after the death of its leader in September, since Uganda said that it had provided information to the USA on the Islamist leader's movements and the US Embassy in Kampala warned of a possible attack by al-Shabaab in the country.

Horn of Africa

Eritrea	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, internal political and social opposition, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups

17. See the summary on DRC (East – ADF) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

Summary:

The single-party regime that has remained in place in Eritrea since 1993 (the former insurgency that contributed to the collapse of Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime in Ethiopia in 1991), is highly authoritarian in nature, silencing and suppressing the political opposition. The government, led by the old guard from the time of independence, has a series of opposition movements to contend with that are calling for progress in democracy and the governability of the country, respect for ethnic minorities and a greater degree of self-government. They also demand official language status for Arabic, an end to the marginalisation of Islam in the country and a halt to the cultural imposition of the Tigray community, or Tygranisation, carried out by the PFDJ, which controls all the mechanisms of power. This situation, added to Eritrea's policy in the region of the Horn of Africa, has led the country towards increasing isolationism. In December 2009 the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo, air travel ban and asset freeze on the country's highest-ranking officials due to their support of the Somalian armed group al-Shabaab.

One of the most noteworthy events that highlighted the situation in Eritrea was UNHCR's announcement in November stating that the number of people coming from Eritrea and seeking asylum in Europe had tripled in the first 10 months of 2014 when compared to the same period in 2013, soaring from 13,000 to 37,000. Twenty-two percent of the refugees that reached Italy were Eritrean, the second-largest nationality after Syrian to enter the country. Most of the refugees are young people fleeing the authoritarianism of the Eritrean regime and the intensification of a recruitment campaign for compulsory and open-ended military service. Compulsory military service was brought to the country in 1995. According to one report, it and other factors have helped to ruin the country, since 80% of the population lives off subsistence farming and is therefore highly dependent on labour to perform field activities.[18]

Another important issue during the year was the **Semera Conference, held in Ethiopia in August. At the event, members of the Afar community of Eritrea and Ethiopia discussed what the government structure to replace the current one in Eritrea should look like**. Meanwhile, the leaders of the RSADO asserted that the movement's armed wing had grown stronger and was preparing to launch large-scale attacks against the Eritrean Army. The RSADO also said that the Afar community in the country was being brutally repressed by the Eritrean government. Around 500 people participated in the Semera Conference, including political leaders, RSADO members, the Red Sea Afar youth movement, women's leagues, senior citizens, representatives of the refugee community,

Twenty-two percent of the refugees that reached Italy were Eritrean, the second-largest nationality after Syrian

other civil society organisations, international observers and members of the Eritrean diaspora. In the second quarter of the year, a Swedish law firm charged various leaders of the country with crimes against humanity, including the current president. In late June, the UN Human Rights Council established a commission to investigate the situation in Eritrea based on a Council resolution that condemned serious and systematic violations of human rights committed in the country. The resolution was rejected by Eritrea. The policy to block independent media and the entry of UN experts to certify the situation in the country makes it harder to obtain real information about it, so the only information available comes from people that have fled. In 2013, Amnesty International declared that around 10,000 people had been imprisoned in the country for political reasons since independence was gained from Ethiopia in 1993. Finally, a Human Rights Watch (HRW) study published in February documents collaboration between security officials from Egypt and Sudan with human traffickers that abduct and torture Eritrean refugees in order to extort money from them and their families. Thus, over the course of the last three years according to HRW, between hundreds and thousands of Eritreans that fled government repression in Eritrea were kidnapped from refugee camps in Sudan and sold to traffickers in the Sinai Peninsula. Many of them were tortured and abused in order to obtain money for their release.

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

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. In 2002, the authoritarian and kleptocratic Daniel Arap Moi, who had held power for 24 years, was defeated by Mwai Kibaki on the back of promises to end corruption and redistribute wealth in a poor agricultural country whose growth is based on tourism. However, Kibaki's subsequent broken promises fostered

18. See Gaim Kibreab, "The national service/Warsai-Yikealo Development Campaign and forced migration in post-independence Eritrea", in *The Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2013, in *The Economist*, "Miserable and useless", *The Economist*, 10 March 2014, http://www.economist.com/blogs/baobab/2014/03/national-service-eritrea.

a climate of frustration, which meant that the opposition leader Raila Odinga became a threat to Kibaki's hegemony of power. Odinga did not base his campaign on tribal affiliation but rather on change and on the building of a fairer society. 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. This situation led to an agreement between the two sectors through which a fragile government of national unity was created. In 2013 new elections were held where Ihuru Kenyatta became the presidents of the country, although he is pending trial at the ICC for his links to the events occurred in 2007. In parallel, several areas of the country were affected by inter-community disputes over land ownership, also instigated politically during the electoral period. Furthermore, the illegal activities of the Mungiki sect, Kenya's military intervention in Somalia has triggered attacks by the Somalian armed group al-Shabaab in Kenya and the subsequent animosity towards the Somalian population in Kenya, presenting a challenge to the country's stability. Another factor in 2012 has been the growing government pressure on the secessionist movement Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), whose goal is the independence of the country's coastal region.

During the year, violence perpetrated by groups sympathetic to the Somali insurgency al-Shabaab intensified alongside a steady rate of attacks and operations conducted by the security forces, claiming around 200 lives. Most of these actions took place in northern and coastal areas. Episodes of violence also occurred in the southeastern coastal city of Mombasa. In June, al-Shabaab threatened to strike against the country's tourist sector, which has suffered a major crisis as a result of the actions of the Islamist rebels. In November and December alone, over 70 people were killed and scores were wounded. In addition, more than 100 Somali militants were killed in two Kenyan air strikes in November conducted on its bases in southern Somalia, according to the government. According to some analysts, the air strikes came in retaliation for an attack on a bus travelling between Mandera and Bulla Arabia in the border area between Kenya and Somalia in late November. In the attack, 28 people were separated and executed for not being Muslims. Al-Shabaab announced that this attack had been in reprisal for police operations in four mosques in early November that were closed for weeks and led to the arrest of hundreds of young people. The proliferation of attacks, retaliatory military actions, arrests, shootings and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) was constant and displaced hundreds of people. The most serious event of the year took place on 15 and 16 June in the town of Mpeketoni and the surrounding area in the department of Lamu, where armed men killed around 60 people. On the same two nights, five other people were killed in the same area.

During the year, violence in Kenya perpetrated by groups sympathetic to the Somali insurgency al-Shabaab intensified

The ICC dropped charges of crimes against humanity brought against the president of Kenya due to a lack of evidence

Given the situation, the government tried to implement various measures to address the growing climate of violence and on 19 December it approved an anti-terrorism law that raised concerns in the USA and among various human rights organisations because it introduces important restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and information. More than 500 NGOs were banned, including around 15 accused of having links to terrorism. The political opposition coalition CORD, which is undergoing a fragile period according to some analysts, filed a lawsuit to stop the bill. Meanwhile, the government carried out a robust operation to harass the separatist group Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), whose members were charged with unlawful assembly and acts of conspiracy. At different times of the year, dozens of members of the organisation were arrested, including the leader of the MRC on 31 December. The government tried to link the actions of al-Shabaab to the MRC, although the separatist political movement repeatedly denied that it had any connection to the armed group. Another prominent issue during the year was the arrest of around 4,000 people of Somali origin by Kenyan security forces in an unprecedented police operation in April, which sparked a diplomatic crisis between Somalia and Kenya. The authorities argued that it was a documentary review, but according to many analysts it actually provided cover for the criminalisation of an entire community, accusing it of having ties to al-Shabaab. The security forces moved thousands of Somalis mainly from the neighbourhood of Eastleigh, also known as Little Mogadishu due to the large amount of Somali residents there, to Kasarani stadium. Intercommunal clashes over land ownership and cattle theft spread, especially in the northern part of the country, with hundreds of people dying as a result over the course of the year. In late August, the Kenyan Red Cross said that at least 77 people had been killed in fighting between the Degodia and Garre clans in Mandera county (bordering with Ethiopia and Somalia).

In its trial of current President Uhuru Kenyatta and Prime Minister William Ruto regarding their involvement in the post-election violence that occurred in Kenya in December 2007, **on 5 December the ICC finally dropped the charges of crimes against humanity brought against the president**. The decision was interpreted as a heavy defeat for the ICC following the Kenyan government's moves to boycott and hinder its action. The ICC asked Kenyatta to appear before it in early October. The court also asked a government representative to appear to review the state of cooperation between the ICC and the Kenyan government. Kenyatta was supposed to appear in March, but the ICC decided to postpone his appearance due to a lack of evidence and witnesses as a result of the little

cooperation offered by the government. Finally, some protests were staged against the government during the year because of its security failures, growing crime, the rising cost of living and corruption, among other issues.

Maghreb - North Africa

Morocco – Western Sahara	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International[19]
Main parties:	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front

Summary:

The roots of the conflict can be traced to the end of Spanish colonial rule in Western Sahara in the mid-1970s. The splitting of the territory between Morocco and Mauritania without taking into account the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people or the commitment to a referendum on independence in the area led to a large part of the territory being annexed by Rabat, forcing the displacement of thousands of Sahrawi citizens, who sought refuge in Algeria. In 1976, the POLISARIO Front, a nationalist movement, declared a government in exile (the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic - SADR) and launched an armed campaign against Morocco. Both parties accepted a peace plan in 1988 and since 1991 the UN mission in the Sahara, MINURSO, has been monitoring the ceasefire and is responsible for organising a referendum for self-determination in the territory. In 2007 Morocco presented the UN with a plan for the autonomy of Western Sahara but the POLISARIO Front demands a referendum that includes the option of independence.

The dispute over the Western Sahara continued to be characterised by **blocked dialogue between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, regular demonstrations by the Sahrawi population demanding social and economic rights and self-determination, harassment of Sahrawi activists by Moroccan authorities and incidents between Sahrawi demonstrators and Moroccan security forces**. Noteworthy in this regard are the protests in El Aaiún in June to demand that the UN mission in the Western Sahara (MINURSO) be given competence over human rights, which resulted in 15 people injured, and altercations between Moroccans and Sahrawis in Dakhla, which wounded seven other people in May. The death of a Sahrawi prisoner in Dakhla was also reported during the second quarter. A member of the Sahrawi Association against Torture, activist Hasena Elwali, died for a lack of adequate medical care, according to Sahrawi sources. In his annual report on the Western Sahara published in April, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underlined that the overall situation was calm and that there were no fears of a resumption of the armed conflict in the short term, but also stressed the continuous displays of discontent by the Sahrawi population. While acknowledging that the Moroccan authorities had shown greater receptivity to allow visits by foreign delegations to the Western Sahara, the report noted that visitors considered hostile by Rabat were denied access or expelled. In fact, there were various cases of this throughout 2014. According to media reports, Morocco expelled around 40 international observers between April and August. The report also complained of the restrictions on MINURSO to establish contacts with civil society independently, which limit the mission's ability to form a comprehensive idea of the situation in the Western Sahara (Morocco thinks that the prerogatives of MINURSO are limited to military matters and the ceasefire, and not to civil society issues). **The UN's mandate was extended for another year, though it was granted no powers to evaluate the human rights situation** as the POLISARIO Front, international NGOs and others have demanded in recent years.

In the diplomatic arena, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for the Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, continued to make regular trips to the region to sit down with various stakeholders in the dispute and attempt to thaw the dialogue between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front.[20] Ross maintained his policy of not holding a new round of direct talks between Moroccan and Sahrawi delegates until there is a real possibility of making progress. Throughout the year, however, both parties seemed to dig into their positions. The Moroccan government continued pushing the advanced regionalisation process that will begin with the Western Sahara and unveiled its development plan for the region, which it calls its "southern provinces", in a parallel session during the 27th meeting of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In early November, in a speech marking the 39th anniversary of the Green March, Moroccan King Mohammed VI insisted that the autonomy plan was the most that Morocco could offer in the context of the current conflict, rejected any change in the parameters of the negotiations and in MINURSO's mandate and asked the United States to take a less ambiguous position with regard to the dispute and to pressure Algeria to stop supporting the POLISARIO Front. POLISARIO's leaders reacted by criticising the Moroccan authorities' policies and statements and Secretary General Mohamed Abdelaziz warned that if diplomacy fails, there will be no other option than to return to armed conflict. According to Ban Ki-moon's report, Sahrawis of different political persuasions that live in the Moroccan-controlled territory expressed their frustration about their exclusion from the negotiating process and said that they did not feel represented by either Morocco or the POLISARIO Front. Some of their demands call for boosting their participation in the

---

19. Although Western Sahara is not an internationally recognised state, the tensions between Morocco and Western Sahara are classified as "international" and not internal as this is a territory which is awaiting decolonisation and which is not recognised as belonging to Morocco either under international law or in any United Nations resolution.
20. See the summary on Morocco – Western Sahara in chapter 3 (Peace Processes).

talks, promoting the reunification of families separated by the conflict, preserving the cultural identity of the indigenous population, paying more attention to the legal aspects of resource exploitation and facilitating the empowerment of civil society.

Tunisia	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government
	Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, Ansar al-Sharia

Summary:
Since becoming independent in 1956 until the start of 2011, Tunisia only had two presidents. During three decades Habib Bourghiba laid the foundations for the authoritarian regime in the country, a regime that continued after Zine El Abidine Ben Ali came to power in 1987 after a coup. The concentration of power, the persecution of the secular and Islamist political opposition and the iron grip on society that characterised the country's internal situation were in starch contrast to its international image of stability. Despite reports of corruption, electoral fraud and human rights violations, Tunisia for years stood as a privileged ally of the West. In December 2010, the outbreak of a popular revolt sowed the regime's contradictions, and led to the hall of Ben Ali's Government at the start of 2011, inspiring mobilisations against authoritarian governments in the whole of the Arab world. Since then, Tunisia has lived immersed in a bumpy transition process where the tensions between the secular and Islamist sectors have become clear.

The transition process in Tunisia was back on track in 2014, after the serious crisis experienced in 2013 stemming from the assassination of two major political leaders. Thus, **various milestones in the public sphere were reached during the year, but episodes of violence continued to break out at the same time. Linked to the activity of jihadist insurgent cells and security force operations against suspected militants, these incidents claimed the lives of at least 50 people**. Regarding political developments, early in the year the government, led by the Islamist party Ennhada, handed over power to a new government of technocrats, as stipulated in the agreement signed as part of the National Dialogue in late 2013. The minister of Industry at the time, Mehdi Jomaa, succeeded Ali Larayedh as prime minister and formed a cabinet consisting mostly of independent figures. The new government was ratified by Parliament in late January, coinciding with the final adoption of the country's new Constitution. After more than two years of debate, the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) passed the new Constitution by a large majority (200 in favour, 12 against and four abstaining), replacing the one that had been in force since 1959. The NCA-created Constitution recognises Islam as the state religion, but guarantees the freedom of worship,

bestows Tunisia with a mixed parliamentary government system with certain privileges for the president and tries to do more to ensure equality between men and women. Thus, one of the articles of the new Constitution requires parity between men and women in all elected assemblies in the country and provides for adopting measures to stamp out violence against women.

After the new Constitution became law, in late May the new electoral law was passed and the different groups represented in the National Dialogue agreed that the legislative and presidential elections would be held during the third quarter of the year. The election campaign stoked tensions again, especially between secular and Islamist groups, but other than sporadic incidents, the elections went smoothly and had a higher turnout that what some analysts anticipated. **Held in October, the legislative elections were won by Nidaa Tounes, a party standing out mainly for its opposition to Islamist sectors**. Nidaa Tounes won 85 of the 217 seats of the NCA, relegating Ennhada to second place with 69 seats. According to some analysts, Ennhada's defeat at the polls was due to its problems in managing the government and the economy. Nidaa Tounes presented itself as a force that could provide greater stability to the country, though it was viewed with caution by some due to the influence within it of groups with ties to the former regime. Nevertheless, Nidaa Tounes's candidate also won the presidential election. In the second round of the election held in December (the first had taken place in November), 88-year-old Baji Casi Essebsi, a minister of the Interior during the Habib Bourguiba era and speaker of Parliament under Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, won 55.6% of the vote, beating out his Moncef Marzouki, the president during the transition and a renowned critic of the Ben Ali regime. Ennahda fulfilled its promise not to present a candidate in the presidential election. In this context, at the end of the year various analysts warned of the government's need to establish a cooperative relationship with the Islamists. In his inauguration speech on 31 December, Essebsi also emphasised the importance of moving ahead in the reconciliation process in the country.

Tunisia made progress in the transition process in 2014, but also faced several episodes of violence perpetrated by jihadist groups

There were also several security incidents, including some of special notoriety. One of those that had the most impact was the **double insurgent attack that killed 15 Tunisian soldiers and at least one of the assailants in July. It was the bloodiest attack on the Army since 1956**, the year the country won its independence, and responsibility for it was claimed by the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, an armed group allegedly linked to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Weeks before, AQIM had claimed authorship of an attack on the home of the minister of the Interior in May that killed four members of the security forces. After the attack in July, the Tunisian authorities took a series of measures such as arresting numerous suspects, closing mosques and media outlets

accused of promoting radical Islam and creating a counter-terrorism agency. Throughout the year, the authorities intensified their collaboration with Algeria in controlling the border by deploying thousands of soldiers and reinforced security in the Libyan border area due to the escalation of violence in the country. The attack on the soldiers in July took place in the mountainous area of Mount Chaambi, an area bordering Algeria where greater insurgent activity has been detected. The area was declared restricted for military operations in April. Other acts of violence took place on Mount Chaambi throughout the year, as well as in areas like El-Kelf, Kasserine, Jendouba and the capital. Also in Tunis, seven suspected militants and one police officer were killed in a tracking operation at the start of the year to find the killers of the politicians assassinated in 2013. Other incidents that occurred in 2014 included the deaths of police officers, the detonation of an explosive device and the deaths of several people (including women) during tracking operations conducted by security forces searching for suspected members of jihadist groups. According to the authorities, they had managed to thwart various attempted attacks allegedly organised by groups like Ansar al-Sharia. Both inside the country and internationally, there was growing concern about the many Tunisians that have been participating in the war in Syria in recent years and their return to Tunisia.

Southern Africa

Madagascar	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	High Transitional Authority, opposition leaders, state security forces, dahalos (cattle rustlers), self-defence militias, private security companies

Summary:

Since the end of the communist regime in the 1990s, the island has been affected by bouts of political turmoil. The unconstitutional seizure of power by the former mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina, with the support of the army, triggered a new political crisis in March 2009. The difficulties in reaching a power-sharing agreement among the main political leaders have led to an institutional stalemate, with sporadic outbreaks of violence taking place. Besides, since the middle of 2012 a spiral of violence grew in the south of the country stemming from rustling and plundering of the dahalo (rustlers in Malagasy) against civil population, which led to an excessive intervention by the security forces, the establishment of self defence militias and the hiring of private security companies to suppress the crisis.

Despite the progress made in the political transition, violence in the south of Madagascar persisted

In the political arena, significant progress was made during 2014 in the political transition process that the country has been undergoing in recent years. President Hery Rajaonarimampianina won the runoff presidential election held on 20 December 2013 in a climate of normality. In January, the Supreme Electoral ratified Rajaonarimampianina's victory. The candidate of outgoing President Andry Rajoelina, he won 53.5% of the vote, while former Health Minister Jean Louis Robinson, the candidate backed by deposed President Marc Ravalomanana, carried 46.5% of the vote. On 16 April, Rajaonarimampianina appointed Roger Kolo to be prime minister. Kolo assumed office as part of the political transition under way in the country. Various countries hailed the move, which crowns the democratic process that started with the legislative and presidential elections held in late 2013. The organisation that unites the countries of Southern Africa, the SADC, also welcomed the decision. In late March, the International Organisation of La Francophonie decided to readmit Madagascar to the organisation after it had been suspended for the previous five years, following in the footsteps of the African Union (AU) in January. In May, the World Bank announced that it was sending 400 million USD to Madagascar, and the EU, IMF and United States also resumed full political relations and official development assistance, frozen since the coup in 2009. However, former President Marc Ravalomanana's desire to return to the country from exile and the current president's refusal to allow it was the only issue that troubled the process throughout the year. In this respect, on 12 October Ravalomanana decided to return secretly to the country after spending five years in exile. This was viewed as an attempt to question the legitimacy of the current president. The AU and the SADC condemned Ravalomanana's decision and he was arrested by the authorities on the grounds that it was necessary for his protection. Various protests were staged and broken up by the police. He was later placed under house arrest. In November, former presidents Rajoelina and Ravalomanana and current President Hery Rajaonarimampianina agreed to undertake a national reconciliation process that Rajaonarimampianina would lead. On 19 December, a meeting was held between the current president and his predecessors, former presidents Andry Rajoelina, Marc Ravalomanana, Albert Zafy and Didier Ratsiraka, led and facilitated by the Malagasy Christian Council of Churches (FFKM).

Meanwhile, the issue that continued to generate greater concern was **the continuing acts of violence in the south of the country**. The district of Amboasary was the epicentre of the clashes and violence, which killed scores of people and displaced 3,000 others. The government deployed additional state forces to put down the intercommunal fighting motivated by the theft of livestock. In July, the government reported

that the operation that it had conducted in the south in the months prior, involving 200 special forces soldiers and supported by the local population against cattle (mainly zebu) rustlers known as dahalos, had killed dozens of the latter and recovered hundreds of heads of cattle, but new clashes broke out in August. However, the government offered a general amnesty if the dahalos surrendered and in October 2,280 former dahalos turned themselves in en masse. However, some organisations were pessimistic about this decision due to the atmosphere of impunity it establishes and the fact that the former thieves lack the resources to survive in society, whereas the authorities have not set up any type of fund or compensation mechanism to create jobs.

Mozambique	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, RENAMO armed group

Summary:

The coup against the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974 and the guerrilla war between the Marxist-Leninist FRELIMO insurgence drove Mozambique to gain independence from Portugal in 1975. Then Mozambique entered a civil war between the FRELIMO Government and the armed group RENAMO, the latter supported by the white minorities governing in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the apartheid South Africa, in the context of the Cold War. The country was also deeply affected by famine and horrendous financial management issues. In 1992 the parties reached a peace agreement that was seen as an example of reconciliation, mediated by the Sant'Egidio Community, ending 16 years of war with one million dead and five million displaced and marking the dawn of a period of political stability and economic development albeit the large inequalities in the country. The leader of RENAMO, Alfonso Dhlakama, has been unable to turn his party into an organised and structured platform that could reach power and since the first elections in 1994 it has gradually lost its share of political power to FRELIMO and other parties such as the MDM (a breakaway party of RENAMO). In parallel, a growing chorus of voices denouncing fraud and irregularities during the successive elections, some of which were verified by international observers, have gone hand in hand with a growing authoritarianism and repression against the opposition, as well as FRELIMO taking over the State (besides the media and the economy). In 2013 RENAMO conditioned its continuity as a political entity to a set of reforms, mainly the national electoral commission and a more equitable distribution of the country's wealth, and threatened to withdraw from the peace agreement signed in 1992.

During the first half of the year, **there was a significant reduction in tension and the signing of the ceasefire**

Despite the signing of the ceasefire agreement that facilitated the holding of elections in Mozambique, the close results and irregularities observed raised new alarms

agreement and subsequent peace agreement facilitated the holding of elections in October, although the close results and irregularities observed raised new alarms in late 2014. RENAMO, the main opposition party, had made its participation in the October 2014 elections conditional upon a series of political reforms. When the FRELIMO-led government refused to carry out the reforms, RENAMO withdrew its signature from the 1992 peace agreement on 21 October 2013. Sporadic clashes have taken place ever since. Though armed militias linked to RENAMO established themselves in the southern district of Homoine in early January, forcibly displacing the populace, on 21 February MPs voted to reform the National Electoral Commission (CNE), which helped to de-escalate the crisis. Homoine has been RENAMO's main military base in the past. The main change to the reform was an increase in the CNE's membership from 13 to 17 and two additional seats for RENAMO, giving it a total of four, while FRELIMO held five seats and the party MDM had one. The seven remaining seats were awarded to members of civil society, making the CNE a more plural space. On 14 March the country's news agency, AIM, reported that four RENAMO members had already been appointed to occupy the seats on the CNE, which was expected to lower tension. In mid-June, RENAMO's National Council met to analyse the political situation in the country and confirmed that it would run in the upcoming elections on 15 October. Meanwhile, although insurgent movements and attacks were reported on civilian targets in July, the government and RENAMO reached an agreement on 24 August to end the political conflict that had pitted them against each other for two years and had broken out into sporadic episodes of armed violence that raised fears of a return of the conflict that ravaged the country from the moment of independence in 1975 until 1992. Both forces agreed to a ceasefire, to integrate RENAMO fighters into the Mozambican Armed Forces and to provide amnesty for acts of violence carried out since 2012. This agreement paved for the way for a meeting between President Armando Guebuza (FRELIMO) and RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama in Maputo to sign the peace agreement that ratified the integration of RENAMO militants into the security forces. Parliament approved the process days later, giving a green light to the start of the campaign for the legislative and presidential elections on 15 October. In the weeks before the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the government had released several RENAMO combatants captured in recent clashes as a measure of goodwill to foster rapprochement with the group.

However, the start of the electoral campaign increased tension in the country. Despite complaints by the leader of RENAMO of irregularities and fraud and accusations of bias and intimidation by the police and state media, international (SADC, EU and US) observation

missions described the process as fair and transparent, recognising some irregularities but saying that they had not decisively influenced the result. There were also sporadic outbreaks of violence. Dhlakama ruled out a return to violence. The elections maintained FRELIMO in power under Filipe Nyusi, who succeeded Armando Guebuza, prevented by the Constitution from seeking a third term. However, support for FRELIMO fell from 75% in the 2009 elections to 57%, while votes cast for RENAMO rose from 16% to 34%. Concern about corruption and authoritarianism and complaints about growing inequality in the country gave RENAMO some support, though not enough to achieve power. However, other opposition parties did not accept the results and the CNE demonstrated the division in the country when it approved the results by a vote of 10 against 7. RENAMO demanded negotiations to establish a national unity or provisional-type government. In December, it threatened to set up a parallel government in the provinces where it had won a majority and at the end of the month Dhlakama threatened to return to violence if the Constitutional Court validated the election results. It validated the results on 30 December, worsening the atmosphere of tension.

West Africa

Burkina Faso	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, state security forces, civil society

Summary:
A former French colony, Burkina Faso has faced several military coups and many socio-economic challenges since winning independence in 1960. A landlocked country, it is vulnerable to volatility in global prices for materials like cotton. The period under President Blaise Compaoré, who came to power through a military coup in 1987 and won successive elections, gradually faced numerous sources of tension linked to the lack of human rights, allegations that the country had participated in conflicts in neighbouring countries, rising prices, a worsening quality of life for the population and criticism of the president's attempts to remain in power. Protests increased in 2011 and there were several military mutinies, generating a serious crisis of confidence between the government and various groups. In late 2014, Compaoré stepped down amidst widespread public protests against his plans to eliminate presidential term limits and after the Army seized power. Given society's rejection of the military coup, it gave way to a transition process under shared leadership including the Armed Forces.

Burkina Faso was the scene of public protests against an extension of the president's term of office, followed by a government takeover by the Army and the start of a transition process

Developments in the country were convulsive, with mass protests against attempts to keep the president in power, a government takeover by the Burkinabe Army, the president's departure and the start of a transition process. In the first few quarters of the year, social and political tension rose due to strain between the opposition and some pro-government groups over President Blaise Compaoré's attempts to reform the Constitution to eliminate constitutional term limits (his presidency ended in 2015). The tension was reflected in positions for and against a possible referendum on term limits and in public demonstrations at different times of the year. The opposition estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people participated in a demonstration in January, described as the largest in decades, but the police claimed that only 10,000 attended. In this scenario, senior officials of the ruling CDP party resigned and formed a new political movement. The tension rose in October, with an increase in protests, mainly in the capital, such as the one on 28 October involving hundreds of thousands of people. Around 30 people were killed and around one hundred were injured in protests on 30 October, when Parliament was supposed to vote on the president's proposal to lift his term limits. On the same day, demonstrators set fire to Parliament, stormed the headquarters of the state television station and city hall and burned houses belonging to MPs. Media outlets reported that the Burkinabe Army fired live ammunition against protestors. The Army seized power that day and the chief of staff, Nabéré Honoré Traoré, initially proclaimed himself the leader of the transition process and announced the forthcoming establishment of a transitional body. On 1 November, Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Zida was appointed the new leader of the process.

The military takeover sparked new public protests and criticism from international players like the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and the United Nations, with the AU threatening sanctions if power was not handed over to civilians. In early November, talks started between the Army, political parties, civil society organisations and tribal leaders. An African affair, the talks were mediated by the presidents of Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. On 13 November, they reached a deal for a transitional framework under civilian leadership that included the appointment of an interim civilian president, the creation of a 90-member legislative body and presidential and legislative elections held one year into the transition. **A special panel of political, religious, civilian, traditional and military leaders appointed Michel Kafando** to be the new president. Backed by the Army, Kafando is a former foreign minister and Compaoré's former representative to the United Nation. In turn, Kafando appointed Lieutenant Colonel Zida to be prime minister. This decision and the military's retention of

four key posts, with Zida serving as defence minister and prime minister, fuelled suspicions among various sectors that the Army was trying to control the transition process to the greatest extent possible. Meanwhile, the government banned the former ruling party, the CDP, and other allied formations. In any case, the situation tended to stabilise somewhat in December when the creation of a commission on national reconciliation and reform was announced.

Côte d'Ivoire	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI

Summary:

The political, economic and social discrimination against northern Ivorians is at the core of the serious crisis that began in the country in the 1980s. Following an initial conflict in 2002 and the resumption of armed violence in 2010, triggered by the presidential elections, stability in the country remains fragile. The end of war in April 2011 and the formation of a new government presided over by Alassane Ouattara (of northern origin) created expectations for change. Justice and reparation for victims, the transformation of discriminatory laws, the resolution of disputes regarding land ownership and the reform of the security sector are some of the great challenges facing the country. The presence of a large number of light weapons, the persistence of violence in the west and the unstable border with Liberia, where mercenary groups remain active, are endangering a fragile peace.

The situation in the country continued to improve, with further steps taken towards political reconciliation and a largely stable security situation, though the context remained fragile. In political terms, in a year before the 2015 presidential election, talks resumed in May after stagnating in the months prior due to factors such as tensions linked to transitional justice processes (in March, the ally of former President Laurent Gbagbo and leader of the Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé, accused of crimes against humanity in the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011, was transferred to the International Criminal Court). There were disagreements between the government and the opposition regarding the new legislation passed in June on the Independent Electoral Commission, with the opposition criticising what it perceived as government overrepresentation. The re-election in August of President Youssouf Bakayok, which was boycotted by members of opposition political parties and some civil society representatives, led the opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI, the former ruling party) to withdraw from the

Around 43,000 former combatants were still armed in Côte d'Ivoire, according to the report of the Group of Experts on the country

commission. The FPI-led coalition of parties Alliance des Forces Démocratiques de Côte d'Ivoire also partially suspended its participation. In reaction, the government adopted measures to expand the membership of the commission. The Alliance considered this insufficient, but did appreciate it. Other steps taken during the year aimed at restoring confidence and reducing the political divide included the FPI's authorisation to organise political meetings for the first time since the post-electoral crisis of 2011, the release of around 300 people detained in relation to the crisis and promises not to take legal proceedings against people returning from exile. Also in the political arena, President Alassane Ouattara reconfirmed that he would run in the election in 2015. Meanwhile, **there were internal divisions in the opposition FPI regarding the election of the party's leadership after former President Laurent Gbagbo announced that he would run for the position. This pitted him against Pascal Affi N'Guessan, who was seeking re-election. Gbagbo's candidacy was finally struck down by a court** following complaints by Affi N'Guessan. In his reports on Côte d'Ivoire throughout the year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised the moves towards reconciliation, normalisation and economic recovery in the country, though he also pointed out many challenges ahead (legal framework for elections and reforms on nationality and land issues, among others).

The security situation remained largely stable, yet structurally fragile. **The predominance of stability, including in the western part of the country, favoured the continuation of the return of the displaced population and led the UN Security Council to approve cutting back the UNOCI military contingent**. Reports of violent incidents linked to the security forces, former combatants and dozos (traditional hunters) decreased, according to the UN at the end of the year. **Still, there were some incidents during the year. Among the most serious incidents was an attack in mid-May by around 40 armed men in the town of Fetai, near the border with Liberia, that killed 13 people**, including three soldiers, and displaced around 2,500 people. Other incidents near the Liberian border included an attack in late April in which homes were burned and establishments were looted, displacing another 2,000 people. According to the report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire in April, mercenaries and militiamen remained active in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and around 43,000 former combatants were still armed in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, complaints of abuse by soldiers, dozos and former combatants included cases of extrajudicial execution, arbitrary detention, extortion and delinquency. During the year there were also new reports of sexual violence, including 180 verified cases of rape between May and December. These included 32 gang rapes in a context of impunity for the perpetrators. Finally, the mandate of the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation was renewed.

Guinea	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, trade 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.

The situation between the government and the opposition remained tense, though less so than in 2013, which was marked by continuing opposition protests that claimed around 30 lives and injured more than 250 people. The impact of the Ebola virus was added to this. The discord in 2014 led the opposition to threaten to stage new protests. At different times of the year, the opposition led by the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) expressed its concern about the government's plans to postpone the local elections in 2015. According to the opposition, the issue of local elections had been covered by the political agreements of July 2013, contradicting a presidential spokesman who said that the subject had not been included in the agreements. The government was also accused of breaking the political agreements of 2013. Some opposition groups also warned of the lack of progress in preparations for the presidential election in 2015. Prime Minister Mohamed Saïd Fofana announced his resignation and that of his governing team in mid-January. President Alpha Condé reaffirmed him in office and a new government was formed without opposition figures and including half the members of the previous cabinet.

In July, the government invited the opposition to sit down for talks. The opposition agreed to reopen the political dialogue, but with some conditions. Specifically, it called for different points to be addressed: the election of the person in charge of managing the voting registry; the correction of the irregularities linked to the voting registry; the organisation of local elections; the preparation of the local and presidential election schedule; the improvement of the legal and institutional framework for the elections (electoral legislation, legislation on the national electoral commission, constitutional court, court of auditors, independent national human rights institution, etc.); respect for the principle of neutrality in public service and equal

access to the state media for parties; identification and legal prosecution of the authors of and accomplices to acts of violence during political demonstrations; and compensation for the victims of the recent political demonstrations. The opposition also laid down the condition that the political dialogue must include the same people that signed the July 2013 agreements. In July, the government and the opposition moved towards an agreement after several meetings under the auspices of Minister of Justice Cheick Sacko. However, an alleged verbal agreement failed, with the opposition claiming that the government had omitted some of the deals made when announcing the agreement. Tensions rose when the opposition pushed for the dissolution of the electoral commission (CENI) for selecting a French company to perform work related to the voter registry. The situation worsened in September after the murder of opposition figure Amadou Oury Diallo, which was described as a political assassination by the UFDG. The opposition threatened a new campaign of protests in mid-December if its demands for electoral reform were not addressed. In December, the government made new offers to resume the dialogue and the opposition reissued its conditions for doing so, showing the persistent difficulties of communication and inability of both sides to agree, while indicating uncertainty regarding the course of the elections in 2015.

Guinea-Bissau	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internalised internal
Main parties:	Transitional government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, international drug trafficking networks

Summary:

The history of Guinea-Bissau since it achieved independence from Portugal in 1974 is scattered with violence and coups d'état that have prevented the country from achieving political stability as well as thwarting all attempts to implement democracy. The strong influence of the armed forces on the country's politics and the confrontation between parties that represent different ethnic groups constitute a major hurdle to achieving peace. The breakdown of the stability pact signed in 2007 by the main political parties represented another lost opportunity for ending the spiral of violence that dominates political life. The growing impact of international drug trafficking networks in West Africa further complicates the crisis. The assassination of the president, Joao Bernardo Vieira, in March 2009, marked the start of a fresh period of instability. In April 2012 the Army carried out a new coup after the first round of the legislative elections when the candidate of the PAIGC, the party in power, won and was questioned by the opposition, despite of the backing from international observers. After the coup, a new transition period started.

The situation in the country improved notably with the return of constitutional order by means of the legislative and presidential elections, the re-establishment of relations with international players and the promotion of internal reforms. The elections were held peacefully in April, despite the initial delay (the opposition supported postponing them from March to April) and the internal divisions within the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the former ruling party, whose candidate Carlos Gomes Junior won the first round of the 2012 elections, after which the Army carried out a coup d'état. PAIGC candidate José Mario Vaz won the runoff presidential election in May. After some initial questioning by independent candidate Nuno Nabiam, who some analysts claimed had military support, Nabiam and the Army accepted the results. The PAIGC also won a legislative majority and no party was able to challenge it. The 89.29% turnout was considered an unprecedented threshold and the UN Secretary-General described it as a historic achievement. Internationally, the legislative and presidential elections were considered free, clean and transparent. A new PAIGC-dominated government was formed with the help of the main opposition party, the Party of Social Renewal (PRS), with 19 and 6 cabinet members respectively, together with other members of minority formations. In his inauguration speech, new Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira called for inclusive dialogue and consensus-building on major national issues. The new president also pushed for internal reforms and dismissed the chief of the Armed Forces, General Antonio Indjai, who led the coup and is sought by the United States on charges of complicity in drug trafficking. The president appointed General Biague Nantam to replace him. In October, presidential candidate, Indjai ally and prominent PRS figure Nuno Nabiam retired from public life. In the wake of the election, international stakeholders like the African Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) resumed relations with Guinea-Bissau, which were broken after the military coup in 2012. Moreover, in November the UN Security Council approved a three-month extension of the mandate of the UN office in the country, UNIOGBIS. ECOWAS also attempted to prolong the mandate of the peacekeeping force.

Yet despite the progress made in the transition, the human rights situation continued to be problematic, with new cases of politically motivated violence during the year in a context of extensive impunity. No progress was made in the investigation of serious human rights violations in previous periods. Furthermore, in terms of security the situation largely remained stable. Nevertheless, some incidents were reported, such as the explosion of a land mine in September that killed 19 passengers of a minibus. Ten other people were injured in another mine explosion.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau improved and presidential and legislative elections were held as part of the transition process and the return of constitutional order after the military coup of 2012

Nigeria	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Resources, Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias

Summary:
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.

The situation in Nigeria remained fragile, with many episodes of intercommunal violence and an atmosphere of political antagonism ahead of the presidential election in February 2015. This brought new tension to the serious situation gripping the country due to the armed conflict with the Islamist insurgency Boko Haram (BH).[21] **Violence pitting parts of the semi-nomadic Fula community, which is mainly Muslim and dedicated to pastoralism, against sedentary tribes that are mostly Christian and farm and raise livestock (like parts of the Berom community) claimed hundreds of lives during the year. From July to September alone, over 300 people were killed,** according to accounts maintained by various media outlets and centres of analysis. The incidents included several days of violence that killed at least 100 people in mid-March in different parts of Kaduna State, although some sources cited a death toll of around 200. Nearly 300 people died in acts of intercommunal violence in April in Nasarawa State (central Nigeria), Zamfara State (northwestern Nigeria) and Taraba State (eastern Nigeria), according to the International Crisis Group. In early April, around 30 Fula pastoralists were killed in clashes with the Nigerian Armed Forces in Nasarawa State. Another 120 people died in various acts of intercommunal violence in the area of Sanga, in Kaduna State, in June. Around 50 people died in violence in mid-July in the district of Gidandawa (Zamfara State). Incidents taking place in

---

21. See the summary on Nigeria (Boko Haram) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

a single day in Tudun-Ababu (Nasarawa State) in late August claimed at least 60 lives. Another 60 people died in clashes in the same state in early September. According to Human Rights Watch, over 10,000 people have died since 1992 due to violence between herding and farming tribes. While intercommunal violence is not normally linked to the violence waged by BH, some throughout the year warned of the risks that the armed group could help to increase intercommunal tensions. Some analysts pointed to alleged links between Fula herders and BH, indicating that some Fula pastoralists responsible for attacks in Zamfara State were members of BH. Some media reports stated that pastoralist groups had achieved greater access to sophisticated weaponry. Throughout the year, government sources reported the arrest of alleged BH members posing as herders. Also during the year, the intercommunal violence spread beyond the borders of Nigeria, with around 20 people killed in a clashes in the second quarter between farmers from Cameroon and hundreds of armed men that were allegedly Fula pastoralists that had fled from the Nigerian states of Taraba and Benue.

Meanwhile, the political situation in the country remained tumultuous amidst the grave impact of BH's violence, many problems of governance and corruption and political antagonism ahead of the election. **Prominent members left the ruling party (PDP) during the year, including dozens of state governors and MPs. Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan was confirmed as the PDP's sole candidate for the presidential election**, while the main opposition party, the APC, chose former military leader Muhammadu Buhari to be its candidate. Buhari came to power through a coup d'état in 1983 and ruled the country until 1985, when Ibrahim Bagangida conducted another military coup. The APC's discourse in 2014 focused on the government's inability to tackle insecurity in the country and the violence of BH, as well as its failures in the fight against corruption and impunity.

2.3.2. America

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

Haiti	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, MINUSTAH, former military officers

Summary:
Once the former president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, had left the country in February 2004, thus avoiding armed confron

tation with the rebel group that had taken control of most of the country, the Multinational Interim Force (MIF) and the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) were both deployed to assist the interim government in restoring order and security. A period of greater political, social and economic stability followed the election of a new president, René Préval, in early 2006. However several problems have yet to be addressed: allegations of human rights violations against the MINUSTAH; high crime rates; the control of certain urban areas by armed gangs; difficulties in the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; the demands of former soldiers to reinstate the armed forces; and high levels of corruption, poverty and social exclusion.

The political and social crisis worsened in Haiti in 2014, with continuous demonstrations calling for the resignation of President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, as well as institutional paralysis resulting from the confrontation between executive and legislative powers that culminated in mid-December with the resignation of Lamothe and the entire government. The catalyst of the protests and the institutional impasse was the inability to hold legislative and local elections that have been postponed since 2011 and 2010, respectively, and the risk that the end of the term of the bicameral legislature in January 2015 creates an institutional vacuum and opens the door for Martelly to rule by decree. According to various analysts, this could significantly exacerbate the situation of political tension, social polarisation and lawlessness in Haiti. Faced with such a prospect and the international community's repeated concerns, talks began between the executive and legislative branches of government. Following several months of disagreement, a historic deal facilitated by the Catholic Church was achieved in March 2014 between the government, legislature and main political parties to hold elections and reduce the social and political tension of recent years. The most notable aspects of the agreement included the formation of a much more inclusive government, the creation of a new electoral body to replace the Provisional Electoral Council, the ratification of several amendments to the electoral law and the holding of the elections postponed since 2011 on 26 October.[22] Some points of the agreement were later implemented, such as a major shakeup in the government (the fifth since Martelly took office in May 2011), with the addition of 10 new ministers, some of them close to opposition groups. However, the distance between the parties' stances grew in the second half of 2014, with the opposition accusing the government of mismanagement and corruption and demanding the resignation of the president, while the government accused six opposition senators of blocking the passage of amendments to the electoral law, necessary for holding the elections. The opposition said that even though the amendments were previously approved by the Chamber of Deputies, they were unconstitutional,

---

22. Shortly after the agreement was signed, the government revealed that the local elections would be held on 28 December, while the top electoral authority is supposed to set the date for the second round of the legislative elections.

and that the dialogue between the government and the opposition should not be limited simply to resolving the institutional crisis, but should also address issues like the release of detained opposition figures or the resignation of the president, whom they accused repeatedly of negligence and corruption. In this regard, the opposition said on various occasions that the dialogue initiatives promoted by the government were purely cosmetic and solely aimed at reducing pressure from the international community.

Faced with the rising protests and political tension in the second half of the year, in late September Martelly began two months of consultations with opposition representatives and various sectors of Haitian society. Yet by the end of November, no significant agreement had been reached and not even any common ground had been found, partially due to the opposition's boycott of the consultations. Martelly then appointed an 11-person advisory committee to propose recommendations designed to remedy the situation and resolve the crisis. In early December the committee made its recommendations public, which included the resignation of the prime minister, the chairman of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and the members of the Provisional Electoral Council. A few days later, Martelly accepted the recommendations and Laurent Lamothe immediately tendered his resignation and that of his bloc government. The minister of Health at the time, Florence Duperval Guillaume, was appointed interim prime minister and a few days later Martelly proposed the former mayor of Port-au-Prince, Evans Paul, for the office. A veteran politician, Paul is on the opposition but close to Martelly. Following these events, **in the closing days of the year Martelly reached a political agreement with the leaders of both houses of the legislature and with the chief justice of the Supreme Court to extend both their terms (the Chamber of Deputies until 24 April and the Senate until 9 September) in exchange for approving the amendments to the electoral law necessary for holding the elections in 2015**. However, by early January 2015, Parliament had not ratified Evans Paul in office and much of the opposition had criticised the aforementioned agreement, asserting that it could exacerbate the political and social crisis in the country. Some even called to resume the protests.

In this regard, the current crisis over the institutional vacuum that could occur starting in mid-January is just one (but hardly the only) visible line of tension in the country, and in fact some analysts believe it may have become a catalyst for significant parts of Haitian society to express a deeper malaise. Many related protests were held in 2014 against issues such as poor service delivery, the precarious economic situation and the continuous vulnerability of tens of thousands of victims of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010,

Demonstrations demanding the resignation of the president and prime minister increased in Haiti alongside the worsening political crisis and institutional paralysis resulting from the confrontation between executive and legislative powers

claiming the lives of over 300,000 people and leaving more than 1.5 million homeless. At the beginning of the year, for example, there were protests to demand better socio-sanitary conditions or to relocate the population of some of the 271 camps where OCHA claims that over 146,000 people are still living. Another source of recent tension was the demonstrations staged by supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in early 2014 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his departure from the country, which he and his sympathisers consider forced, and to protest an arrest warrant dictated by a judge in mid-August after Aristide failed to appear to testify as part of an investigation into a case of corruption and money laundering that took place during his presidency. Although the arrest warrant had still not been executed by late September, the judge did order the surveillance of Aristide's home to make sure he could not leave, putting the former leader under de facto house arrest. This situation prompted many demonstrations by Aristide's supporters and incidents and clashes between protestors and police on various occasions during the year.

South America

Bolivia	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Self-government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition (political parties, authorities and civil society organisations from the eastern regions, indigenous groups)

Summary:
At the end of 2003, the then president, Gonzalo Sánchez Lozada, went into exile in the USA after more than 100 lives were claimed in February and October when a series of anti-government protests were violently put down. Following a period of uncertainty during which two presidents took office on an interim basis, Evo Morales won the 2005 elections, becoming the country's first indigenous leader. However, his presidency, in particular the agrarian reform or the nationalisation of hydrocarbon resources and the approval of a new constitution, was hindered by fierce opposition to his political project by several political parties and by the eastern regions of the country, which, led by the department of Santa Cruz, demand greater autonomy. In parallel to the political struggle between the government and the opposition, in recent years Bolivia has faced one of the highest rates of social conflict in the entire continent, with protests of different kinds related to the labour demands of various sectors, the activity of mining companies or the rights of indigenous peoples.

Though without the mass demonstrations, episodes of polarisation or even violence of previous years, three distinct lines of tension were identified in 2014. First, in late March there were major clashes between the police and groups of miners opposed to implementation of a new law they consider detrimental to mining cooperatives. Three people were killed and more than 130 were wounded during the protests, which also included the blocking of several roads in the eastern part of the country. In light of these events, the government decided to suspend enactment of the new mining law, which prohibits mining cooperatives from signing direct contracts with private companies in case it leads to the expropriation of certain natural resources (something forbidden by the Constitution) and because some private companies or foreign investors could directly benefit from the preferential treatment given to mining cooperatives. In addition to suspending the draft law, La Paz forced the resignation of the minister responsible for it and called the National Federation of Mining Cooperatives of Bolivia to begin talks to include their demands in new legislation. As a result, the clashes and blocking of roads virtually ended. Second, tension rose between Bolivia and Chile regarding their dispute stretching back decades by which Bolivia claims sovereign access to the sea. In late March, the Bolivian government announced its intention to submit a report with historical and legal arguments to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in support of the request submitted in April 2013 to obtain a ruling from the ICJ that would force Chile to negotiate the issue in good faith. La Paz stated that its request has the technical support of international experts and a large part of the Bolivian population. It also expressed its willingness to resume bilateral talks with Chile and to resume the 13-point agenda agreed during the first term of current Chilean President Michel Bachelet, from 2006 to 2010. In turn, the Chilean government stated its intention to question and challenge the jurisdiction of the ICJ to resolve the dispute, a position backed by every president of the country since the restoration of democracy. After the War of the Pacific of 1879, Bolivia lost 400 km of coastline and 120,000 km^2 of territory.

The third source of tension was **the confrontation between the Bolivian government and the Armed Forces after more than 700 soldiers were discharged**. In April, different members of the military began to complain about situations of discrimination and intimidation mainly affecting indigenous people and to demand the "decolonisation" of the Armed Forces and equal treatment in the military. The soldiers' demands included greater opportunities to study and attain higher-ranking posts, as well as an end to discrimination regarding salaries, housing and access to healthcare. Mainly featuring non-commissioned officers of the Bolivian Armed Forces, the protests went on throughout the month of April and included marches through La Paz, the withdrawal of their respective units and hunger strikes performed by many soldiers' wives. President Evo Morales, of Aymara origin, called for discipline within the military while the chief of the Armed Forces denied

the allegations of discrimination and said that they were an excuse for acts of sedition and to orchestrate a coup d'état. In late April, 715 soldiers were discharged after being accused of mutiny, contempt and sedition, among other charges. Following protests set off by this decision, in May 660 of the more than 700 people affected were readmitted to the military and talks began to reform the Organic Law of the Armed Forces.

In addition to these protests, various groups with different sector-related demands also staged demonstrations during the year. In early June, for example, incidents and roadblocks were reported in five different departments (La Paz, Beni, Oruro, Potosí and Chuquisaca). There were also demonstrations by peasants in La Paz against the new electoral map drawn by the Supreme Court, by haulers in Potosí to demand better roads, by miners in Potosí and Oruro and by freight workers in Chuquisaca.

Peru	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed opposition (remnants of Shining Path), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations)

Summary:

In 1980, just when democracy had been restored in the country, an armed conflict began between the government and the Maoist armed group Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso in Spanish) that lasted for two decades and claimed 60,000 lives. The counter-insurgency policy implemented in the 1990s pushed the state towards authoritarianism under Alberto Fujimori, who in 2000 went into exile in Japan having been deposed by congress and accused of numerous cases of corruption and human rights violations. Since 2008, the remaining Shining Path factions have stepped up their operations significantly in the Alto Huallaga region and especially in the VRAE region (Valley between the Apurímac and Ene Rivers). The government, which claims that the Shining Path organisation is involved in drug trafficking, has intensified its military operations in both regions notably and has refused to enter into talks of any sort. It has also intensified the political and legal struggle against its political arm, Movadef. Meanwhile, several collectives, especially indigenous groups, have organised periodical mobilisations to protest against the economic policy of successive governments and against the activity of mining companies.

There were no significant clashes between the Armed Forces and Shining Path, but the state maintained military, political and legal pressure on the group and on organisations that it considered to have ties to it. In military developments, around 10 people were killed and many more were wounded in clashes between Shining Path and state security forces, especially as part of

the counterinsurgency Operation Cunshireni, launched in mid-June in the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro River Valley (VRAEM) region. In the period before and after the elections on 5 October, Shining Path stepped up its attacks and around 95 episodes of violence were reported. As a result of the military pressure, several Shining Path arsenals were discovered throughout the year and many of its leaders were arrested, like "Comrade Rodrigo" and "Comrade Percy", who according to the government were trying to recompose the group in the Huallaga Valley. **After declaring the faction of the group that operated in the Alto Huallaga neutralised, the government focused its counter-insurgency activities on the VRAEM region.** After arresting some of the main political and military leaders of the group in the region in 2013, the government stepped up its military efforts to defeat Shining Path for good. Moreover, since the government links Shining Path's presence in the region to the existence of coca crops and drug trafficking routes, Lima announced its intention to eradicate 75% of the illicit crops and to destroy illegal landing strips. Whereas 22,000 hectares of coca leaf plantations were destroyed in 2013, the goal declared for 2014 was 30,000 hectares. Some analysts estimate that at least 10,000 farmers cultivate coca leaf in the VRAEM, a region that according to these same sources produces at least half the 300 tonnes that the United Nations calculates are produced each year in Peru (and a figure that could be much higher according to intelligence reports). In early March, the minister of defence declared that he had already started to notice a certain decrease in the number of armed combatants in the regions where the forced eradication of illicit cops was well under way. In December, the government announced the destruction of several landing strips used by drug traffickers in the region.

In the political and judicial sphere, an operation was set in motion in early April in which 28 people were detained and arrest warrants were issued for six people residing abroad due to their alleged links to the group, and in January a trial began against 12 senior members of Shining Path for their alleged participation in an attack in Miraflores in 1992 that killed 25 people and injured 150. In December, the founder and leader of the group, Abimael Guzmán, said that Movadef is a political group independent of Shining Path and that attempts to link both organisations betray political intentionality. He also said that Shining Path signed a peace agreement with the government in 1992 and that the group has not undertaken a single armed action since. At different times of the year, the government declared that Movadef clearly depends on Shining Path and warned that the group had infiltrated the educational system and universities, as occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when it first emerged. Eleuterio Flores, alias "Artemio", who like Guzmán is also serving a life sentence, denied charges of drug trafficking and money laundering against him (in addition to terrorism) and declared that he had not funded Movadef with money obtained from drug trafficking. In the same vein, charges of terrorism,

drug trafficking and arms trafficking were filed against the three most prominent leaders of the remaining factions of Shining Path, Eleuterio Flores and brothers Jorge and Víctor Quispe Palomino, by a court in the USA, a country that considers Shining Path to be a terrorist organisation. Finally, in mid-June a mass grave was found in Satipo province with the remains of around 800 suspected victims of Shining Path between 1984 and 1990, most of them indigenous Ashaninkas and Machiguengas.

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

Summary:
After Hugo Chávez came to power in 1998 there were many mobilizations and clashed between Government supporters and opponents, and the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, especially during election periods and the attempted coup in 2002. However, the political and social crisis ravaging the country today deepened during the political transition after Chavez's death in March 2013 due to a cancer. After his disease was made public in 2011 Chávez was forced to step down from his political activity on several occasions to receive medical treatment and, according to some analysts, this weakened the Government. However, Chávez won the 2012 presidential elections. After his death, the opposition called a fraud the rise to power of whom, until then, had been the country's Vice-President, Nicolás Maduro, since they believed the post should have been occupied by the president of the Parliament. Tensions rose significantly after the presidential elections in April 2013, where Maduro won by a tight margin of votes (50.6%) and where the opposition denounced many irregularities and, together with several Governments and the OAS, called for a recount of votes and verification of the ballots. After the Supreme Court of Justice validated the results, the opposition challenged the elections at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. During the second half of 2013, new mobilizations broke out among those supporting the Government and those against it, and there were several episodes of violence. The dynamics of social polarisation continues at the start of 2014 and violence increased after the student protests that started in the month of February.

Venezuela witnessed **the largest protests in recent years, in which 40 people died, around 850 were injured and over 3,000 arrested**. Most of the demonstrations and acts of violence occurred in the first quarter, though protests, complaints about human rights violations, high levels of political and social polarisation and growing fragmentation within the ruling party were reported throughout the year. Staged largely by students, the protests began in Caracas in mid-February and gradually extended to various cities across the country. On 12

February, hundreds of people demonstrated before the main office of the attorney general to protest the precarious economic situation (hyperinflation, shortage of basic goods, etc.) and high rates of crime, as well as to accompany a group of students that wanted to deliver a letter calling for the release of 14 people arrested during the protests that took place in early February in the states of Táchira and Mérida. This protest, which sparked the first episodes of violence, was convened and led by a group of opposition MPs that had announced a series of peaceful demonstrations in the days prior (which they called the "Way Out") to force a change of government. In mid-February, one of the top leaders of this movement, Leopoldo López, founder of the political organisation Voluntad Popular, was arrested and transferred to a military prison. He is charged with inciting violence and with encouraging the first fatalities of the protests. Faced with continuing protests throughout the month of February, the government sent the Venezuelan Army to Táchira, threatened to impose a state of emergency and deployed state security forces accompanied by groups of armed civilians. Despite statements made by Maduro and other members of the government about having defeated or weakened the opposition, there were still protests, episodes of violence and significant arrests in March, including of the mayors of San Cristóbal and Valencia and of three Air Force generals accused of conspiring to topple the government. On various occasions, Maduro and prominent members of government declared that the protests were a coup to overthrow a democratically elected government and were following a modus operandi very similar to the failed coup d'état attempt in 2002. Maduro also said that many people had been involved in the 2002 coup and accused the USA of being behind the protests to destabilise the country. In mid-February, the government gave three US diplomats 48 hours to leave the country after accusing them of conspiracy. The US government denied any involvement in the crisis, urged Caracas to guarantee stability in the country and human rights for the population, expressed concern about the detention of López and other political leaders and exhorted Maduro to address the opposition's demands.

Many political opposition groups and national and international human rights organisations reported torture, abuse, arbitrary arrest and other infringements upon human rights. In September, for example, human rights organisations reported that in 2014, Venezuela saw the largest protests and levels of repression in the last 15 years and published a report indicating that during the year there were around 6,000 protests, more than 200 attacks in residential areas and over 50 attacks on universities. At mid-year, the National Union of Press Workers reported that since the start of 2014 there were 231 assaults on journalists (65% committed by government officials, 21% by demonstrators and 13% by armed civilians). United Nations High Commissioner

Venezuela witnessed the largest protests in recent years, in which 40 people died, around 850 were injured and over 3,000 arrested

for Human Rights Navi Pillay denounced violations of human rights, including the detention (and lack of due process) of many people and attacks on universities by security forces and groups of armed civilians. Likewise, the human rights organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that the Bolivarian National Guard, the Bolivarian National Police and police corps from different states had routinely been using illegal force against demonstrators in recent months and questioned the credibility of the investigations conducted by the government and the attorney general. The Venezuelan government denied many of these allegations, said that its response to the protests had been in compliance with the law, declared that it had collaborated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, accused the United Nations and various governments of echoing information and figures from organisations of dubious credibility and blamed the opposition for many episodes of violence and for causing most of the deaths reported during the quarter, as medical treatment could not be provided due to the barricades erected by the opposition to block off several cities. However, Caracas also acknowledged that 21 police officers had been arrested and prosecuted, while the commandant of the National Guard, one of the most criticised corps, recognised excesses committed by some of its members and promised to investigate aggression against more than 50 journalists. Furthermore, early in the year the attorney general's office said that it was investigating 60 cases of alleged abuse, adding that they were not part of a policy or strategy of state repression. In December, the US government approved sanctions against certain government officials for human rights violations, while the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning political persecution in Venezuela and calling for the release of political prisoners.

As the spiral of violence escalated, various initiatives to try to contain and resolve the crisis were brewing. In late February, the government set up a National Peace Conference and in mid-March Parliament created a Truth Commission for the acts of violence that had occurred thus far, although the opposition declined to participate in either initiative on the grounds that they did not include key opposition groups and were simply tools used by the government to buy time, relieve pressure from the international community and quell the popular demonstrations without making any concessions or enacting any reforms. Whereas the Venezuelan government rejected any type of international facilitation or mediation in the crisis at first (notably the rejected offers of Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and Uruguayan President José Mujica), in late March a UNASUR delegation of foreign ministers visited the country, met with representatives of both the government and the opposition and made a series of recommendations. Given the opposition's scepticism about UNASUR facilitating the talks (especially

considering that the economic and political relations between the countries that compose it compromise their neutrality and that political institutions are not suitable for addressing human rights issues), both parties finally decided that the Vatican (through the current secretary of state and former papal nuncio in Venezuela, Cardinal Pietro Parolin) would also conduct facilitation tasks along with the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador. Thus, on 10 April, shortly after the UNASUR delegation of foreign ministers made its second visit to the country, the dialogue process began with no previous agenda or conditions, open and rebroadcast to the public. After the first two sessions of the talks, certain agreements were reached such as the expansion of the Truth Commission approved by Parliament in March, the selection of posts on the National Electoral Council and the Supreme Court of Justice, review of the situation of political prisoners and inclusion of opposition-governed areas in the government's plan to fight crime. However, in mid-May the negotiations came to an end after the opposition left, claiming deadlock and a lack of results. After this collapse, which could not be remedied by the diplomatic efforts of the UNASUR delegation, division and fragmentation spread within the opposition and ruling party alike.

2.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

Central Asia

Kyrgyzstan	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Summary:
Since its emergence as an independent state in August 1991, the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan has experienced several periods of instability and socio-political conflict. The presidency of Askar Akayev (1991-2005) began with reformist momentum but gradually drifted towards authoritarianism and corruption. In March 2005 a series of demonstrations denouncing fraud in that year's elections led to a social uprising that forced the collapse of the regime. The promises of change made by the new president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, soon came to nothing, giving way to a regime of authoritarian presidentialism in which corruption and nepotism were rife, especially from the end of 2007. All of this took place in a scenario involving economic difficulties for the population, latent tension between the north and south of the country, and the exclusion of ethnic minorities from political decision-making processes. Five years later, in April 2010, a new popular uprising led to the overthrow of the regime, with clashes that claimed 85 lives and left hundreds injured. This was followed in June by a wave of violence with an inter-ethnic

dimension, claiming more than 400 lives. Other sources of tension in Kyrgyzstan are related to the presence of regional armed groups with Islamist tendencies in the Fergana Valley (an area between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and border disputes with the neighbouring countries.

Different sources of tension remained active in Kyrgyzstan, including internal political and social issues, border tensions over resources, territorial boundaries and regional insurgencies. In March, the central government collapsed due to internal criticism of Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiev, who ended up leaving office. A new coalition government was created to replace the previous one, composed of Ata-Meken, the Social Democratic Party and Ar-Namys. The conflicts between the government and rival sources of power remained active. The former mayor of the southern city of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov (a power figure opposing the government and a former ally of the president ousted in 2010, Kurmanbek Bakiev) was not re-elected mayor in elections held in mid-January by municipal plenary with a secret ballot and disqualified the process. Thousands of Myrzakmatov's supporters demonstrated and tried to storm the seat of the regional government. Myrzakmatov, the party Ata-Jurt and other groups formed a new opposition coalition aimed at unseating President Almazbek Atambayev. Various types of popular demonstrations made different demands throughout the year, including environmentalist ones like protests against a Kazakh company's prospecting for gold deposits that led to clashes that wounded around 30 people, demonstrations against the mining activities of the company RedMet in the northern region of Chui, which blocked roads in Bishkek and protests in August and September in the northern city of Tokmok against the construction of an oil refinery. There were also protests in Osh against rising energy prices. In March, the government announced the creation of local militias as a new force to cope with situations of public disorder. The internal situation continued to be influenced by tense relations between the state and the Uzbek minority (14% of the population, living mostly in the south of the country, the scene of the violence of 2010, of which most victims were Uzbeks), as well as discrimination against them. In this context, the government eliminated the right to conduct secondary school graduation examinations in the Uzbek language, alleging that the option was rarely taken.

Cross-border tensions were frequent and high during the year, with various people killed and wounded in incidents between interstate border forces, between ethnic communities and allegedly linked to regional insurgencies. Thus, there were **clashes along stretches of the disputed border with Tajikistan, especially around the enclave of Vorukh** (Tajikistani territory inside Kyrgyzstan) in the Ferghana Valley, an area of disputed borders, with great demographic pressure and competition for the little fertile land available. Episodes in January between border guards from both countries

wounded around a dozen people. The fighting erupted over work on a road in Kyrgyzstan that would create a detour around the enclave of Vorukh. According to the Tajik population, the work encroached on land belonging to the Tajik enclave. Both countries blamed each other for the violence. Additional troops were sent to the area, the border was closed and Kyrgyzstan recalled its ambassador. Negotiations were begun to resolve the crisis, which reduced tension somewhat as the troops withdrew and the border was reopened two months later. However, Vorukh was the scene of new tensions and incidents throughout the year. For instance, roads were blocked and scores of people (between 25 and 60, according to sources) were wounded in clashes between Kyrgyz and Tajik populations near the enclave in May. Fire was exchanged between border guards in July, killing one and wounding several others. In response, Kyrgyzstan called its reservists for training. Finally, after further negotiations Kyrgyzstan announced that it had reached an agreement on using the road through the enclave, although both parties described the talks as bumpy. There were other incidents involving casualties in other parts of the border between both countries. Their respective presidents met in September to ease tensions, although no agreements were made on demarcating the border around the disputed areas. There was also tension with Uzbekistan regarding gas and water.

Meanwhile, **the border with China was also a place of tension. In late January, clashes between Kyrgyz border guards and armed men that had crossed the border from the region of Xinjiang** (an area of China where the armed Uyghur insurgency battles with state forces) killed over 10 people, most of them Uyghurs. Kyrgyzstan announced an investigation into death threats allegedly issued against Kyrgyz border guards by the armed Uyghur group ETIM in retaliation for the deaths of 11 Uyghurs.[23] The government stated that crimes linked to religious extremism had increased. More people were arrested during the year on charges of belonging to banned organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Border tensions rose between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with clashes around territorial enclaves and disputed border areas that wounded scores of people

Tajikistan	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, System, Resources, Territory Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition (Islamic Renaissance Party), social opposition (regional groups Gharmis and Pamiris), former warlords, Islamist groups (Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU]), Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan

Summary:

The tension in Tajikistan is largely related to the armed conflict that took place from 1992 to 1997 between two main groups marked by strong regional divisions: on the one side, the opposition alliance of Islamist forces and anti-communist liberal sectors (centre and east of the country) and, on the other side, the government forces, which were the heirs of the Soviet regime (north and south). The 1997 peace agreement involved a power-sharing deal, which incorporated the opposition to the government. In its post-war rehabilitation phase, the problems facing the country include regional tensions (including the growing hostility of the Leninabadi population in the north of the country towards its former allies in the south, the Kulyabi, the dominant population group in power since war ended), the presence of some non-demobilised warlords and former opposition combatants in parts of the country, the increasing authoritarianism of the regime, corruption, high levels of poverty and unemployment, tensions with neighbouring Uzbekistan, instability related to the border shared with Afghanistan and the potential threat of armed Islamist groups.

The situation remained characterised by low-grade tension coming from various sources, such as the internal repression of opposition groups and activists, strain between the government and the main opposition party, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), the allegedly greater threat posed by extremist groups and border tensions. Local and international human rights organisations denounced the situation of vulnerability facing anti-torture coalitions and other human rights groups in Tajikistan, who lack sufficient legal guarantees to exercise their freedom of expression. Likewise, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Méndez urged the Tajik authorities to fully implement policies to eradicate and prevent torture and mistreatment, but welcomed the national action plan adopted. In September, the highest Muslim authority in the country, the mufti Saidmukarram Abdulkodirzoda, issued a fatwa prohibiting the Muslim population from criticising the government or cooperating with news media, political groups or local or international organisations that aim to destabilise the country. The opposition Islamic Renaissance Party criticised the fatwa, claiming that it had been dictated by the authorities. In turn, the government put up strong deterrents against the call for opposition protests made in October by Group 24, led by Umarali Quvvatov, in exile since 2012. Thus, access was blocked to opposition websites, media and social networks days before (and the entire Internet was shut down in the north of the country, according to local media). The Supreme Court declared Group 24 an extremist organisation and banned its activities and the government deployed armoured vehicles and police in the capital, Dushanbe. Political opposition groups like the IRP and social opposition groups urged

23. See the summary on China (East Turkestan) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

their bases not to participate, given the longstanding effects of the civil wars in the 1990s and the lack of clarity regarding Group 24's platform. In the end, the planned demonstrations did not take place. Moreover, the leader of the local IRP branch in the region of Gorno-Badakhshan, Saodatsho Adolatov, was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of inciting ethic and religious hatred. The party claimed that the sentence was politically motivated.

In September, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon said that the country faced a growing threat from religious extremist groups, identifying the struggle against extremism as one of the authorities' priorities. In a context of restricted freedom of expression and infringement of human rights, the focus against what is called religious extremism could serve as cover for abuses committed by the authorities. The authorities actively pursued groups considered a threat to security and stability. Between January and August, 88 people were arrested on charges of terrorism, according to the International Crisis Group. Pressure mounted on circles allegedly linked to or supportive of the Islamist group ISIS, with arrests of suspected militants returned to Syria to carry out attacks in Tajikistan, according to the government, and of people allegedly responsible for recruiting fighters for ISIS. Dozens of suspected new Tajik recruits were also arrested. The authorities estimate that around 300 Tajik citizens are fighting with ISIS in Syria. Some security incidents also occurred near the border with Afghanistan. Tensions remained high between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan throughout the year due to incidents in disputed border areas in the Ferghana Valley, a densely populated area with disputes over scarce resources and fertile land. Therefore, several people were killed and dozens were injured in various episodes throughout the year.[24]

East Asia

China (Tibet)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, System, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile, political and social opposition in Tibet and in neighbouring provinces and countries

Summary:
In 1950, one year after emerging victorious in the Chinese civil war, the communist government of Mao Tse-tung invaded Tibet and over the course of the following decade increased its military, cultural and demographic pressure on the region, putting down several attempted rebellions, in which thousands of people were killed. Faced with the brutality of the occupation, in 1959 the Dalai Lama and tens of thousands of people fled from Tibet and went into exile in several countries, especially in Nepal or the north of India, where the government in exile is based. In the last few decades, both the Dalai Lama and numerous human rights organisations have denounced the repression, demographic colonisation and attempted acculturation of the Tibetan population, part of whose territory enjoys autonomous region status. Dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Beijing has been derailed on several occasions by the Chinese government's accusations concerning the alleged secessionist objectives of the Dalai Lama. The outbreak of violence that occurred in 2008, the most virulent in recent decades, interrupted dialogue once again and eroded trust between the parties significantly. The wave of self-immolations that began in 2009 in several Chinese provinces with Tibetan areas provoked a harsh response from Beijing, along with a distancing between the Chinese government and the Tibetan authorities in exile, which are accused by the former of inciting the protests.

There were no significant episodes of violence during the year, but international organisations continued to protest against the human rights situation while anti-government demonstrations and self-immolations calling for the Dalai Lama's return continued in Tibet. Including the cases reported in 2014, since 2009 there have been 134 self-immolations, 128 of them in China (primarily in the provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu, with nearly none in the Tibet Autonomous Region) and six in India and Nepal. The vast majority of the self-immolations were fatal. With regard to the human rights situation, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, based in Dharamsala (the city where the Tibetan government-in-exile is located), reported an increase in arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, torture and even shooting by the Chinese authorities at unarmed populations. Other human rights organisations made similar charges at various times of the year. Radio Free Asia reported the death of a monk in the Chamdo prefecture (Tibet Autonomous Region) allegedly due to beatings sustained while in police custody and on the prison sentences of between 10 and 18 years for three people accused of participating in various protests in Driru county, also in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Human Rights Watch published a report warning of a sharp increase in restrictions and harassment against the Tibetan population residing in Nepal due to pressure from Chinese authorities. At mid-year, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, Human Rights Watch and other human rights organisations asked the Chinese government to stop harassing and repressing activists for different causes and to release some of them

Regarding the protests, **one of the most interesting developments of the year was the rise in demonstrations linked to environmental causes and mining company activities in Tibet**. In May, a young Tibetan stabbed

---

himself and jumped off a roof to draw attention to this issue, while in June around 60 people were detained in the village of Gewar (Chamdo county) when they protested against mining activity and the death of one person during demonstrations staged weeks before in the city of Tongbar. In early August, 13 people were injured in Shigatse prefecture (Rizake in Chinese), in the Tibet Autonomous Region after, according to some sources, the police fired on a crowd of people that had surrounded some government buildings to protest the environmental effects of mining activities in the region. In late September, more than 1,000 people staged a demonstration in the county of Maldro Gongkar to protest the environmental effects of mining activities. In November, the organisation Free Tibet denounced that the Chinese government was forcing nomads to abandon their land in order to facilitate the installation of large infrastructure (like dams) and the activity of mining companies. According to the organisation, most nomads forced to move towards urban areas suffer from high unemployment and socio-economic exclusion. Free Tibet also mentioned that in 2012 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food had urged Beijing to end its programmes to forcibly resettle and relocate the nomads, which normally perform agricultural activities.

Three issues stood out at the political level. First was the campaign launched by the Tibetan government-in-exile in June to publicise its policy, called the "Middle Way" approach, and to counter information spread from Beijing about the alleged differences in approach between the Dalai Lama and current Tibetan Prime Minister Lobsang Sangay or about the supposed separatist aspirations of the Tibetan government-in-exile. In December, Sangay said that governments are increasingly considering this strategy as suitable for resolving the historical conflict in Tibet, which consists of renouncing the independence of Tibet but demanding the concession of real autonomy on issues that are vital for the survival of Tibetan identity. Notable in this respect was the private meeting held at the White House in late February between the Dalai Lama and US President Barack Obama, the third of its kind since Obama took office in 2009. The Chinese government voiced its discomfort with the meeting and even formally requested that it be cancelled. According to a statement issued by the White House after the meeting, Obama expressed his opposition to the independence of Tibet and said he supported the "Middle Way" strategy led by the Dalai Lama for many years. Furthermore, in September the Dalai Lama acknowledged that he had participated in informal and unofficial talks with Chinese government representatives (formal talks have been suspended since 2010) to discuss his pilgrimage to the holy site of Wuntai Shan, in the Tibet Autonomous Region. He also said that current Chinese President Xi Jinping had a much more open mind and a much more realistic approach to resolving the problems than his predecessors and welcomed Xi Jinping's statements stressing the importance of Buddhism in Chinese society.

China – Japan	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Territory, Resources International
Main parties:	China, Japan

Summary:
The dispute between China and Japan (and to a lesser extent, Taiwan) over the sovereignty and administration of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (as they are known in Japanese and Chinese, respectively) in the East China Sea dates back to the early 1970s, when the USA, which had administered the islands since 1945, ceded control of them to Japan. The dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which have high geostrategic value and are estimated to possibly hold huge hydrocarbon reserves, is part of the troubled historical relationship between China and Japan since the early 20th century due to the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and the Second World War. In 2013, China's unilateral declaration of a new Air Defence Identification Zone that included the disputed islands, as well as both sides' unilateral actions before and afterwards, significantly raised bilateral and regional tension around a historical dispute that had been managed relatively peacefully since the early 1970s but which, according to some analysts, could potentially provoke a military incident between the two countries and destabilise the region.

Military and diplomatic relations remained tense between China and Japan due to their territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (in Japanese and Chinese, respectively), although less so than in 2013 and at the end of the year both countries signed an important agreement and a meeting was held between the Chinese president and the Japanese prime minister. **Although there were no direct confrontations or deliberate or incidental acts of aggression in the immediate surroundings of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the Japanese government declared that Chinese ships and planes frequently enter their territorial waters and airspace, accused China of conducting dangerous military manoeuvres in the area** and publicly denounced that Chinese fighters had come too close to Japanese aircraft conducting control and monitoring tasks near the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. According to information made public by Japan in late September, the number of incursions made by Chinese patrols around the islands has dropped in recent years (216 in 2012, 101 in 2013 and 23 by the end of September 2014), but the number of reports of Chinese fishing vessels in the same area rose over the same period (39 in 2012, 88 in 2013 and 207 counted in the first nine months of 2014). Some sources think that the decrease is mainly due to the fact that the Chinese government has focused its effort and attention on the South China Sea, while others believe that it reflects better diplomatic relations between both countries. In late June, five fishermen vanished after a Chinese boat sank near the disputed islands. Moreover, in April Beijing criticised the Japanese government's

decision to start building a military base on Yonaguni Island in April (Okinawa prefecture), the westernmost in Japan, which lies around 150 kilometres southwest of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Tokyo intends to post a permanent maritime surveillance unit there composed of 150 members of its Self-Defence Forces. Beijing also criticised Japan's decision to name 150 of the islands, including five islets. At the start of the year, China blasted Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's comparison of the Russian annexation of Crime to China's policy towards the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

In addition to the political and diplomatic crisis caused by their disagreement about the sovereignty of the islands and the military tension generated by the presence of both countries' ships and planes in the disputed region, China and Japan's bilateral relations were affected by other factors as well. The first was the **Japanese government's decision that it would reinterpret (and not reform, as that would require a qualified majority in Parliament) Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (adopted after the Second World War), which restricted the activity of the Japanese Armed Forces to self-defence and prevented Tokyo from deploying them outside national territory.** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared that his government had no intention to participate in military alliances, stably deploy troops abroad or assist in the defence of third countries, and that the aforementioned reinterpretation is intended to protect Japanese citizens in non-secure situations. However, a senior government official later said that among other things, the reinterpretation would allow Japan to come to the United States' aid in case of attack or threat, whereas the military alliance between the countries did not. Both the Chinese government and various analysts viewed this reinterpretation of Article 9, as well as other changes to Japan's national security strategy, in connection with the territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Beijing said that the new Japanese security strategy undermines peace and stability in the region. This position was supported by a report released in July by a leading Chinese think tank that warned of a notable rise in Japanese military exercises in 2013 (alone or in conjunction with third countries such as the United States) and stated that Japan's military capabilities were primarily directed against China's interests and were moving towards preparations for war.

Tension also rose between China and the governments of the Philippines and the USA related to these countries' political and military alliances with Japan and to their tacit support for its territorial claims. In this sense, US President **Barack Obama declared in late April that the US security alliance with Japan commits it to defending all Japanese territory, including the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands**. As a result of these statements, during the visit to China by the US secretary of defence, the Chinese government exhorted Washington not to meddle in its territorial disputes. In late September, the US undersecretary of defence said that under the bilateral

defence treaty it has with Japan, the USA will defend Japan against any possible attack on its territorial integrity in the East China Sea as long as these islands remain part of Japan. At the same time, however, he made it clear that his government has no definite position on the dispute between China and Japan over sovereignty of the islands. Beijing also criticised the support that the Philippines, another country with which it maintains territorial disputes, had given to the reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. The third factor that worsened the bilateral relations between China and Japan consisted of some statements and symbolic gestures. In August, for example, several members of the Japanese government visited the Yasukuni shrine, the resting place of some of the main leaders responsible for war crimes committed by Japan during the Second World War, who a senior official in the Japanese government described as martyrs. In October, Abe sent offerings to the shrine and 110 MPs prayed in it. Moreover, in early July the Chinese president was the first to participate in commemorating the incident that set off the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System International
Main parties:	Korea DPR, Rep. of 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). Although in 2000 the leaders of the two countries held a historic meeting in which they agreed to establish trust-building measures, once Lee Myung-bak took office in 2007 the tension escalated significantly again and some military skirmishes occurred along the border. Subsequently, the death of Kim Jong-il at the end of 2011 (succeeded as supreme leader by his son Kim Jong-un) and the election of Park Geun-hye as the new South Korean president at the end of 2012 marked the start of a new phase in bilateral relations.

Even though the first high-level talks were held in the last seven years and some families divided by the Korean War (1950-53) were reunited in February, relations between both countries were governed by high levels of military confrontation and constant exchanges of fire,

as well as accusations of massive human rights abuses committed by North Korea. In the military arena, some analysts indicated that while North Korea routinely fires shells and launches missiles of various ranges, in 2014 it did so much more frequently than in previous years. South Korea conducted military exercises throughout the year (alone or with other countries), sparking vociferous protests and threats from its northern neighbour. Thus, in addition to the annual exercises conducted with the USA between February and April (which both Seoul and Washington consider defensive and routine), it also conducted joint naval exercises with the USA in mid-July and performed others a few days later with the USA and Japan near the island of Jeju-do. Finally, in late August it once again conducted joint military exercises with the USA, in which approximately 50,000 South Korean and 30,000 US troops participated. Regarding the exchanges of fire between both countries, there were clashes, skirmishes and warnings throughout the year, but the moment of maximum confrontation occurred between late March and April, especially near the maritime border in the Yellow Sea, called the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which North Korea does not recognise. The North Korean government fired around 500 artillery rounds, many of which fell south of the NLL, and South Korea shot 300 into the disputed territorial waters. The population of the South Korean islands in the Yellow Sea near the NLL had to be evacuated. Some media sources considered this the most serious exchange of fire since 2010. In the days before the border incident, tension between both countries had already increased significantly when North Korea launched more than 70 missiles into international waters in the Sea of Japan. What North Korea claimed to be defensive military exercises were criticised harshly by its southern neighbour. Furthermore, Pyongyang's launch on 26 March of two medium-range Nodong missiles for the first time since 2009 was unanimously condemned by the international community and raised tension on the Korean Peninsula. The missile launch coincided with the fourth anniversary of the sinking of a South Korean ship that caused the death of its 46 crew members and that several countries blamed on a projectile fired by North Korea.

Another aspect that generated mistrust and tension between both countries was the human rights situation in North Korea. Noteworthy in this regard was the execution in January of the immediate family of Jang Sung-taek (Kim Jong-un's uncle and a close ally of his father, Kim Jong-il), who had been put to death with two other close collaborators in December. However, the issue that generated the most concern in South Korea and the international community was the **publication in mid-February of the International Commission of Inquiry's report, according to which hundreds of thousands of people have died in concentration camps in the last 50 years and**

Even though high-level talks were held and some families divided by the Korean War were reunited during the year, relations between North and South Korea were governed by high levels of military confrontation and constant exchanges of fire

between 80,000 and 120,000 people are still being held in four major prisons in the country. The report states that in recent decades, crimes have been perpetrated comparable to those committed by the Nazis during the 1930s and 1940s. In November, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution urging the Security Council to consider the International Commission of Inquiry's report and to take appropriate measures, including transferring the case to the International Criminal Court for possible crimes against humanity, activating mechanisms of international criminal justice and imposing sanctions on the people responsible for the alleged crimes. Previously, the Human Rights Council had decided to extend the mandate of the head of the International Commission of Inquiry for another year and to establish a field office to continue gathering information and evidence on the human rights situation in North Korea. In recent years, various human rights organisations had stressed that the international community needed to show greater interest in the human rights situation in North Korea, a situation that according to their understanding had been overshadowed by concern over the North Korean nuclear programme. However, various analysts think there is little chance that the Security Council will pass any resolutions regarding the issue due to the veto held by China and Russia, which reject some of the conclusions of the report, and North Korea's denial of the accusations. The North Korean government urged the international community not to meddle in its internal affairs. In September, it presented a report that not only rejected the accusations made by the International Commission of Inquiry (claiming they were politically motivated) and denied the existence of concentration camps, but asserted that the human rights situation is good and that among other things, the freedoms of expression and religion, as well as protection from torture and slavery, are guaranteed.

Despite the political and military tension between both countries, some of the most significant gestures of rapprochement in recent years occurred during the year. In late February, the first reunion of families separated by the war in the last three years took place at the Mount Kumgang tourist complex in North Korea. Nineteen reunions of this type have taken place since 1985. In the period when the countries were closest, after the summit in 2000, around 18,000 people could briefly meet with their family members and 4,000 could communicate by videoconference. There are currently 70,000 people in South Korea signed up to participate in reunions of this kind, which are selected from a lottery. Before the reunion in late February, the South Korean government had approved a package of 400,000 USD in humanitarian aid for its neighbour while the North Korean government had sent a letter to Seoul urging it to reconcile and terminate acts of hostility and accepting South Korea's proposal to draw up a

new schedule for reunions of families separated by the Korean War, which had been cancelled months before. After these reunions, dialogue between both Koreas was mostly quiet until the third quarter of the year, when a delegation of around 40 South Korean government representatives and businesspeople visited North Korea to evaluate possible investor interest in a railway aimed at linking Russia with the port city of Rason. At around the same time, talks were held between both governments on North Korea's participation in the Asian Games held in the South Korean city of Incheon from 19 September to 4 October, viewed by both countries as a great opportunity to improve bilateral relations and reconciliation. In the end, the North Korean government surprisingly sent a delegation of three people closely linked to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to the closing ceremony. The highest-ranking delegation that North Korea had ever sent to its neighbour, it pledged to resume political dialogue at the highest level to improve bilateral relations. A few days later, in mid-October, the first high-level military meeting was held between both countries since 2007, but the dialogue was interrupted after North Korea accused the South Korean government of rigidity. Though the South Korean president used her attendance at the Asia-Europe Meeting to urge Pyongyang to resume dialogue and encouraged the 50 countries present to cooperate with North Korea, high-level meetings between both countries did not take place again.

Korea, DPR –USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government
	International
Main parties:	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of 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 talks began on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula in which the governments of North Korea, South Korea, the USA, Japan, China and Russia participated. In April 2009, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the said talks after the United Nations imposed new sanctions after the country launched a long-range missile.

Although significant progress was made during the year to resume the multilateral talks on the denuclearisation

of the Korean Peninsula, **tensions between the North Korean Government and several countries rose considerably after the launching of several rockets, the threat of a new nuclear test, the alleged reactivation of important nuclear facilities and the upgrading or construction of infrastructure to launch rockets and satellites**. During the first quarter of the year, North Korea launched two medium-range Rodong rockets –seen as the most advanced in the North Korean arsenal– after tens of rockets were launched into the Sea of Japan in March, after the USA and South Korea started their annual joint military drills, and after the South Korean president warned on the risks that some of the North Korean arsenal could fall into the hands of terrorist organizations and that an accident in the Yongbyon nuclear facility, the largest in the country, could lead to a catastrophe greater than the one occurred in Chernobyl in the eighties. Considering the background –in 2006 and 2009, the launching of Rodong missiles by North Korea preceded other arms tests that led to great concern among the international community–, the UN Security Council and the Secretary-General of the organization, Ban Ki-moon, condemned this launching since they considered the use of ballistic missile technology constituted a violation of several UN resolutions, and some media even went on to speculate with the possibility of new sanctions being put in place. North Korea responded to these condemnations by warning on the possibility of carrying out a new type of nuclear test, the fourth after the tests carried out in 2006, 2009 and 2013. Although the statement by North Korea did not specify the type of nuclear test it referred to, several analysts believed that Pyongyang was working on producing miniaturized nuclear warheads to attach them to long-range nuclear missiles. Although the announcement made by North Korea led to warnings on new sanctions by countries such as South Korea and the US, or to a tougher discourse by the Chinese Government (declaring that the nuclear programme posed a threat to peace and stability in the region and warning the North Korean Government that such a trial would lead to an even greater international isolation), in the months of June and July, Pyongyang threatened once again to carry out an atomic test.

Continuing with the international concern over North Korea's atomic programme, **at the end of September, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted a unanimous condemnation against the North Korean Government at its annual conference, for its efforts to increase its nuclear capacity, including the reopening of an important nuclear reactor and a uranium processing plant**. Weeks before, a report by the IAEA pointed out that several satellite images (the IAEA was expelled from the country in 2009) suggested that activity had resumed in two reactors in the Yangbyon nuclear complex, which had been closed since 2008. According to this report, the first would allow producing, in just one year, the plutonium required to produce an atomic bomb, while the

second would have the capacity to enrich uranium, which is also needed to produce atomic weapons. Just a few days after the unanimous condemnation by the AIEA against North Korea, a report by the US-Korean Institute, from the John Hopkins University, warned that satellite images suggested a significant improvement of North Korea's main rocket-launching station, in the northeast of the country, something that the abovementioned institute considers as a key part to the North Korean programme to test intercontinental ballistic missiles. Towards the end of the year, new satellite images seemed to confirm the resuming of activity at the Yangbyon reactor, while South Korea warned on the rollout of submarines with the capacity to launch ballistic missiles. In December, the US Government accused Pyongyang of being behind the cyberattack on the company Sony, allegedly due to the release of a movie on the North Korean leader. North Korea rejected these accusations and, in turn, accused the USA of temporarily blocking access to the Internet.

Despite these episodes of tension, **during the year, the six countries involved in the six-party talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which had been interrupted since 2009, carried out intense diplomatic action to resume the talks**. It is worth highlighting the many visits to third countries carried out by the North Korean Foreign Minister or by senior North Korean officials. Especially relevant were the declarations made by the Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister, calling for the talks to resume and publicly pressuring North Korea, a country that has traditionally been its main ally on the international scene. In November, after a meeting in Moscow between the special envoy of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and the Foreign Affairs Minister, the North Korean Government expressed its willingness to resume the multilateral talks on the denuclearization of Korea with no preconditions and on the basis of a joint statement issued in 2005 by the countries participating in these talks (USA, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and North Korea). This was the first visit of a North Korean dignitary to Moscow in several years. Some analysts considered this meeting as an attempt by the North Korean Government to come closer to Russia, in view of growing distances with Beijing. Although Pyongyang's apparent willingness to talk opened up new expectations and led to increased diplomatic activity by the countries mentioned above, some analysts disagreed on the moment and the conditions to resume these talks. In this regard, the UAS, South Korea and Japan require North Korea to display some verifiable gestures to prove its commitment to the country's denuclearization and to the multilateral dialogue.

Violence was lower in Bangladesh, but political instability remained high

South Asia

Bangladesh	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal

Summary:
Since the creation of Bangladesh as an independent State in 1971, after breaking away from Pakistan in an armed conflict that caused three million deaths, the country has experienced a complex political situation. The 1991 elections led to democracy after a series of authoritarian military governments dominating the country since its independence. The two main parties, BNP and AL have since then succeeded one another in power after several elections, always contested by the loosing party, leading to governments that have never met the country's main challenges such as poverty, corruption or the low quality of democracy, and have always given it to one-sided interests. In 2008, the AL came to power after a two-year period dominated by a military interim Government was unsuccessful in its attempt to end the political crisis that had led the country into a spiral of violence during the previous months and that even led to the imprisonment of the leaders of both parties. The call for elections in 2014 in a very fragile political context and with a strong opposition from the BNP to the reforms undertaken by the AL such as eliminating the interim Government to supervise electoral processes led to a serious and violent political crisis in 2013. Alongside this, the establishment of a tribunal to judge crimes committed during the 1971 war, used by the Government to end with the Islamist opposition, especially with the party Jamaat-e-Islami, worsened the situation in the country.

The situation in Bangladesh was extremely serious throughout the year, though **violence was down considerably in comparison to the closing months of 2014, which began with legislative elections on 5 January that escalated the political crisis in the country over the year to come.** Boycotted by the main opposition party, the BNP, the elections were won by the ruling party (AL), which carried 233 of 300 seats. The government estimated voter turnout at 48%, although some media outlets put the figure at only 22%. Preceded by a terrible wave of violence, the elections were held in a highly tense atmosphere. Over 20 people were killed and more than 100 polling stations were burned on election day. After the elections, the head of the AL, Sheikh Hasina, was inaugurated as prime minister for her second consecutive term. After the new government

and Parliament were formed with no involvement from the main opposition party, local elections were held in which the AL triumphed again, this time over a coalition composed of opposition parties BNP and JI. Levels of electoral violence dropped notably, although some irregularities were reported and denounced by the opposition during the electoral process. The government took several steps that were harshly criticised by the opposition, such as legislative changes aimed at amending the Constitution to grant Parliament the right to dismiss members of the Supreme Court. It also passed highly controversial measures related to media broadcasts that prevented the spread of news, photos or videos that could damage the image of the security forces or the Armed Forces. Meanwhile, the leader of the BNP, Khaleda Zia, battled a court case throughout the year in which she faced charges of corruption and of appropriating hundreds of thousands of euros earmarked for various works of charity in memory of her husband, the former president of Bangladesh assassinated in 1981. The Supreme Court dismissed Zia's various appeals and the former leader could face life in prison for embezzlement. Many protests were staged by supporters of Zia and the opposition party throughout the trial and many warned of the risks of violence that it posed.

Meanwhile, the work of the International Crimes Tribunal remained a source of instability in the country. Established as a domestic tribunal (despite the name) in 2010 to judge crimes committed during the war of 1971 that led to the division of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh as an independent state, the death sentences given to various Islamist leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami set off social protests and strikes, especially in November and December.

India (Nagaland)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	Identity, Self-government Internal
Main parties:	Government, NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (Khole-Kitovi), NNC, ZUF

Summary:
The conflict affecting the state of Nagaland began following the British decolonisation process in India (1947), when a Naga movement emerged that demanded recognition for the collective rights of the Naga population, which is mostly Christian, as opposed to the Indian majority, which is Hindu. The founding of the NCC organisation marked the beginning of political demands for the independence of the Naga people, which over the following decades evolved in terms of both content (independence of Nagaland or the creation of Greater Nagaland, encompassing territories from neighbouring

states inhabited by Naga people) and opposition methods, the armed struggle beginning in 1955. In 1980 the NSCN armed opposition group was set up following disagreements with the more moderate political sectors, itself splitting into two separate factions eight years later: Isaac Muivah and Khaplang. Since 1997 the NSCN-IM has maintained a ceasefire agreement and has held talks with the Indian Government, while the NSCN-K reached a ceasefire agreement in 2000. Since then, clashes between the two factions have taken place in parallel with attempts to foster rapprochement and reconciliation among the Naga insurgency. A significant reduction in violence has been observed in recent years.

The situation in Nagaland was relatively calm throughout the year, though with some episodes of sporadic violence. There were less violent deaths linked to the tension than in the previous year, with 15 people killed according to data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal. Eleven of the victims were civilians. One of the most serious events of the year took place in January, when a mass grave was discovered in the district of Dimapur with the bodies of nine people executed earlier in the month. One of the victims was identified as a youth from the district of Karbi Anglong in Assam, who had gone missing a week before. The killings were blamed on the armed opposition group NSCN-IM and the group monitoring the ceasefire asked the NSCN-IM to surrender the insurgents allegedly involved in the massacre to the authorities. The group rebuffed the request, stating that it was not obliged to do so because the ceasefire with the Indian government remained in effect, given the conditions stipulated in the agreement. Additional security forces were sent to Karbi Anglong to prevent clashes. Security incidents were reported sporadically over the course of the year, like a firefight between the NSCN-IM and Indian security forces in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in which four people were killed, two of them insurgents and the other two civilians attempting to flee the scene of the fighting. In another incident in the district of Phek, a civilian was shot dead by the insurgent group NNC-NA, which later kicked out the person responsible for the murder, saying that it had never ordered the attack. In the district of Golaghat, a region bordering Nagaland in the state of Assam, at least 14 people were killed and 10,000 had to flee to shelters after attacks in August by armed Naga fighters that also burned down hundreds of homes. This area has been the scene of violent clashes with some frequency in recent decades arising from disputes over land ownership and territorial demarcation, since the Naga insurgency claims that areas of the state of Assam are part of "Greater Nagaland". Furthermore, the agreements reached in March and April between different insurgent factions, the GPRN/NSCN (Khole Khitovi), NSCN/GPRN (IM) and NNC/FGN, helped to improve the situation in the state.

India – Pakistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Identity, Territory International
Main parties:	India, Pakistan

Summary:

The tension between India and Pakistan dates back to the independence and partition of the two states and the dispute over the region of Kashmir. On three occasions (1947-1948, 1965, 1971) armed conflict has broken out between the two countries, both claiming sovereignty over the region, which is split between India, Pakistan and China. The armed conflict in 1947 led to the present-day division and the de facto border between the two countries. In 1989, the armed conflict shifted to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1999, one year after the two countries carried out nuclear tests, tension almost escalated into a new armed conflict until the USA mediated to calm the situation. In 2004 a peace process got under way. Although no real progress was made in resolving the dispute over Kashmir, there was a significant rapprochement above all in the economic sphere. However, India has continued to level accusations at Pakistan concerning the latter's support of the insurgency that operates in Jammu and Kashmir and sporadic outbreaks of violence have occurred on the de facto border that divides the two states. In 2008 serious attacks took place in the Indian city of Mumbai that led to the formal rupture of the peace process after India claimed that the attack had been orchestrated from Pakistan. Since then, relations between the two countries have remained deadlocked although some diplomatic contacts have taken place.

Tension between India and Pakistan was very high throughout the year, with many ceasefire violations that led to the death of around 50 people on both sides of the border. Both countries accused each other repeatedly of violating the ceasefire agreement and diplomatic tensions ran high at several points during the year, while formal talks between both governments could not be revived.[25] Though there was some rapprochement between both governments after the inauguration of new Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it did not improve relations substantially or prevent exchanges of fire between both militaries at different times of the year. In early 2014, the chief of the Indian Armed Forces made a statement that justified violating the ceasefire agreement if Pakistan did the same. The Pakistani government considered this provocative. Moreover, the arrest of a Pakistani truck driver on charges of drug trafficking halted the transport of merchandise across the border for days, turning bilateral trade into one of the greatest sources of tension. Another important episode of tension occurred in June when India blamed Pakistan for an attack in the district of Poonch that injured several civilians and led to losses of livestock. Fortunately, no people were killed. The Indian Armed Forces said

that they responded to the attack using the same class of weaponry. The fighting resumed in July and August, killing nearly 20 people, soldiers and civilians and forcibly displacing thousands, who took refuge in temporary shelters after various weeks of combat. The violence had a major impact on the livelihoods of local people, mainly affecting agricultural and livestock activities. Different attempts to lower the tension failed, including a meeting between border force commanders in August that was followed by new shooting just a few hours later. In October, there was a rise in violence between both militaries along the Line of Control that claimed the lives of 19 civilians. The constant clashes, which sometimes occurred daily, could have presented the most serious combat situation in the last decade. The Pakistani government claimed that the Indian Army's attacks had killed 13 civilians and injured 53, although media reports cited 11 Pakistani civilians dead and eight Indian civilians. The military authorities in both countries maintained contact through a hotline throughout the crisis, but it did not help to lower the tension. Exchanges of fire continued in November and December, killing at least seven people.

Nepal	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	System Internal
Main parties:	Government, Armed Forces, UCPN(M) and CPN(UML) political parties, former Maoist armed opposition group PLA

Summary:

1996 marked the start of a decade-long armed conflict between the Nepalese government and the armed wing of the Maoist CPN-M, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which aimed to overthrow the monarchy and establish a Maoist republic, in a country affected by poverty, feudalism, inequality and the absence of democracy. Following a decade of armed conflict and a coup in 2005, through which the king assumed all state powers, at the end of April 2006 King Gyanendra ordered the reopening of parliament after several weeks of intense social protests that claimed some 20 lives. The protests that brought about the overthrow of the king were orchestrated by a coalition of the seven main democratic opposition parties and the Maoists. Following the overthrow of the monarchy they unilaterally declared a ceasefire, which was backed by the interim government. In November 2006 a peace agreement was signed that brought the armed conflict to an end, after which the republic was proclaimed. In 2008 a constituent assembly was established to draw up Nepal's new constitution, although successive political crises and the lack of agreement on key aspects of the peace process, such as territorial decentralisation or the situation of Maoist combatants have led to a stalemate in the peace process.

---

25. See the summary on India and Pakistan in chapter 3 (Peace Processes).

The political situation in Nepal improved throughout the year. While the process to draft a new Constitution gathered strength following the formation of the new Constituent Assembly in 2013, in December the political parties of Nepal admitted that it would not be possible to achieve the political consensus to draft the new Constitution by the 22 January 2015 deadline. In early 2014, the MPs elected in 2013 took office and worked to draft the new Constitution for the country during the year. After the election of the new prime minister in February, Sushil Koirala, of the Nepali Congress party, with 405 of 601 MP votes, the leaders of the three main political parties, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and UCPN(M), reached an agreement to establish a High-level Political Committee charged with drafting the new Constitution, committed to different aspects to ensure the process succeeds and to working together to resolve problems in the transition. However, the agreement failed and many disagreements arose among the various political factions. The future territorial organisation of the country was one of the central issues of the debate. The Maoist party UCPN(M) announced the formation of a five-party left-wing alliance to make suggestions on drafting the new Constitution and to guarantee that it complies with what is laid out in the 2006 peace agreements. In April, Parliament passed a law to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Commission of Inquiry on Disappeared Persons, which were criticised by human rights organisations since they provide amnesty for people responsible for human rights violations during the armed conflict, arguing that any amnesty should be approved by the victims.

Thousands of people participated in Pakistan in protests against the government of Nawaz Sharif headed by opposition leaders Imran Khan and Tahirul Qadri

Pakistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, System Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias)

Summary:

In 1999 the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was brought down by a military coup orchestrated by General Pervez Musharraf, who justified his actions by accusing this and previous governments of mismanagement and corruption. The new military regime initially met with the isolation of the international community. There was a thawing of relations after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, when Musharraf became the main ally of the USA in the region in the persecution of al-Qaeda. The fragile political situation that has characterised the country for several years can be explained by the length of time for which Musharraf held on to power, simultaneously holding the positions of head of state and commander-in-chief, by the attempts to compromise the independence of judicial power and by the increasing power of Taliban militias in the tribal areas of the country on the border with Afghanistan. In 2008 Musharraf resigned as president following defeat in the legislative elections and was replaced by Asif Ali Zardari. However, the country has continued to experience alarming levels of violence.

Pakistan underwent a serious political crisis throughout the year, aggravated by extremely high levels of violence that affected the entire country alongside armed conflicts pitting the central government against the Taliban and Balochi insurgencies.[26] The city of Karachi was once again the scene of stifling tension and around 2,000 people may have died in the violence, primarily the victims of targeted killing. According to the Centre for Research and Security Studies of Pakistan, most of the victims of this kind of violence were civilians. People were also killed in operations conducted by security forces in the city and in attacks by insurgent organisations. The area of Lyari continued to be the epicentre of violence in Karachi and was where most of the incidents occurred involving armed gangs operating in the city, some of them linked to different political parties. Although two of the top gangs in the city, led by Uzair Baloch and Baba Ladla respectively, reached a truce in March, it could not significantly reduce the violence, which remained at high levels. The security forces' ineffectiveness in putting an end to the violence and insecurity was criticised repeatedly, as the various operations have not lowered them in a meaningful way, although the security forces announced that more than 20,000 people had been arrested during the operation that began in September 2013 and that at least 350 criminals and terrorists had been killed. A critical event during the year was the arrest in London of Altaf Hussain, the leader of the party MQM (one of the main political forces in Karachi and the second-most important in Sindh province, which represents the Mohajir community, descendants of Urdu-speaking Muslims that emigrated from India to Pakistan after partition), which set off alarms about a possible increase in violence in Karachi and led to a shutdown of public transport and the closing of shops after several buses were burned. Hussain, who has been a resident of the United Kingdom since 1992, where he leads the party, was released on bail after being accused of money laundering.

Alongside the violence in Karachi, a **serious political crisis gripped the country, especially in August and September. Opposition leaders Imran Khan, head of the party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, and cleric Tahirul**

---

26. See the summaries on Pakistan and Pakistan (Balochistan) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

Qadri, chair of the party Pakistan Awami Tehreek, called for demonstrations demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Thousands of people participated in the protests, which started out as peaceful but later led to clashes with police that resulted in several people dead and hundreds injured and arrested. The violence escalated when people participating in the protests entered restricted access zones in the capital where the main government and administrative buildings are located, protected by the Pakistani Army, and the police responded with a crackdown on the protests. The crisis was caused by Imran Khan's accusations that Sharif had committed electoral fraud and his demand for new elections, while Qadri demanded the formation of a national unity government. Both leaders joined forces to stage the demonstrations, despite their differences in outlook. The government requested the help of the Armed Forces to conduct negotiations with the opposition, but their failure gave the protests new strength. However, in September the protests lost steam and the demonstrators abandoned the areas they had occupied in Islamabad. In December, the Supreme Court rejected various requests to remove Prime Minister Sharif from power, including the one submitted by the PTI.

Sri Lanka (north-east)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, Tamil political and social opposition

Summary:

In 1983 the LTTE, the Tamil pro-independence armed opposition group, began the armed conflict that ravaged Sri Lanka for almost three decades. The increasing marginalisation of the Tamil population by the government, mostly composed of members of the Sinhalese elite, following the decolonisation of the island in 1948, led the LTTE to initiate an armed struggle to achieve the creation of an independent Tamil state. From 1983, each of the phases in which the conflict took place ended with a failed peace process. Following the signing of a ceasefire agreement, fresh peace talks began in 2002, mediated by the Norwegian government, the failure of which sparked a fierce resumption of the armed conflict in 2006. In May 2009 the armed forces defeated the LTTE and regained control over the entire country after killing the leader of the armed group, Velupillai Prabhakaran. Since then thousands of Tamils have remained displaced and no measures have been adopted to make progress in reconciliation. Furthermore, the government has refused to investigate the war crimes of the armed conflict, denying that they ever took place.

The situation in Sri Lanka worsened during the year, with several episodes of violence and a particularly tense atmosphere prior to the presidential election in January 2015. The call for early elections in January was accompanied by many reports of intimidation and violent attacks against activists that led different analysts to warn of the risks of a coup d'état if the opposition won. Opposition candidate Maithripala Sirisena, the minister of Health until he announced his interest in running in the election in November, provided great competition to Mahinda Rajapaksa by uniting much of the political opposition, including the main opposition party UNP, members of Rajapaksa's government, the main Tamil party (TNA) and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC). **The government continued to hinder independent investigation of war crimes committed during the final phase of the armed conflict between the government and the LTTE that ended in 2009.** The Human Rights Council approved a resolution to open an investigation into these possible war crimes based on the prior acknowledgment that 40,000 Tamil civilians may have died in the closing months of the conflict, basically as a result of government bombardment. The resolution was promoted by the US and UK governments, among others, and received 23 votes of approval from the 47 that make up the Human Rights Council. The Sri Lankan government blasted the resolution and refused to cooperate with the United Nations in its inquiry into the events. Although the government had shown some progress internationally in implementing the recommendations made by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission set up by President Mahinda Rajapakse, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that the government had not carried out any reliable investigation into what happened during the armed conflict. Throughout the year, the work of the UN investigation was impeded by the intimidation and arrest of Tamil people that would have cooperated with the UN, as well as bureaucratic and administrative hurdles for UN staff. In May, the government conducted a military parade to commemorate the fifth anniversary of its victory over the LTTE, but events to remember Tamils that died in the war were banned.

Meanwhile, **the government stepped up security operations in the northern and eastern parts of the country, citing a possible reorganisation of the armed Tamil opposition group LTTE, which was annihilated at the end of the war**. In April, the Sri Lankan Armed Forces said that they had killed three suspected members of the group that may have been trying to put it back together according to the instructions of two LTTE leaders based in Europe. Later, the Women's Action Network reported that the government was detaining female family members of those suspected of trying to restart the LTTE, although the police said that the arrests were covered under anti-terrorist legislation. At least 60 people were arrested in various raids conducted in the northern part of the country and in the capital, Colombo, and the Malaysian authorities said that they had arrested three LTTE members residing in the country as refugees. Two prominent human rights activists were detained in March, but were released a few days later under international pressure. Both complained that other activists were still being

detained by the government. In June, there was a wave of violence against the Muslim community in the cities of Alutgama and Beruwala. Three Muslims were killed in the attacks carried out by the Buddhist extremist group Bodu Bala Sena, which burned several houses and also caused material damage to mosques. Its leader was arrested in May on charges of insulting the Quran, as well for intimidating attorneys representing Muslim plaintiffs. The government imposed a curfew for several days to deal with the violence. Minister of Justice Rauf Hakeem threatened to resign as a result of the government's decision to authorise the Buddhist group's demonstration that led to the attacks on the Muslim population. Finally, a Buddhist monk promoting dialogue between the different religious communities and critical of Buddhist extremist organisations was arrested.

South-east Asia and Oceania

Indonesia (West Papua)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition (autonomist or secessionist organisations, indigenous and human rights organisations), indigenous Papuan groups, Freeport mining company

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.

Fully in line with events in recent years, sporadic incidents of violence, demonstrations in favour of self-determination for the region and complaints and protests against the human rights situation were all reported in West Papua. The incidents of violence included the death of four people in late January in the region of Puncak Jaya during a counter-insurgency operation. In the same region in mid-March, one person was killed and four others were arrested during an attack on a police and military patrol. The governor of Papua said that the attack was not politically motivated, but purely criminal in nature. A few weeks later, a police officer and a soldier were injured in an episode of violence that occurred in the area bordering Papua New Guinea. In April, clashes broke out again between the Armed Forces and suspected OPM members on both sides of the border, wounding several people. The fighting triggered Indonesian military incursions into the territory of Papua New Guinea, raising diplomatic tensions between both countries and temporarily closing some schools and a border crossing, which prevented hundreds of people from accessing their land or workplace. After the clashes, the Armed Forces of Papua New Guinea announced that it had begun an operation to hunt down the OPM and had destroyed some of their camps. These episodes of violence coincided as legislative elections were being held in Indonesia, which generally were peaceful. In this regard, the National Committee for West Papua (KNPB), a coalition of organisations that advocates the self-determination of West Papua, called on the population of West Papua to boycott the elections because the future of the region should be decided in a referendum on self-determination. Finally, four or five people (according to the source) were killed and 21 were wounded in an episode of violence in December in the town of Ebarotali, in the mountainous Paniai Regency. The government launched an investigation into the incident, declared that it occurred when 200 people attacked a police and military post and aired its suspicions that the OPM could have orchestrated it. However, organisations like HRW said that the state security forces fired into a crowd of people gathered at the post to protest police abuse of a minor.

Following this incident and statements by new President Joko Widodo regarding his intention to establish a new military command in Papua province, various human rights organisations warned of the risks of increasing the military and police presence in the region. According to these organisations, the Indonesian Armed Forces have deployed around 16,000 troops there. Including the police, **the number of members of state security forces in the region is higher than the indigenous population in Papua and places the military presence at levels comparable to those that existed between 1990 and 1998 in Aceh province when it was a special military operations area and governed by martial law**. The same human rights organisations also criticised the appointment as minister of Defence of someone that had led military operations in Aceh and West Papua that involved mass human rights violations. Also in terms of human rights, in the first quarter a demonstration was called by Tapol, Amnesty International, Survival and the Free West Papua Campaign before the Indonesian Embassy in London to demand the release of 76 political prisoners that the groups claim are in Indonesia. According to these organisations, in 2013 the number of politically motivated arrests doubled and cases of torture and mistreatment of detained and captured people increased. The same day, demonstrations were

staged for the same purpose in New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands and Jayapura, the capital of the province of Papua. Some incidents occurred at this most recent demonstration and some people were arrested. Another major demonstration during the year occurred on 1 December to mark the 53rd anniversary of West Papua's proclamation of independence from the Netherlands.

In political terms, in January it emerged that **the government was finalising its review of the special autonomy law for West Papua adopted in 2001**. Nevertheless, given all the criticism of the law in recent years for failing to solve or channel the conflictive situation in West Papua, in 2013 the government began a series of talks, including the governors of the provinces of Papua and of West Papua, to reform the law. In August, Joko Widodo met with several Papuan leaders and expressed his intention to focus much of his government action on the region. In December, for example, he announced a new plan to extend and improve the rail system throughout West Papua. In the international arena, in March the prime minister of Vanuatu, Moana Carcasses Kalosil, gave a speech to the United Nations Human Rights Council urging the international community to worry about the continuing violations of human rights that the people of West Papua have suffered since 1969. On other occasions, Moana Carcasses Kalosil has distinguished himself by supporting self-determination and decolonisation in New Caledonia, West Papua and Tahiti. Thus, one of the most important events of the year was the decision adopted by the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), an organisation that brings together various nations in the Pacific, at its summit held in Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) in late June, **to momentarily reject the membership request of the group formalised in 2013 by the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL).** At the time, the MSG decided to postpone the decision pending the visit by a delegation of the group to Indonesia and West Papua to see the situation firsthand. The visit took place in January, but was boycotted by the government of Vanuatu because it felt that the trip's programme did not include meetings with representative institutions or individuals that could express the majority feelings of the people of West Papua, and therefore did not obtain enough information to fulfil its mission. Even though more than 70 West Papuan organisations openly supported the direct representation of Papua in the MSG, the group ruled that the WPNCL must reapply to join it after first consulting with the government of Indonesia, which holds observer status in it. Some of the heads of state of the MSG also stressed the unity and representativeness of the Papuan group that aspires to join the regional organisation, clearly alluding to the fact that there is another Papuan organisation, the Federal Republic of West Papua, which also claims to represent the Papuan people and says that the WPNCL forms part of its organisation. Finally, the closing statement issued by the MSG as the summit ended pledged to pay more attention to the special autonomy law and to progress in self-government, in addition to promoting the development of West Papua together with the Indonesian government.

Myanmar	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	System Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition (opposition party NLD), 969 group

Summary:
The military junta seized power in a coup d'état in 1962 and has remained in government ever since. The military government abolished the federal system and imposed a fierce dictatorship, known as the "Burmese Way to Socialism". In 1988, the economic crisis led thousands of people to voice their discontent in the street. These protests were put down brutally by the military regime, claiming 3,000 lives. Although the government did call elections, it never acknowledged their result, i.e. the victory of the democratic opposition, led by Aung San Suu Kyi. She was subsequently arrested and has been intermittently placed under house arrest ever since. In 2004, the government began a constitutional reform process in an attempt to offer the image of a liberalising regime. This process was discredited by the political opposition to the dictatorship. In 2007, the political opposition and several Buddhist monks led intense social protests against the military regime that were brutally put down. The general elections held in 2010 were considered fraudulent by the international community and the internal opposition but the government initiated a process of reforms aimed at democratizing the country.

The political situation in Myanmar remained tense, with different sources over the course of the year. **Intercommunal violence resurged in Rakhine State on several occasions, aggravated by one of the most controversial political issues of the year, the creation of a census of the country that was widely criticised because of its ethnic classifications.** One of the most serious episodes of violence took place in January, when a group of Buddhists accompanied by Burmese security forces attacked a Rohingya settlement, killing 48 people and forcibly displacing hundreds. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay spread word of the event and demanded an investigation, but the government responded by denying that the massacre had taken place. After criticising the United Nations and international media for referring to local sources, the government denied that the violence had taken place in its final report on the incident. The Burmese government also suspended the activity of the humanitarian organisation Doctors Without Borders, accusing it of acting biased in favour of the Rohingya population. The United Nations rapporteur for Myanmar called for an independent investigation, criticising the one carried out by the Burmese government for lacking

credibility. In March, the government began to create the controversial census with the support of the UN agency UNFPA. The census has been harshly criticised by international organisations like the International Crisis Group, Transnational Institute and Human Rights Watch, which indicated that it could exacerbate the tension and violence. In fact, its creation sparked acts of violence in Kachin State and Rakhine State. In the end the Rohingya people were not allowed to identify themselves as such in the census and many of them were excluded from the census count. This occurred despite the government's initial promises that the entire population of Myanmar could identify their ethnic group freely. Pressure from Rakhine political groups and from the Rakhine population itself, which is the majority community in the state, broke out into several protests against the process to create the census, a campaign to derail it and finally violent attacks against international humanitarian organisations that killed one person and forced the evacuation of 300 aid workers.[27] In September, the government published some preliminary results of the census, but data related to ethnicity would not be published until 2016, after the elections planned for late 2015. There were also outbreaks of violence during the year, like in Mandalay in July when two people, one Buddhist and one Muslim, died after a rumour was spread that a Muslim man had raped a Buddhist woman. Moreover, 14 people were wounded and different buildings were burned, including an orphanage, during days of riots in parts of Mandalay inhabited by Muslims. As a result of the riots and violence, a curfew was imposed until August and 200 people were arrested.

Political reforms continued in the country, though various analysts warned that the democratisation process was becoming stagnant. The most remarkable political issues included the government's refusal to reform the Constitution to allow opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to run as a presidential candidate in the upcoming election, since it prohibits any person with a foreign spouse or descendants from holding the office. Aung San Suu Kyi's children are British nationals. In October, the government met with military, legislative and political party representatives to discuss the transition after Aung San Suu Kyi called for negotiations. The main opposition party, the NLD, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, said that it had collected five million signatures to reform the Constitution in order to scale back some of the massive powers that the Army currently holds in Burmese politics and to allow its leader to run as a candidate in the upcoming election.

The creation of a census by the government in Myanmar with the support of the United Nations aggravated tensions in the country because of its ethnic classifications

Philippines (Mindanao-MILF)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, MILF, BIFF

Summary:

The armed conflict in Mindanao stretches back to the seventies, when Nur Misuari established the MNLF to ask Manila for self-determination for the Moro pople, an array of Ismalised ethnic and linguistic groups that have been organised politically in independent sultanates since the 15th century. The MILF, for strategic, ideological and leadership reasons, broke away from the MNLF at the end of the seventies. While the MNLF signed a peace agreement in 1996 that planned for certain autonomy for the areas in Mindanao with a Muslim majority (the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao), the MILF continued with its armed struggle, even if both parties started peace conversations in 1997 facilitated by Malaysia and reached a preliminary peace agreement in October 2012 and a substantial and sustained reduction in fighting between the MILF and the Armed Forces to practically irrelevant levels that meant the armed conflict was no longer considered as such in 2012. Nevertheless, the levels in Mindanao continued to be high due to the clashes between the Government and the BIFF (an excision of the MILF that is against the peace process), and also due to the sporadic armed incidents between the MILF and other armed groups operating in the country.

In full harmony with the signing of the historic peace agreement between the government and the MILF on 27 March and the progress made in implementing it, **no significant episodes of violence were reported during the year, but there were many clashes between the Philippine Armed Forces and the BIFF, a MILF splinter group opposed to the peace process, which claimed the lives of over 100 people**. Despite the generally good relations between the government and the MILF, at certain times of the year tension rose significantly between both parties. In mid-April, the MILF accused the government of killing four of its fighters during a counter-insurgency operation against Abu Sayyaf on the island of Basilan. The government later declared that the deceased were not targets of the counter-terrorist operation. In late June, tension between the MILF and the government increased notably after the local authorities in the region of Lanao del Norte warned of an imminent attack by around 700 members of the MILF led by Commander Bravo (Abdullah Macapaar),

---

27. International Crisis Group, *Counting the Costs: Myanmar's Problematic Census*, International Crisis Group, Asia Briefing no. 144, Yangon/Brussels, 15 May 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/b144-counting-the-costs-myanmar-s-problematic-census.aspx.

one of the MILF commanders most active in the spiral of violence that affected Mindanao in 2008 after the collapse of the agreement on ancestral lands. According to local authorities, Commander Bravo's plan was to rescue a MILF member detained for having kidnapped two people. The government deployed additional military and police contingents to the region, though there were no significant episodes of violence in the end. In addition to these sporadic moments of tension, the MILF was involved in other acts of violence during the year such as clashes with MNLF factions, community militias and even rival MILF factions. However, many of the clashes reported in recent years between the MILF and the MNLF, or between factions of the MILF, are more connected to personal, family and land issues than to ideological or strategic ones. Other armed groups in the region were involved in these types of clashes, called "rido". For example, in early August seven people were killed in the town of Tuburan (Basilan province) and thousands of people were forced to flee their homes after BIFF and Abu Sayyaf members faced off over land issues, while in late June a prominent BIFF leader (Commander Basir) was killed and a well-known member of Abu Sayyaf (Misuari Jamiri) was wounded in fighting between a MNLF faction loyal to the government and a joint BIFF and Abu Sayyaf contingent in Basilan province.

The most important episodes of violence during the year involved fighting between the Armed Forces and the BIFF that killed over 100 people. The BIFF displayed its opposition to the peace process throughout 2014 and at the end of the year it refused to sign a Christmas ceasefire, like the NPA often does. In February, the government said that 53 BIFF combatants were killed (including children), dozens were wounded and more than 35,000 people were forced to abandon their homes in Maguindanao and North Cotabato as a result of a counter-insurgency operation that the Armed Forces conducted in late January and early February. According to Manila, some of the group's main camps were seized and the BIFF, which had around 460 fighters, was weakened and fragmented by the operation. One of the arguments that the government used to justify the offensive in Maguindanao was that the leader of the BIFF, Ameril Umbra Kato, was hiding in MILF strongholds where state security forces cannot operate due to the cessation of hostilities and peace process under way between the government and the MILF. In another major clash between the BIFF and the Armed Forces, 17 BIFF fighters and one soldier were killed in Cotabato on 21 July. In mid-September, one day after President Benigno Aquino sent the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law to Congress for discussion and approval, 12 people were killed and hundreds were forced to flee their homes when the BIFF launched an attack in the town of Midsayap (Cotabato province). The day after the attack, the government put the Philippine Armed Forces on red alert after some intelligence reports warned that groups like the BIFF or Abu Sayyaf could boost their attacks in Mindanao if armed operations continued

against Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq or Syria. However, the military made it clear that there was no coordination of action between the aforementioned groups.

Clashes increased in November and December after the government declared that its operations against the BIFF had forced it to abandon its strategic positions in the regions of Pikit and Datu Piang and that the Armed Forces raised their levels of alarm due to the BIFF's alleged connection to the detonation of several explosive devices. The most significant of these occurred in mid-December, when 10 people were killed and 41 were injured after a bomb exploded on a bus in the town of Maramag, Bukidnon province. Previously, in November, the government had accused the BIFF of being behind the detonation of an explosive device in the town of M'lang (North Cotabato province) that killed three people and injured 22. Days before, in the same province, one person was killed and 17 were injured when a bomb exploded at a school. The police identified two other unexploded bombs near the same school. In previous months, the government had accused the BIFF of orchestrating the explosion of two bombs in the city of General Santos that injured six people. Finally, in late July the government announced that Abdul Basit Usman, an explosives expert and member of the regional network Jemaah Islamiyah, had been wounded during a special operation against the group. According to government sources, he was in the region to train BIFF combatants to build explosive devices.

Philippines (Mindanao-MNLF)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, factions of the armed group MNLF

Summary:
Although independence enjoyed support throughout the 20th century, the political structure of the movement dates back to the 1960s, while the armed struggle began in the early 1970s at the hands of the MNLF. A large percentage of the 120,000 fatalities attributed to the conflict in Mindanao date back to the 1970s, in the middle of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. In 1976 the MILF faction splintered from the MNLF soon after the latter signed a peace agreement with the government through which Mindanao was to be granted autonomy (and not independence). Despite the agreement, the armed conflict continued until 1996, when another peace agreement with similar provisions was signed in 1976. However, since then, some MNLF factions that have not disarmed have been involved in violent incidents to demand the full implementation of the peace agreement and the release of the MNLF founder, Nur Misuari, arrested in 2001 after being accused of rebellion. Although there has been a reduction in tension since 2007 due, on the one hand, to an agreement between the parties to review and

implement the 1996 peace agreement and, on the other hand, to the fact that Misuari was authorised to carry out political activities, sporadic clashes continue to take place in several regions of Mindanao. In 2012 some factions of the MNLF signalled their intention to resume armed activity if the peace agreement signed that year between the Philippine government and the MILF invalidated any of the contents of the 1996 peace agreement.

The MNLF did not participate in significant acts of violence during the year, so the factors that generated greatest concern within the government were the opposition expressed by some of the group's factions and leaders to the peace agreement signed in late March between the government and the MILF; the fear that one of these factions might decide to resume armed hostilities; the lack of news regarding the whereabouts of MNLF founder Nur Misuari (a fugitive following his alleged involvement in the attack on the city of Zamboanga in September 2013) and, above all, the political and media confusion caused by the announcement of internal reorganisation in the group and the expulsion of Nur Misuari as its leader. **The opposition expressed by some MNLF leaders to the signing of a peace agreement between the government and the MILF in late March also gave the government and the MILF grounds for concern**. While none of these leaders threatened to take up arms again, they did say that the frustration felt by many MNLF supporters that the MNLF was not recognised as a political player and that contempt for the peace agreement signed between the government and the MNLF in 1996 could have unpredictable consequences. Regarding the MNLF's involvement in violence, clashes over a land dispute between members of the MNLF and the MILF in late February in North Cotabato province forced hundreds of people to flee the region. In mid-July, clashes over land were reported again between MILF and MNLF factions in North Cotabato. The tension between both groups was also made clear when a prominent MNLF commander in central Mindanao declared that four MILF commanders and around 4,000 MILF fighters had left the group and joined the MNLF. Both the government and the MILF denied the story and described it as propaganda.

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

Summary:
Since Thaksin Shinawatra's began his term in office in 2001, he had been criticised by several sectors for his authoritarian style, his campaign against drug trafficking (which claimed over 2,000 lives) and his militaristic approach to the conflict in the south. However, the socio-political crisis affecting Thailand over the last few years escalated in 2006. That year, after a case of corruption was made public, mass demonstrations took place demanding Shinawatra's resignation and in September a military junta staged a coup that forced him into exile. Despite the approval of a new constitution in a referendum held in August 2007, the new government failed to reduce the social and political polarisation taking place in the country. It was in this context that a party loyal to Thaksin Shinawatra won the elections in December 2007. However, a series of violent incidents and the mass demonstrations against the government organised by the People's Alliance for Democracy (known as the "yellow shirt movement"), prompted the resignation of two prime ministers and the arrival in power in December 2008 of Abhisit Vejjajiva, a member of the opposition to Thaksin Shinawatra. Since then, there have been periodical mass demonstrations by the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (known as the "red shirt movement", which supports the return of the former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra), demanding the resignation of the government and the holding of early elections.

After several months of political crisis and mass protests that claimed the lives of around 30 people and left more than 700 others injured, the Thai Armed Forces carried out a coup d'état on 22 May, two days after declaring martial law across the country. The political crisis in Thailand worsened in the months before the attack due to the increase in protests throughout the country, the Constitutional Court's cancellation of the early elections held on 2 February and the resignation of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. The protests included the opposition's campaign to blockade and shut down Bangkok, which lasted from mid-January to the end of February. More than 20 people have died and over 720 have been injured since the massive protests began in late 2013. In late January, the government imposed a state of emergency in Bangkok and in several neighbouring provinces. Levels of violence increased substantially in February, whether due to clashes between supporters and opponents of the elections, altercations between demonstrators and state security forces or attacks against opposition protests or leaders. These events were condemned by the government, which promised to prosecute those responsible, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who offered his offices in an attempt to resolve the current situation. The protests subsided significantly in early March when the campaign to shut down the capital ended and the state of emergency imposed in January was lifted. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court cancelled the early elections held on 2 February because they could not be conducted throughout the country simultaneously, since the opposition protests fully or partially prevented voting at around 10% of the polling stations in the country, in 18 provinces. Much of the opposition had boycotted the elections and the Election Commission had repeatedly called to postpone them due to the political and social tension, but Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra decided to hold them at the date scheduled as a mechanism to put an end to the

protests. Not only did the Constitutional Court's ruling prevent the formation of a newly elected government and perpetuate the interim one, but protests resumed, staged by both the opposition and the "red shirts", which mobilised thousands of people in the north of the country. In late April, after several meetings with the government, the Election Commission announced that the cancelled elections would be held in June, but the opposition Democrat Party and People's Democratic Reform Committee refused to participate in new elections and continued to demand the formation of a non-elected people's council to carry out certain structural reforms before new elections are called. The third factor that precipitated events in Thailand was the resignation of Yingluck Shinawatra (and nine other members of the interim government) in early May after being convicted of abuse of power by the Constitutional Court. In mid-February, the National Anti-Corruption Commission accused Yingluck Shinawatra of embezzlement and abuse of power in granting subsidies to the rice sector. This led to another increase in protests and social polarisation, as indicated by the formation of pro-government militias by the "red shirts" (thousands of volunteers took part in martial arts training in the northern province of Nakorn Ratchasima and their leader said that the Thai population possesses 10 million guns, a clear threat to the actions and objectives of the opposition) and the creation of monarchist groups to identify people that allegedly committed crimes of lèse-majesté.

After several months of political crisis and massive protests in Thailand in which 30 people were killed and over 700 were injured, the Armed Forces staged a coup d'état on 22 May

In this context, the Thai Armed Forces carried out a coup d'état on 22 May, two days after declaring martial law across the country. The Constitution was suspended and hundreds of people were arrested, including Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. The chief of the Armed Forces, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, publicly declared that the King of Thailand had recognised him as head of the National Council for Peace and Order (CNPO) and said he would need about 15 months to undertake the reform and reconciliation necessary for holding general elections. **In the weeks before the coup and under the protection of the curfew in effect until mid-June, social and political repression increased noticeably, with hundreds of people arrested, public demonstrations banned and hundreds of radio broadcasters and television stations closed down**. Former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, who was arrested at first, was released under military custody. The group commonly known as the "red shirts" was especially affected by the repression. The International Organisation for Migration estimated that in mid-June around 200,000 Cambodians had returned to their country of origin after some information was spread describing a possible campaign launched by the new military authorities against illegal immigration. Although the repression was heavier in the weeks

immediately after the coup, human rights violations, cases of torture and the persecution of opposition groups and some journalists and academics were reported throughout the year. Local elections were suspended in mid-July and measures were imposed to control and censure the press. In late December, for example, the government announced that it had blocked content critical of the government or the monarchy (on web pages and social networks) and closed down hundreds of web pages. Moreover, the exiled chair of Yingluck Shinawatra's party, Pheu Thai, announced the formation of Free Thais for Human Rights and Democracy in order to organise and coordinate opposition to the coup and military junta. Even though the new authorities claimed that countries such as China, Vietnam and Myanmar had given explicit support to the CNPO, the international community generally slammed the coup d'état. The EU and countries like the USA imposed political, economic and military sanctions and urged Bangkok to return to the path of democracy. In this regard, the prime minister linked the convening of a constituent assembly and the holding of legislative elections to the fulfilment of certain necessary social and political conditions, with some analysts saying that both could take place in 2016.

As a result of the application of martial law, there were no significant demonstrations in the second half of the year, but the CNPO had to deal with some covert actions to reject the military junta, numerous allegations of human rights violations and two issues that elevated the tension. First, in late September a group of rubber producers announced their intention to carry out protests across the country to denounce the lack of government support regarding the fall in rubber prices in recent years. Their mass demonstrations against the former government of Yingluck Shinawatra were one of the factors that weakened it, fuelling social polarisation and provoking military intervention. At the time, the rubber producers accused the government of discrimination in its subsidy policy for rice cultivators, who operate mostly in the north of the country, one of the strongholds of Shinawatra's party. Second, in November the new Legislative Assembly passed a motion to indict Yingluck Shinawatra and the presidents of the Senate and the House of Representatives, as suggested by the National Anti-Corruption Commission. In September, the attorney general of the country went against the opinion of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and refused to prosecute the former prime minister for alleged irregularities in her policy of subsidies for the rice sector. The Legislative Assembly's decision was met with threats by the People's Democratic Reform Committee and the "red shirts" that they would resume mass demonstrations in favour of and against both events, respectively.

Thailand – Cambodia	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory International
Main parties:	Thailand, Cambodia

Summary:

The origin of the dispute between the two countries is the issue of sovereignty over a stretch of land measuring approximately 4.6 km2 and surrounding the 11th century Preah Vihear Buddhist temple, situated on the border between Thailand and Cambodia. Following several centuries of dispute, in 1962 the International Court of Justice ruled that the temple belonged to Cambodia. However, it did not rule on the land around the temple. Thailand's claims have been fuelled in recent decades by the fact that the temple is most easily reached from the Thai side and by its disagreement regarding the historical maps on which the ruling of the International Court of Justice was based. The disputed border region contains a large number of troops and is heavily mined. After the military tension reached its peak in the first half of 2010, bilateral relations improved considerably after the arrival in power in July 2010 of Yingluck Shinawatra, who maintained a much more fluid political relationship with the Cambodian prime minister, Hun Sen. In this context, the International Court of Justice issued an order that obliged the parties to withdraw their troops from the region under dispute and to allow the deployment of international observers to monitor the cessation of hostilities. Since then, no significant clashes have taken place and both governments have restated their intention to resolve the dispute through political and peaceful methods.

Although there were no high-intensity incidents in the disputed border region and both countries maintained cordial and cooperative relations, including after the coup d'état in Thailand in May, **some episodes of violence were reported during the year and military and political tension increased significantly in December**. Though the number of people killed in border clashes was unknown, in mid-December the Cambodian government said that during 2014, five people of Cambodian nationality were shot by the Thai Armed Forces. Despite Cambodia's good relations with the government led by Yingluck Shinawatra, Hun Sen's government has also maintained smooth relations with the new Thai military junta since the coup in May. Indeed, in July the Cambodian minister of Defence travelled to Bangkok and met with the leader of the junta and prime minister of Thailand, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, to address the border dispute and other issues. In this respect, the Cambodian government was comprehensive about the lack of progress in implementing the ruling of the International Court of Justice and the border demarcation process due to the political situation in Thailand before and after the coup d'état. Despite these good relations, in late September there was an exchange of fire between the Armed Forces of Thailand and Cambodia in the province of Preah Vihear, the region where the disputed temple is located, leaving two soldiers wounded. However, both governments indicated that the mutual shelling was caused by confusion and that normality and calm had returned after the armed incident, the first after the coup d'état in Thailand. The Cambodian defence minister personally addressed the Cambodian troops deployed in the disputed border region to tell them that there was no problem with the new Thai authorities.

However, two episodes in December raised tension again. In the middle of the month, the government of Cambodia sent a letter to Thailand vigorously protesting the Thai military's shooting of five civilian women on the border, killing one of them. Both governments decided to create a joint panel to investigate the event, but the Thai prime minister denied that his troops had opened fire on civilians and said that the armed incident had been between Thai soldiers and criminal logging networks. A few days later, during the annual meeting of the General Border Committee, both governments signed an agreement to maintain peace, improve the quality of life of the communities living in the border area and increase their cooperation to fight together against terrorism, human and drug trafficking and illegal logging. Despite this agreement, in late December tension rose again after a media outlet revealed that the Cambodian government was deploying heavy machinery and additional troops to the border. In response, the Thai government wrote a letter of protest, closed the border and sent military reinforcements to the area. Cambodian military sources affirmed that some soldiers were wounded after Thai troops fired in the disputed area, although other sources denied this. According to Thailand, Cambodia's attempt to build a hotel and a casino clearly violates an agreement by which they pledge not to develop disputed areas unilaterally. Cambodia denied that it had sent additional troops and that it had been planning to build a hotel and a casino and further stated that the heavy machinery deployed in the region was only to build a road too far from the disputed area to be considered a violation of the aforementioned bilateral agreement. In turn, Phnom Penh accused Thailand of constructing buildings only one or two metres from the disputed area pending demarcation.

2.3.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Moldova, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia

Summary:

Transdniestria, a territory covering 4,000 km2 with a half million mostly Slavic inhabitants, legally under the sovereignty of Moldova but virtually independent, has been the scene of an unresolved dispute about its status since the 1990s. The conflict emerged in the final days of the USSR, when fears increased in Transdniestria about the possible unification of independent Moldova and Romania. The region declared independence from Moldova, which proclaimed its own independence in 1991. Escalating incidents led to armed conflict in 1992. A ceasefire agreement was reached that same year, putting an end to a war that lasted several months. Russian troops stationed in Transdniestria since Soviet times became peacekeeping troops, while Moldova called for their departure in subsequent years. After the war ended, both parties have intermittently negotiated to resolve the dispute. The armed conflict that began in Ukraine in 2014, a country bordering Transdniestria, raised alarms about potential impacts on Moldova and its own unresolved conflict.

Tension rose during the year, largely stemming from fears about the possible effects of the crisis in Ukraine and the worsening international struggle between Euro-Atlantic institutions, which attract Moldova, and Russia, which is aligned with Transdniestria. Pro-Russian political positions gained strength among some in Transdniestria. Thus, in March the parliamentary speaker of the de facto independent region, Mikhail Burla, sent Russia a request to annex Transdniestria. Parliamentary spokeswoman Irina Kubanskikh made statements to the same effect. Russia took no steps to annex Transdniestria, although several new cooperation agreements were signed in July that brought their mutual relations even closer, including in economic, commercial, transport and agricultural spheres. The agreement also permitted the increase of the Russian presence in Transdniestria. Russia's special representative for Transdniestria, Dmitry Rogozin, said that Russia would guarantee security in the region. Rogozin visited Transdniestria in May, a trip that created tension with Moldova. Meanwhile, the Moldovan government warned Russia against taking any step in the direction of annexing Transdniestria. In the context of the Ukrainian crisis, NATO expressed concern during the year about the heavy deployment of Russian troops near the eastern Ukrainian border, which it claimed was sufficient for invading Transdniestria. Thus, **the Moldovan government put its border forces on alert in May, alleging that the situation in Ukraine was deteriorating. The authorities in Transdniestria also put their forces on alert**, while Russia denounced the blockade imposed by Moldova and Ukraine on access to its troops in Transdniestria, which have undertaken a peacekeeping mission there since the end of the war in the 1990s. The signing of a political association agreement between Moldova and the EU in June was another source of tension, with Russia and Transdniestria criticising it and the Kremlin applying pressure in advance to prevent it from getting signed. After it was finalised, Russia imposed sanctions

Moldova and Transdniestria put their forces on alert in a context of rising regional tension due to the crisis in Ukraine

on Moldova, including the import of various products. Despite the rise in tension, the OSCE-mediated peace process remained active, although several rounds of negotiations were delayed over the course of the year. Moldova held elections in November. The pro-EU parties managed to hold on to power and renewed the coalition government, while the pro-Russian Party of Socialists, which began a campaign in March to hold a referendum for the country to join the Russian-backed customs union project, won the most votes with 20.51%, ahead of the pro-EU Liberal Democratic Party with 20.16% and the pro-Russian Communist Party with 17.48%.

Russia and Caucasus

Azerbaijan	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:

The former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan gained independence in 1991. Following this, its energy wealth (oil and gas) and strategic location in the South Caucasus (a region that has been a crossroads of old empires and new powers, historically serving as a source and corridor of raw materials) have made it a key country in the foreign policies of other countries regarding energy security and in terms of international geo-strategic rivalries. Nevertheless, the oil and gas-fuelled economic boom has not led to significant improvements in the overall welfare of its population. Ilham Aliyev has been the president of Azerbaijan since 2003, when he succeeded his father, Heydar Aliyev, the Soviet leader who became an Azerbaijan nationalist leader and who governed newly independent Azerbaijan between 1993 and 2003, amid criticism of authoritarianism. Ilham Aliyev's time in power has also been characterised by repression, corruption and human rights violations, including the intimidation of independent media outlets. Political instability, the repression by the police of anti-government demonstrations and accusations of electoral fraud have featured prominently in the post-Soviet era.

The situation worsened, with a wave of arrests and government repression against people linked to human rights advocacy, journalism, the political opposition, civil activism and the construction of ties with Armenian civil society. Many renowned figures were arrested, remanded in custody or sentenced to prison on charges such as vandalism, espionage, tax evasion, illegal business, weapons possession and many more, and were considered political prisoners by local and international NGOs. These figures included human rights activist Leyla Yunus, involved in civic diplomacy initiatives

between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, among other projects, who was arrested in July along with her husband, activist Arif Yunus. In October, the preventive detention of Leyla Yunus was extended until February and many organisations expressed alarm about her deteriorating health. Other figures arrested or persecuted during the period included the leader of the opposition party Musavay's youth wing, opposition activist Omar Mamedov, the founder of the Human Rights Club, Rasul Jafarov, human rights advocate Intigam Aliev, political activist Murad Adilov, journalist Seymur Hazi, journalist Khadija Ismayilova and human rights advocate Elcin Namazov, in addition to many other prominent individuals. There were also attacks on activists, like the assault in August on human rights advocate Ilgar Nasibov. Between October and December, several thousand people demonstrated against the regime of President Ilham Aliyev and demanded the release of political prisoners. Some international bodies like the Council of Europe and the OSCE expressed concern about the deteriorating internal situation in terms of human rights and urged the authorities to stop persecuting the activists, as well as to begin a dialogue between the government, political players and civil society. In the demonstration on 12 October, the opposition National Council of Democratic Forces called for the government to resign. A presidential decree in late December released over 80 people, some of whom were considered political prisoners by human rights organisations, which estimated there were around 100 in the country.

Government persecution of human rights advocates, activists, journalists and opposition politicians worsened in Azerbaijan

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

Summary:

The tension between the two countries regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh region, an enclave with an Armenian majority which is formally part of Azerbaijan but which enjoys de facto independence, lies in the failure to resolve the underlying issues of the armed conflict that took place between December 1991 and 1994. This began as an internal conflict between the region's self-defence militias and the Azerbaijan security forces over the sovereignty and control of Nagorno-Karabakh and gradually escalated into an inter-state war between Azerbaijan and neighbouring Armenia. The armed conflict, which claimed 20,000 lives and forced the displacement of 200,000 people, as well as enforcing the ethnic homogenisation of the population on either side of the ceasefire line, gave way to a situation of unresolved conflict in which the central issues are the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the return of the population, and which involves sporadic violations of the ceasefire.

The unresolved conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated several times during the year, demonstrating the chronic fragility of the ceasefire given the high levels of militarisation. Incidents occurred throughout the year. As in previous years, Armenian forces (from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh) and Azerbaijani forces blamed each other for hundreds of ceasefire violations. There was an increase in incidents at different times, like in January, with several fatalities, reports of military incursions and attempts at entry by groups opposed to the respective controlling forces, leading the OSCE Minsk Group to express great concern about the situation in the region and warn of the risks. The incidents throughout the year also affected civilians, like two Azerbaijani women and one girl injured by Armenian fire in the second quarter in the district of Tovuz, near Nagorno-Karabakh. There was further escalation in July and August, with a fresh crop of incidents. Thus, among other episodes, around 15 Azerbaijani soldiers and five Armenian troops were killed in the opening days of August, although some sources indicated that the toll could be higher than publicly admitted. **From January to August, around 30 people lost their lives. This figure corresponds to the total yearly toll in previous periods.** In addition, in July the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh denounced the actions of "saboteurs" who killed an Armenian soldier and injured the wife of another, as well as the abduction and killing of an Armenian teenager by Azerbaijani commandos. An Armenian mayor was also injured when a land mine exploded under his vehicle while travelling in Nagorno-Karabakh. Likewise, a vehicle belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross was shot while attending the local population in the border area. Several civilians were affected by exploding land mines throughout the year. Another rise in tension came at the end of the year when **Azerbaijan shot down a military helicopter from Nagorno-Karabakh, killing all three aboard.** Azerbaijan claimed that the vehicle had tried to attack its positions, so it responded in self-defence, whereas Armenia described the incident as unprecedented provocation and denied that there had been a previous attempted attack by Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite the rise in tensions over the course of the year, the dialogue process remained active, with various meetings, including presidential summits, although no progress was made.[28]

---

28. See the summary on Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) in chapter 3 (Peace Processes).

Georgia (Abkhazia)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Georgia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia

Summary:

The precarious security situation in the region is due to the failure to resolve the underlying issues that led to armed conflict (1992-1994) between Abkhaz local leaders, backed by Russia, and the Georgian government, respectively defending the independence of the region and the country's territorial integrity, in the context of the break-up of the USSR. Following the war, which forced the displacement of some 200,000 Georgians, the territory of Abkhazia has functioned as a de facto state. Despite the existence of a ceasefire agreement, a negotiation process and international presence throughout these years (UN observers and Russian peacekeeping forces), the situation remained tense, fuelled by geo-strategical issues and aspects related to the balance of power in the Caucasus between Georgia and Russia. The situation escalated into an international war that began in August 2008 in South Ossetia, after which the Abkhaz forces consolidated their hold of Abkhazia and Russia formally recognised its independence. Frequent security incidents, the uncertain status of the territory, Russia's role and the cumulative impact of the two wars remain constant sources of tension.

It was a turbulent year for Abkhazia, with an internal political and social crisis that led to protests and a change of government, which further deepened relations with Russia through a new bilateral treaty that Georgia viewed as annexation. Thus, internal dynamics in Abkhazia were just as important during the year as the chronic dispute between Georgia and Abkhazia over its status. The military security situation linked to the unresolved conflict was largely calm and stable, in line with previous periods. The co-mediators of the international dialogue process said the same. Nevertheless, some incidents did occur, such as those partly linked to security measures taken by Russia during the Winter Olympic Games held in the southern city of Sochi in February. In this regard, Georgia expressed concern about what it considered displacement of the border area with Russia 11 kilometres inside Abkhazia. The Georgian government also complained about Russian reconnaissance flights in Georgian airspace, which it described as provocative. Tblisi claims that around 1,000 such flights have been conducted since the war with Russia ended in 2008. Likewise, fences and other obstacles built along the administrative border by Russian and Abkhaz forces continue to be an object of concern due to the

Russia and Abkhazia signed an agreement deepening their relations in matters such as defence, trade and customs that Georgia denounced as Russian annexation of the region while internal political crisis gripped Abkhazia

impact they have on the movement of the population on both sides of the border.

The second source of tension, linked to the internal dimension in Abkhazia, became more important with the political and social crisis unleashed in the second quarter. **In April, the opposition coalition Coordinating Council presented a list of demands that included the resignation of the prime minister and his cabinet**, constitutional amendments to reduce the powers of the president and the resignation of President Alexander Ankvab. The platform had been created a year before as a reaction critical of policies granting Abkhaz identification documents to the Georgian population of Abkhazia, alleging that the Georgian minority was not obeying the requirement imposed by Abkhazia to renounce their Georgian passport in order to obtain Abkhaz documents. In 2014, the group expanded its agenda to address general domestic and governance issues. The platform stepped up its pressure and in May, some of its followers **seized the office of the president, causing Ankvab to flee and denounce an attempted coup d'état.** There were demonstrations both opposing and supporting Ankvab and Russia sent the government's chief of relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Vladislav Surkov, to the region. The Coordinating Council increased its demands. Finally, the local legislature passed a motion of censure against Ankvab, in a vote abstained by his party allies, and declared him unfit to remain in office. Ankvab ended up resigning within the first few days of July, but denounced a coup d'état. The prime minister also stepped down and loyal MPs were expelled or resigned. Russia viewed the outcome of the crisis favourably.

Held in August, the early presidential election was won by Raul Khajimba, one of the leaders of the Coordinating Council protests, with 50.57% of the vote (70% turnout). The election was not recognised internationally and relations deepened with Russia, creating new uncertainty regarding the Georgian minority in Abkhazia. Thus, **the acting authorities revoked the Abkhaz passports of 22,787 citizens in the districts of Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchire, where the Georgian minority lives, and also removed their names from the electoral roll**. The measures came just as the Abkhaz, Ossetian and Russian delegations were attempting to remove the issue of displaced people and refugees from the negotiating agenda, who are mostly Georgian civilians coming from Abkhazia displaced by the war. However, the issue remained on the agenda in the negotiating round in December.[29] The closer relationship with Russia desired by the new authorities and Moscow alike materialised with the signature in late November of **a new treaty between Russia and Abkhazia that substantially deepened relations between them**, already

---

29. See the summary on Georgia (Abkhazia) in chapter 3 (Peace Processes).

close since the formal recognition and signing of treaties on different matters in 2008 after the Russo-Georgian War. The proposed draft of the treaty created tension and internal criticism in Abkhazia due to the alleged loss of sovereignty it entailed. The final treaty included various Abkhaz proposals, though they were not enough to allay the concerns of part of the population. The text included aspects like the creation of a common defence and security zone, collective defence clauses and the formation of a group of combined forces, addressing multiple areas such as trade, customs, citizenship, security and defence. **The Georgian government blasted the move, which it described as a step towards Russia's "de facto" annexation of Abkhazia**. Russia said that the agreement did not jeopardise the Geneva talks process, which brings together Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia and is brokered by the UN, OSCE and EU. Thus relations between Georgia and Russia continued to be marked by antagonism, which was partly made worse by the signing of the aforementioned treaty and pro-EU and pro-NATO countries' growing distrust of Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. Georgia signed an association agreement with the European Union and NATO granted Georgia a "substantive package" at the NATO summit in September that includes the creation of a NATO training centre in Georgia, occasional exercises conducted by the alliance on Georgian soil and support for developing defence capabilities, among other aspects. The announcement was harshly criticised by Russia and the breakaway regions.

Georgia (South Ossetia)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Georgia, Government of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia

Summary:

The socio-political crisis in the region is related to the failure to resolve the underlying issues that led to armed conflict between the Ossetian and Georgian forces in 1991-1992. Since then, the two states have maintained their respective stances in favour of independence from or unification with Russia and regarding the territorial integrity of Georgia, while failing to overcome the impasse in the de facto independent region via negotiation. In turn, the internal conflict has been fuelled by tension between Georgia and Russia –related to geo-strategic and balance of power issues in the southern region of the Caucasus–, which in 2008 escalated into a brief war that began in South Ossetia and later spilled over into Abkhazia and areas under Georgian control. Following the last war and the forced displacement of most of the Georgian population that resided in South Ossetia, the Ossetian position was strengthened. Russia recognised its independence and maintained its military presence in the region. The issue of displaced persons from the 1990s and the second war, the status of the territory and sporadic violations of the ceasefire continue to be sources of tension.

The situation in the region remained largely stable and calm, with some low-intensity incidents, while relations between Georgia and South Ossetia deteriorated at the end of the year with the announcement of a forthcoming deepening of relations between the region and Russia. The incidents during 2014 included the arrests of Georgian citizens, such as three journalists of Georgian origin detained by Russian troops in South Ossetia in April, who were later released, and around 20 Georgian residents arrested in various episodes in May on charges of crossing the border illegally while harvesting. In this regard, issues like access to farmland and power supply in towns on both sides of the border were on the agenda of the meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), which periodically brings together all parties to the conflict in South Ossetia as part of the peace process. The incidents also included Georgia's complaints about Russian reconnaissance flights over its airspace, including a Russian military helicopter that flew over Georgian police stations in 19 towns near the South Ossetian border. The Georgian government also denounced the construction of fences and other obstacles along stretches of the border, which has an impact on the living conditions of people on both sides and also caused the international co-mediators some concern.

In the domestic arena, in late January South Ossetian President Leonid Tibilov dismissed the government, citing inefficiency. **The early parliamentary elections in early June brought the opposition United Ossetia to power. In January, the party had called for a referendum on union with** Russia. Its leader, Anatoly Bibilov, was appointed speaker of Parliament. At the end of the year, South Ossetia and Russia announced that they were preparing a new treaty of alliance to deepen their relations. The announcement came shortly after the signing in November of a treaty of alliance and integration between Russia and Abkhazia amidst chronic antagonism between Russia and Georgia, which was increased by the continental and international crisis between Moscow and the West over Ukraine. Thus, while Abkhazia and South Ossetia chose to strengthen their relations with the Kremlin, including on defence and security matters, Georgia signed an association agreement with the EU and NATO approved a package for Georgia that brings it closer to the organisation and includes the creation of a NATO training centre in Georgia, among other aspects. Russia and South Ossetia planned to sign a new treaty in early 2015. According to the media, the draft document covered the integration of different South Ossetian areas of competence like defence, security, customs and more under the umbrella of Russian ministries and agencies. Likewise, in December South Ossetian President Leonid Tibilov said that he had asked Moscow to consider the possibility of South Ossetia's total absorption by Russia. Despite the difficult relations between Georgia, South Ossetia and Russia, the peace process (in which Abkhazia is also involved) remained active, with different rounds held during the year under the mediation of the UN, OSCE and EU, though no significant progress was made in that regard.

Russia	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups from the Northern Caucasus

Summary:

Russia, the country with the largest surface in the world and vast natural resources –mainly gas and oil– succeeded the USSR in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet block. Since then it has gone through complex stages, including a process of economic and political reforms, privatisation and liberalisation during the first years, under Boris Yeltsin in the nineties, who strengthened the centres of corporate power; and a transition towards an authoritarian state, mainly during the stages when Vladimir Putin was the President (2000-2008 and 2012 onwards). Faced with the unconstitutionality of his third mandate, his ally Dimitry Medvedev succeeded him as President from 2008 to 2012, generating hopes for a greater democratisation, but these never became consolidated. Medvedev was appointed prime minister in 2012 after Putin became president again. From the point of view of internal affairs, since taking power, Putin strengthened the vertical political control of the institution and media and dismantled the power gained by oligarchs during Yeltsin's period, some of who support the liberal opposition. In parallel, the restrictions on human rights and freedoms have cut back the margin for political contestation. However, in 2012 there were many mobilisations against alleged irregularities in the elections and a demand for political opening. Other axes of internal tension include the Islamist violence in the northern Caucasus –stemming from the transformation and regionalisation of the violence that affected Chechnya in the nineties war– and that also resulted in terrorist attacks and violence in other parts of Russia.

Ongoing tension in Russia was linked to various sources, including the extension of violence related to groups with ties to the insurgency in the northern Caucasus and attacks carried out elsewhere in Russia, but levels of violence dropped compared to the year before. In 2014, **Russia rolled out unprecedented security measures for the Winter Olympic Games held in the southern city of Sochi from 7 to 23 February. The insurgency in the northern Caucasus had threatened an attack on the Olympic Games**, but it did not come to pass. However, human rights and environmentalist activists and ethnic Circassians staged some limited protests and were also persecuted by the authorities. The Circassians also carried out protests in other parts of the northern Caucasus in an attempt to give visibility to criticism that the Olympic Games were being held on ancestral Circassian soil. The Circassian population was massacred in the 19th century and there has

been no process of historical memory. Moreover, some incidents of violence took place during the year. **Six civilians were shot dead in the southern region of Stavropol in two days in early January**. The insurgency in Kabardino-Balkaria claimed responsibility for some of the attacks. Meanwhile, **government repression against human rights organisations and activists worsened.** It had already deteriorated since a law was passed in 2012 forcing NGOs to register as "foreign agents", a term with highly negative connotations similar to "spy" or "traitor" in Russia, if they are involved in "political activities" (defined in an excessively vague manner) and receive international funding. Since then, the affected NGOs, which work in areas such as electoral supervision to human rights in general, advocacy for the rights of the LGTBI population, development and many others, joined together to reject the law and many of them faced lawsuits. In June 2014, the Russian authorities approved parliamentary changes to the law, authorising the ministry of justice to register them unilaterally as foreign agents without the need for the organisations' consent. Thus, in 2014, several of them were unilaterally classified as foreign agents. Some decided to close before receiving the label. NGOs officially registered in this way included organisations like Memorial (the Moscow chapter, as the one in Saint Petersburg was closed), JURIX, Golos, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia and the news agency Memo.ru. In total, 28 were registered by force and two voluntarily, according to a report by Human Rights Watch.[30] Local activists warned of the serious impact on their work due to the associated stigmatisation. For example, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia told Amnesty International that they had received less calls on their direct phone line, which they attributed to users' fears that their calls were being monitored.[31] Moreover, the headquarters of some organisations suffered acts of vandalism. Analysts said that another potential source of internal tension was the economic crisis battering Russia and the impact of the economic sanctions on its economy.

Russia (Chechnya)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, System Internal
Main parties:	Federal Russian Government, Government of Chechnya, armed opposition groups

Summary:

After the so-called first Chechen War (1994-1996), which confronted the Russian Federation with the Chechen Republic mainly with regard to the independence of

30. Human Rights Watch, "Russia: Government against Rights Groups", *HRW*, 18 January 2015, http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/18/russia-government-against-rights-groups.
31. Amnesty International, "Lawfare to destroy 'enemies within' – Russian NGO tagged as 'foreign agents'", *Amnesty International*, 9 October 2014, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/lawfare-destroy-enemies-within-russian-ngos-tagged-foreign-agents-2014-10-09.

Chechnya (self proclaimed in 1991 within the framework of the decomposition of the USSR) and which ended in a peace treaty that did not resolve the status of Chechnya, the conflict re-appeared in 1999, in the so-called second Chechen War, triggered off by some incursions into Dagestan by Chechen rebels and attacks in Russian cities. In a pre-election context and with an anti-terrorist discourse, the Russian army entered Chechnya again to fight against the moderate pro-independent regime which arose after the first war and which was, at the same time, devastated by internal disputes and growing criminality. In 2001 Russia considered the war as being finished, without an agreement or a definitive victory, and in 2003 favoured a state of autonomy and a Chechen pro-Russian administration. However the confrontations continued in following years, although in the form of low-level violence. In parallel, there was a Islamisation of the Chechen rebel ranks while the insurgency was increasingly of a regional nature, especially affecting neighbouring Dagestan. Furthermore, the civilian population faces serious human rights violations, largely committed by local security forces.

Tension in Chechnya escalated in the final quarter of 2014, with attacks unprecedented in recent years, whereas the situation had previously remained mostly stable in terms of military security. The toll for the year included 52 killed and 62 wounded, according to the independent portal Caucasian Knot. Meanwhile, the trend of serious human rights violations continued along with the authoritarianism of the regime presided over by Ramzan Kadyrov, with specific impacts on gender. The first nine months bore witness to low-intensity incidents that claimed several lives as part of the conflict pitting the Islamist insurgency of the northern Caucasus against the security forces. **In March, the rebels announced the death of their highest leader, the Chechen national Dokka (or Doku) Umarov, which had first been reported in September 2013. Umarov was succeeded by Ali Abu Mukhammad (Aliaskhab Kebekov), an ethnic Avar from Dagestan. Thus, for the first time the top leadership of the insurgency moved from Chechnya to another northern Caucasian country**, thereby reflecting the dynamics of recent years that has made Dagestan the epicentre of violence in the region, with several hundred people killed each year. However, far from suggesting that the rebellion was dormant in Chechnya, violence rose there in the final months of the year. In addition, there were divisions within the insurgency in Chechnya and the entire northern Caucasus regarding loyalties to different leaderships. At the end of the year, commanders from Chechnya and other republics announced that they were following the leader of the jihadist group Islamic State (ISIS), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, whereas Ali Abu Mukhammad claimed to be the sole authority in the northern Caucasus, generating uncertainty about the near future. Moreover, it emerged that many combatants of Chechen origin are fighting in

Violent incidents increased in Chechnya and various commanders of the Chechen insurgency pledged loyalty to the armed jihadist group ISIS

the different factions of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, many of them Chechen refugees in Europe. In September, one of the leaders of these factions, Abu Omar al-Shishani, offered a financial reward for whomever killed the Chechen president, though Kadyrov declared al-Shishani dead in November.

In relation to the rise in violence within Chechnya, there was a suicide attack in the capital, Grozny, on City Day, 5 October, near a concert hall where the event was being commemorated. The attack killed five police officers and wounded 12 other people. **There was also a large-scale attack in Grozny in early December that killed 14 police officers, 11 insurgents and one civilian, and another in which 36 agents were wounded**. The insurgents opened fire on the security forces after they tried to stop the vehicles in which they were travelling, and later took refuge in the Press House and a school, where the fighting continued. Exceptional "counter-terrorism operation" measures were imposed. According to Caucasian Knot, it was the fifth most serious attack in the entire northern Caucasus since 2004. The insurgency claimed responsibility for the attack, alleging that the purpose was to avenge the persecution of women that wear hijab. It took place in the context of repression against men and women perceived as followers of the Salafist strain of Islam, mass arrests had been conducted in Dagestan and Chechnya. Following these events, **the Chechen president announced collective punishment for the family members of the suspected insurgents, including the demolition of their homes and expulsion from Chechnya**. In December, media outlets reported that the houses of several civilian family members had been burned down. The Committee Against Torture was set on fire in retaliation after its chairman, Igor Kayapin, asked the Russian attorney general and the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation to study whether collective punishment could violate Russian law. Kayapin also suffered other acts of intimidation.

The action taken against the Committee Against Torture was just part of the overall atmosphere of human rights violations committed by the regime. The international NGOs Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch urged the Russian authorities to end the persecution against human rights advocates in Chechnya. Thus, the creation of the Centre for Human Rights Monitoring and Protection was announced in southern Russia in May in a context in which organisations and activists from the northern Caucasus, and especially from Chechnya, face serious obstacles in carrying out their reporting and support work. Over the course of 2014, the activist and president of the NGO Assembly of Caucasian Nations, Ruslan Kutaev, was sentenced to four years in prison on charges of possessing illegal drugs. Memorial and international organisations denounced the sentence as politically motivated. Moreover, in March it emerged that around 40,000 people coming from Russia, most

of them originally from Chechnya, requested asylum in industrialised countries in 2013, according to UNHCR. This figure was 76% higher than in 2012. Also during 2014, the authorities stepped up their persecution and harassment of Salafists, as occurred in the neighbouring republic of Dagestan, including by arresting women perceived as such. Bearing in mind that the Chechen authorities have promoted policies and measures against women in recent years (imposing dress codes and encouraging action against those that break them) and that persecution has been growing against civilians linked to Salafist branches of Islam, it emerged that the Chechen president had tasked the security forces with arresting women wearing hijabs that cover the lower part of their face, registering them and even removing their underwear, according to information received by a local NGO. According to this source, Kadyrov also ordered the arrest of young people with a "Wahhabi" appearance, in reference to Salafism. In 2007, Kadyrov made it mandatory for women to cover their heads with a headscarf in public buildings. Finally, the European Court of Human Rights issued new rulings against Russia during the year for committing violence against civilians in Chechnya.

Russia (Ingushetia)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↓
Type:	System, Identity, Government Internal
Main parties:	Russian Federal Government, Government of Ingushetia, armed opposition groups (Jamaat Ingush)

Summary:
The low intensity violence from which Ingushetia has suffered since the beginning of the 21st century confronts the local and federal security forces and a network of armed cells of an Islamic nature, known as the Ingush Jamaat and integrated into the Caucasus Front (a movement that brings together the various rebel forces from the north of the Caucasus). With origins that date back to the participation of the Ingush combatants in the first Chechnya war (1994-1996), since 2002, the Ingush rebel forces were restructured on territorial lines, causing a campaign of local violence which, without the pro-national drive of Chechnya, sought the creation of an Islamic state in the Caucasus. The beginning of the violence in Ingushetia occurred in a parallel way to the presidency in the republic of Murat Zyazikov, to whose term of office (2002-2008) numerous problems of violations of human rights, corruption, poverty and a climate of anarchy and social and political tension were attributed. The Ingush rebel forces periodically attack the military and civil staff of the Russian and local forces. Between 2008 and 2010, the violence increased and from 2011, it significantly subsided.

Unlike in Dagestan and Chechnya, tension lessened over the conflict between the insurgency and security forces and the security situation was largely stable, with few incidents. Still, **around 20 people were killed and 15 were wounded in clashes and attacks between the Islamist insurgency and the security forces**. Incidents included the **shooting death of the top leader of the insurgency in Ingushetia, Arthur Getagazhev**, which triggered a special security service operation in the town of Sagopshi (Malgobek district). Four other insurgents and two other people were killed in the "counter-terrorist" operation. Some experts said that the change in local leadership may have led to a reduction in violence, as it had to readjust, though it had not ceased to be a menace. Other incidents, clashes and attacks took place throughout the year.

South-east Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Government Internalised internal
Main parties:	Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, high representative of the international community

Summary:
The former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited by Bosnians, Serbs and Croats, was caught up in a war between 1992 and 1995 (during the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation) in which the country's Serbian political elite, with support from Serbia, as well as Bosniak and Croatian political figures, mobilised their respective populations and forces on the basis of ethnic issues and political plans for self determination which were mutually incompatible. The Dayton peace agreement led to the creation of a fragile state divided into two entities: the Republika Srpska (with a Serb majority and 49% of the territory); and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (with a Bosniak and Croatian population and 51% of the territory), both of which enjoyed wide-ranging powers, including military power. Political tension among the nationalist elites of the three communities, and between these elites and the international bodies with the mandate of overseeing the implementation of the agreements, along with the legacy of the impact of the conflict on the population and country, remain active sources of conflict.

Social and political tension increased at the start of the year, with popular protests in the Bosniak-Croat Federation against corruption and in defence of improvements to the quality of life, while the situation remained relatively stable for the rest of the year. The demonstrations began in Tuzla in February against the collapse of several privatised state companies. Protests were sparked in over 30 cities across the federation that lasted various days, whereas the situation in the Republika Srpska remained stable.

Some protests resulted from violent clashes and incidents between demonstrators and police, as well as attacks on cantonal and state government buildings. Hundreds of people were injured. Analysts said that socio-economic and political issues drove the protests, not sectarian ones, and were directed against their politicians' performance. Still, political leaders in the Republika Srpska denounced that the protests were aimed at destabilising it. Four cantonal governments resigned under pressure from the demonstrations, including the one in Tuzla. Public discussion forums were formed in various towns to present the government with their demands. The cantonal legislature of Sarajevo accepted the local forum's demands to form a government of experts and make cuts in lawmakers' salaries. Other protests were staged in the following months, such as smaller ones before the federal Parliament in May, calling for the resignation of the government and the fulfilment of demands raised in the public forums.

However, for the greater part of the year, the situation remained stable across the country, affected by many challenges in terms of human security, gender equity and reconciliation, among others. The European Union announced a shift in its approach to the country towards a greater emphasis on financial and legal issues, presenting it in part as a response to public demands. In September, the International Monetary Fund announced that the upcoming programme was contingent upon the implementation of economic reforms, contrasting with the opposition to privatisation expressed by the demonstrations in February. Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina held general and presidential elections peacefully in October. The SDA, HDZ and FD reached a post-election agreement to govern the Bosniak-Croat Federation, while the ruling SNSD won a majority in the Republika Srpska, with Milorad Dodik's re-election as president and his ally Zeljka Cvijanovic appointed prime minister in a government led by the SNSD and consisting of three other parties. In turn, the tripartite state presidency took office in mid-November.

Over 30 cities across the Bosniak-Croat Federation were the scene of public demonstrations in February to protest public management and to promote greater social welfare

Serbia – Kosovo	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Government International[32]
Main parties:	Government of Serbia, government of 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.

The situation in Kosovo worsened during the year due to the climate of internal political tension, pending issues in the normalisation of relations with Serbia and reconciliation and transitional justice. In political terms, tensions rose due to political disputes regarding issues like the future representation of the minorities of Kosovo in Parliament and the criticism of the Kosovar opposition to the lack of results in talks with Serbia, with some groups arguing that the situation in northern Kosovo had deteriorated and that Serbian paramilitary structures should not be disbanded, despite the government's assertion that these and parallel legal structures were being dismantled and the municipalities had already been dissolved. Moreover, the disagreements and uncertainty about the future of the quota of seats reserved for minorities, in force since 2008, led the Serbian minority in the Parliament of Kosovo to threaten to abstain from voting on constitutional amendments required for the Kosovar government to implement its decision to transform the current security forces into the Kosovar Armed Forces. These plans were announced by Pristina in March and heavily criticised by Serbia. As such, the vote on the future military of the country was postponed in May. The disagreements and parliamentary paralysis led the ruling DPK to call for early elections in June. The DPK carried 30.38% of the votes (37 seats), the DLK won 25.24% (30 seats), Vetevendosje received 13.59% (16 seats) and the AAK obtained 9.54% (11 seats).

The post-electoral climate did not improve and the DPK and opposition parties competed to form a

---

32. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered "international" since although its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a State by more than a hundred of countries.

government (the DLK, the AAK and Nisma Per Kosoven formed a coalition after the elections and reached out to Vetevendosje). **The power dispute, which was also fought in court, prolonged the government paralysis until November, when the DPK and the DLK finally announced an agreement for a coalition government** that began in December. The leader of the DLK, Isa Mustafa, was appointed the new prime minister, while the former prime minister and leader of the DPK, Hashim Thaci, was named deputy prime minister and foreign minister. The year-long political paralysis affected other spheres and delayed the approval of legislative changes to establish a new special tribunal with international justices to judge alleged war crimes committed by the Albanian guerrilla KLA in the 1990s. The new tribunal was approved by Parliament in April, despite harsh criticism from senior Kosovo Albanian officials, including the prime minister and former KLA commander Hashim Thaci, but its enactment depended on legislative reforms. As such, the chief prosecutor of the EU's Special Investigative Task Force, Clint Williamson, declared that there is enough evidence to formally charge certain former senior KLA officials with crimes against humanity committed against minorities and Albanians opposed to the KLA after the end of the war in Kosovo. The documentary evidence includes killings, kidnappings, sexual violence, forced disappearance, detention in illegal camps in Kosovo and Albania, other forms of inhumane treatment, forced displacement and the destruction and desecration of churches and other religious sites. Williamson warned of an atmosphere of intimidation, especially for witnesses. Williamson's term ended in August and he was replaced in office by David Schwendiman of the United States in November.

The challenges of intercommunal relations continued to be evident, especially in Mitrovica. Only 5,134 of the 28,000 people that could vote in the elections in Serb-majority North Mitrovica did so (the local elections in November 2013 in Kosovo were repeated in North Mitrovica in February after the mayor-elect refused to take office because it implicitly entailed acceptance of the independence of Kosovo). **Several security incidents took place throughout the year. Kosovo Albanian protests against Serbian barricades set up on the bridge dividing Mitrovica led to incidents that injured 13 police officers and 21 demonstrators**. Some unexplained killings also occurred. The police intercepted explosives allegedly for use in a bomb attack in the vehicle of a Serbian citizen. Internationally-related developments included allegations that the EU mission in Kosovo (EULEX) was guilty of corruption and bribery arose in the local press, as did complaints of a prosecutor working with the mission, who was removed from office. The EU announced an investigation into the allegations. The former prosecutor claimed that EULEX had ignored previous warnings.

2.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

Egypt	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the Armed Forces, National Salvation Front coalition, Salafist al-Nour party, Tamarod movement, April 6 movement, Islamist coalition Alliance to Support Legitimacy

Summary:
Within the framework of the so-called "Arab revolts", popular mobilisations in Egypt led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak at the beginning of 2011. During three decades, Mubarak had headed an authoritarian government characterised by the accumulation of powers around the Government National Democratic Party, the Armed Forces and the corporate elites; as well as by an artificial political plurality, with constant allegations of fraud in the elections, harassment policies towards the opposition and the illegalisation of the main dissident movement, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The fall of Mubarak's regime gave way to an unstable political landscape, where the struggle between the sectors demanding for pushing towards the goals of the revolt, Islamist groups aspiring to a new position of power and the military class seeking guarantees to keep their influence and privileges in the new institutional scheme became evident. In this context, and after an interim government led by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the electoral triumph of the MB in the parliamentarian and presidential elections seemed to open a new stage in the country in 2012. However, the ousting of the Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, when he had just been in power for one year, opened new questions on the future of the country in a context of persistent violence, polarisation, and political repression and increasing control by military sectors.

Egypt continued to experience great internal upheaval, continuous demonstrations, clashes between dissident groups and government forces, persecution of both Islamist and non-Islamist opposition groups and the growing influence of the military in political life, which has intensified since the coup conducted against the government of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in mid-2013. The various acts of violence that occurred in the country throughout 2014 caused the deaths of over 100 people. Beside the growing activity of armed insurgent groups based in the Sinai Peninsula, which partially justified their actions as a response to Cairo's policies of harassing Islamists,[33] many people were killed during anti-government protests. **Some of the most**

---

33. See the summary on Egypt (Sinai) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

serious incidents took place at the beginning of the year, coinciding with protests to mark the anniversary of the uprising against the regime of Hosni Mubarak (a total of 49 people lost their lives on 25 January) and as part of demonstrations that led to clashes with security forces shortly before a referendum was held on the new Constitution, in which around 30 people died. The referendum was held amidst opposition groups' calls for a boycott, including the banned MB and the Islamist coalition Alliance to Support Legitimacy. According to official data, the text of the Constitution was approved by 98% of the votes with 39% turnout of the electorate. Irregularities were denounced during the vote. Several groups questioned some aspects of the new Constitution, particularly measures that grant greater influence to the military, like the ability of the Armed Forces to try civilians, the appointment of military officers to the ministry of defence and the continuity of military budgets free of civilian scrutiny. **The renewed and growing role of the military in Egyptian political life became even more explicit after the presidential election was won by the general that led the coup, former Defence Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**. After being promoted Marshall of the Armed Forces in January, al-Sisi resigned from the military to run in the election in May against a single rival, the politician Hamdeen Sabahi. The electoral authorities extended the election to two days in an attempt to achieve a larger turnout, which according to government figures reached 46%, as well as to give greater legitimacy to predictable results that handed victory to al-Sisi with 96.9% of the vote.

The new leader gave no signs of a desire to build bridges with those critical of him and in fact implemented policies to persecute dissidents. Throughout 2014, the campaign to harass groups linked to the MB continued to be marked by the detention of many people (according to estimates in the media, over 16,000 people suspected of supporting the MB had been arrested following the coup), as well as mass trials and death sentences for hundreds for their alleged involvement in acts of violence in recent years, including the spiritual leader of the MB, Mohammed Badie. Other court rulings ordered the dissolution of the MB's Freedom and Justice Party and the Alliance to Support Legitimacy, which united groups close to the MB and other Islamists. The persecution of non-Islamist members of the opposition also intensified and affected iconic groups and people of the revolt against Mubarak, including the proscribed April 6 Movement and leaders like Alaa Abdelfatah, one of the leaders of the protests in Tahrir Square, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for participating in an unauthorised demonstration. Hundreds of students were also reportedly arrested after incidents on university campuses. Altogether, this situation led various international human rights organisations to denounce restrictions on freedoms in the country,

The situation in Egypt continued to be characterised by a highly tense atmosphere, periodic acts of violence and the growing influence of the military in the political life of the country

harassment of the opposition and the extensive use of force by the Egyptian security forces in their campaign against dissidents. Amnesty International reported that the Egyptian legal system was threatening to turn into another piece in the authorities' machinery of repression, while Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report citing senior government officials, including al-Sisi, as responsible for the deaths of demonstrators following the coup against the MB government. **Egypt was also heavily criticised by the UN Human Rights Council, which demanded an investigation into abuses by security forces and the release of political prisoners**. Notably, during the fourth quarter, after an attack that caused the death of 33 soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula in October, the government expanded the powers of the Egyptian Army, including granting military tribunals the jurisdiction to try civilians. In this context, at the end of 2014, over 800 people had been referred to military courts. Near the end of the year, the government also finalised the drafting of a new electoral law, which drew criticism for being created without consulting the parties and for allowing the return of leaders linked to Mubarak's former National Democratic Party (NDP). Previously, a court ruling had lifted the ban on members of the NDP from participating in local and parliamentary elections and another court decision in November dropped charges against Mubarak for the deaths of protestors during the revolt of 2011. The legislative elections are scheduled for March 2015.

Iraq (Kurdistan)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Territory, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran

Summary:

Concentrated in the northern part of Iraq, the Kurds represent between 15 and 20% of the country's entire population. Since the creation of the state of Iraq and after the unfulfilled promises of an independent Kurdish state in the region, the Kurdish population has experienced a difficult fit within Iraq and suffered severe repression. In 1992, after the end of the Gulf War, the establishment of a no-fly zone in northern Iraq laid the foundations for creating the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The Kurds' experience with self-government was strengthened when Saddam Hussein's regime was toppled in 2003 and won recognition in the federal scheme embodied in the 2005 Iraqi Constitution. Since then, different interpretations of the rights and responsibilities of each party have stoked tension between Erbil and Baghdad. The strain has mainly been over the status of the so-called "disputed territories"

and control of energy resources. More recently, the Syrian Civil War and the development of the armed conflict in Iraq have affected the dynamics of this tension, rekindling discussion about the prospects of a possible independent Kurdish state.

The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan was directly influenced by the general tumult in the country and the advance of the radical armed group Islamic State (ISIS) towards territory administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the middle of the year.[34] The events influenced the dynamics of the relationship between Erbil and Baghdad, which in the first few months of 2014 continued to be characterised by disagreements on issues such as the management of energy resources. **In May, both administrations faced off over the KRG's decision to sell oil through a pipeline linking Kurdish territory to the Turkish port of Ceyhan, despite fierce opposition from the government of Nouri al-Maliki**. The authorities in Baghdad complained about Turkey and filed a formal complaint with the International Chamber of Commerce in order to block the sale of this oil. Additionally, there were some important episodes of violence that affected Kurdish interests during the first quarter, such as a suicide attack on the party headquarters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Khanaqin (a Kurdish-majority city northeast of Baghdad) where around 30 people died in May. Many others died weeks later in another bomb attack on Kurdish party offices. However, the most destabilising events occurred as part of the ISIS offensive against Mosul and other parts of northern Iraq in June. **Faced with the advance of the jihadist group and the withdrawal of Iraqi troops, Kurdish security forces (peshmergas) mobilised to halt the ISIS combatants and ensure control of important places near the KRG's territory, including Kirkuk**. The Kurdish authorities consolidated their control over Kirkuk, a petrol-rich city and one of the main places of dispute between Baghdad and Erbil. The Kurdish forces were perceived as better trained and organised to deal with the threat posed by ISIS and became the preferred recipients of international financial aid, arms and training. The assault on the Yazidi community and the risk that ISIS might advance towards Erbil, where important Western companies and interests are based, led to renewed US military intervention in the region in August. With US air support, peshmergas and Iraqi Army units recaptured strategic sites like the Mosul Dam and the town of Amerli. The KRG's security forces also played a prominent role in the fight against ISIS in Kurdish-majority areas in Syria like the emblematic city of Kobane.[35]

Amidst this convulsion and the simultaneous expansion of Kurdish control in northern Iraq, various

Kurdish leaders stressed that for practical purposes, the borders had already changed and the president of the KRG, Massoud Barzani, announced his intention to hold a referendum on the independence of Kurdish territory from Iraq. This approach received a harsh response from al-Maliki's government, which accused the KRG of collaborating with ISIS. After Kurdish ministers refused to attend meetings with the central government, al-Maliki dismissed Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari. This scenario led several experts to study the possibilities of an independent Kurdish state, while underlining the different obstacles that it would face, including US resistance to the partition of Iraq, the difficulties in setting limits for a potential Kurdish polity, Turkey's fears and the usual divisions within the Kurdish leadership.[36] Despite intense discussions about the subject in the middle of the year, the Kurdish authorities decided to collaborate with the political process on the federal level after al-Maliki left office in August, after eight years in power. Postponing their desire for a referendum, Zebari and other Kurdish leaders joined the national unity government in order to focus their efforts on fighting ISIS and managing the security crisis. Still, it must be mentioned that Kurdish participation in the new political scene in Iraq was conditioned by a series of requirements, including addressing key issues like the control of gas and oil reserves, the sharing of oil revenue between Erbil and Baghdad and the future of the "disputed territories". Thus, at the end of the year an agreement was announced between the KRG and the federal government according to which the Kurdish authorities promised to deliver 250,000 barrels per day to be sold by Baghdad, while another 300,000 would be channelled through the oil pipeline running between the KRG and Turkey. Moreover, Baghdad would resume delivery of 17% of the oil revenue to the KRG's budget. Notably, one of the consequences of the intensification of the conflict in Iraq and the advance of ISIS was the arrival of many thousands of people to KRG-controlled territory, including both internally displaced people from other parts of Iraq and refugees from Syria. According to data from the KRG's ministry of planning and IOM, nearly one million Iraqis sought refuge on Kurdish soil between January and December 2014.

Israel – Syria, Lebanon	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	System, Resources, Territory International

---

34. See the summary on Iraq in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
35. See the summary on Syria-Turkey in this chapter.
36. See Joost Hiltermann, "Kurdish Independence: Harder Than It Looks", *The New York Times Review of Books*, 10 July 2014, http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/jul/10/kurdish-independence-harder-than-it-looks/, and Serhun Al, "Debating a Kurdish State", *Sada*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12 August 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=56374&solr_hilite=.

Main parties:	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Lebanese group Hezbollah and its armed wing (Islamic Resistance)

Summary:

The backdrop to this situation of tension is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its consequences in the region. On the one hand, the presence of thousands of Palestinian refugees who settled in Lebanon from 1948, together with the leadership of the PLO in 1979, led Israel to carry out constant attacks in southern Lebanon until it occupied the country in 1982. The founding of Hezbollah, the armed Shiite group, in the early 1980s in Lebanon, with an agenda consisting of challenging Israel and achieving the liberation of Palestine, led to a series of clashes that culminated in a major Israeli offensive in July 2006. Meanwhile, the 1967 war led to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights, which together with Syria's support of Hezbollah explains the tension between Israel and Syria. Since 2011, the outbreak of the armed conflict in Syria has had a direct impact on the dynamics of this tension and on the positions adopted by the actors involved in this conflict.

The international tension involving Israel, Syria and Lebanon continued to been seen in periodic acts of violence that caused more than 20 fatalities and various injuries. Throughout 2014, media outlets reported crossfire incidents in the border area between Syria and Israel and air strikes by Israeli forces in Syria. In this regard, earlier this year some sources indicated that Israel had attacked a military base in the port city of Latakia, although this was not officially confirmed, and that it also targeted Hezbollah in the border region, allegedly to disrupt the transport of weapons. **The Golan Heights area was the scene of various incidents**, including the killing of two suspected fighters of the Lebanese Shia militia by the Israeli security forces in March; an attack on an Israeli patrol that wounded several soldiers weeks earlier, and to which Israel responded with an offensive that claimed the life of a Syrian soldier; and the death of an Arab-Israeli teenager when shells were fired from inside Syria in June. The latter event prompted an Israeli military response against various targets in Syria that may have killed between four and ten people, according to different accounts. It was unclear if the shells had been launched by Syrian armed insurgent groups or government forces, but the authorities in Damascus reacted by condemning the Israeli air strikes. In late August, 45 members of the UN peacekeeping mission, UNDOF, were abducted near the Golan Heights. UNDOF has been deployed in the area to monitor the ceasefire agreement signed between Israel and Syria following the war of 1973. Responsibility for the kidnapping was claimed by the jihadist group al-Nusra Front, considered a branch of al-Qaeda in Syria.

The soldiers, who came from Fiji, were released in mid-September. After the incident, countries contributing troops to the international mission expressed concern and some, like the Philippines, declared that they would withdraw them from the region. After more than four decades, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that the separation agreement between Israeli and Syrian forces remains in force, but in an increasingly unstable and precarious security environment due to the dynamics of the war in Syria.[37] The UN Security Council also passed a resolution condemning Syrian armed groups for using explosive devices in the area under UNDOF supervision.

There were skirmishes in the border area between Israel and Lebanon during the year, including an Israeli artillery attack on Lebanese soil after an explosion hit an Israeli patrol near the Shebaa Farms in March.[38] There were at least nine incidents of shells fired from Lebanon towards Israel, which intensified along with the rising tension in the area after the Israeli offensive on Gaza in July,[39] and new exchanges of fire occurred between Israeli and Lebanese soldiers in the Shebaa Farms that wounded three people in October.[40] Furthermore, Israeli drone strikes were conducted almost daily in Lebanese airspace, a situation condemned by the UN as a violation of Resolution 1701 (2006) and the sovereignty of Lebanon. Meanwhile, several analysts stressed that the involvement of the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah in the armed conflict in Syria, in support of the regime of Bashar al-Assad, evinces a change in its strategic objectives and is having an impact on the group's identity and recognition on the regional level. Hezbollah's alliance with Damascus, an alignment that experts classify as inevitable given its close relationship with the Syrian regime, means that it is increasingly viewed as sectarian in a context of growing tensions between Sunnis and Shia. This has negatively affected views of the group, which previously had been positive among some Sunnis due to its struggle against Israel.[41]

Lebanon	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Hezbollah, opposition March 14 Alliance (led by Future Movement), Amal, Free Patriotic Movement, Arab Democratic Party (Alawi), Hizb ul-Tahrir, militias, Abdullah Azzam Brigades (linked to al-Qaeda)

37. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 4 September to 19 November 2014*, S/2014/859, 1 December 2014, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_859.pdf.
38. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)*, S/2014/438, 26 June 2014, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/438.
39. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
40. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution (2006)*, S/2014/784, 5 November 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/784.
41. International Crisis Group, *Lebanon's Hizbollah Turns Eastward to Syria*, Middle East Report no. 153, 27 May 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/syria-lebanon/lebanon/153-lebanon-s-hizbollah-turns-eastward-to-syria.aspx.

Summary:

The assassination of the Lebanese prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, in February 2005 sparked the so-called "Cedar Revolution" which, following mass demonstrations, forced the withdrawal of the Syrian Armed Forces (present in the country for three decades), meeting the demands of Security Council resolution 1559, promoted by the USA and France in September 2004. The stand-off between opponents of Syria's influence (led by Hariri's son, who blamed the Syrian regime for the assassination) and sectors more closely linked to Syria, such as Hezbollah, triggered a political, social and institutional crisis influenced by religious divisions. In a climate of persistent internal political division, the armed conflict that broke out in Syria in 2011 has led to an escalation of the tension between Lebanese political and social sectors and to an increase in violence in the country.

The situation in Lebanon continued to be directly influenced by the armed conflict in neighbouring Syria and was characterised by many acts of violence that caused scores of fatalities and intensified during the second quarter of 2014. Partial estimates based on media reports indicate that **over 200 people had died over the course of the year in various incidents, mainly due to clashes pitting Hezbollah militiamen and Lebanese soldiers against members of armed jihadist groups based in Syria, suicide attacks and assaults against Shia neighbourhoods considered bastions of Hezbollah** (in retribution for the group's participation in the Syrian war in support of the Damascus regime) and air strikes and missile attacks in border areas coming from Syria, among other aspects. As in previous years, the main scenes of violence were the Lebanese capital, Beirut, the city of Tripoli and the Bekaa Valley. One of the most prominent events of the first quarter was an attack on an Iranian cultural centre in Beirut in February, which killed eight. Responsibility was claimed by the Abdullah al-Azzam Brigades, a local group allegedly linked to al-Qaeda. Earlier, the leader of the organisation, which also perpetrated a double suicide attack against the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon in late 2013, had died while in military custody. Meanwhile, the authorship of other suicide bomb attacks was claimed by Sunni armed groups based in Syria like al-Nusra Front and Islamic State (ISIS), which showed growing involvement in Lebanon. This trend was especially evident in August, **when the Lebanese Armed Forces engaged in fierce battles with jihadist militias, including parts of al-Nusra Front, for control of the town of Arsal. Around 100 people were killed in the fighting**. These armed clashes were considered the most serious in Lebanon resulting from the war in Syria. The fighting appears to have begun after a leader of al-Nusra Front or ISIS was captured, prompting Syrian combatants to attack Lebanese military checkpoints and government facilities and to try to seize control of the town. The Lebanese forces responded with support from the Syrian Air Force. After several frustrated attempts at a ceasefire, the hostilities ended after a truce was facilitated by Sunni religious leaders of the Association of Muslim Scholars, which led to the withdrawal of jihadist forces from the area. In the battle over Arsal, both ISIS and al-Nusra Front took around 30 Lebanese police officers and soldiers captive and demanded the release of Islamist prisoners as a condition for setting them free. In the weeks that followed, three of the captured soldiers were executed and in December, another was killed in retaliation for the arrest of family members of senior leaders of al-Nusra Front and ISIS in Lebanon.

Clashes continued to take place in the fourth quarter, including combat between suspected al-Nusra Front militiamen on one side and Lebanese security forces and members of Hezbollah on the other, as well as attacks in Arsal and other places like Baalbek, Britel and Labweh, some of them in retribution for military operations in Tripoli. In October, three days of brutal battles between the Lebanese Army and suspected jihadist militiamen left a death toll of more than 40 in Tripoli. These incidents began after three other combatants allegedly linked to ISIS were killed in a town near the city. The clashes forcibly displaced hundreds of people and caused great destruction in the Sunni-majority neighbourhood of Bab-el-Tebbaneh, used as a stronghold by insurgent fighters. The events also intensified criticism of the Lebanese security forces, accused of acting with discretion (by giving leeway to some militias and persecuting Sunnis more intensely and indiscriminately), aligning with Hezbollah and promoting the rise of sectarian tension through its action. In April, the Lebanese Army implemented a security plan in agreement with various political forces aimed at containing the dynamics of violence in the country. The plan entailed a larger military deployment in Beirut, Tripoli and areas bordering with Syria, as well as raids, patrols, tracking operations, weapons seizures and arrests of suspects. In this context, and especially after the events in Arsal, concern and criticism about the Lebanese security forces' actions towards Syrian refugees increased, including the arrest of and attacks on people suspected of having ties to ISIS or al-Nusra Front. Although attitudes of solidarity and sympathy remained evident overall, **the events in Arsal exacerbated feelings of hostility among some Lebanese against the Syrian refugee population, which reached 1.1 million in late 2014**. According to media reports, thousands of Syrians were forced to flee Arsal after the incidents in August, there were acts of revenge and attacks on camps and a Syrian youth was shot dead. NGOs and some in Lebanon warned of the mounting tensions and said that these and other events only stoked sectarian mistrust and fostered the radicalisation of Sunni groups. At the year's end, faced with the lack of international support to cope with the forced displacement crisis caused by the war in Syria, the Lebanese authorities announced restrictions on the entry of new refugees and visa requirements starting in 2015.

The conflict also had an important impact on Lebanese politics, while also reflecting its problems. The

authorities were criticised for not developing a strategy to deal with the refugee problem, for taking a strictly military approach to the expanding confrontation, not to mention other aspects relevant to the dispute, and for remaining embroiled in internecine struggles that blocked political activity.[42] **While Prime Minister Tamam Salam managed to form a new cabinet in early 2014 after a year of effort, the country continued without a president until the end of the year following the expiration of the term of Michel Suleiman in May**. Parliament postponed the election in late January after 17 failed attempts to choose a new head of state. In November, the month that the elections were supposed to be held, Parliament also decided to extend its own term until 2017 due to security concerns linked to the war in Syria. Different parts of the Lebanese population criticised the decision. Finally, various analysts drew attention to the impact of Hezbollah's involvement in the armed conflict in Syria on its identity and legitimacy in the region.[43] This is because the recognition it had won among some groups for its role in the fight against Israel, including Sunnis, has been affected by its pro-Damascus position against a backdrop of worsening sectarian tensions.[44]

Palestine	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	PNA, Fatah, armed group al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades

Summary:

The disagreements between the various Palestinian sectors in recent decades have mainly featured secular nationalist groups (Fatah and its armed wing al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, PFLP, DFLP) and religious groups (Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigade, Islamic Jihad). This confrontation is the result of a power struggle to control the Palestinian territories, which, in turn has produced different approaches in terms of relations with Israel. Having controlled Palestinian politics for many years, the Fatah movement led by Yasser Arafat and later by Mahmoud Abbas faced accusations of corruption and of failing to defend Palestinian interests in the peace process, which led to Hamas' victory in the January 2006 elections. This situation triggered a dialectical and armed struggle between the two groups for the control of political institutions and, above all, the security forces. In 2011 Hamas and Fatah announced a reconciliation agreement. However, the discrepancies between the two

groups have continued, complicating the task of forming a government of national unity. Changes in the region within the framework of the Arab revolts have also had a relevant influence on the progress and setbacks in the reconciliation process, which Israel is openly against.

The evolution of the tension between Palestinian factions in 2014 followed a path similar to that of the previous year, with a first quarter marked by events that raised expectations of possible reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas and a second quarter in which the disagreements between both groups became more visible, though they were present throughout the year. In early 2014, signs of a new rapprochement between the largest two Palestinian organisations were determined by various events. These included the announcement by the Palestinian prime minister in the Gaza Strip, Ismail Haniyeh, to allow the re-entry of hundreds of Fatah militants banned from the territory since the hostilities in 2007, the release of seven Fatah militants in Gaza and statements made by Fatah leaders about the importance of including Gaza in the process to create a Palestinian state, in addition to several meetings held between high-level representatives of both groups in Gaza and Doha. Disagreements persisted regarding the approach to Israel and Hamas remained critical of the negotiations begun by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 2013. Leaders of the Islamist group openly questioned the legitimacy of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to negotiate on behalf of the entire Palestinian population, especially considering that his term of office expired in 2009 and demonstrations of support for Abbas were prohibited in Gaza before his visit to Washington in March. In this context, the derailment of negotiations with Israel assisted the rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas.[45] **The Islamist group and the PLO, led by Fatah, announced a new reconciliation agreement on 23 April for the purpose of forming a unity government and holding the postponed elections in the Palestinian territories**. The news was received with scepticism, since similar agreements were adopted in 2011 (in Cairo) and 2012 (in Doha) that never bore fruit. However, several analysts said that some factors could help the implementation of this agreement, including Hamas' need to circumvent a situation of isolation and vulnerability after the fall of the government of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and Mahmoud Abbas's need to boost his levels of popularity among the Palestinian population. Israel reacted to the reconciliation announcement by breaking off the negotiations, which had already hit a stalemate, and emphasised that it would not recognise any Palestinian government supported by Hamas. The

42. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *What's at the Heart of Lebanon's Troubles?*, Sada Debates, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 October 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=56830&solr_hilite=.
43. Sahar Atrache, "How Hezbollah Is Changing the War in Syria - and Vice Versa", *Huffington Post*, 6 June 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sahar-atrache/hezbollah-war-syria_b_5455850.html.
44. See the summary on Israel-Syria-Lebanon in this chapter.
45. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

unity government took power in early June, headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and composed of technocrats and independent politicians committed to respecting the principles required by the Middle East Quartet (the United Nations, the USA, Russia and the European Union) that include the rejection of violence, recognition of Israel and respect for previous agreements signed by the PA. These principles are not officially endorsed by Hamas. In this context, the UN, the EU and the USA were willing to work with the new Palestinian government.

Once the unity government took office, the administration of the Gaza Strip resigned. However, conflicts between Hamas and Fatah became clear in following weeks, mainly around two issues. First was the matter of the unpaid salaries of around 40,000 civil servants hired by Hamas since it assumed control of the territory in 2007 (half of them for security tasks) that had not been paid on the grounds that their situation would be reviewed and approved by the new government. However, civil servants linked to Fatah were paid, causing irritation within Hamas and altercations between sympathisers of both groups. (Fatah has around 70,000 civil servants, who have continued to receive their salaries despite not having worked for the administration in Gaza for years.) The second source of conflict was determined by the kidnapping and later killing of three Israeli youths in the West Bank, which Israel blamed on Hamas. The fact that the Palestinian Authority continued to cooperate with Israeli forces during the mass arrest campaign that mainly affected supporters of the Islamist group in the West Bank also caused estrangement between both parties. Later, the Israeli offensive against Gaza during the summer blocked the reconciliation agreements. The truce signed by Israel and Hamas in late August provided that the administration of Gaza should be undertaken by the PA, which had a role in the agreement to facilitate the entry of goods and material to rebuild the devastated territory. While Fatah and Hamas announced an agreement to allow the PA to return to Gaza, tensions remained evident between both sides, Abbas accused the Islamist group of maintaining a shadow government in Gaza and uncertainties remained regarding many issues, like how security would be organised, for example. **The unity government convened in Gaza for the first time in October, but one month later the prime minister suspended a trip following a series of attacks against Fatah there**. Unity government ministers returned to Gaza at the end of the year, but their visit was also marked by incidents after Hamas' security forces prevented the meeting planned with the civil servants hired by the PA before the 2007 crisis. The issues of the civil servants,

who had still not been paid and caused many protests, the security situation (Hamas was only willing to give up control of border posts in the Gaza Strip) and the elections, which were supposed to be held in late 2014, remained unsolved. Meanwhile, Fatah and Hamas continued to trade blame for the inability to deal with the severe crisis in Gaza and the dysfunctional aspects of the unity government.

Syria – Turkey	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government International
Main parties:	Syria, Turkey

Summary:
Relations between Syria and Turkey had improved in recent decades following the signing of the Adana agreement in 1998, which forced the expulsion of the Kurdish armed group PKK and its leader, Abullah Ocalan, from Syrian territory. The launch of Turkey's "zero problems with our neighbours" foreign policy by the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan had paved the way for the signing of commercial and border agreements by Damascus and Ankara. The waters were muddied by the outbreak of conflict in Syria in 2011, leading to a period of distancing between the two countries. After taking the initiative to prevent the isolation of the regime in Damascus and urging Bashar al-Assad, without success, to implement reforms in Syria, Turkey adopted an openly critical stance, publicly supporting the Syrian opposition. Turkey's position has been determined by the intense flow of Syrian refugees that it has been forced to deal with and due to the impact of the crisis on the Kurdish question. The tension has led to a series of incidents that have raised fears concerning the possible escalation of violence between the two countries.

Despite a newly announced reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas and the establishment of a unity government in April 2014, the relationship between both Palestinian groups continued to be marked by hostility and distrust

In keeping with the trend of the previous year, tension between Syria and Turkey **continued to be characterised by sporadic border incidents linked to the war in Syria that led to mutual accusations between both governments**, although starting at mid-year the situation was overshadowed by the impact of the advance of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq.[46] Highlights during the first quarter included the downing of a Syrian military plane by the Turkish Air Force in March. According to the official Turkish version, the incident involved two Syrian jets that were warned before entering Turkish airspace over Hatay province. Damascus denied Ankara's story and accused it of collaborating with the opposition, and specifically of complacency about the activities of jihadist groups. The Turkish authorities stressed their

---

46. See the summaries on Iraq and Syria in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

denial of any supposed permissiveness regarding the action of radical insurgent groups and reported the arrest of dozens of people suspected to have ties to al-Qaeda or ISIS. According to media reports, at least 70 people, including civilians, were killed in acts of violence related to the war in Syria in the first quarter of 2014, mostly near the border. Skirmishes and incidents involving Syrian refugees in Turkey were also reported throughout the year.

In this context, the advance of ISIS in Syria and Iraq was salutary. **The offensive undertaken by ISIS against the Kurdish-majority border city of Kobane prompted hundreds of PKK combatants to cross the border to help the militia fighters of the YPG, considered the PKK's branch in Syria**. The intensification of border controls and the adoption of measures to block the flow of combatants encouraged various forms of criticism against the Turkish government, accused by various groups of acting passively before the violence of ISIS, and even in complicity with it. The Kurdish approach to the crisis in Kobane led to an escalation of violence waged by Kurdish groups in Turkey and the Turkish security forces.[47] According to some analysts, the Turkish position was affected by Islamic State's abduction of a group of 40 Turkish citizens in northern Iraq, who were not released until late September. Following this outcome, however, Turkey maintained its refusal to join the international anti-ISIS coalition led by the United States, despite pressure from Washington. The position of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government stressed the need to establish a no-fly zone and argued that the international approach to the conflict should consider the threat posed by Bashar Assad's regime. The authorities in Ankara were especially critical and wary of delivering weapons to Kurdish forces fighting in Kobane for fear that the arsenals might end up in the hands of the PKK and strengthen its position. After blocking the movement of weapons and fighters to Kobane, in October Turkey allowed 200 peshmergas from Iraqi Kurdistan to enter the area, given its strategic relationship with the KRG.[48] In December, another group of around 150 peshmergas joined the group headed for Kobane to step up the fight against ISIS. After the international anti-ISIS coalition's aerial operations over Syria expanded, Erdogan stressed that his country would not join any anti-jihadist platform that did not place the end of the Assad regime and the creation of a safe zone as priorities. At the end of the year, however, the Turkish authorities affirmed that they would cooperate with the United States in equipping and training moderate groups of the Syrian opposition. Turkey is still one of the main destinations of Syrian refugees, with more than one and a half million according to estimates by UNHCR.

The Gulf

Bahrain	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
The popular uprisings that spread across countries in the Maghreb and Middle East in 2011 also had an impact on Bahrain. Ruled since the 18th century by the al-Khalifa and part of the British protectorate territories from 1861 to 1971, the country formally became a constitutional monarchy in 2002. The family in power is of Sunni faith, unlike most of the country's population, which is of Shiite faith and which denounces systematic policies of discrimination. Internal tensions, which had increased in recent years, turned into open protest from February 2011. Demands for political and social reforms were met by the government with economic incentives and offers of political dialogue, but also with the repression and persecution of government opponents. The threat to the stability of the region led to the intervention of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which sent troops to the country. The situation in Bahrain has fuelled the confrontation between Iran and the Gulf countries (especially Saudi Arabia) and is of special concern to the USA, whose Fifth Fleet is stationed in the archipelago.

Internal tension was still evident in Bahrain in regular anti-government demonstrations, the authorities' harassment of dissidents and various acts of violence that caused the death of around a dozen people over the course of 2014. Some of these episodes took the form of explosions in the capital, Manama, and the surrounding area, killing at least seven police officers. Authorship of an attack involving the death of three police officers early in the year was claimed by a dissident group calling itself Saraya al-Ashtar, which has been declared a terrorist organisation by the authorities of Bahrain. During 2014, various people were injured by police repression or as a result of clashes between opposition groups and security forces during anti-government protests, some of them prompted by the deaths of opposition activists in detention (at the beginning of the year, at least two people died while in police custody). Other opposition demonstrations coincided with symbolic dates like the anniversary of widespread anti-government protests in 2011 or were motivated by rejection of measures taken against opposition leaders and activists. The political situation was characterised by the lack of progress in the dialogue between the government and the opposition. Early in the year, dissident groups like the prominent Shia organisation al-Wefaq decided to withdraw from the

---

47. See the summary on Turkey (south-east) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
48. See the summary on Iraq (Kurdistan) in this chapter.

national dialogue initiative due to the deadlock in the talks and the arrest of senior opposition leaders. In this context, the government declared the dialogue collapsed and blamed the opposition for the failure of the process that began in February 2013. However, the intervention of Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, considered a more moderate figure within the regime, helped to revive the meetings and encouraged a discussion about formulas to save and provide content for the national dialogue. The prince met personally with different opposition groups, which revealed a road map for resuming the meetings, repeated their demands that Bahrain become a true constitutional monarchy and called for changes to the electoral law to ensure transparent elections monitored by a neutral committee. They argued that Parliament must have full legislative powers and that the government must be elected and called for guarantees for equality among the citizens of the country, an end to policies to naturalise foreigners and the release of prisoners of conscience. Finally, the dissident groups promised to denounce violence by all sides, demonstrated a willingness to hold three meetings per week to speed up the dialogue and asked for the results to be submitted to a referendum.

In September, the crown prince reported the outcome of his bilateral talks with at least six dissident groups and said that the parties had identified five areas of common interest, including the redefinition of electoral districts to ensure better representation, new powers for Parliament to question ministers about their actions and to approve cabinet members and legal and security-related reforms. However, the Shia opposition said that the items proposed did not satisfy its demands and kept up its demonstrations against the government. In this context, the elections held in November showed the gulf between the parties. **In October, al-Wefaq and four other opposition movements announced that they would boycott the elections. Shortly thereafter, the authorities ordered a freeze on al-Wefaq's activities for three months and banned dissident demonstrations right before the vote. Hundreds of people faced off with police and dozens were arrested, accused of calling the voters to turn the elections into a referendum on the legitimacy of the regime**. According to the government, turnout stood at 51.5%, but the opposition said that it only reached 30%. At the end of the year, the atmosphere of tension worsened when the leader of al-Wefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman, was arrested on charges of inciting violence and promoting clashes between members of the opposition and the security forces. His detention and the initiation of proceedings against prominent activists like Nabeel Rajab (indicted by comments made on Twitter) sparked new protests. Also during 2014, Manama expelled a senior US official from the country and declared him a *persona non grata* for meeting with the leader of al-Wefaq alone, unaccompanied by a Bahraini government official. The incident triggered a diplomatic row between the USA and Bahrain, as well as some countermeasures.

However, Washington's position regarding Manama, as well as its ability to apply pressure, was conditioned not only because Bahrain is the headquarters of the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, which is essential for operations in the Persian Gulf, but also because the country has joined the US-led anti-ISIS alliance, participating in air strikes against the armed group in Iraq and Syria.[49]

Iran (north-west)	
Intensity:	1
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, PJAK, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraq

Summary:
Despite the heterogeneous and multi ethnic nature of Iran, the minorities that live in the country, including the Kurds, have been subjected to centralist, homogenisation policies for decades and have condemned discrimination by the authorities of the Islamic Republic. In this context, since 1946, different political and armed groups of Kurd origin have confronted Tehran government in an attempt to obtain greater autonomy for the Kurd population, which is concentrated in the north-western provinces of the country. Groups such as the KDPI –Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran– and Komala headed this fight for decades. Since 2004, the Free Life of Kurdistan Party (PJAK) has gained a protagonist role in the conflict with Tehran. Its armed wing, the East Kurdistan Defence Forces, periodically confronts the Iranian forces, in particular members of the Revolutionary Guard.

In keeping with the trend in recent years, the dispute involving the Iranian government and the Kurdish armed group PJAK experienced lower levels of tension in 2014, specifically since the PJAK declared a ceasefire in 2011. **The most notable events of the year included the PJAK's announcement that it was forming a new organisation whose main objectives would be to establish dialogue with the authorities in Tehran**. In a press conference held in May in the city of Khoran, in northern Iraq, the leader of the new group, Rizan Javid, said that the Organisation of Free and Democratic Society for East Kurdistan (KODAR) mostly consists of people that have served in the ranks of the PJAK. Javid repeated that the group was ready to sit down for talks with Iran and said that similar appeals in the past had received no response from Tehran. This shift in the PJAK's approach may be linked to the guidelines set out by PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who according to media reports suggested in 2013 that the armed group should try to resolve the Kurdish issue in Iran through political negotiations with the state. According to media outlets linked to Kurdish interests, the PJAK's position could also be determined by regional changes and an awareness that armed struggle is not effective in

---

49. See the summary on Iraq and the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).

achieving its objectives. Along these lines, some analysts have stressed that the Kurdish minority in Iran is more in favour of dialogue than of armed confrontation with Iran, especially for fear of a repressive response, since the Iranian government has traditionally taken a military approach to addressing ethnic and minority grievances. Experts also warned of a disconnect between the Kurds and Kurdish organisations in Iran, partly because those groups have moved their bases to northern Iraq.

Though the ceasefire remains in force, there have been incidents and skirmishes between PJAK fighters and the Iranian security forces in recent years, and 2014 was no exception. According to media reports, in June clashes between members of the Revolutionary Guard and Kurdish combatants (presumably trying to cross the border) led to several insurgent fatalities, according to the Iranian government's version of events. Other episodes linked to the conflict between Iran and Kurdish groups occurred throughout the year, including the Iranian military's killing of a leader of the organisation Komala in February and regular complaints about the situation of Kurdish prisoners, particularly regarding death sentences and prison conditions, which led some prisoners to undertake hunger strikes.

Iran (Sistan Balochistan)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Identity, Self-government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), Jundallah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran, Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan

Summary:
Sistan-Balochistan is an Iranian province bordering with Afghanistan and Pakistan –the Baloch population lives on both sides of the border– and is of Sunni majority, contrasting with the rest of the country, where the Shiite arm of Islam is predominant. The zone is characterised by high poverty levels and is the scene of smuggling routes and drug trafficking. Since 2005 the group Jundallah (Soldiers of God) has led an insurgence campaign in the region. The organisation, which also calls itself the People's Resistance Movement, was established in 2002 and denounces Tehran's sectarian persecution. Jundallah states that its aim is to defend the rights, culture and religion of the Baloch people and denies having any ties with abroad, as the Iranian Government accuses it of having with the US, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and with the al-Qaeda network. In view of the possibility of destabilization in the region, Tehran has strengthened its control mechanisms and has sentenced dozens of Jundallah militants to death. The actions of the armed group have dropped since 2010 after its leader was captured and executed, but new armed groups with a similar agenda to Jundallah's have continued to operate in the area, with sporadic clashes with the security forces.

Following the trend noted the year prior, an intensification of tension was reported in Sistan-Balochistan in 2014 resulting from the increased activity of the Sunni armed group Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice) and its repercussions on bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan. Throughout the year, the insurgent organisation, which links its actions to the struggle for the rights of the Baloch population and the Sunni minority in Iran, claimed responsibility for several attacks against border posts and members of the Iranian security forces. Moreover, clashes were reported that killed and wounded people of both sides. According to unofficial counts based on media reports, over a dozen people died in different incidents related to the conflict, although in some cases the number of casualties was unclear. **Episodes of violence that occurred during the first quarter of 2014 include an attack against Revolutionary Guard troops perpetrated by Jaish al-Adl that left seven soldiers dead in January and led to the capture of five other Iranian soldiers in February**. The Iranian soldiers, who were fulfilling their mandatory military service, were moved to Pakistan, where the armed group has its bases. In exchange for their release, Jaish al-Adl demanded that around 300 Sunni prisoners being held in Iran and Syria be set free, including around 100 alleged members of the insurgent organisation. In March, the group declared that it had killed one of the soldiers and warned that the remaining hostages risked the same fate unless the government agreed to its demands. The incident led to an escalation of tension between Iran and Pakistan, as the Iranian authorities accused Islamabad of failing to control its borders effectively and of not taking the steps necessary to secure the Iranian soldiers' release. Tehran also warned of the possibility of sending troops to Pakistan to rescue the soldiers. Meanwhile, Pakistan rebuffed Iran's accusations and demanded that its borders be respected. Despite the exchange of criticism, representatives from both countries met in Quetta (in the Pakistani province of Balochistan) and set up a joint committee for the purpose of speeding up their soldiers' release. Finally, the four soldiers were set free by Jaish al-Adl in early April. According to the Iranian government, the release occurred as part of intervention by the Pakistani security forces, but the armed group claimed that it came at the behest of eminent Sunni clerics in Iran who interceded on behalf of the military.

During the second quarter, attacks by Jaish al-Adl intensified, which some analysts attributed to reprisals for the killing of two top Balochi leaders in Pakistan in August, in an action presumably perpetrated by Iranian forces. However, according to other versions, the deaths of these leaders, linked to the armed group Jundollah, which previously led the campaign against Iranian forces in the region, had resulted from an attack by Jaish al-Adl as part of an internal dispute between the Balochi factions. According to some experts, Jaish al-Adl has integrated a large number of fighters from Jundollah, whose activity in the area gradually shrank after its leader was killed in 2010. In this context, **in**

September clashes were reported between members of the Revolutionary Guard supported by pro-government Balochi militias and Jaish al-Adl combatants after an insurgent attack on a border post in the town of Saravan. According to Iran, the Sunni insurgents were forced to retreat to their bases in Pakistan after many of them were killed. However, Jaish al-Adl described the operation as a success and said that at least 10 Iranian soldiers had fallen. New incidents in October claimed the lives of three police officers and a border guard when a bomb exploded in Saravan and two more border guards were shot dead on the border with Pakistan. In December, three more Iranian soldiers were killed in an insurgent attack, also in Saravan. Jaish al-Adl's tactics are focused on explosives and armed attacks against military vehicles and checkpoints. After the attacks in October, Iran decided to bolster its military presence in the area. Various analysts established certain parallels between the actions of Jaish al-Adl and the group Islamic State (ISIS), which expanded its control of Iraq and Syria during 2014. Although there is no evidence of a direct relationship between both organisations, experts said that Jaish al-Adl had demonstrated greater capabilities in its most recent attacks. The Iranian authorities have usually accused Saudi Arabia, the USA and Pakistan of giving support to these types of groups in order to destabilise the country. In this regard, in October an exchange of mortar fire was reported between Iran and Pakistan in the first incident of its kind in decades. According to media accounts, Pakistan responded to shells fired from Iran that killed at least one Pakistani soldier. The information was not officially confirmed or denied by either government and it was unclear whether the Iranian incursion into Pakistani territory was intended to disrupt a Jaish al-Adl cell.

The Iranian province of Sistan-Balochistan was the scene of various armed actions carried out by the insurgent group Jaish al-Adl, which also caused bilateral tensions between Iran and Pakistan

Iran – USA, Israel[50]	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	System, Government International
Main parties:	Iran, USA, Israel

Summary:
Since the Islamic revolution in 1979 that overthrew the regime of Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi (an ally of Washington) and proclaimed Ayatollah Khomeini as the country's Supreme leader, relations between the US, Israel and Iran have been tense. The international pressure on Iran became stronger in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when the George W. Bush Administration declared Iran, together with Iraq and North Korea as the "axis of evil" and as an enemy State due to its alleged ties with terrorism. In this context, Iran's nuclear programme has been one of the issues that have generated most concern in the West, which is suspicious of its military purposes. Thus, Iran's nuclear programme has developed alongside the approval of international sanctions and threats of using force, especially by Israel. Iran's approach to the conflict during the two consecutive mandates of the ultra-conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) did not contribute to ease tensions. The rise to power of the moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani, in turn, has generated high hopes of a turn in Iran's foreign relations, especially after the signing of an agreement on nuclear issues at the end of 2013.

The international tension surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme was channelled through high-level diplomatic talks between representatives of Tehran and the P5+1 powers (consisting of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council + Germany, also known as the EU3+3). Early in 2014, the parties agreed on the terms for implementing the agreement finalised at the end of 2013 for its formal entry into force. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that Iran was honouring its commitments related to suspending uranium enrichment activities above 5%, diluting its reserves of uranium enriched to 20%, facilitating the work of the international inspectors, stopping the installation of new centrifuges and halting construction of the heavy water reactor in Arak. The various inspections conducted by the IAEA throughout the year found that Iran remained compliant in this regard. Iran and the IAEA also reached additional agreements to clear up doubts about the military dimension of Iran's atomic programme. In return for these measures taken by Iran, the European Union and the USA lifted sanctions on the country. Successive rounds of negotiations were held in Vienna in the first quarter of 2014, each month from January to July. According to press reports, the talks during this period were affected by certain dynamics observed in previous negotiations over the Iranian nuclear issue, including maximalist positions on both sides and misperceptions about respective leeway, in addition to the trading of accusations. As the deadline set for reaching an agreement drew near, in July, it became clear that Iran and the P5+1 would not come to an agreement. The parties decided to extend the deadline for the negotiations until November, coinciding with the first anniversary of the signing of the agreement that led to the negotiating process. At mid-year, bilateral meetings between US and Iranian representatives intensified and high-level meetings were held in Geneva and later in New York, coinciding with the yearly meeting of the UN General Assembly in September. At this point, it became more apparent that disagreements persisted over key issues, especially in relation to the nuclear capabilities that Iran could keep under an agreement and the timetable for lifting

---

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

sanctions. Faced with this finding and **the evidence that the parties were willing to stay on the path of dialogue, in November Iran and the P5+1 announced that they would extend the negotiations by seven more months**. A new deadline for a comprehensive agreement was set for July 2015, which in theory should be preceded by a political agreement to be signed in March at the latest.[51]

The decision to extend the talks was taken after intense conversations in Vienna and Muscat (Oman), where US Secretary of State John Kerry met with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and the head of European foreign affairs at the time, Catherine Ashton. At the end of the year, negotiations resumed in Geneva that were both bilateral (between delegates of the United States and Iran on 15 and 16 December) and multilateral (Iran and the P5+1 on 17 December) in nature. The failure to achieve an agreement by the deadlines set in 2014 was disappointing to some. However, various experts assessed the progress of the talks positively, saying that they had deepened each party's knowledge about the other, as well as mutual expectations and range of action, that they had managed to stay afloat despite the vagaries of the international agenda and the divergent positions of the parties involved (with respect to the conflict in Syria, for example) and that, in the case of the USA and Iran, they were willing to continue the process despite the scepticism and outright opposition of hardliners in both countries. In this vein, **throughout the year the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei never stopped expressing scepticism about how the talks were going** and adopted a defiant tone after the extension of the talks was announced, claiming that the West had not been able to bring Iran "to its knees". The Obama Administration's position on the nuclear issue was compromised by the Republicans' victory in the elections in November that gave them control of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The future of the negotiations could be affected by the position of some Republicans that have repeatedly threatened to impose new sanctions on Tehran and became belligerent after the release of (later disproven) information about alleged Iranian violations of certain provisions of the agreement. However, it emerged that after the elections Obama sent a letter to Khamenei urging him to seize the historic opportunity for a deal that could also facilitate approaches to other issues of Tehran and Washington's shared concern, like the rise and expansion of the armed group Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria. In Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu's government welcomed the lack of consensus on the Iranian nuclear issue in November, arguing that no agreement was better than a bad one. Therefore, Israel remained critical and sceptical of Iran, which in August reported that it had shot down a suspected Israeli drone as it flew over

After nearly a year of talks, Iran and the P5+1 powers decided to extend the negotiations, setting the middle of 2015 as the deadline for a definitive agreement

facilities of the Natanz nuclear complex. Meanwhile, Russia agreed to build two new reactors with Iran at Bushehr under IAEA supervision.

Saudi Arabia	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, AQAP, ISIS

Summary:

Governed since the 18th century by the al-Saud family and established as a state in 1932, Saudi Arabia is characterised by its religious conservatism and wealth, based on its oil reserves, and its regional power. Internally, the Sunni monarchy holds the political power and is in charge of government institutions, leaving little room for dissidence. Political parties are not allowed, freedom of expression is curtailed and many basic rights are restricted. The Shiite minority, concentrated in the eastern part of the country, has denounced its marginalisation and exclusion from the state's structures. The authorities have been accused of implementing repressive measures on the pretext of ensuring security in the country and in the context of anti-terrorism campaigns, the targets of which include militants of al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In the context of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, pro-reform and pro-democracy protests met with a repressive response from the government, which claimed that attempts to destabilise Saudi Arabia were being orchestrated from outside the country.

Tension in Saudi Arabia continued to show in various acts of violence involving the security forces, suspected militants linked to Sunni armed extremist groups, activists in Shia-majority parts of the country and border guards. The incidents that occurred throughout 2014 resulted in the deaths of nearly 30 people, meaning an intensification of violence compared to 2013. Some of the violence took place in the eastern part of the country, an area with a larger Shia population that has traditionally been more rebellious towards the authorities. At the start of the year, four people were killed in a tracking operation that led to fighting in the area of al-Awamiya: two police officers and two people linked to the opposition. The latter were the brother of one of the protest leaders and a famous photographer that had documented the demonstrations and the funerals of the activists killed by the security forces since 2011. At the end of the year, armed men shot a police officer to death in al-Awamiya and the next day five people were killed in a police raid (one pedestrian and four people suspected of involvement in the attack).

---

51. For further information on the prospects of negotiations over the Iranian atomic programme, see "Negotiations over the Iranian nuclear dossier: a renewed commitment to dialogue" in chapter 5 (Opportunities for Peace in 2015).

One of the most prominent events of the year occurred in November in the area of Dalwah, also in the eastern part of the country, when armed men attacked a group of Shia leaving a religious commemoration, killing eight. The next day, two of the suspected assailants and two police officers died north of the capital, Riyadh. The authorities claimed that the incident involved militants of the armed jihadist group Islamic State (ISIS). Followers of ISIS claimed responsibility for another shooting in Riyadh in December against a Dutch citizen, who survived the attack. Previously, Islamic State had called on its supporters to carry out attacks against government officials, Westerners and members of the Shia community in Saudi Arabia in retaliation for Riyadh's involvement in the US-led anti-ISIS coalition.[52] In this context, at the end of the year Riyadh announced that it had arrested 135 people for alleged links to terrorist activities, including dozens of people suspected of having ties to ISIS. Other acts of violence took place in 2014 in the zone bordering with Yemen that mainly affected border guards. At least three Saudi soldiers are estimated to have lost their lives in incidents in April in the provinces of Asir and Jizan when they were hit by shells fired by unidentified armed men in Yemen. Furthermore, several AQAP militants were killed by Yemeni security forces when they tried to cross into Saudi Arabia.[53]

Also during the year, **several people were reportedly convicted for participating in demonstrations or carrying out activities linked to the opposition**. One of the most prominent was the death sentence given to prominent Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr in October. The religious leader, who had supported anti-government demonstrations that began in the east of the country in 2011 as part of the Arab revolts, was charged with seeking the intervention of foreign agents in Saudi Arabia, of disobeying the authorities and of inciting the use of violence against the security forces. His arrest two years ago, during which he was injured, had already sparked protests in the east. Two other Shia demonstrators received a similar punishment, while seven others were sentenced to 20 years in prison for protesting against the regime. In this context, human rights groups expressed concern about the signs that justice in these cases was not impartial. Organisations like Human Rights Watch also warned that the Saudi authorities had intensified measures to harass dissident groups, persecuting many people for their comments on social media.

Yemen	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government
	Internal

Main parties:	Government, security forces, pro-government militias, military deserters, armed tribal groups, political and social groups

Summary:

In recent years, Yemen has faced a climate of deep instability conditioned by the presence of a Shiite rebel force in the north (the Houthis), a secessionist movement in the south and growing al-Qaeda activity in the territory. From 2011, in a regional context of uprisings, the instability in Yemen became more acute when the population staged protests against Ali Abdullah Saleh's attempts to stay in power, after more than three decades in presidency. The peaceful protests, put down brutally by the regime, were eclipsed by growing armed confrontations between sympathisers and opponents of the regime. The clashes have mainly involved the security forces, pro and anti-governmental tribal militias and units of army deserters. Following the signing of a transition agreement in late 2011 that led to the end of Saleh's presidency, the country began a turbulent transition plenty of challenges.

The transition process in Yemen deteriorated precipitously over the course of 2014 amidst growing polarisation and violence in the country.[54] The different conflicts active in Yemen are estimated to have killed more than 1,000 people, the highest figure since the upheaval that ended with the ouster of Ali Abdullah Saleh,[55] and by the end of the year the political situation was characterised by extreme fragility. **The year started off with certain expectations in January when the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) presented its conclusions after months of talks**, which began in March 2013. The more than 500 delegates that participated in the initiative made about 1,400 recommendations that had to become a road map and the basis for discussing the new Constitution of the country. The work of the NDC's nine committees produced suggestions such as the abolition of child marriage, the promotion of women's rights (including a quota of 30% representation in the public sphere), measures to reverse the marginalisation of the south and the creation of a federal system. The latter issue was one of the thorniest, since the NDC did not state the number of entities that a federal formula would include and ruled out the option of independence for the south, as separatists from the area demanded. The NDC gave President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi a mandate to form a commission to define the number of regions into which the country would be subdivided. After two months of work, the committee ruled in February that the Yemeni federal system had to consist of six regions, a formula that made some in the country unhappy. Hadi also gave a one-year extension to the transition process established by the agreement promoted by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the UN in late 2011 in order to buy more time to draft

---

52. See the summary on Iraq and the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
53. See the summary on Yemen (AQAP) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
54. See the summary on Yemen (the Houthis) and the summary on Yemen (AQAP) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts) and the summary on Yemen (south) in this chapter.
55. IRIN, "Yemen: What's Next?", *IRIN*, 22 December 2014, http://www.irinnews.org/report/100965/yemen-what-next.

the Constitution and to hold a referendum before the upcoming elections are held. The appointment of the committee responsible for drafting the Constitution gave rise to new controversy, for various reasons. Critics cited the number of members (the NDC had recommended 30 people and Hadi appointed 17), problems of representation (groups like the Socialist Party and young people felt excluded and the 30% minimum quota for women was not met, as only four members were female) and the team's expertise, since it was insufficiently equipped for discussing important and complex subjects like the federal formula applicable for the country. Questions were also raised when Hadi extended the committee's deadline by one year. The NDC had suggested six months, so the one-year extension was viewed as an attempt by Hadi to extend his stay in power.

The government was also affected by accusations of corruption and by rejection of some of its policies. Overall, unhappiness about these different factors sparked massive demonstrations calling for the resignation of the government and the end of US drone operations in the country.[56] In this context, rumours emerged about attempts by groups loyal to Saleh to destabilise the government. In response, the authorities ordered the withdrawal of heavy artillery from the vicinity of the capital and closed the media outlets owned by the former president. **The scenario became more complicated at mid-year due to the government's problems paying salaries, acts of sabotage that left the capital without electricity for days and especially the authorities' decision to suspend fuel subsidies in late July**. The protests multiplied and grew louder, especially in Sana'a. Meanwhile, counter-demonstrations were also organised, showing the atmosphere of polarisation. In this context, violent incidents killed many people in the city, which came under the control of Houthi forces in September. After waging an intense armed campaign during the first quarter and expanding their areas of influence from their traditional stronghold in the north of the country, the Houthis, who had also led protests against the government, forced a political change that materialised in the resignation of Prime Minister Mohammed Basindawa. Under the auspices of the UN, a peace agreement was signed in late September that provided for implementing the agreements reached as part of the NDC, forming an inclusive government, adopting anti-corruption measures and beginning the disarmament of non-state actors.[57]

Despite the formation of a new government headed by Prime Minister Khalid Bahah, at the end of the year the violence and political instability continued to grow. **Even though the peace agreement called on the**

The transition process in Yemen was seriously affected in 2014 by a context of upheaval and violence that by the end of the year threatened to plunge the country into a scenario of greater instability and fragmentation

Houthis to retreat from the capital, in late 2014 the group maintained its positions in Sana'a and employed a discourse defiant of the authorities, with accusations of corruption levelled against Hadi, who criticised the territorial expansion of the northern group. The leader was also the subject of growing attacks from within his own party, which is also Saleh's party, the General People's Congress (GPC). The party decided to remove Hadi from its leadership. Hadi had been the former vice president of Yemen during Saleh's final term of office. The decision was made shortly after the UN Security Council approved sanctions against Saleh and two Houthi commanders for destabilising the transition in the country. In mid-December, less than one month after taking power, Bahah's government threatened to resign, but received a vote of confidence from Parliament. Analysts warned that the country was extremely vulnerable, with half the population in need of urgent humanitarian aid and with the economy at the brink following Saudi Arabia's decision to suspend aid before the Houthis' advance, citing their ideological proximity to Iran.

Yemen (south)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Self-government, Resources, Territory Internal
Main parties:	Government, secessionist and autonomist opposition groups from the south (including the South Yemen Movement/al-Hiraak al-Janoubi)

Summary:
Yemen is the result of a problematic process of unification that in 1990 joined together the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) in the north and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south. Since then, the balance of power has tilted northwards and President Ali Abdullah Saleh (leader of the former YAR since 1978) has held office ever since. The fragile political balance established with the creation of the new state led to the outbreak of civil war in 1994, from which the northern forces emerged victorious. The situation remains tense and in recent years demonstrations protesting against discrimination towards the south have intensified, especially concerning control over resources. There have also been clashes with the security forces. The southern protest movement is not structured around a single organisation but rather it is composed of groups with a variety of agendas, whose demands range from greater autonomy to secession, which are exerting pressure to achieve a new north-south relationship within the framework of the transition process that began in Yemen at the end of 2011.

---

56. See the summary on Yemen (AQAP) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts).
57. See chapter 3 (Peace Processes).

The conflict between southern separatists and the central government of Yemen was directly determined by the overall trend of developments in the country in 2014, characterised by the expansion of the influence and power of the Houthis, an insurgent group from the north of the country, and by growing political instability that brought Yemen to the brink of chaos at the end of the year.[58] During the first quarter of the year, in line with the dynamics of the conflict in 2013, **north-south tensions were evident in regular demonstrations in different southern cities like Mukalla, al-Dhalia and Aden, some of which led to incidents in which several people died, and in disagreements about proposals to define the political future of the country as part of the transition process**. In this sense, various southern groups rejected the conclusions of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), which revealed its results in January after months of debate. In particular, some southern groups questioned the decision to promote a federal formula for the country. Given that the NDC had been unable to agree on the number of regions, in the end a committee appointed by President Abo Rabbo Mansour Hadi decided to give the country a six-region structure, two of them in the south: Aden and Hadramawt. This decision was opposed strongly by southern groups. In the months that followed, southern groups continued to stage demonstrations including thousands of people, some of them to mark the anniversary of the short-lived Democratic Republic of Yemen proclaimed in 1994, four years after the unification of North and South Yemen, which led to a civil war won by the northern forces. Speaking from exile in Lebanon, one of the leaders of the southern movement, Ali Salem al-Baid, urged the Yemeni authorities to start talks to facilitate the creation of an independent state in the south and avoid bloodshed.
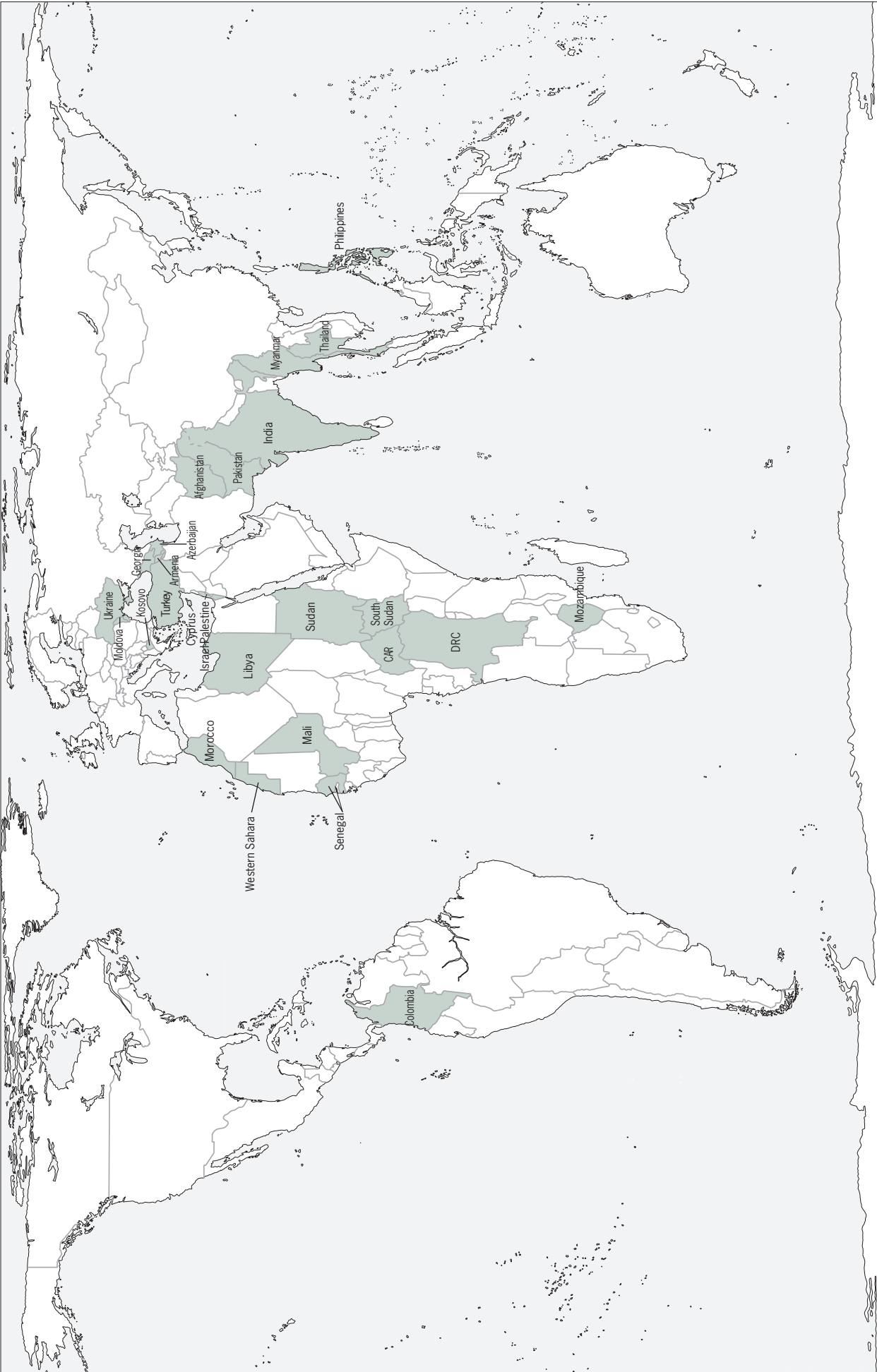
Starting in the second quarter, the worsening general crisis in the country following the Houthis' capture of the capital, Sana'a, prompted new mass demonstrations in favour of independence for the south. Moreover, some representatives of the southern movement issued the central government an ultimatum to withdraw its officials and security forces from the region. Meanwhile, in September a group of ex-soldiers and former military officers from the south announced the establishment of a military council. **The members of this council called on the population to stage mass demonstrations and to organise a civil disobedience campaign in order to take control of the southern cities before declaring independence**. In late November, to mark the 47th anniversary of the south's independence from British rule, thousands of people filled the streets and one of the main leaders of the southern movement (al-Hiraak), Hassam Ba'oum, said that southern secession was a matter of time. Speaking to the press, Ba'oum offered more details, saying that several consultation processes had been put in motion to ensure that the movement to independence was peaceful and that a timetable was already being discussed for proclaiming an independent state in the south. Sources within the movement asserted that the process included steps to take control of state infrastructure and institutions in the south. While recognising that the situation in Yemen had opened a window of opportunity for the independence of the southern region, some experts warned that this kind of process will have to overcome several obstacles, including the persisting fragmentation and divisions between various groups in the south (a factionalism extended through the rest of Yemen), the lack of a charismatic figure able to unite the different groups and guide the process towards secession and the disagreements over a formula acceptable for the future of the south, since there are groups living in the south ready to accept the six-region federal solution, while others support a two-state federation and others still are unwilling to stomach any solution but independence.[59]

---

58. See the summary on Yemen (the Houthis) in chapter 1 (Armed Conflicts) and on Yemen in this chapter.
59. Saeed al-Batati, "Divided south Yemen separatists vow to achieve independence", *Middle East Eye*, 30 September 2014, http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/divided-south-yemen-separatists-vow-achieve-independence-830553601.

Map 3.1. **Peace processes**

Philippines

Thailand

Myanmar

India

Pakistan

Afghanistan

Azerbaijan

Georgia

Armenia

Ukraine

Kosovo

Turkey

Moldova

Cyprus

Israel

Palestine

Sudan

South Sudan

Mozambique

DRC

CAR

Libya

Morocco

Mali

Western Sahara

Senegal

Colombia

Countries with formal or exploratory negotiations

3. Peace processes

- 15.1% of the 33 analyzed negotiations analyzed went well (including those that ended successfully), another 24.2% experienced difficulties and 57.6% were badly, meaning the balance is quite negative, despite the fact that, in some countries, peace negotiations were set to resume in 2015.
- During the year, peace agreements were reached in Mozambique (RENAMO) and in South Sudan (SSD-Cobra Faction). In the case of Mozambique, however, the situation deteriorated at the end of the year.
- Several international meetings were held to try getting a direct dialogue with the confronted parties in Libya, mediated by the United Nations, but by the end of the year it had not yet been possible to formalize an inclusive dialogue.
- Negotiations between the Colombian Government and the FARC guerrilla continued to progress, with the perspective of completing the negotiation agenda by the end of 2015. At the same time, exploratory contacts with the ELN guerrilla made it possible to reach a two-point agreement: getting society and victims of the conflict to participate.
- In the Philippines, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed, hailed as a historical move since it culminated 17 years of negotiations with the MILF and was to end over four decades of armed conflict in Mindanao.
- In Turkey, the Kurdish leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, declared that it was possible to reach a broad democratic solution before the elections in June 2015. Öcalan presented a draft framework for negotiations that included several sections, including a methodology, philosophy, agenda and action plan.
- In Ukraine, and despite the many calls to implement two agreements signed in September, neither the cease-fire was respected nor was there a commitment to allow reducing the fighting.

This chapter analyses the situation of 33 contexts of negotiation or exploration. In addition, it studies three cases with sporadic rapprochement –Ethiopia-ONLF, Somalia-al-Shabaab, and India (Assam)– which are not included in the following table because they do not consist of initiatives of contacts that can be considered as peace negotiations ((the total number of cases that are analyzed is 33). Four other cases (Eritrea-Ethiopia, Mozambique, Syria and Yemen) that with the exception of Mozambique are not comparable to a consolidated and structured peace process are discussed. During the year three groups laid down their arms to achieve a peace agreement with their respective governments, although in the case of the MILF in the Philippines problems that could alter the implementation of agreements emerged already in 2015.

Table 3.1. **Status of the negotiations at the end of 2014**

Good (2)	In difficulties (8)	Bad (19)	At an exploratory stage (1)	Resolved (3)

Senegal (MFDC)
Colombia (FARC)
	Mali (several)
	Sudan (National Dialogue)
	India (NSCN-IM)
	Myanmar
	Thailand (south)
	Serbia-Kosovo
	Turkey (PKK)
	Armenia-Azerbaijan
	  (Nagorno-Karabakh)
		Sudan (SPLM-N)
		Sudan (Darfur)
		Sudan-South Sudan
		South Sudan
		DRC (FDLR) (*)
		CAR
		Libya
		Morocco-Western Sahara
		Afghanistan
		India-Pakistan
		Pakistan (TTP)
		Philippines (NDF)
		Philippines (MNLF)
		Cyprus
		Moldova(Transdniestria)
		Ukraine
		Georgia (Abkhazia & South Ossetia)
		Israel-Palestine
			Colombia (ELN)	Mozambique
				  (RENAMO)
				South Sudan
				  (SSDM-Cobra Faction)
				Philippines (MILF)

(*) Negotiations with the FDLR, through DRC and with the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio, do not follow the conventional patterns of negotiations, in the sense that, for the time being, there is not participation of the Government of Rwanda, where the members of the FDLR are from.

15.1% of the 33 analyzed negotiations analyzed went well (including those that ended successfully), another 24.2% experienced difficulties and 57.6% were badly, meaning the balance is quite negative, despite the fact that, in some countries, peace negotiations were set to resume in 2015. In the six years between 2008 and 2013, the average of the negotiations that at the end of the year ended badly was only 17.3%.

3.1. Peace processes: definitions and types

Negotiation is understood as the process through which two or more parties involved in a dispute (whether countries or internal actors within a country) agree to discuss their differences within an agreed framework to seek a satisfactory solution to their demands. This negotiation may be direct or with the mediation of third parties. Formal negotiations tend to have a prior or **exploratory** stage that enables the framework of the future negotiations to be defined (format, place, conditions, guarantees, etc.). **Peace process** is understood as the consolidation of a negotiation process, once the points on the agenda, the procedures, the timeframe and the facilitators have been defined. Negotiation is therefore one of the stages in a peace process.

Ceasefire is understood as the military decision to cease all combating or use of arms for a specified period, while **cessation of hostilities** encompasses not only the ceasefire, but also the commitment not to carry out kidnappings, harass civilians or make threats, etc.

Depending of the final goals that are sought or the dynamics pursued during the different stages of negotiations, most peace processes can be placed in one of the five categories or models listed below, although there may occasionally be processes that fall under two categories:

a) Demobilisation and reinsertion
b) Political, military or economic power-sharing
c) Exchange (peace for democracy, peace for territories, peace for withdrawal, peace for the recognition of rights, etc.)
d) Confidence-building measures
e) Self-government formula or "intermediate political structures"

The process model is usually linked to the type of demands put forward and to the actors' ability to pressure or make demands (level of military, political and social symmetry), although other influential factors include accompanying and facilitation, the level of exhaustion of those involved, the support they get and other less rational factors that are more closely related to the leaders' pathologies, world views or historical momentum. On a handful of occasions, especially if the process is long in time, it may happen that a peace process is initially considered to fall under one of the categories above (a, for example) and then demands rise

and place the process in a more complex category. It is also important to remember that not all processes or their prior stages of exploration, dialogue and negotiation, take place with absolute honesty, since quite often they are part of the actual war strategy, whether it may be to gain time, to internationalise the dispute and raise its profile, or to rearm, among other motives.

Finally, we should highlight that what is usually called a "peace process" is actually nothing else that a "process to end violence and armed fighting". The signing of a cessation of hostilities and then of a peace agreement is nothing but the start of a true "peace process", linked to a stage known as the "post-war rehabilitation", which is always difficult, but also where the decision-making is done and where policies are implemented and, if these are successful, will make it possible to overcome other violence (structural and cultural) that will then allow talking about "achieving peace". This yearbook, however, provides an analysis of the efforts made during the first stage of this long race, without which it would not be possible to achieve the final goal.

3.2. Evolution of negotiations

3.2.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

In the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, the UN Security Council approved the creation of a EU mission (EUFOR CAR). In July, the Forum for Reconciliation and Political Dialogue was held in Brazzaville (Congo), facilitated by the Congolese president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, with the participation of several armed groups in the country and around thirty countries and international organisations forming the International Contact Group for the CAR. The armed groups from the country agreed to a cessation of hostilities. The UN, for its part, and through the MINUSCA, assumed the transferral of responsibilities in the peacekeeping operation in the country, relieving the MISCA, the AU force. There were also divisions within the group Séléka. At the end of December, the official facilitator of the peace process, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, in an attempt to try and revive the process, asked his Kenyan counterpart, Uhuru Kenyatta, to hold contacts between the leaders of the Central African armed groups in Kenya. Although the Congolese president sent two emissaries to the Central African president to inform of the conversations' contents, aiming at bring the former Central African presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, the current insurgence leaders, closer to the peace process, the Central African president viewed this as an act of conspiracy because the contents of the conversations included a ceasefire and a review of the transition process, both of which were questioned by the Government of Catherine Samba-Panza. One day after the agreement was announced, on 28th January 2015, Denis Sassou-Nguesso disowned the agreement, declaring that although conversations were necessary,

they should not include the option of a new transition in the country with new institutions, in an attempt to calm his Central African counterpart.

In **DRC (East)**, an Amnesty law was passed in January, mainly focusing on members of the M23 in Uganda. However, during the year, the terms of this amnesty were not clarified, and most M23 members did not joint in. The small Mai Mai Simba militia (in the Ituri region) surrendered to the Congolese Armed Forces. For its part, in April the FDLR announced its voluntary disarmament, although there were doubts as to the real scope of this project. Nevertheless, they started conversations with the Congolese Government in Rome, with mediation by the Community of Sant'Egidio, which was quite active in Africa during the year. Conversely, the UN Sanctions Committee did not authorize the vice-president of the FDLR in DRC, Gaston Iyamuremye, alias Victor Rumuli Byringiro, to travel to a meeting in Rome. The regional and international organisations asked the FDLR members to return to Rwanda, their country of origin, since otherwise the military option would be unavoidable in 2015.

Horn of Africa

Towards the middle of January, Sudan offered to mediate between **Eritrea and Ethiopia**. According to the Sudanese ambassador in Asmara, Abdul Rahamn Sir Alkahtim, Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir had started indirect conversations between the Eritrean president, Isaias Afewerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn. Al-Bashir had gone further and suggested to them the possibility of a summit in Khartoum, on a date to be convened.

In **Ethiopia (Ogaden)**, two Somali soldiers who temporarily went missing after being taken by the police in Nairobi were actually representatives of the ONLF in Kenya for the peace negotiations. This halted the contacts that had taken place until then to try and establish a peace process between the Ethiopian Government and the ONLF, with mediation from Kenya.

In **Somalia**, the Government opened the door to conversations with members of the al-Shabaab armed group. It would seem non-official channels had been opened for these conversations, albeit with no results. The president of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, extended until the end of the year the amnesty set up by his government for all al-Shabaab members wishing to put down their arms, but the reply from the armed group was an attack on the AU base in the capital. The disputes in the Government that blocked Government action between the president and the prime minister forced the latter to step down, a move that was approved by the Federal Parliament. The president appointed

Omar Abdirashid Ali-Sharmarke as the new prime minister. During the year, two leaders of the Islamist group al-Shabaab also surrendered, bringing to light the tensions within the group, and in September its leader was executed in a US military operation.[1]

As for the "national dialogue" in **Sudan**,[2] the president appealed to face the political and economic problems to tackle poverty, war and political instability, with the engagement of the former South African president Thabo Mbeki and the African Union High Implementation Panel for Sudan (AUHIP). In September an Agreement on the National Dialogue and Constitutional Process with 8 points was signed in Addis Ababa, with the AU acting as an observer. The Berghof Foundation, for its part, called a meeting in Berlin with the leaders of the different armed groups from the SPLM-N coalition and the president of the SRF, Minni Minnawi, who agreed to participate in any political process that would lead to peace in the country. The opposition parties demanded that elections were delayed until the end of the national dialogue process. In this regard, it was relevant that opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi, from the PCP, decided to participate in the "national dialogue".

In **Darfur (Sudan)**, contacts continued during the year between the Government and the insurgence without success. The Chadian president, Idriss Déby, met with the leader of the JEM faction, Gibril Ibrahim, in Paris. Ibrahim expressed that he did not want partial peace but rather agreements with the whole SRF alliance. The Egyptian Government announced its interest in mediating in the peace process. At the end of the year a new meeting between the Government and the SRF of Gibril Ibrahim was called, but the Government delegation was only prepared to discuss security issues.

In **South Kordofan and the Blue Nile (Sudan)**, conversations resumed between Sudan and the armed group SPLM-N, which had been stalled for almost a year. Both parties met again in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) under the auspices of the AU. The facilitator, Thabo Mbeki, suspended the process after the SPLM-N rejected a draft framework agreement, meaning they went back to the previous agreement reached on 28th June 2011, which had never been implemented, but could be used as a reference for the new framework agreement. Mbeki pointed out that Sudan was experiencing "a double-track process", referring to the parallel negotiations in the Sudanese region of Darfur, and that both negotiations should be "synchronised", a point that didn't please the Sudanese Government. In December negotiations with the SPLM-N were suspended due to deep disagreement between the parties on their standpoints. However, the leader of the SPLM-N, at the third meeting of the Geneva Call, committed to destroy their stocks of anti-personnel landmines and the parties showed willingness to participate in the large-scale operation to free all prisoners of war.

---

1. Read the summary on Somalia in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
2. Read "The Sudanese national dialogue, the penultimate hope for peace in Sudan", in chapter 5 (Opportunities for Peace in 2015).

In **South Sudan**, the international community put pressure on the Government and the SPLM/A-IO insurgence led by former vice-president Rieck Machar to stop the severe climate of violence. Nevertheless, the mediation efforts made by the regional organization IGAD failed and the successive ceasefire agreements that were signed during the year were systematically violated. The Government and the SPLM/A-IO initiated peace conversations at the beginning of January in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The parties reached an agreement on the procedures that would be followed in the surveillance and verification mechanism for the cessation of hostilities and they also discussed the steps to follow as for the national dialogue and issues relating to the armed group SPLM/A-IO. Peace conversations after the signing of the agreement, nonetheless, were boycotted by the Government, due to statements made by the executive secretary of the IGAD, Mahboub Maalim, who irresponsibly called the Government and the opposition "stupid". A delegation of the SPLM/A-IO visited Beijing (China) and held conversations with the Chinese Government, which in 2014 took the first steps as a collaborator in peace processes, especially in countries such as South Sudan, rich in oil. The Government of South Sudan criticised the three Troika countries (USA, UK and Norway) for attempting a change in regime. These three countries supported the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, which led to the signing of the 2005 peace agreement and to South Sudan's independence later on. It was also surprising that the parties agreed to continue negotiations in Arusha (Tanzania), building on the efforts made by the IGAD, albeit facilitated by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), from Finland, which led to some confusion. Nevertheless, president Kiir left the negotiating table. In the Ethiopian capital, the Government of South Sudan signed a peace agreement with the group South Sudan Democratic Movement-Cobra Faction (SSDM-Cobra Faction), led by David Yau Yau, whereby a special territorial administration would be created for the region of Pibor, under the principle of State decentralisation.

As for conflictive relations between **Sudan and South Sudan**, the Commission for National Elections in Sudan announced that the Abyei area would be included in the 2015 elections, leading South Sudanese authorities to protest. The UN special envoy of the Secretary-General, Francis Mading Deng, suggested a new agreement for Abyei, which would be declared a neutral area.

Maghreb-North Africa

In **Libya**, an International Conference on Libya was held in Rome (Italy) and the Spanish diplomat Bernardino León was appointed as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya and head of the UN mission in the country (UNSMIL). In September Madrid (Spain) hosted a Conference on the Stability and Development of Libya, in a new attempt to open an inclusive dialogue. That same month, Algeria hosted a meeting of countries committed to peace in Libya, in Algiers, without hiding its wish to organise future meetings and lead the attempt to open negotiations. The Security Council decided, together with the UN, to create and International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L), made up of the neighbouring countries as well as bilateral and multilateral organisations. It also created a High Level Committee of Heads of State and Government, to allow the AU to accompany the peace efforts to rebuild Libya in a more effective way. Both these groups are coordinated by Egypt and Algeria. On 29th September, a dialogue was held in Ghadames, west of Libya, between some parties to the conflict, attended by Bernardino León, representatives from the UK and Malta. On 11th October, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon went to Tunisia and Libya on a surprise visit, together with his representative for Libya, calling for a ceasefire and for dialogue. As proof of the interest of several countries to have an influence on the process, the special envoy of the Turkish president, Emrullah Isler, visited Libya and met with the self-proclaimed prime minister of the Government based in Tripoli, Omal al-Hasi. There was an attempt to form a diplomatic pole between Algeria, Qatar and Turkey. Besides, the Sudanese foreign minister, Ali Karti, managed to get several opposed factions to accept a proposal for peace and reconciliation from Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir. In December a second dialogue was to take place, sponsored by the UN, which had to be postponed on two occasions, and with hopes of this second dialogue to happen at the start of 2015.

As for **Western Sahara**, the strategy followed by the UN was to continue holding bilateral consultations with the possibility of having itinerant diplomatic activities. The UN special envoy highlighted that a new session of direct contacts between the parties would not take place until there are expectations for the dialogue to progress, thus ending a long-standing tradition of having unproductive meetings, due to the firm resolve of the parties not to change their traditional stances. The Personal Envoy met with the working groups set up in Rabat (Morocco) and in Tindouf (Algeria) by the parties, to present, on a confidential basis, a set of questions formulated specifically to each of them. The questions were deliberately difficult and aimed at getting the parties to move beyond easy questions, entering into different conversations to the previous ones, and to encourage them to show flexibility. Ross hoped to have monthly consultations with the parties towards October, the date when he would come up with his first assessment on this approximation in negotiations. The Security Council also raised the possibility of proceeding to register refugee population in the Tindouf camps, a point that had already proved controversial in previous years, since there were noticeable differences between the number of refugees stated by the POLISARIO front and the UNHCR. Morocco decided to implement the plan for autonomy through a process of advanced regionalisation, which would start in Western Sahara, although it had taken on this commitment years before

and had never turned it into a reality. It would seem the POLISARIO Front was deceived with the mediation work done by Ross and was critical with the methodology followed by the US diplomat, putting the work done by the UN into question.

Southern Africa

As for the impasse experienced in **Mozambique**, the Government and RENAMO, the main party in opposition, finally reached an agreement on 24th August to end the political conflict confronting the two parties for two years, which had even reached some episodes of sporadic armed violence, causing fears that the armed conflict in the country from when it gained independence in 1975 and 1992 would restart. The two forces reached a ceasefire agreement and agreed to integrate RENAMO combatants into the Mozambican armed forces, as well as an amnesty for the violent acts carried out after 2012. This ceasefire agreement paved the way for president Armando Guebuza (FRELIMO) and the leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama, to meet in Maputo to sign a peace agreement that ratified the integration of RENAMO combatants into the security corpses. The Parliament ratified this agreement days later, leading to the start of the electoral campaign for the legislative and presidential elections on 15th October. During the weeks before the signing of the ceasefire, the Government had freed several RENAMO activists who had been arrested in recent fighting, as a measure of good will to facilitate a rapprochement with the group.

West Africa

During the first half of the year **Mali** registered many difficulties to progress in the dialogue between the Government and armed actors in the north that should have started under the framework of the Ouagadougou agreement in 2013. After a new escalation of violence, the Government and several organisations operating in the northern area –including the MNLA, the HCUA and the MAA – agreed to start peace conversations with the Government, with the aim of talking the conflict, and they signed what is known as the "Algiers Declaration". Additionally, the National Assembly approved, with a large majority, the creation of a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. After that peace conversations started in Algiers, facilitated by Algeria and the AU, MINUSMA, ECOWAS, OIC, EU, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. During the second half of the year four rounds of contacts were held (July, September, October and November) under the framework of a two-sided process between the Government and two coalitions of armed groups in the north: on the one hand, the Coordinator, which brings together the MNLA, MAA and HCUA, and on the other hand, the Platform, integrated by the Coordination of Movements and Resistance Patriotic Fronts (CMFPR), the Coalition for the People of Azawad, and a faction of the MAA.

After the second round of contacts, new groups joined these blocs, including the Imghad and Allies Tuareg Self-Defence Group, a militia that is considered pro-government and that started its activities in the north of the country in 2014. Negotiations led to the adoption of a roadmap, a declaration on the cessation of hostilities and the drafting of a document that was to serve as a basis for a final agreement. However, until the end of 2014 there continued to be disagreements between the parties regarding key issues, especially regarding the political and institutional solution in the north, with the Government and the Platform supporting a formula based on increased regionalisation and the Coordinator favouring the establishment of a federal system.

Negotiations continued in **Senegal (Casamance)**. At the start of 2014 a government delegation and representatives of the MFDC faction led by Salif Sadio met in Rome, with the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio, and signed a commitment on confidence measures. Sadio's Faction agreed to declare a ceasefire, which the group formally announced on 29th April. Weeks before, and in view of the positive evolution of contacts between the parties, president Sall went on his first visit to Casamance (17th and 18th March), where he claimed what he hailed as the "peace of the brave", with no winners or losers, and based on respect and the territorial integrity of Senegal. The leader reiterated his peace offers for the region and announced a development plan for the area. The leader of another MFDC faction, César Badiate, rejected the idea of "Sall's peace for the brave", although he reiterated his desire for there to be dialogue with the Senegalese authorities and suggested the possibility that conversations could take place in the USA. After reiterating that the Government's red line was Senegal's territorial integrity, Dakar replied to Badiate ratifying its willingness to negotiate. Badiate held meetings with the special counsellor for Casamance in the USA, Mark Boulware, who also met with Sadio and with members of the Government. Even if Boulware stated that the conditions were favourable for peace in Casamance, other actors –including the bishop of Ziguinchor– warned of the risks of the multiplication of mediators with the different factions of the armed group. The Community of Sant'Egidio also confirmed that, even if great progress had been made, there continued to be disagreements on important issues, meaning that the negotiations process still required time. It is important to highlight several initiatives from the society aimed at supporting the negotiations. In this regard, some proposals made by Senegalese women organisations should be highlighted. They organised a meeting between several actors to analyse the current status of the conflict and to reflect on the perspectives for a solution. Moreover, women NGOs developed a programme of mobilisations fro 2015 aiming at brining representatives of all Senegal together, and also women from Gambia and Guinea Bissau, with the aim of collecting ideas on how to advance towards a peaceful solution for Casamance after more than three

decades of conflict. The Community of Sant'Egidio, at the end of the year, was visited by the Senegalese president, Macky Sall.

3.2.2. America

In **Colombia**, president Santos won the second round of the presidential elections, renewing his mandate with a clear commitment to continue with the negotiations with the FARC guerrilla, which started in 2012. The Government and the FARC reached an agreement on the fourth point on their Agenda, regarding a solution to the problem of illegal drugs, and surprised the world just before the elections by issuing a "Declaration of principles for the discussion of point 5 on their Agenda: "Victims", where they acknowledged their responsibilities in the conflict and committed to giving the victims a voice, which could be interpreted as a signal to the electorate that had doubts on the possibility of reaching agreements on this point. Alongside, the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims was created, made up of 12 experts and also a sub-commission was established for the "End of the Conflict", made up of up to 10 members of each of the delegations, which would comprise the bilateral abandonment of arms, a ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities. A gender sub-commission was also established. The FARC, through "Pablo Catatumbo", acknowledged the damage caused during the 50 years of conflict, in a first public attempt to apologise to the victims. Negotiations were interrupted for a few days after the FARC retained an Army general, who they later freed as a measure of confidence to reinforce the negotiations. Shortly afterwards, the FARC announced a unilateral ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities for an indefinite period, although the Government did not allow an international verification, which nevertheless started unofficially. President Santos announced on 10th June that, since January, the Government was holding exploratory contacts with the ELN guerrilla, after some initial contacts at the end of 2013. By October 2014 they had already reached a two-point agreement: allowing the participation of society and the victims of the conflict. At the end of the year, the president conditioned the continuity of the exploratory conversations to the ELN to stop kidnappings. In January 2015, the ELN took the political initiative on the occasion of its 5th Congress, accepting its willingness to abandon arms if certain conditions were met. They also revealed the points of their Agenda with the Government, and those they had reached a consensus on.

3.2.3. Asia

South Asia

In **Afghanistan**, the High Peace Council of Afghanistan acknowledged that at the start of the year a meeting had taken place with a Taliban faction in Dubai (United Arab Emirates). The Afghan Government pointed out that the arrest of a former Taliban leader in the Emirates was an obstacle to the peace process, since Agha Jan Motasim, the former Taliban finance minister, would have been mediating between the Afghan Government and the Taliban leadership. Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, the interior minister, took charge of the dialogue with the Taliban. By the end of the year there were two fronts of possible mediation, which created some confusion. One was the triad formed by China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the second was a group of countries in the region called "6+1", with the USA, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. China allowed the Taliban to visit their country and seemed to be the best positioned country for future negotiations under its facilitation. The new president, Ashraf Ghani, had started contacts with the insurgence with hopes to resume possible peace negotiations in Qatar. In December, some 500 Taliban abandoned arms and joined the peace process.

In **India (Nagaland)**, progress was made with the implementation of the Lenten agreement, signed in March with the purpose of forming a Naga National Government, especially regarding confidence-building measures. The Government expressed that, while negotiations were still open with the NSCN-IM, there would be no conversations with the rest of insurgence groups. Towards the middle of July, the new Indian Government led by the party BJP, resumed peace conversations with the NSCN-IM, while the NSCN-K rejected any form of agreement. The Nagaland Government expressed that its role was limited to facilitation, and did not participate directly in the negotiations, mediated by the central Government. Towards the end of the year, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, visited Nagaland with the aim of strengthening dialogues.

As for the conflict between **India and Pakistan** over **Kashmir**, during most of the year, the process experienced a deep crisis due to the clashes that went on along the border between the two countries. The new nationalist Indian prime minister received his Pakistani counterpart, who is a Muslim. Later on, the Indian Government cancelled a planned meeting between the Foreign Affairs secretaries of both countries in Islamabad, chilling the negotiations. It is also worth highlighting that there were meetings between Pakistani diplomats and Kashmir separatist leaders. The UN Secretary-General, for the first time, offered his good offices to help resolving the conflict.

In **Pakistan (Waziristan)**, the first direct meeting between the Government and the group TTP took place, where they agreed to extend the ceasefire and to continue with the exchange of prisoners. The Government and the TTP agreed to dialogue under the parameters of the Constitution; that agreements would only apply to tribal areas affected by the armed conflict; that both parties would stop armed activity that could damage conversations —although they didn't reach a format

agreement on the ceasefire–; and that negotiations would not extend in time. In April, however, the peace process completely broke down when the ceasefire collapsed. There were also internal power struggles within the TTP, a group that carried out a brutal terrorist attack on a school, where 141 people were killed, almost all of minors, wiping out all possibilities of negotiating with this group in the short term.

South-east Asia

In **Myanmar**, there was an agreement in March to establish a joint committee to work on the final text of the national ceasefire agreement. One of the most controversial points in the negotiations, which was purposefully left out of the conversations that led to the ceasefire, was that of integrating the insurgence into the Armed Forces, as well as the Government's demand that armed groups informed of the number of troops, arms and ammunitions under rebel control, a point that has led negotiations on other peace processes to collapse. Finally, an agreement was reached to integrate most armed groups into the Armed Forces. The Government and the insurgence also agreed to include a mention to federalism in the draft text of the ceasefire. The Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) had proposed a list of third parties to participate in the signing of the agreement, with observers from the US, UK, Japan, China, France and the UN. At the end of the year, the negotiations resumed and an agreement was reached to create an inclusive Federal Army and a ceasefire agreement. In view of the results achieved, it is important to highlight the active participation of important businessmen in facilitating the negotiations. By the end of the year, the NCCT declared it wished to have additional international observers, preferably from the Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG), including Norway, UK, Japan, Switzerland, the US and Australia. At the end of the year, negotiations entered a crisis because of an attack on a KIA camp.

In the **Philippines**, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed on 27th March, hailed as a historical stem since it culminated 17 years of negotiations with the MILF and should put an end to more than four decades of armed conflict in Mindanao. After the signing of this agreement, the work to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law –the name given to the statute of autonomy that will govern the new Bangsamoro entity– started. This entity will come into operations once the Bangsamoro Basic Law is endorsed, a Bangsamoro Transition Authority is established, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is abolished. After drafting the proposed law and including the amendments and suggestions from the Government, during most of the year, this law was discussed and worked on in parliament. In parallel to this, the Government and MILF negotiation panels established a Coordination Team for Transition to coordinate the transferral of responsibilities from the current

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, which will govern in Bangsamoro from the time the Bangsamoro Basic Law is passed until elections are called in Bangsamoro in 2016. It is estimated that the Bangsamoro Transition Authority will be up and functioning in around one year. The Coordination Team for Transition will be made up of five members from the central Government and the current ARMM, and five representatives of the MILF. It is also important to highlight that a meeting took place in Hiroshima (Japan) between the president of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino, and the MILF leader, Murad Ebrahim. The MILF announced it had practically completed the steps to formalise the creation of a new party, the United Bangsamoro Justice Party, with the aim of participating in the elections planned for May 2016. The Government and the MILF decided to implement the provisions set out in the annex on the so-called "normalization", consisting in creating a Joint Normalization Committee, A Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission, and an Independent Decommissioning Body (of weapons).

As for the negotiation process between the Government and the NDF, during the year there was no significant progress. The NDF denounced that the new approach adopted by the Government to continue with the process –the so-called "local peace conversations"– had, as a main objective, the surrender of its armed wing, the NPA. Nevertheless, on several occasions it declared its willingness to hold informal conversations or consultations with the Government. For its part, the Government also showed its willingness to resume peace conversations if both parties agreed on a substantive agenda that was realizable and limited in time, and on a change in the negotiation methodology. At the end of the year, the Norwegian Government publicly announced the appointment of a new facilitation team. Norway had been playing this role for years. A few months later, the NDF expressed it was ready to go back to the negotiating table at the start of 2015, although it also stated it would not be possible to reach a final agreement before the end of the current president's mandate in June 2016. For its part, the Philippine Government announced its intention to establish a new negotiating team. Based on the rapprochement of positions between the parties, there was speculation on the possibility of a meeting between Benigno Aquino and Jose Maria Sison, as the latter had requested previously.

Furthermore, the tripartite negotiations (Government, MNLF, Organization of the Islamic Conference) on the full implementation of the 1996 peace agreement remained stalled. These negotiations had been interrupted since, at the end of 2013, the MNLF besieged the city of Zamboanga, killing tens of people. This attack led the founder of the group, Nur Misuari, to flee and his whereabouts are unknown, besides internal tensions and certain divisions within the MNLF. While some factions expressed their support to the peace process between the Government and the MILF, others have expressed

fear that the peace agreement signed between the Government and the MILF in March may invalidate the content of the 1996 peace agreement. Some MNLF leaders called for a greater harmonization between the two agreements, while other more belligerent voices expressed their regret and the possibility that the MNLF might resume the armed combat.

In **Thailand (south)**, a significant part of society called for a "National Dialogue", as has happened in other countries during the year. The armed groups in the south accepted to withdraw the claim for independence in exchange for autonomy. According to several sources, the strategy of the Armed Forces would be to promote combatants to defect and surrender and to minimize or ignore the demands for greater autonomy, meaning the Armed Forces would have a clear control over the course of the eventual peace negotiations. The Government expressed its intention to increase the number of armed groups with which it dialogued and to include, insofar as possible, local organisations and communities into the peace process. By the end of the year the Government came up with a new negotiation scheme, with three panels and three stages: one on conversations and the promotion of communication and confidence; an agreement to agree on a code of conduct to reduce confrontation; and the third, a "roadmap" to resolve the conflict peacefully.

3.2.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

In **Moldova (Transdniestria)** the parties signed a protocol on the freedom of movement in February. However, in May, the Moldovan Government put its border forces under alert due to the deterioration of security in the Ukraine, which could affect the region. Tension increased with the signing of an agreement of association between Moldova and the EU in June, which was strongly criticised by Russia. Transdniestria and Russia signed several agreements in July, for economic, trade, transport, agriculture and science cooperation, creating more tensions with the Moldovan Government. In the parliamentary elections of November, the pro-Europeans won 44% of the votes, while the pro-Russians took 39%. The Moldovan chancellor, Natalia Gherman, proposed modifying the format of the peacekeeping mission in Transdniestria, controlled by Russia, and to turn it into a mission under international mandate. During the year, the negotiation process remained active, but the round planned for July was postponed on two occasions, generating concern within the context of continental crisis due to the war in the Ukraine. The special representative of the OSCE rotating presidency for the resolution process in Transdniestria, Rodojko Bogojevic, regretted the proposal, but valued positively what he considered to be a clear commitment by both parties with the dialogue.

In the **Ukraine**, unidentified Russian military forces gradually occupied the territory and institutions in Crimea, which was finally annexed to Russia after a referendum that was rejected by the Ukraine and then by the UN General Assembly. After the Crimean crisis, the conflict broke out in eastern Ukraine, together with several attempts to find a solution during the year, with the participation of the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine), as well as Germany, France and the USA. On 25th May, the Ukrainian business tycoon Petro Poroshenko won the presidential elections. On 20th June, Poroshenko announced a peace plan ("Steps towards the peaceful resolution of the situation in eastern Ukrainian regions"). Putin accepted the peace plan and the ceasefire proposed by Poroshenko, and refused to accept the independence of the pro-Russian regions of Donetsk and Lugansk (or Donbas), located in the east of the country, but pressed for the Ukraine to become a federation and with the right to draft their own laws and establish independent trade relations with nations such as Russia. On 5th September, the central Government in Kiev and the separatists from the east signed a 12-point protocol in Minsk to achieve peace, including a ceasefire that was only partly respected during the first few days. On 16th September, the Ukrainian parliament approved a bill suggesting three years of autonomy for the eastern areas, as well as a partial amnesty and the commitment to use the Russian language, but this new decentralising law was later revoked. The Ukrainian parliament then ratified the agreement of association with the EU, which was one of the factors triggering the conflict, although the economic chapter was left out, and is suspended until 2016. On 19th September, Ukraine and the rebels signed a Memorandum on the Minsk Protocol parameters that included, among other points, the creation of a demilitarised zone of 30 km, where heavy weapons would be withdrawn at least 15 km by each side. At the beginning of November, elections were held in the Donbas region, controlled by the rebel leaders, with a clear victory for the pro-Russians. These elections were not recognised by the international community. The Ukrainian Government rejected the secessionists as interlocutors, and preferred direct dialogue with Moscow. At the end of the year, the Ukrainian authorities and the pro-Russian separatists started to exchange prisoners of war, but the ceasefire was not respected and the fighting continued.

Russia and Caucasus

As for the conflict between **Armenia and Azerbaijan** over the region of **Nagorno-Karabakh**, the mechanisms of the formal process remained active, such as the regular meetings between the co-chairs of the Minsk Group –the mediating body of the OSCE in the peace process, co-chaired by the US, France and Russia– with the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, and of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian, and with the participation of the personal representative of the OSCE rotating presidency, Andrzej Kasprzyk. In a context of escalating

tensions between the two countries and permanent violations of the ceasefire, president Putin organised a joint meeting with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in August. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, met the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents on the occasion of a NATO summit, in a renewed attempt to ensure that the conflict is resolved through political negotiations. The presidents of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and of Armenia, Serzh Sarkisian, met at the end of October in Paris, in a meeting organised by the French president. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group also participated in the meeting, but all this diplomatic activity did not serve to reach any substantial progress in the negotiations.

In **Georgia**, the Government and Russia held the same positions they had done for years: the Russian position is that it does not consider itself as part of the conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and therefore rejects any unilateral commitment to refrain from using force; while Georgia is distrustful about a joint position and favours a reciprocal measure from Russia like the one taken by Tbilisi in 2010. In June, the delegations from Abkhazia and South Ossetia abandoned the meeting of the working group on humanitarian issues in the negotiation process, demanding that the issue of displaced Georgian population was taken off the negotiating agenda. Nevertheless, they participated in subsequent rounds and the issue was not fully set aside. In September, Abkhazia requested changes in the format and the Geneva negotiations agenda, even if it was in favour of continuing with the dialogue process. In October, internal political tensions grew in Abkhazia as well as distrust between Georgia and Russia due to the disclosure of the Russian proposal for an "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Integration", aiming to further boost the relations between Russia and Abkhazia. This was interpreted by Georgia as an attempted annexation. In November, Russia and Abkhazia signed a "strategic partnership" agreement leading to a greater dependency of Abkhazia on Russia. The Georgian Prime Minister, Irakli Garibashvili, launched a proposal for a status of autonomous republics for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that would include autonomy, but within a "united and independent" Georgia. The Ossetia leader, Leonid Tibilov, declared that he had offered Moscow to consider the possibility of a full annexation of South Ossetia. At the same time, Russia and South Ossetia were preparing a new treaty at the end of the year, and Georgia suspected this was yet another attempt of annexation.

South-east Europe

In **Cyprus**, at the start of the year the peace process for the divided island of Cyprus resumed, after being at a stalemate for 18 months, influenced by the rotating presidency of the EU held by Cyprus, and also by the financial crisis affecting the island. As agreed by the parties, following the plan established by the UN, the resolution of the conflict would be based on a united Cyprus, with a model of bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality, single citizenship and a single international legal personality. The federation will be the result of a solution approved in simultaneous, independent referenda. The leaders of both communities agreed on 22nd May to speed up the negotiation process and to hold at least two meetings every month. The parties will organise visits by the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot negotiators to Greece and to Turkey, respectively. The parties also agreed to move on to a stage of "structured negotiations", where they could deal with their differences on key issues that have not yet been solved. Turkey suggested the creation of a Joint Committee with the Greek Cypriots, to protect the rights of both communities on the use of natural resources of the island, a point that led to a deep crisis in the negotiations. In October, the president of the Greek Cypriot community, Nicos Anastasiades, suspended his participation in the negotiations after Turkey dispatched a vessel for seismic detection for the exploitation of gas to waters of Cyprus' exclusive economic zone, which are disputed between the two communities. The Government of Nicosia had already granted exploitation licenses to several foreign multinationals. At the end of November, Turkey proposed the creation of a Joint Committee together with the Greek Cypriots to protect the rights of both communities to use the natural resources on the island, and to create a joint company to carry out explorations.

The special envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Cyprus suggested opening up a parallel negotiation process (the "second track") and creating an advisory panel to study the best way of resolving the dispute over gas technically. The Turkish and Greek prime ministers reached the conclusion that they should use the natural resources of Cyprus jointly.

In **Kosovo**, the situation was strongly influenced by the internal tensions that led to the call for early elections in June. The Government wasn't formed until six months later. There was no substantial progress in the negotiation process.

In **Turkey**, in February, three requirements made by the leader of the Kurdish PKK guerrilla, Abdullah Öcalan, on the process were disclosed: the implementation of a legal framework for the negotiations, the establishment of observer entities and a permanent commission to supervise the negotiations. The Government, for its part, submitted a draft bill to Parliament aiming to give legal guarantees to the actors of the Administration involved in the dialogue process, which also authorized the Government to adopt measures in the political, cultural, legal and socioeconomic fields, as well as to adopt the necessary measures to allow PKK combatants to return and integrate back into the country. The new bill was passed in July and, in overall term, it was valued positively by the Kurdish movement. Distrust grew between the parties due to the stance adopted by each of

the parties in relation to the advancement of the Jihadist group ISIS in Kurdish areas of Syria –where the main Kurdish actor, the PYD and the YPG and YPJ guerrillas, have close ties with the PKK. The PKK called on its grassroots to support the Kurds in Syria and accused Turkey of supporting the ISIS, while Turkey feared that the PKK might grow stronger due to the crisis in Syria. The Governing party, the AKP, said in August that the Government was about to complete a roadmap to end the conflict and that details were being shared with the Kurdish side. The peace dialogue slowed down due to the crisis in Syria and even came to a standstill in October, when violent clashes erupted between supporters of the PKK and Islamists from Hüda-Par in southeast Turkey. It also transcended that the Government ruled out having international third parties, but that the parties were discussing possible new mechanisms to reinforce the process. Among other elements, the Kurdish delegation that has been visiting Öcalan in the Imrali prison since 2013 as part of the dialogue process grew in November, from three to four members (the former member of parliament and veteran Kurdish politician Hatip Dicle joined the team), and this was approved by the Government. The leader of the PKK expressed, at the end of November, that it was possible to reach a large democratic solution within the next 4 to 5 months. At the end of the year, Öcalan presented a draft negotiation framework that included several sections, such as a methodology, philosophy, agenda and plan for action.

3.2.5. Middle East

Mashreq

As for the conflict between **Israel and Palestine**, within the framework of negotiations sponsored by the US at the start of the year, the Palestinian president expressed his willingness to consider the deployment of NATO troops in a future Palestinian State that would be demilitarised and would only have a police force. Abbas also acceded to Israel keeping troops in the West Bank for up to five years and that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories should be dismantled in a similar time period. During the second quarter of the year, contacts between the Palestinians and the Israelis were blocked, after nine months trying to dialogue, due to several factors. These included the refusal by Israel to concretize the freeing of a fourth group of Palestinian prisoners and its persistence to continue building settlements, which led the PA to advance in its initiatives to gain international recognition for Palestine. Within this context, the announcement made in April by the two main Palestinian organisations, Hamas and Fatah, that they would form a joint government, led Israel to suspend the dialogue. During the third quarter, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict worsened as a consequence of the offensive launched by Israel against the Gaza Strip and the rocket attacks launched by Hamas on Israel. On 26th August, Hamas and Israel accepted a long-term truce promoted by Cairo, which also included Israel's commitment to ease

the blockade on Gaza. Negotiations between Israel and Hamas resumed in the form of indirect contacts towards the end of September in Cairo. In September, Hamas and Fatah announced an agreement that aimed at allowing the Palestinian Authority (PA) to return to Gaza. In December Jordan, a non-permanent member on the UN Security Council, presented a draft resolution on behalf of Palestine and the Arab states establishing a one-year period to conclude peace negotiations with Israel and set 2017 as the year to complete the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories. Shortly after that, Palestine joined the International Criminal Court, deeply upsetting and causing unease in Israel.

At the end of December, the **Syrian** regime expressed its willingness to participate in a preliminary meeting with the opposition factions in Moscow, at the start of 2015, after a prior meeting between these factions in Cairo. This was a Russian initiative. Both the Syrian Government and the opposition also considered the peace initiative launched by the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Steffan de Mistura, to reach a ceasefire in the city of Aleppo, as a first step towards a broader ceasefire.

The Gulf

As for **Yemen**, it is worth mentioning that, in January, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) concluded its work sessions started in March 2013, with a series of recommendations on the country's future, including an agreement in principle for a federal system in the country. The NDC delegates did not manage to agree on the number of regions there should be in this new federal system, and they asked the Yemeni president to create a commission to define this issue. After two weeks of work, this committee approved the converting of Yemen into a federal system of six regions. This agreement will be translated into the country's new Constitution, which should be drafter during 2014 and approved in a referendum as a prior step to the general elections. The approval of a new federal framework was met with a broad resistance from sectors in the south, who preferred a formula with two regions or hoped for independence of the southern region. At the end of September, the Houthis –who in the last year had increased their control in Yemen's northern regions– took the capital, installed checkpoints around the city, surrounded the main official buildings and forced the Government to resign.

President Abdo Rabbo Mandour Hadi –who had called the Houthi attack an attempted coup–accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Mohamed Basindwa, who in turn signed the peace agreement promoted by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Jamal Benomar. The agreement –*Peace and National Partnership Agreement*– signed on 21st September, established a reduction in the price of fuels, called for the election of a new prime minister and the formation of a new inclusive government after one month. This led to plans

for a larger presence of the Houthis in Government. The Houthis were reticent to signing an annex that planned for the disarmament of the parties, for the Government to regain authority in the areas controlled by the militias and the devolution of arms confiscated during the fighting. The five-point annex committing the parties to end violence –including the clashes in the Maarib and al-Jawf provinces– was signed one week later, but did not serve to end incidents. Analysts and observers considered the peace agreement only reduced the risk of a civil war breaking out in the country temporarily, and warned that the crisis could allow for al-Qaeda to advance in the south of Yemen. During the month of October, there were many clashes between different armed groups, killing hundreds of people and placing the country in a scenario of severe instability, bordering a civil war. Despite the commitment taken on by the Houthis to withdraw from the capital, Sana'a –within the framework of agreement sponsored by the UN in September to override the political crisis that led to the change in Government– Houthi militias continued to patrol the streets in the city and advanced their positions towards other parts of the country. It is worth highlighting that during that month, as part of the agreement promoted by the UN, Hadi appointed a new prime minister, Khalid Bahah, considered to be a technocrat, and who was accepted by the Houthis, who had rejected the first candidate proposed for the post. The different armed conflict around the country, which are all interrelated, left a death toll of more than 1,500 dead in 2014, the worst figure since Ali Abdullah al-Saleh was overthrown, according to the press.

Map 4.1. **Countries with serious gender inequalities**

Countries with serious gender inequalities in 2014

4. The gender dimension in peacebuilding

- 65 countries experienced serious gender inequalities, with 48 cases outstanding, focusing mainly in Africa and Asia. 61% of armed conflicts for which there are data on gender equality took place in contexts with severe inequalities.
- During 2014 the use of sexual violence was witnessed in contexts of armed conflict and tension in places such as Syria, CAR, Egypt or Myanmar, among others.
- A high-level summit took place in London on sexual violence in armed conflicts, with a mixed outcome because civil society was excluded and because of the ambiguity regarding the commitments taken on by Governments.
- Women participated actively in the formal peace negotiations in the Philippines and Colombia, with a gender equality agenda. In Colombia, a sub-commission on gender was established for the negotiating table.

This chapter provides an analysis of the various initiatives being implemented in peacebuilding processes from a gender perspective by the United Nations and by other local and international organisations and movements. An analysis through this perspective makes it possible to highlight the specific impacts of armed conflict on men and women, as well as the extent to which and the way in which they participate in peacebuilding, in particular the contributions being made by women in this respect. The chapter is structured into three main sections: the first assesses the global gender inequality situation through an analysis of the Gender Inequality Index; the second section analyses the gender dimension in the impact of armed conflicts and socio-political crises; and the final section is devoted to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. A map is included at the start of each chapter that highlights the countries with serious gender inequalities according to the Gender Inequality Index.

4.1. Gender inequalities

The **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**[2] reflects women's disadvantage in relation to the situation of men by analysing three dimensions: reproductive health (maternal mortality rate and adolescent fertility rate[3]), empowerment (women and men with at least secondary education and the share of parliamentary seats held by each sex), and the labour market (participation rate of women and men in the workforce). The GII shows the loss in human development due to inequality when comparing the achievements of women and men in the said dimensions. It ranges from zero, where there is a situation of full equality between men and women, to one, when one gender presents the worst performance possible in all the measured dimensions. The importance of this index lies in the fact that it does not merely break down information according to sex but rather analyses this information on the basis of the relations of inequality established between men and women. In other words, it is a gender-sensitive index.[4]

---

1. 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 been historically established in the patriarchal system. The goal of gender as an analytical category is to demonstrate the historical and situated nature of sexual differences.
2. UNDP, "Gender Inequality Index", *Human Development Report 2014 Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*, New York: UNDP, 2014.
3. The reproductive health indicators used in the GII do not have equivalent indicators for men, which means that in this dimension, the reproductive health of girls and women is compared with what should be social objectives, i.e. for there to be no maternal deaths or adolescent pregnancies. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2014 Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*, New York: UNDP, 2014.
4. While statistics broken down according to sex provide factual information on the situation regarding women, a gender-sensitive indicator provides direct evidence of women's status in respect of a certain standard or reference group, in this case men. Susan Schmeidl and Eugenia Piza-Lopez. *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action,* International Alert and Swiss Peace Foundation, 2002, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/D2489588422D1A37C1256C3000383049-fewer-gender-jun02.pdf.

Table 4.1. Countries with serious gender inequalities

Countries with a GII between 0.4 and 0.5

Bhutan	Jamaica	*Paraguay*
Bolivia	Jordan	South Africa
Botswana	*Morocco*	Surinam
Colombia	Namibia	Tonga
Honduras	*Nepal*	*Venezuela*
Indonesia	Nicaragua	

Countries with a GII index above 0.5

Afghanistan	Ghana	***Pakistan***
Bangladesh	Guatemala	Papua New Guinea
Benin	Guyana	Qatar
Burkina Faso	*Haiti*	*Senegal*
Burundi	***India***	Sierra Leone
Cambodia	Iran	***Syria***
Cameroon	***Iraq***	***Sudan***
CAR	Kenya	*Swaziland*
Chad	*Lao, PDR*	Tanzania
Congo	Lesotho	Togo
Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia	***Uganda***
Dominican Republic	*Malawi*	***Yemen***
DRC	**Mali**	Zambia
Egypt	Mauritania	*Zimbabwe*
Ethiopia	Mozambique	
Gabon	*Niger*	
Gambia	Panama	

The GII varies between 0, indicating full equality, and 1, indicating the greatest possible inequality. The reference value taken is 0.451, which is the world average.

Countries are listed alphabetically.

Marked in **bold** are those countries with one or more active armed conflicts and those marked in *italics* are countries with one or more active socio-political crises in 2014, following the definitions provided by the School for a Culture of Peace.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the 2014 GII.

According to the GII, **the situation of women was severe in 65 countries, especially severe in 48 cases, mainly in Africa and Asia**[5] The analysis obtained from crossing this indicator with the indicator of countries in a situation of armed conflict reveals that 12 out of the 65 countries where a situation of serious gender inequality is seen were experiencing one or several armed conflicts in 2014. We must highlight that there are no data on gender equality for four of the countries with one or more armed countries –Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia and South Sudan. This means that **22 out of the 36 armed conflicts during 2014 were in countries with serious gender inequalities and that six of these conflicts were in countries with no data available on this matter.**[6] Thus, 61% of the armed conflicts for which there is data on gender equality occurred in contexts with serious gender inequalities. In ten countries with one or more armed conflicts, the figures on gender equality did not fall into the gravity threshold established in this report: Algeria, China, Israel, Libya, Myanmar, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine. It is worth mentioning that the situation of inequality was extremely serious in the abovementioned countries experiencing armed conflict that were the scene of gender inequalities, since in all these countries, except for Colombia, the

GII was higher than 0.5.[7] This reality would coincide with the thesis defended by some authors who point out that gender inequality in a country rises the changes of that country experiencing an internal armed conflict.[8] Also, in 34 of the countries with serious inequalities, there were one or more situations of tension. This means that at least 45 of the 95 active social-political crises during 2014 happened in countries where there were serious gender inequalities, representing 56% of the tensions for which data exists.

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

This section focuses on the gender dimension in the cycle of conflict, particularly regarding violence against women. Armed conflicts and socio-political crises are phenomena with a significant gender dimension. A gender-based analysis dismantles the traditional view of armed conflicts as neutral situations and questions the belief that the origins of armed conflict are independent of the gender power structures in place in certain societies. From this perspective, serious doubts are also raised about statements that attempt to generalise the consequences of conflict without taking the gender dimension and gender inequalities into account.

4.2.1. Sexual violence in armed conflicts

During 2014, sexual violence in contexts of armed conflicts continued to be one of the central issues on the international agenda on women, peace and security. The international summit held in London in June to deal with this issue was of a special relevance and attracted media and political notoriety to the issue, although there was no significant impact in terms of the real commitments taken on by Governments vis-à-vis the fight against impunity and the real and effective protection of the population against this form of violence in armed conflicts. The use of sexual violence was witnessed in many armed conflict and social-political crises active during the year, with a serious impact on victims, especially civilian women. Besides, in the institutional sphere, as well as the summit in London, several initiatives were launched to try and increase the visibility of this serious human rights violation and reduce its impact and the impunity surrounding these cases.

In March, the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on sexual violence in armed conflicts, complying with UN Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), and 1960 (2010). This report gathers information on

---

5. This classification has been prepared by the author of this study, not the UNDP. Here, a serious situation in terms of gender equality is that when countries show values between 0.4 and 0.5; the situation is especially serious in countries with values higher than 0.5.
6. The armed conflict called Central Africa (LRA) takes place in DRC, the CAR, and South Sudan.
7. Colombia (0.460), Afghanistan (0.705), DRC (0.669), Egypt (0.580), Ethiopia (0.547), India (0.563), Iraq (0.542), Mali (0.673), Pakistan (0.563), CAR (0.654), Syria (0.556), Sudan (0.628), Uganda (0.529) and Yemen (0.733).
8. Mary Caprioli, "Gender equality and state aggression: the impact of domestic gender equality on state first use of force", *International Interactions* 29, no. 3, 2003: 195-214.

Table 4.2. **Sexual violence in contexts of armed conflict**[9]

Afghanistan	The Independent Human Rights Commission noted a rise in the reported cases of sexual violence and forced marriage of women and girls, and an increase of reports relating to sexual violence against men and boys by police and military officials, tribal leaders and members of non-state opposition armed groups.
CAR	Sexual violence was part of the attack that were carried out within the framework of the armed conflict and also as part of the sectarian violence carried out by anti-balaka groups, former members of Séléka and other armed groups. Women holding political posts or the family of civil officials were raped. There are many difficulties to report violence, especially because of the permanent presence of the perpetrators.
Colombia	Afro-Colombian women were affected by sexual violence in a disproportionate way. Around 90% of sexual violence victims were women. Especially poignant is the violence perpetrated by armed groups that emerged from the demobilisation of paramilitary groups.
Côte d'Ivoire	High levels of sexual violence were seen, especially affecting minors. Also, many gang rapes were reported. Impunity and the lack of access to justice for victims are hampering all progress.
DRC	More than 15,000 incidents of sexual violence were registered in this country, mostly carried out by non-state armed groups, although the Armed Forces and the National Police were also involved. Half of the victims were girls.
Mali	Sexual violence linked to conflict was used by state and non-state actors, and particularly affected displaced women in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. 25% of victims were minors. Armed actors used sexual violence as a form of retaliation for supposed collaboration with enemy actors.
Myanmar	Sexual violence was reported linked to the armed conflict and also to inter-community violence in the state of Rakhine. The lack of access to justice and the difficulties for humanitarian actors to access the population restricted the reports and their verification.
Somalia	Sexual violence was a recurrent practice in the armed conflict, and the main persons responsible for this were members of the Army, al-Shabaab, and other militias, as well as members of the units to fight against crime. Women from minority clans and internally displaced women were especially vulnerable to this violence. The lack of guarantees from the justice system was a cause of special concern.
South Sudan	The UNMISS highlighted that sexual violence was a recurring feature of the armed conflict and noted ethnic motives behind many cases. The Army (SPLA), the Police, as well as oppositions groups were mainly responsible, and most sexual attacks happened within the cross-border incursions and military operations in the State of Jonglei.
Sudan (Darfur)	Reports on sexual violence increased, but the number of reported cases continued to be much lower than the number of real cases. Most of the victims were displaced women, and the perpetrators were unidentified armed men, Army members and also displaced civilians. There are severe restrictions to access justice.
Syria	Sexual violence has been an ongoing practice in the armed conflict and the fear of sexual violence has been a major reason behind forced displacement. Both the State security forces and the opposition groups have used sexual violence. Women, men, boys and girls have been the victims of sexual violence in detention centres.
Yemen	A link was seen between the presence of armed groups and the increase of early and forced marriages, as well as cases of sexual slavery and sexual abuse against girls living in greater poverty.

cases of sexual violence occurred in 2013, as detailed in the table below, where some aspects mentioned in the report are highlighted.

Throughout the year many cases of sexual violence were registered in different placed affected by armed conflicts, social-political tensions or in post-war situations. **Syria** was one of the scenarios where sexual violence was reported related to the conflict dinamics that affect this country. Despite the difficulties in documenting the use of sexual violence in Syria, the evidence suggests it is an extensive phenomenon that is affecting women and men, but also girls and boys. A series of reports

22 out of the 36 armed conflicts during 2014 were in countries with serious gender inequalities

published by the United Nations in the first quarter of 2014 denounced the brutal impact of this violence on minors, identifying various contexts in which the abuse took place and the types of aggression to which the girls and boys were subjected.[10] Government detention centres have been one of the main settings of sexual violence (as well as threats that it will be used) against children, including rape, in order to humiliate them, extract confessions or pressure them to turn in a relative. There have also been reports of pregnant women that lost their babies due to the unhealthy conditions in the detention centres and the lack of medical attention for prisoners. Many other forms of abuse against women and girls

---

9. UN Security Council, *Conflict-related sexual violence. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2014/181, 13th March 2014, http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2014/181.
10. Human Rights Council, *Oral Update of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic,* HRC Twenty-fifth session, 18th March 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/OralUpdate18March 2014.pdf; Reuters, "UN aided 38,000 victims of Syrian gender-based violence in 2013", Reuters, 8th January 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/08/us-syria-crisis-rape-idUSBREA0711R20140108; UNSC, *Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 27th January 2014, http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/syria-sg-report-27-january-20143.pdf.

have been reported at road checkpoints and during search operations in places considered close to the opposition. In many cases, gang rapes in the presence of family members were reported. The social stigma attached to rape has led some girls to be subsequently killed by their families (honour killing). Although information mainly indicates that pro-government forces are responsible for these crimes, the UN has also received reports of the use of sexual violence by armed opposition groups, among them ISIS. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry reported acts of sexual violence by ISIS that could constitute crimes against humanity, in addition to multiple women killings. The fear of sexual violence has been identified as one of the main causes of forced civilian displacement. However, various reports have highlighted that internally displaced of refugee girls and boys are especially vulnerable to situations of exploitation, sexual abuse and domestic violence. Preliminary studies have also confirmed a rise in the forced marriage of Syrian refugee girls, pressured by their families for economic reasons or because they think it is a way to ensure them greater security. Among Syrian refugee girls in Jordan alone, early marriages have risen from 12% in 2011 to 18% in 2013, according to research conducted by UNICEF.[11]

Box 4.1. **ISIS: Sexual abuse and violence in Iraq**

After leading attacks in Syria, the armed jihadist group Islamic State (better known as ISIS or IS) has captured international attention in recent months for its bloody offensive and rapid rise in northern Iraq. One of the features of its modus operandi has been the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, which has been widely denounced by the UN, human rights organisations and local women's groups. ISIS has been accused of perpetrating savage acts of sexual violence against thousands of people, the vast majority of them women and adolescents of both sexes, including mass kidnappings and rape, the forced marriage of women and girls to the group's combatants, situations of sexual slavery and the sale and purchase of women considered war trophies, among other practices.

The minorities of Iraq have been the main victims of this violence. According to a joint statement by the UN Secretary-General's special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, and the special envoy for Iraq, Nickolay Mladenov, since January and until mid-August around 1,500 people from Yazidi and Christian communities had been forced into sexual slavery.[12] A recent report by Amnesty International detailing the persecution of the minorities of Iraq by ISIS described some forms of abuse to which the group is subjecting women and girls, noting that some of its victims that have been raped or forced to marry their captors have committed suicide.[13] According to various analysts, the group is deliberately using sexual violence as a strategy to instil terror, strengthen its control, destabilise conquered communities and stigmatise the female victims of abuse in a context where women are considered the repository of collective honour.[14]

In addition to sexual violence, the women of Iraq have suffered (and in many cases continue to suffer) from other effects of the advance of ISIS. Thousands have been forced to flee their homes in search of shelter, exposing themselves to situations of extreme vulnerability and even dying of hunger and thirst, as happened to the Yazidi population that fled to Sinjar Mountain in August. In the territory where the armed jihadist group has established control, it has imposed a strict code of behaviour and dress that does not allow women to leave home unaccompanied by a man from their family and forces them to fully cover themselves in public places. Those that do not comply with these restrictions risk being publicly beaten. Cases have also been reported of women forced to convert to Islam. In addition, evidence suggests that ISIS has executed many women, including one accused of adultery, two others that had been candidates in the recent elections in Iraq and the lawyer and women's rights activist Sameera Salih al-Nuaimi, who was tortured and executed in public after criticising ISIS for destroying heritage in Mosul. The United Nations has received information on the summary trials and executions of women and has warned that educated and professional women are especially likely to suffer violence at the hands of the group.[15]

Given this situation, Iraqi women's organisations have called on the international community to take action against ISIS. The Iraqi Women Network (IWN), which brings together 90 women's groups, made a special appeal to the UN Security

11. UNICEF, *Under Siege: The devastating impact on children of three years of conflict in Syria*, March 2014, http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_72815.html.
12. UN News, "'Barbaric' sexual violence perpetrated by Islamic State in Iraq", *UN News*, 13th August 2014, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48477.
13. Amnesty International, *Ethnic Cleansing on a Historic Scale: Islamic State's Systematic Targeting of Minorities in Northern Iraq,* London: Amnesty International, September 2014, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/gruesome-evidence-ethnic-cleansing-northern-iraq-islamic-state-moves-wipe-out-minorities-2014-0.
14. Beghikhani, Nazand, "Iraq: Sexual Violence as a War Strategy in Iraq", *Your Middle East*, 11th August 2014, http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/columns/article/sexual-violence-as-a-war-strategy-in-iraq_25812; Susskind, Yifat, "Under ISIS, Iraqi women again face an old nightmare: violence and repression", *The Guardian*, 3rd July 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/jul/03/isis-iraqi-women-rape-violence-repression; Al-Ali, Nadje, "Sexualized violence in Iraq: How to understand and fight it", *Open Democracy*, 29th September 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/nadje-alali/sexualized-violence-in-iraq-how-to-understand-and-fight-it.
15. Cumming-Bruce, Nick, "Women's Rights Activist Executed by ISIS in Iraq", *New York Times*, 25th September 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/26/world/middleeast/womens-rights-activist-executed-by-islamic-state-in-iraq.html?_r=0.

Council, the CEDAW Committee and the Human Rights Council to act to secure the condemnation of the barbaric practices of ISIS, which may be classified as crimes of genocide.[16] Specifically, the IWN requested the creation of an international committee to investigate the situation of women in territories controlled by ISIS, the adoption of measures to free women and children held by the armed group, the protection of displaced women and their families, the provision of urgent humanitarian aid and medical assistance to the victims of ISIS and the protection of witnesses to abuse.

Meanwhile, women have also organised and demonstrated locally. In different cities around the country, including several in the province of Anbar where ISIS has consolidated its position, groups such as the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) are working to provide shelter, food and medical attention to women that have been raped or that have fled their homes due to the violence of ISIS. With no intention to understate the seriousness of the jihadist group's crimes, some voices have stressed that violence against women in Iraq did not begin or end with ISIS, but lies along a continuum that has characterised the turbulent post-invasion scene in the country. Thus, they have drawn attention to the hypocrisy of some authorities that now warn about ISIS but did not act to stop gender violence over the last decade despite continued complaints by Iraqi women's organisations.

In CAR it was reported during the year that **sexual violence was being used by all parties to the conflict, particularly against women, girls and boys. Sexual violence and the threat of its use are one of the main causes of forced displacement in the country, according to the United Nations**, leading hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes and stay away from them for fear of becoming victims to this form of violence. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, visited the country and called for female participation in all dialogue and reconciliation efforts. The executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Bineta Diop, the AU's special envoy for Women, Peace and Security, also visited the country. They noted the extreme gravity of sexual violence being committed during the conflict in the country, from rape to sex slavery and forced marriage. The executive director of UN Women urged the UN Security Council to take measures to help to strengthen the rule of law in the country and to enhance the participation, leadership and protection of women. In this regard, she called on the Security Council to ensure that gender issues were tackled from the start of the recently created UN mission (MINUSCA) to promote the participation and leadership of women in local reconciliation, transitional justice and the upcoming elections. Likewise, she said that the information collected during her mission coincides with that appearing in the investigation conducted by the OHCHR in December 2013. The violence took place in house-to-house raids, at unauthorised roadblocks, in military camps and as part of sectarian violence. As a result, there is a great need for medical and psychosocial assistance at camps for displaced people, which lack services for people that have suffered gender violence. Neighbouring countries are also affected. Cameroon is sheltering 100,000 new refugees, of which 84% are women and children. In mid-June, the UNHCR stated that half a million people had been displaced by the violence. Inhabitants of the northern part of the country denounced the international forces' ability to cope with the situation in the face of persisting attacks and insecurity. Mlambo-Ngcuka also highlighted some positive aspects, such as the organisation of civil society, including women, to survive and thrive amidst the conflict. Despite their religious and social differences, female leaders have shown a clear determination to overcome their differences.

In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) convicted Germain Katanga of DR Congo as responsible for war crimes, including attacks against civilians, looting, the destruction of property and murder as a war crime and as a crime against humanity as part of military operations in the Ituri region, affected by the armed conflict devastating the country. However, he was acquitted on counts of rape and sexual slavery as war crimes and as crimes against humanity, as well as the use of child soldiers. Various women's organisations expressed their astonishment at this exclusion, noting that despite the testimonies before the ICC of several women that had been raped and other evidence collected during the investigation that the court considered credible, it finally decided to drop these charges. The international organisation Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice described this omission as devastating for the victims and said that it may have been due to having higher burdens of proof for crimes of sexual violence than for other crimes.

16. AINA, "Iraqi Women Network Calls for Action Against ISIS", *Assyrian International News Agency (AINA),* 3rd September 2014, http://www.aina.org/news/20140903021449.htm
17. Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, *Partial Conviction of Katanga by ICC. Acquittals for Sexual Violence and Use of Child Soldiers. The Prosecutor vs. Germain Katanga*, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, 7th March 2014, http://www.iccwomen.org/images/Katanga-Judgement-Statement-corr.pdf.

Box 4.2. Boko Haram: armed conflict, kidnappings and violence against women in Nigeria

The continuous pattern of abduction of women and girls by Boko Haram (BH), reconfirmed in recent months by the capture of more than one hundred in various incidents, shows that the group has deliberately targeted them in their actions, with serious consequences. According to a recent report published by Human Rights Watch (HRW), during their captivity, women and children retained by BH are subjected to all kinds of abuse, including physical abuse, psychological abuse, forced conversion to Islam under the threat of death, forced marriage, sexual abuse and rape.[18] The HRW report gathers testimony from people directly affected by this violence in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, most of them Christians. Some girls managed to escape after 276 were kidnapped from a school in Chibok in April 2014, an event that gave more visibility to the phenomenon in 2014 and set off the international campaign "Bring Back Our Girls". According to HRW, Boko Haram has abducted over 500 women since 2009 and the number continues to climb. In the last quarter of 2014 alone, scores of people were reportedly kidnapped by BH, including around 60 women near the Cameroonian border in October and another 172 women and children in late December from the village of Gumsuri, also in northeastern Nigeria.[19]

In agreement with other analyses, the HRW report emphasises that since mid-2013, BH has adopted a strategy that makes women and girls a specific objective of its actions. Prior to that, it had focused on members of the security forces, politicians, public officials (as symbols of authority) and students (Boko Haram translates loosely as "Western education is a sin"). While some incidents were reported between 2009 and early 2013, including the kidnapping of married women as punishment for not adhering to the group's ideology and of single women and girls for the purpose of marrying them to its members, since mid-2013, when the state of emergency was declared in northeastern Nigeria and violence intensified, BH has increasingly carried out group abductions on a gender basis. The HRW investigation identifies at least three reasons for this new approach: to punish students for attending Western-style schools, to force Christian women and girls to convert to Islam and to exact vengeance against the Nigerian authorities for detaining family members of the group's militiamen, including wives of BH leader Abubakar Shekau.

Some analyses indicate that this final factor, the arrest of family members, has been especially relevant. Zenn and Pearson have pointed out that Shekau complained about the detention of the wives, sons and daughters of the organisation's combatants in nearly every video message in 2012 and 2013, in which he warned about retaliation against the women of the enemy side. These threats later materialised, such as with the kidnapping and subsequent release of women and children from a police station in Borno State in May 2013.[20] According to specialists, the detention of suspects' family members is a common practice in Nigeria and in the case of women and children arrested by the authorities for their alleged ties to BH, there was no evidence of their direct participation in the group's activities. Therefore, women have been targeted by both sides in the conflict for instrumental reasons. Moreover, this violence is embedded in a broader context characterised by the prevalence of discriminatory practices against women in Nigeria.

Additionally, various recent analyses agree that BH is using abducted women and girls for other tactical purposes. Some reports suggest that their capture is being used to demand ransom for their release or to press for the exchange of prisoners and that they are also being forced to participate in military operations. Besides being subjected to forced labour, they are forced to cook and clean their bases, transport ammunition, carry objects looted after attacks and acts as decoys to lure soldiers into ambushes. There have also been reports of the arrest of women allegedly linked to BH that carried weapons, the arrest of women that were presumably trying to recruit other women (mostly widows and young women) and women's participation in bomb attacks (in December 2014, a teenager said that her parents had given her to BH militants, which ordered her on a suicide mission that she did not carry out).[21] BH is therefore adapting its modus operandi by resorting to women for its actions, bearing in mind that they arouse less suspicion and are better able to circumvent security controls. Thus, it is replicating methods used by radical groups in other countries, like in Iraq for example.

18. Ola, Lanre, "Suspected Boko Haram gunmen kidnap 172 women, children in Nigeria", *Reuters*, 18th December 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/18/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0JW1FP20141218; Princeton University, "UN Panel Discussion Focuses on Boko Haram, Extremist Violence against Women and Girls", 30th October 2014, https:\lisd.princeton.edu\un-panel-discussion-focuses-boko-haram-extremist-violence-against-women-and-girls; Nossiter, Adam, "Boko Haram Said to Abduct More Women in Nigeria", *New York Times,* 23rd October 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/24/world/africa/boko-harm-abducts-more-women-despite-claims-of-nigeria-cease-fire.html?_r=0.
19. Ola, Lanre, "Suspected Boko Haram gunmen kidnap 172 women, children in Nigeria", *Reuters*, 18th December 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/18/us-nigeria-violence-idUSKBN0JW1FP20141218; Princeton University, "UN Panel Discussion Focuses on Boko Haram, Extremist Violence against Women and Girls", 30th October 2014, https:\lisd.princeton.edu\un-panel-discussion-focuses-boko-haram-extremist-violence-against-women-and-girls; Nossiter, Adam, "Boko Haram Said to Abduct More Women in Nigeria", *New York Times*, 23rd October 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/24/world/africa/boko-harm-abducts-more-women-despite-claims-of-nigeria-cease-fire.html?_r=0.
20. Zenn, Jacob and Elizabeth Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram", *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Volume 5, Issue 1, 2014, http://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/jtr/article/view/828/707.
21. BBC, "Nigerian girl says parents volunteered her as suicide bomber", *BBC*, 24th December 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30601639; BBC, "Boko Haram crisis: Nigeria arrests 'female recruiters'", *BBC*, 4th July 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28168003.

Against this background, local and international activists have underscored the need to pay greater international attention to the conflict between BH and Nigerian security forces due to the serious impact it is having on the civilian population (not only regarding abductions), to consider the context that has favoured the rise of the extremist group and to include women effectively in discussions about security in the country. Despite the many actions of mobilisation and condemnation undertaken by Nigerian women's organisations with regard to the conflict, until October 2014 not one of them had been called to participate in the three regional security meetings focused on discussing formulas to address the problem. Women's groups from Cameroon, a country that has also been affected by the armed conflict, have warned that BH's actions are having an impact whose consequences will have to be observed over the long term, due to the massive displacements of population and the exclusion of boys and girls from school, since their families fear sending them in case of attack or abduction. Meanwhile, attention has been drawn to the need to facilitate complaints of sexual violence, a problematic issue in Nigeria given the widespread impunity and stigmatisation suffered by victims of such abuse, and to provide an appropriate response and support for victims of violence. In this regard, HRW, which has denounced abuses committed by the government as part of its fight against BH in the past, openly criticised the Nigerian government for being incapable of deploying the mechanisms necessary to protect women and children from this abuse and for failing to provide adequate medical and psychological support to victims that have managed to escape from BH's bondage.

The organization Women's League of Burma presented its annual report on sexual violence within the context of armed conflict in **Myanmar**, denouncing that women and human rights defenders in ethnic communities are harassed and suffer sexual attacks by soldiers from the Armed Forces.[22] The report documents 118 cases of rape, gang rapes, and attempted sexual aggressions in areas where there are ceasefires in place and in other areas where such agreements are not yet in place. According to the authors of the research, these data only represent a small proportion of the aggressions that actually occur. The report also denounces the impunity of the armed forces, whose human rights violations are neither prosecuted nor punished.

Various reports published during the first few months of 2014 revealed that **Sri Lankan** security forces committed widespread and systematic sexual violence against the Tamil population after the end of the armed conflict that lasted from 1983 to 2009.[23] One of the most prominent reports, the work of Yasmin Sooka, the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) and the International Truth and Justice Project in Sri Lanka, based on the testimonies of Tamil people abducted and tortured by security forces between 2009 and 2014, indicates how kidnappings, arbitrary detention, torture, rape and sexual violence increased in the post-war period, especially against people accused of having been part of or having had links to the Tamil armed opposition group LTTE. Moreover, the report reveals a plan coordinated and approved at the

highest levels of government that supports the serious human rights abuses committed by the security forces. The report aims to present reasonable evidence of crimes against humanity committed by the security forces, such as torture, rape and sexual violence. All the women and men whose testimonies were collected stated that they suffered sexual violence at the hands of the security forces. Since the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, many NGOs, research centres and international organisations have denounced the use of sexual violence by the security forces in Sri Lanka against Tamil women. These claims are denied by the government, which rejects any investigation into the matter.[24] The high level of militarisation in the north and east of the country, the absolute impunity of the security forces and the vulnerable situation of the civilian population, especially people displaced as a result of the armed conflict, are just some of the factors mentioned in different studies of this form of violence. Furthermore, several of these studies state that there is enough evidence for acts of sexual violence that took place during the armed conflict to constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The human rights organisation Human Rights Watch reported that the sexual violence that took place during the armed conflict that affected **Nepal** from 1996 to 2006 remains unpunished and has not yet been properly investigated.[25] Both government security forces and the Maoist armed opposition group were responsible for acts of sexual violence,

22. Women's League of Burma, *If they had hope, they would speak, The ongoing use of state-sponsored sexual violence in Burma's ethnic communities.* Women's League of Burma, Thailand, November 2014. http://womenofburma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/VAW_ Iftheyhadhope_TheywouldSpeak_English.pdf

23. Yasmin Sooka, The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) and The International Truth & Justice Project, Sri Lanka, *An Unfinished War: Torture and Sexual Violence in Sri Lanka 2009–2014*, The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) and The International Truth & Justice Project, March 2014, http://www.stop-torture.com/; International Crimes Evidence Project, *Island of impunity? Investigation into international crimes in the final stages of the Sri Lankan civil war*, Public Interest Advocacy Centre, February 2014, http://www.piac.asn.au/publication/2014/02/island-impunity.

24. Gowrinathan, Nimmi, "Inside Camps, Outside Battlefields: Security and Survival for Tamil Women". *St Antony's International Review*, Volume 9, Number 1, May 2013 , pp. 11-32(22).; International Crisis Group, *Sri Lanka: Women's Insecurity in the North and East*. Asia Report N°217, International Crisis Group, December 2011, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/217-sri-lanka-womens-insecurity-in-the-north-and-east.aspx.

25. HRW, *Silenced and Forgotten: Survivors of Nepal's Conflict-Era Sexual Violence,* HRW, 23rd September 2014, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nepal0914_ForUpload_0.pdf.

though most were committed by members of the former. The number of women affected by sexual violence is unknown, as the fear of retribution and social stigma prevented it from being reported when the armed conflict raged and there are still many obstacles to formally reporting it since it has ended.

The women were victims of gang and individual rape, sexual assault with objects and verbal abuse and threats. Human Rights Watch also revealed the lack of services to assist the survivors of sexual violence, as well as the shortcomings of the future Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Box 4.3. **Armed actors and sexual violence in conflicts**

The report by the UN Secretary-General on violence in conflicts included a list of armed actors that are seriously suspected of committing systematic rape and other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict situations, or of being responsible of these acts, that are the being reviewed by the Security Council.

CAR: LRA; former combatants of the Séléka forces; anti-balaka forces, including elements associated to the CAR armed forces.

Côte d'Ivoire: Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire; former militia groups, including the Patriotic Alliance of the Wé; the Front for the Liberation of the Great West; the Ivorian Movement for the Liberation of the West of Côte d'Ivoire; and the Patriotic Resistance Movement of the Great West.

DRC: armed groups: APCLS; ADF-NALU; Congolese defence forces; FDLR; the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front; LRA; M23; Mai-Mai Cheka/Nduma Defence for Congo; Mai-Mai Kifuafua; Mai-Mai Morgan; Mai-Mai Simba/Lumumba; Nyatura armed group; PARECO; Raia Mutomboki.
Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo.
National Police of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mali: MNLA, Ansar Dine, MUYAO, AQIM

South Sudan: SPLA, National Police of South Sudan, SPLM/A-IO, LRA

Syria: Government Forces, including the Syrian armed forces, intelligence forces and the Shabbiha, a militia affiliated to the Government; armed opposition members operating in the disputed territories and controlled by the opposition, including Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Homs.

4.2.2. The response to sexual violence as a weapon of war

Libya approved a bill in June that included compensation for the victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict and, envisaging the establishment of a commission to determine who has the right to receive compensation and medical assistance, as well as what amounts. This bill adds on to a text that had been promoted in February. It acknowledges the victims of sexual violence both during Gaddafi's regime and during the 2011 uprising that overthrew his regime. In addition to compensation, there are also plans to create an archive aiming to preserve the memory of victims of sexual violence. Although the exact number of women affected by sexual abuse during the conflict is unknown, evidence gathered by the International Criminal Court and human rights organisations point out that hundreds or even thousands of women might have been affected by this type of violence. Local human rights organisations had requested compensation, but it was not clear how many women

would benefit from these compensations, because of the social stigma experienced by the victims of rape in the Libyan society, which could lead many of them to remain silent. Some local women's groups have requested that female judges should investigate these cases. Local and international groups, including the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH), valued the government's initiative positively.

The Parliament of **Kosovo** passed in late March legislation that aimed to give recognition and assistance to survivors of sexual violence during the war between Serbia and the armed Albanian group ELK in 1998-1999. The reference to the victims of this type of violence was included in the Law on the Status and Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Sexual Violence Victims During the War, Civilian Victims and their Families (Law no. 04/L-54). Released in April, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's report on Kosovo says that some groups are worried because the approved legislation does not consider survivors of sexual violence coming from a community other than the majority Albanian

one.[26] Composed of more than 60 local organisations, including some for women from minority communities in Kosovo, the NGO Kosova Women's Network (KWN) hailed the ratification of the law as an important step towards restoring dignity to women that suffered sexual violence in war. Finally, female politicians in Kosovo launched a campaign to give visibility to and demand justice for women that were raped. Among other actions, they will ask the UN to create a report on rape during the armed conflict. The campaign focuses on the abuse committed by the Serbian forces.

The government of **Colombia** passed a new law stipulating that sexual violence committed as part of the armed conflict affecting the country receive the consideration of a crime against humanity and increasing criminal categories to cover the different forms of sexual violence. The new law states that it must be taken into account whether the violence took place in contexts of coercion or via threats or the use of power and provides for full reparation and psychological and medical assistance for victims.

Box 4.4. **Outcome of the summit to end sexual violence in London**

A high-level summit on sexual violence in conflict was hosted by the British government in London in June. This was the first time that a high-level international meeting was held on this subject and it was attended by 123 governments (60 to 70 of them at the ministerial level). After the summit, many civil society organisations, activists and academics involved in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict stressed its importance in giving greater visibility to this form of violence –partly due to the attendance of media figures like actress Angelina Jolie, the co-host of the summit alongside UK Foreign Minister William Hague–, but they also exposed the meeting's significant shortcomings.

First, many voices highlighted the lack of tangible progress and the vague commitment acquired from the participating governments.[27] The single most important achievement of the summit was the "International Protocol for the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict", a manual that aims to assist in the prosecution of sexual violence as a crime. The United Nations presented a guide on compensation for victims of sexual violence. But aside from approval of these documents, the governments did not commit to any particular scheduled goal or set aside any amount of money for implementing policies of prevention, care for victims and prosecution of those responsible for crimes. Moreover, there were also some notable absences, such as China, Kenya, India, Iran, Russia, Syria and Sri Lanka, which did not attend because they had not signed the 2013 Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Second, one of the most serious critiques levelled by civil society concerned the issue that the government meetings included virtually no civil society representatives, a clear contradiction to the commitments acquired with the adoption of Resolution 1325 by the UN Security Council, and particularly Resolution 2122 of 2013, which points to the need for more emphasis on women's leadership and participation and strives to increase it.[28] The involvement of civil society focused on side events, which was interpreted as the UK government's desire to keep the most critical voices out of the government debates. However, some of the most important initiatives of the summit came from the activity of civil society, like the creation of a network or survivors and activists, Survivors United for Action, aimed at stepping up pressure on governments. Moreover, some of the most important speeches at the summit were given by civil society representatives like Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee, who stressed the need to end armed conflict as the only effective means to ending sexual violence and highlighted the close links between militarisation, the presence of weapons and sexual violence.

Third, many exposed the simplification of the phenomenon of sexual violence in official discourse. The summit basically covered rape in conflict, but it did not contextualise sexual violence in the continuum of violence that women suffer all over the world and failed to demonstrate that not all forms of sexual violence that take place as part of war are weapons of war.[29] Furthermore, the emphasis placed on sexual violence as a security threat could once again strengthen the view of women as victims that must be protected by "protective" military forces consisting mostly of men. Experts on the study of sexual violence in conflict stressed the importance of addressing the phenomenon by recognising its complexity and placing emphasis on prevention, rather than on punishing the perpetrators as the only effective measure.

In brief, although many agreed on how important it was to give the subject greater public and political attention, the need to promote specific comprehensive measures was made clear, based on the broad experience of civil society involved in the struggle against this form of violence and in helping survivors

26. UNSC, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo*, 29th April 2014, http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/2014/305.
27. The International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict, "Global Summit falls short on concrete commitments to end sexual violence", *The International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict*, 13th June 2014, http://www.stoprapeinconflict.org/campaign_disappointed_in_results_of_global_summit.
28. Jody Williams, "UK summit on sexualized violence: 'A time warp in the wrong direction'" *Women Under Siege Blog*, 15th June 2014, http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/uk-summit-on-sexualized-violence-a-time-warp-in-the-wrong-direction.
29. Amelia Hoover Green, "Ignoring the evidence at the End Sexual Violence in Conflict Summit", *Women Under Siege Blog*, 17th June 2014, http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/ignoring-the-evidence-at-the-global-summit-to-end-sexual-violence-in-confli; Anne Marie Goetz, "Stopping sexual violence in conflict: gender politics in foreign policy", *openDemocracy 50.50 inclusive democracy*, 20th June 2014, http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/anne-marie-goetz/stopping-sexual-violence-in-conflict-gender-politics-in-foreign-policy.

4.2.3. Other forms of gender-based violence in contexts of socio-political crisis or armed conflict

During the year, a number of reports came out on worldwide **forced displacement** resulting from armed conflict, violence and persecution.[30] The data confirm that the phenomenon is tending to grow and now tops 50 million people, the worst levels since the Second World War, with a heavy impact on women. According to the UNHCR's annual report, in late 2013, 51.2 million people had been forcibly displaced, including refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers (compared to 45.2 million in 2012), of which 49% were women and girls. Notably, one out of every two refugees was a minor, the highest proportion in a decade. This is especially important from a gender perspective, since childcare is mostly performed by women. The UNHCR has emphasised that women and girls face specific risks in displacement situations and are especially exposed to situations of sexual violence, gender violence and discrimination. Reports issued by the UNHCR and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) mentioned Syria, the CAR and South Sudan as the countries with the greatest new displacements in 2013, all of them armed conflicts in which women were exposed to sexual and gender violence.

The Israeli operation in the **Gaza Strip** as part of the armed conflict with Hamas, which lasted for 50 days from 8 July to 27 August, had devastating consequences for the Palestinian civilian population. The UN estimated the total number of Palestinian casualties at 2,104, of which 1,462 were civilians, including 495 children and 253 women. Meanwhile, the Israeli death toll stood at 66 soldiers and seven civilians. Israel was widely criticised for some of its actions during the conflict, especially for indiscriminate attacks on UN schools turned into shelters. The conflict forcibly displaced thousands of people and inflicted great destruction in the Palestinian territory. In this context, Palestinian women's organisations that participated in the 27th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva demanded that the international community hold Israel accountable for abuses committed in Gaza, as well as for violations of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories. The women expressed concern about the continuation of the ceasefire unless the blockade on the Gaza Strip is lifted and also demanded the inclusion of a gender perspective when rebuilding it. The Palestinian women did not participate formally and were not consulted in negotiating a truce between Hamas and Israel, so they appealed to Resolution 1325, stressing the need for Palestinian women to play a larger role in resolving the conflict with Israel. Moreover, women's organisations from all over the world organised and joined in protests against the bombing of Gaza by the Israeli government and denounced the severe impact of the armed conflict.

4.2.4. The participation of women in armed conflicts

As for the direct participation of women in armed conflicts, one of the highlights of the year has been the role of Kurdish women in organizations linked to the armed group PKK in fighting the Islamist armed group ISIS in Iraq and in the response by this same group to the siege on the canton of Kobane, on the border between Syria and Turkey. After the attacks on the Yazidi population in Iraqi Kurdistan in August, which had a severe impact on the civilian population in general, and on women particularly (executions, sexual violence, kidnappings for sexual slavery, trafficking of women and girls), the Kurdish armed opposition started to establish a humanitarian corridor to allow the Yazidi population to escape from the mobbing by ISIS. Women, by participating in combat units (YJA-Star) became actively involved in this corridor and later in the armed defence of Kobane from the ISIS attacks. Women have participated actively in armed defence in different ways, especially through what are known as the YPJ (Yekineyen Parastina Jin, women defence units) made up exclusively by women –mainly Kurdish, but also with other origins– and by participating in mixed defence units (YPG). This strong active participation of Kurdish women in the armed defence of Kobane has been the object of endless headlines in the western press, even if their participation has been portrayed only from the more superficial and anecdotic perspective, without framing it within the extremely active role played by women in the Kurdish movement. The Kurdish women's movement is grouped as a confederation under the umbrella of the Komalen Jinen Kurdistan (KJK, Communities of Kurdistan Women) and the participation of women, both political and armed, is framed within this structure. In parallel to these structures of only women, they also participate in the mixed organizations of the Kurdish movement. The agenda for gender equality is an important part of the political agenda of Kurdish organizations linked to the PKK, which have instated a co-leadership system and promote the participation of women in all spheres very actively, including quotas.[31] Between 8,000 and 10,000 Kurdish women would be actively participating in the armed defence of Kobane, representing one third of the total combat force, and carrying out the same tasks as male combatants. The YPJ emerged alongside the creation of the YPG to defend Rojava[32] from the attacks of several actors in the war in Syria, including Bashar al-Assad's Government forces.

---

30. UNHCR, *War's Human Cost: UNHCR Global Trends 2013*, 20th June 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/5399a14f9.html; ACNUR, *Women: Particular Challenges and Risks*, June 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d9.html; IDMC, *Global Overview: People internally displaced by conflict and violence*, May 2014, http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2014/global-overview-2014-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence.
31. For further information on the participation of women in the Kurdish movement, refer to box 4.5. "The Peace dialogue in Turkey: An opportunity from the gender perspective?" in this chapter.
32. Kurdish name to refer to the area of Kurdish majority in Syrian territory.

Ukraine was another of the scenes where the media echoed the presence of women in the armed ranks, both within the Ukrainian Army and in the pro-Russian ranks. In a context of growing militarization, the Ukrainian Government announced its intention to increase its enlistment by calling up men and women for duty. Women accounted for 13% of the Armed Forces, a similar proportion as in other western Countries. In parallel, there was a lot of information on women who voluntarily joined the pro-Russian movement.

4.3. Peacebuilding from a gender perspective

In this section we analyse some of the leading initiatives to include the gender perspective in the different areas of peacebuilding.

4.3.1. Resolution 1325

In October, the **UN Secretary-General presented his annual report of women, peace and security** to the UN Security Council, complying with the mandate set forth in Security Council resolution 1325 of the year 2000.[33] As in previous years, the report was a follow-up on the implementation of this resolution based on the evaluation of different indicators. The report, relating to the year 2013,[34] highlighted that there had been significant normative advances, such as the approval of two new resolutions by the UN Security Council (2106 and 2122), a declaration by the Peacebuilding Commission on the empowerment of women, the inclusion in the Arms Trade Treaty of a criterion on gender-based violence and the approval by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of general recommendation number 30. The Secretary General's report determined there was a larger presence of women in formal peace processes, highlighting that in all peace processes where the United Nations was participating there was a presence of women in the mediation teams, and in eight of the eleven processes where the international organization was present there was at least one female negotiator. As for the peace agreements signed during 2013, the Secretary-General highlighted that 54% of these agreements included references to women, peace and security, and that the number of ceasefire agreements containing explicit references to the prohibition of the use of sexual violence had tripled. However, the global figures on the participation of women in legislative and government political institutions continued to shed very limited figures: only 22% of people in parliaments around the world were women; and only 13.1% of ministerial posts were occupied by women. In relation to other peacebuilding dimensions, the report states, for instance, that 28% of the beneficiaries of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programmes where the UNDP intervened were women, or 25% for programmes supported by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In parallel to the presentation of **the Secretary-General's annual report, the UN Security Council also held an annual open debate on women, peace and security**, focusing on the situation of displaced women and girls, with particular emphasis on their leadership and survival skills. At a time when the global figures of refugees have reached the same level as during the Second World War, the issue was especially relevant, and during the debate the many challenges facing displaced women and girls were highlighted, as well as the serious gap in protection, as well as the severe impact of gender-based violence and sexual violence, as well as other human rights violations, and the lack of access to basic services and health and the difficulties to participate in decision-making processes. The NGO working group on women, peace and security called on country representatives participating in the debate to provide detailed information on the efforts being carried out to support the leadership and participation of displaced women, and to debate on the protection efforts from a gender perspective and on the humanitarian response and to provide details on the efforts to protect women human rights defenders, among other aspects, as well as giving some recommendations for the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325, planned for the year 2015.

4.3.2. The gender dimension in peace negotiations

During 2014, important **peace processes took place in countries such as the Philippines and Colombia**. Also, in other contexts such as Syria, diplomatic efforts were made to set up peace negotiations, even if to no success.

In March 2014, it was signed in the Philippines the final agreement was signed that put an end to the armed conflict that pitted that Philippine government against the MILF guerrilla movement in Mindanao for decades. One of the most significant aspects of the peace process was its inclusiveness, which was prominent among the parties to the conflict as well as the players accompanying the negotiations and other observers. **Women held meaningful positions on both negotiating teams, and the leader of the government's team was a woman.** In fact, in an unprecedented milestone, the agreement was signed on behalf of the Philippine government by a woman, Miriam Coronel Ferrer. Alongside the inclusion of women in the negotiating teams, women's civil society organisations have also played –and continue to play– an

---

33. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security,* 23rd September 2014, S/2014/693 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/693.
34. For further information on these advances please refer to School for a Culture of Peace "The agenda on women, peace and security during 2013" *Gender and Peace,* No. 1, April 2014, http://escolapau.uab.cat/genero/img/ge01e.pdf.

essential role in monitoring the implementation of the different agreements reached, including the ceasefire agreement. While the presence and participation of women in peace negotiations is a positive development in and of itself, in the case of the Philippines, it must be noted that the presence of women has also been reflected in the content of the peace agreement, which guarantees having women in the new institutional mechanisms emerging from the peace process and the inclusion of a gender perspective in economic aspects through development plans specifically aimed at improving women's quality of life. Thus, women's involvement has been reflected in content, clearly showing that the inclusion of different social groups in peace negotiations leads to peace agreements that are more embracing and representative of the needs of the people they affect.

In relation to the peace talks aimed at ending the armed conflict in Colombia between the Government and FARC-EP guerrilla, in September the parties agreed to establish a subcommittee on gender with a mandate to integrate the voices of women and a gender perspective in all agreements reached at the negotiating table, including partial ones and a potential final agreement. The subcommittee will be composed of five representatives from each party and will be advised by domestic and international experts. Presidential Advisor for Women's Equality Nigeria Rentería, who is also participating in the peace negotiations, underscored the importance of specifically making women's rights

and a gender perspective a constitutive element of the peace accords. The FARC-EP, which designated five women to join the subcommittee (Yira Castro, Diana Grajales, Victoria Sandino, Alexandra Nariño and Camila Cienfuegos), stressed the importance that non-discrimination on the basis of gender held for the armed group, stating that 40% of its members are women, and blasted accusations that the guerrillas had used sexual violence, saying that the Colombian Armed Forces and paramilitary groups were responsible for it. Meanwhile, women's organisations welcomed the creation of the subcommittee, though they were sceptical about the genuine inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace negotiations. On numerous occasions, women's organisations have claimed that all armed parties to the conflict have been responsible for committing crimes of sexual violence.[35]

In December took place the first meeting of the gender subcommittee in the peace negotiations in Havana (between Colombian government and FARC-EP representatives) with Colombian women's organisations in December. The gender subcommittee, which has the mandate to integrate the voices of women and a gender perspective into all partial and possibly final agreements reached at the negotiating table, plans to hold three meetings with different women's organisations in the country. The delegation consisted of representatives of the main women's organisations working for peace in Colombia: Mujeres por la Paz, Ruta Pacífica, Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, Red nacional de

---

Box 4.5. **The peace dialogue in Turkey: an opportunity from the gender perspective?**

The peace dialogue engaging the Turkish Government and the PKK since the end of 2012, known as the Imrali process, continues to be a great opportunity of transformation for this long-lasting armed conflict, despite the enormous difficulties. The conflict has caused some 40,000 victims since 1984 and, depending on the sources, somewhere between 1 and 3 million internally displaced people. There have been around 10,000 killings that have not been elucidated –affectinc mostly civilians Kurds–, cases of torture, an undefined number of victims of gender-based violence, including rape, and an extended trauma among the Kurdish population, which has been most affected by the war. In a significant way, the Imrali process is also an opportunity to give visibility to and tackle the crucial issue of the gender dimension in the conflict and to facilitate sustainable gender-based transformations. Among the factors that boost this opportunity is the large mobilisation of Kurdish women in this direction, the growing convergence between Kurdish and Turkish women through a joint platform, the support shown by the PKK to the gender agenda and the greater international visibility of the emancipatory role played by Kurdish women linked to the PKK in the region, due to the crisis in Syria. Nevertheless, alongside these opportunities there are also risk factors, including the rejection by the AKP and the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to meet the calls for emancipation of women and to fully include them in the dialogue process, the risks of subordinating or even diluting the gender dimension in the process in light of the foreseeable obstacles, the historical lack of bridges between Kurdish and Turkish women at different levels, including those with a greater capacity of influencing the centres of power.

Gender and patriarchy have occupied a central place in the Kurdish issue throughout its history, closely interlinked with other processes, including the emerging issues of militarization and cultural harmoization. At the same time, the gender dimension has come across intersected with other multiple axes (class, origin, religion, etc.). State discrimination and violence against the Kurdish populatin has had specific manifestations and impacts on Kurdish women –considered not as single categories– such as forced displacement, the feminization of poverty, sexual violence, the disruption of

---

35. Comisión de Verdad y Memoria de Mujeres Colombianas, *La verdad de las mujeres. Víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia*, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, Bogotá, 2013.

livelihoods, gender-based violence, the strengthening of stereotypes. At the same time, Kurdish women have been active subjects in many spheres and strategies (co-founders of the PKK and armed combatants; activists; politicians; journalists; lawyers in the Kurdish movement, etcetera).

Previous experiences of dialogue between the State and the PKK had not been accompanied in such a clear way as now by attempts to turn dialogue into an opportunity of transformation from the gender perspective. Several factors have contributed to this, such as the work and mobilization of a joint platform of Kurdish and Turkish women, the Women's Initiative for Peace, created in May 2009 and that brings together women of different origins, beliefs and identities (feminists, women from the Turkish women's movement, Kurdish women from the Democratic Free Women movement, women belonging to LGBT movements, trade unionists, women in political parties, journalists, women academics, human rights activists, and many others). Their objective is to enliven the spaces for joint discussion and to mobilize against war and violence against women, from the position that there cannot be peace without women.

With the boost to the Imrali dialogue process in 2013 and 2014, the platform has also increased its public visitbility, its activities and its mechanisms. This includes making explicit its wish to participate formally and informally in the negotiations. Among its mechanisms, it has established a monitoring group of the dialogue to hold meetings with all the parties invlolved in the peace process. A first report on the evolution of dialogue during 2013 and on the platform's activities already pointed out some challenges: the fragility of the dialogue process, the growing discriminatory drift of the AKP towards women and other serious gaps in the internal and regional policy of the AKP. It also highlighted opportunities: the need for women to participate in the process at all levels; as well as solutions: an equalitarian legal framework, stressing the historical memory, and prosecuting human rights violations occurred during the war, and a new perspective on security and the reform of the security sector with a human approach. At the same time, the mobilisation and work done by the platform brought out the limited relations between Turkish and Kurdish women MPs and the challenges and difficulties facing those women who decide to take joint steps in a context of polarization and distrurst between the State and the Kurdish nationalist movement. In any case, the platform represents the appearance on stage of a dynamic actor that can mobilize to look for state, regional and international alliances.

On the other hand, the Kurdish nationalist movement and the women's branches within the movement also presented their wishes for a gender approach in the dialogue process, through the demand for an equalitarian representation of men and women in all commissions that will be established within the framework of the peace dialogue, as well as the establishment of a specific commission to deal with gender issues further in depth. From the Kurdish movement's perspective, the solution to the Kurdish issue also requires there to be a process of democratization that embraces the equality and freedom of women, including through a non-sexist Constitution that promotes the emancipation of women; an approach to gender-based violence and other issues beyond the Constitution, through the participation and the perspective of women in all themes and issues; and an active participation of women in local governments, to deal with all issues affecting them. It is an approach to the gender dimension that is the result of decades of struggling by a part of the women in the Kurdish movement, and not without initial inmternal reticence, to become a fundamental part of the movement, in a context in which the Kurdish movement and its different faces (guerrilla, political party, social and professional organizations, etc.) has counted on a broad participation of women and has established the co-leadership system in its different spheres –just beneath its top leader, Abdullah Öcalan– and with gender quotas at all levels, as well as specific structures with women. This reality coexists with a social environment which, in line with the Turkish and global realities, continues to be patriarchal and marked by high levels of violence against women.[36]

Nevertheless, there are many obstacles facin women who actively promote a solution to the conflict that will give an answer to the considerations of women. Obstacles include the conservative drift of the AKP as for the rights and freedoms of women and their autonomy, with public statements committing them to the role of mothers and rejecting equality between men and women. Also, at the end of 2014, Kurdish women were warning that the Turkish Government was not accepting women as part of the peace process. This could explain why, when the Krudish delegation visiting the PKK leader, Abdulah Öcalan, in prison was increased, the Kurdish women's rights activist Ceylan Bağrıyanık, from the Democratic and Free Women's Movement (DÖKH) was not included, when the former MP and leader of co-cahir of the Kurdish platform DRP Hatip Dicle was, when both named had been put forward by the organisation to increse the delegation, which visited Öcalan in its extended form for the first time on 17th December 2014. All visits to Öcalan must be authorised by the Turkish authorities. Nevertheless, at the start of 2015, it transpired that Bağrıyanık was joining the Kurdish delegation, which could strengthen the gender dimension of the process. The initial Kurdish delegation already included a woman, Pervin Buldan, the co-chair of the pro-Kurdish party HDP. It is yet to be seen if the conservative approaches of the AKP with regards to gender will block the remaining demands to participate and the underlying claims, what strategy the Kurdish movement will follow with regards to this issue and how Kurdish women and the alliances

---

36. For further information on the platform, go to http://www.barisicinkadinlar.com/en/.

Artistas, Asociación de Mujeres por la paz y los derechos de la Mujer (ASODEMUC), Sisma Mujer and Casa de la Mujer. Also participating were three international experts on gender representing Cuba, Norway and UN Women. The women's organisations called on the parties to decree a bilateral ceasefire for Christmas and the New Year. They also presented several demands about the peace process, including guarantees of women's participation at all stages and mechanism of the peace process; recognition of diversity and of the Afro-Colombian, indigenous, peasant, rural, urban, young female and LGTBI populations; the equitable distribution of goods, services, resources and wealth between men and women; guarantees of truth, justice, reparations and non-recurrence for female victims of the conflict; and a de-escalation of violence while ensuring that the parties stay at the negotiating table until a peace agreement is achieved. The women of the delegation hailed the event as "historic" and hoped that it would translate into concrete commitments to ensure the full participation of women in a potential peace agreement. Moreover, during a visit to Havana to meet with delegations of the government and the FARC-EP, one of the victims delegations proposed treating sexual violence committed as part of the armed conflict as a crime against humanity and giving social and psychological support to victims of this violence, which are mostly women, as well as access to justice.

Talks known as Geneva II, the first direct meeting aimed at ending the the civil war devastating Syria since 2011 between the mixed opposition and the Syrian government, were held in January in Switzerland with the mediation of the United Nations. The meeting was preceded by different initiatives led by women's organisations that asked to participate substantively in the peace negotiations. Although both delegations included women, the call for the inclusion of third party representing civil society, where the presence of women was guaranteed, had no official echo, which was widely criticised. The initiatives that preceded Geneva II included a meeting in Geneva organised by UN Women, the appearance of three female civil society leaders before the UN Security Council, the "Women Lead to Peace" campaign promoted by various international

organisations and a women for peace summit in Geneva alongside the peace negotiations with the participation of Syrian women and women involved in other peace processes. It is worth noting the different positions taken with respect to women's involvement in peace negotiations. The United Nations and some Syrian organisations defended the participation of women in negotiating delegations and the inclusion of female civil society activists as observers in the negotiations, while other international and Syrian organisations called for a space for civil society —in which women would participate— at the negotiating table. The international organisations that supported these requests (CODEPINK, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), MADRE, Karama and Nobel Women's Initiative) criticised the international community and the United Nations' failure to meet the commitments acquired as part of the women, peace and security agenda by not guaranteeing the substantive participation of women. Some of the women's organisations' main demands regarding the negotiating process included the immediate signing of a ceasefire agreement that would give humanitarian organisations access to the population, the withdrawal of foreign combatants and the end of all arms exports to Syria. The Syrian women participating in the various forums stressed that the role played by women early in the protests against the Assad government had become overshadowed by the rise in violence and militarisation of the conflict and discussed the importance of strengthening the social fabric during it, since before the war, Syrian civil society was very weak because of the regime's authoritarian and repressive nature.

4.3.3. Civil society initiatives

The Manipur Women Alliance on UNSCR 1325 was created for the purpose of promoting women's participation in decision-making in the Indian state of Manipur.[37] The alliance was created as part of the meeting put together by the women's and civil society organisations Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN) and North East India Women Initiative for Peace (NEIWIP) in collaboration with the Control Arms

---

37. Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, "Women Leaders of Manipur forms Alliance on Women, Peace and Security", *E-Pao*, 8th May 2014.

Foundation of India (CAFI). Different aspects related to the impact of the armed conflict Manipur on women were addressed, as was the role that women have played in the various peacebuilding initiatives in the region and the things that Resolution 1325 has done to promote women's participation and to recognise their contributions to peace processes. In addition to establishing the network, a 21-point agenda was created with future strategies for involving women in peace and development decision-making.

Senegalese women's organisations promoted different initiatives aimed at encouraging peace in the Casamance region after more than three decades of conflict. Coinciding with the International Day of Peace, in September the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (Women's Platform for Peace in Casamance, PFPC) held a meeting with various civil society groups to analyse the current situation of the conflict and the prospects for peace negotiations. The PFPC stressed the need to sponsor the joint work of different players committed to peace to accompany and strengthen talks between the Senegalese government and the armed group MFDC, with a view to a final solution to the conflict. In order to influence the peace process in the region more effectively, the various organisations signed a commitment agreement on joint actions after the meeting. Meanwhile, the Comité Régional de Solidarité des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (USOFORAL in the Jola language) announced the organisation of a week of regional and nationwide mobilisation for peace in Casamance. The purpose is to mobilise women in the 14 regions of Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau so they may share their ideas on a peaceful end to the conflict in Casamance. It also aims to raise consciousness among women all over Senegal that the conflict in Casamance does not solely concern the people of that region. The conclusions of this week of mobilisation, which is scheduled for April 2015, are planned to be sent to the authorities and to the MFDC. USOFORAL coordinator Seynablu Male Cissé has appealed to Resolution 1325 to demand the involvement of women in the peace process. Notably, before the start of negotiations between the government and the MFDC, women's organisations led marches and vigils for peace, promoted the signing of a "memorandum for peace" to commit presidential candidates prior to the elections in

2012, met with senior officials and confidentially sat down with political representatives of the MFDC. Ritual practices led by priestesses also sought to promote the smooth progress of the negotiations.

4.3.4. The international agenda

The United Nations, together with many civil society organisations, did the preparatory work to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals planned for 2015, as well as designing a new development agenda. Some of the most important aspects of this work have been the efforts to get the new agenda to include gender equality and the achievement of peace much more clearly.[38] At the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women a document with conclusions was agreed that included a call for any new development agenda to include gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human right of women and girls, as goals per se, and also to include the remaining goals set out through targets and indicators.[39] This was one of the main demands made by women organizations –which is included in the High-Level Panel's report[40]– highlighting the tough negotiations carried out during the Commission's session, opposed by some conservative governments, and the inclusion of fundamental issues for women's rights. The organisations also highlighted the importance of including a firm language on violence against women and girls.[41] However, they were unable to further acknowledge the extremely negative impact of the international financial crisis on development and, more specifically, on women. In parallel, it is important to highlight the efforts that are being made for the new development agenda to integrate the agenda on women, peace and security, including calls for the establishment of a a goal per se on peaceful societies, and to integrate all the instruments approved by the UN on women, peace and security.[42] The report by the High-Level Panel picked up on the establishment of the goal "Ensuring stable and peaceful societies", but does not include aspects from the agenda on women, peace and security, or crucial issues such as disarmament and demilitarization, among others. There have also been demands for the agenda on women, peace and security to be included in the goal on gender equality.

---

38. Read "Integrating Peace and Development: progress on the international agenda for gender equality" in chapter 5 (Opportunities for peace in 2015).
39. Association for Women's Rights In Development, "CSW58 Round Up 4 – Friday 28 March 2014, CSW58 Agreed Conclusions", AWID, 28th March 2014, http://www.awid.org/Library/CSW58-Round-up-4-Friday-28-March-2014.
40. *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty And Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development*, May 2013, http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/HLPReport_Spanish.pdf.
41. VV.AA., *Feminist Reflections: UNs High Level Panel Report on Post-2015 Development Agenda,* June 2013, http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/component/content/article/168/458-feminist-reflections-uns-high-level-panel-report-on-post-2015-development-agenda.
42. Read "The inclusion of the reduction of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda" in chapter 5 (Opportunities for peace in 2015).

5. Opportunities for Peace in 2015

Based on studies of conflicts and peacebuilding in 2014, in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace highlights five opportunities for peace in 2015. These are contexts where an armed conflict or socio-political crisis is present or has occurred in the past in which a series of factors have come together that could help lead to a positive outcome and/or issues on the international agenda that could facilitate peacebuilding in the short or medium term. The opportunities identified in 2015 include the renewed commitment to dialogue to find a solution to the Iranian nuclear dossier; the hope for peace offered by the national dialogue in Sudan; the prospects for making the reduction of armed violence an important subject on the Post-2015 Agenda; the confluence of global efforts against child recruitment; and the possible progress of gender equality on the international agenda due to the coincidence of various international events.

All these opportunities for peace will require real effort and commitment from the parties involved and, if appropriate, the support of international stakeholders so that synergies and positive factors already present may lead to peacebuilding. Thus, the analysis conducted by the School for a Culture of Peace aims to provide a realistic view of these scenarios and topics, identifying positive elements that give hope for change, while also highlighting existing difficulties that could become obstacles to opportunities for peace.

Map 5.1. **Opportunities for peace for 2015**
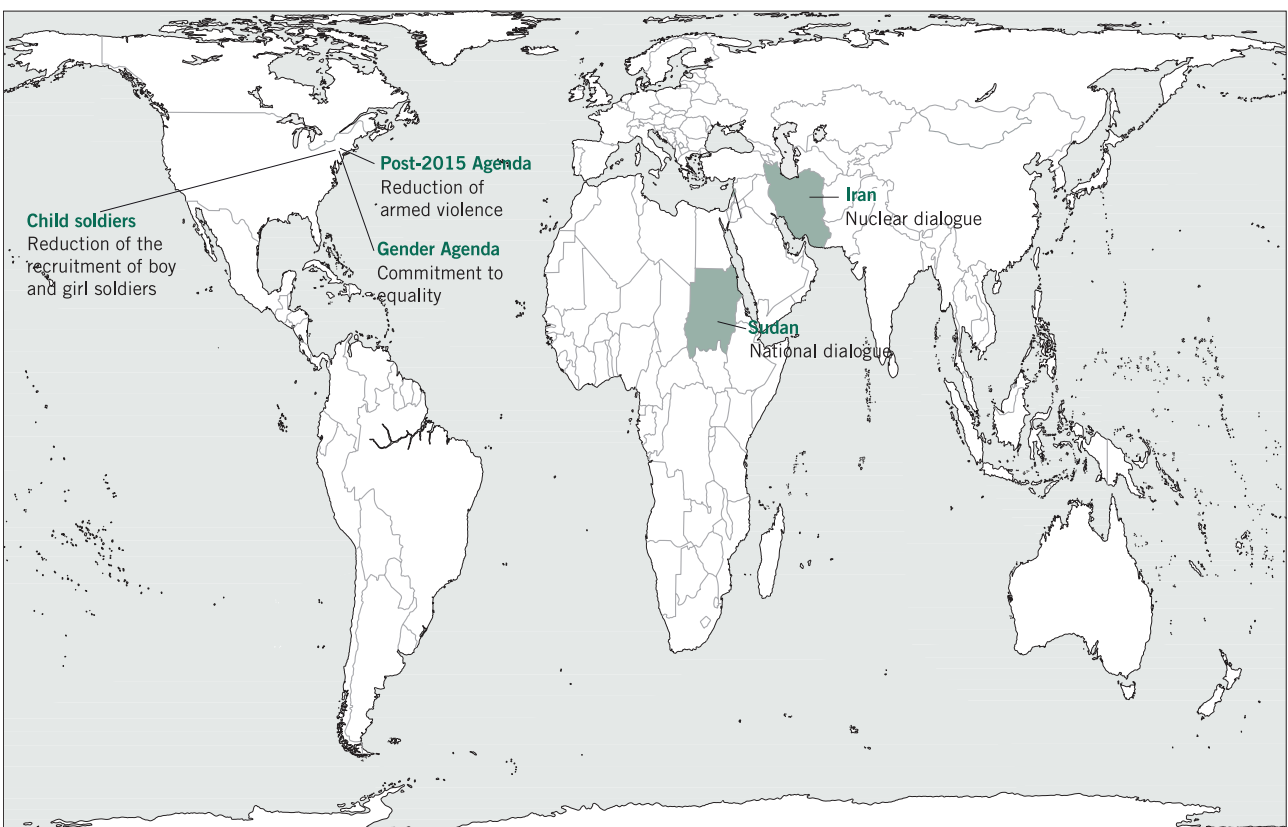
5.1. Negotiations over the Iranian nuclear dossier: a renewed commitment to dialogue

In late 2013, Iran and the group of international powers known as the P5+1[1] (the USA, China, Russia, the UK, France and Germany) reached an unprecedented agreement to start negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme. The Joint Plan of Action raised expectations about the possibilities of resolving a thorny issue that has been on the international agenda for years through a historic agreement to assist the normalisation of relations between Iran and the West, and especially the United States. The terms of the plan envisaged that the parties reach an agreement within one year maximum, but that did not come to pass. The day that the self-imposed deadline expired, 24 November 2014, Iran and the P5+1 countries had to admit that there were still great disagreements between them. However, the negotiators stressed that significant progress had also been made, making it worthwhile to remain committed to the dialogue. Thus, a seven-month extension to the negotiations was agreed, consisting of two phases. Both parties have until 1 March 2015 to bring their positions closer together and define a political agreement, and until 1 July to achieve a comprehensive agreement, including an implementation plan. This agreement could have important implications not only for the nuclear non-proliferation system, but also for international and regional politics and relations between the United States and Iran. During this time period, however, many more obstacles will likely have to be overcome than were reported in the first year of negotiations.

Talks over the Iranian nuclear issue began in early 2014. In the first stage of the meetings, some of the dynamics of previous negotiations were maintained, characterised by maximalist approaches, mutual accusations and misperceptions regarding the weaknesses of the other party and the weight of domestic narratives and pressures. Nevertheless, the representatives of Iran and the P5+1 managed to advance and reconcile stances on technical issues amidst a succession of multilateral diplomatic meetings and more discreet bilateral negotiations between Iran and the United States (which were also more effective, according to some analysts) in cities such as Vienna, Geneva and Muscat (Oman). As the November deadline approached, it became apparent that the main points of disagreement focused on two issues. The first was the size and scope of Iran's uranium enrichment programme (the abilities it could keep and those which should be dismantled as part of an agreement) and the second was the sequence for lifting the sanctions imposed on the Tehran regime (in exchange for the agreement and its concessions, Iran wants a complete and rapid removal of the sanctions, while the P5+1 countries propose a suspension and then a phaseout, depending on implementation of the agreement). While the talks, only a few details of which have become public, have centred around various technical aspects, the basis of

the discussion (and the solution) is political. For Iran the nuclear issue is a matter of national dignity that implies rejecting the dictates of the West. As a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Tehran insists that it has the right to pursue peaceful atomic activities and provides transparency (inspections, access to facilities) in exchange for keeping aspects of its nuclear plan and research programmes. The P5+1, and particularly the Western countries, want to limit Iran's abilities as much as possible to prevent any chance that the Iranian nuclear programme may acquire a military dimension.

The failure to reach an agreement within the established timeframe caused some disappointment, but there were also several positive assessments of the progress made, lessons learned after a year of dialogue and prospects for an agreement in the months of negotiations ahead. The parties underscored that progress had been made on subjects that initially seemed intractable and deeper knowledge had been acquired of the other party, its internal constraints and room for manoeuvre. The negotiations over the Iranian nuclear issue also enabled the establishment of an unprecedented channel of communication between senior officials in Washington and Tehran, despite their historical animosity. While this rapprochement was seen publicly in the telephone conversation between US President Barack Obama and the recently elected Iranian leader, Hassan Rouhani in 2013, it took shape over the course of various meetings in 2014 between John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif (some alone and others with the chief of European diplomacy at the time, Catherine Ashton) and in smooth telephone conversations between members of the negotiating delegations. Ashton also travelled to Tehran in the first trip to Iran made by a senior EU diplomat in six years.

Notably, the path of diplomatic dialogue about the Iranian nuclear *dossier* was maintained, despite the many contingencies that could have hindered its development, such as tensions between Russia and the West stemming from the crisis in Ukraine, for example, or the legislative elections in the United States in November, which was a significant setback for Obama's Democratic Party (and which led to some scepticism among the Iranian delegation about any deals that Washington could propose). Specialised analysts pointed out that negotiations to regulate such complex issues usually last more than a year.[2] Thus, the extension of the talks has been seen as a sign of trust that it is still a credible pathway. Meanwhile, the deal is still alive that allowed the talks to begin, bringing benefits to both parties. For the P5+1, this means that Tehran has put a freeze on its atomic activities (the IAEA has certified that Iran has fulfilled its promises in this regard), while

---

1. Consisting of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, this group of countries is also known as the EU3+3.
2. International Crisis Group, *Iran Nuclear Talks: The Fog Recedes*, Middle East Briefing no.43, 10 December 2014, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/iran/b043-iran-nuclear-talks-the-fog-recedes.aspx.

Iran enjoys a partial lifting of the sanctions, giving it a little room to breathe economically.

In the current scenario, various factors could help the parties to achieve an agreement and act as an incentive. For the time being, the leadership of both Iran and the USA are committed to the search for a negotiated solution. Obama has invested significant political capital in rapprochement with Washington's traditional enemy. After his party's defeat in the elections in November, Obama wrote his fourth letter to the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging him not to miss the opportunity to make a deal. Obama only has so much time (his term ends in 2016) to try to reach an agreement that would become the distinctive seal of his foreign policy legacy, a sphere in which he has not had much success. Rouhani, the former Iranian nuclear negotiator from 2003 to 2005, has focused his efforts on the nuclear dossier, aware that any economic recovery, one of the main issues facing Iran, would require an agreement resulting in lifting the sanctions. Various public opinion studies reveal that Rouhani's commitment to negotiations has the backing of most of the Iranian populace, which is open to making some concessions and adopting measures that enable it to normalise relations with the USA.[3] Thus, some analysts have said that the hope for change represented by Rouhani and his focus on a nuclear deal goes hand in hand with the need for change in the regime, as more than two-thirds of the population was born after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

In addition, the evolution of the conflicts in the Middle East, and particularly the rise of the radical Sunni Islamic State (ISIS), has shown an unusual confluence of interests between the United States and Iran. Despite their differences in other areas, like the war in Syria (Iran remains steadfast in its support for Bashar Assad's government), in practice Tehran and Washington have become allies in the fight against ISIS, identified as a common enemy. Senior leaders from both countries have addressed the issue, and Obama insinuated as much in his letter to Khamenei. A possible agreement that resolves the atomic dispute could promote or open avenues of understanding between Tehran and the West in other areas, based on the understanding that Iran is an inevitable regional power in the current context, with a special ability to influence developments in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. One of the most stable countries in the region, it has the resources and willingness to intervene in the region to stop the rise of radical Sunni armed groups. Europe is not only interested in promoting pathways to stabilise the Middle East, but could also be interested in

Tehran and the P5+1 powers have until 1 March 2015 to close some distance between them and come to a political agreement, and until 1 July to achieve a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme

lifting sanctions on Iran for the purpose of diversifying its sources of energy supply given its tensions with Russia. Meanwhile, Moscow could leverage its relations through agreements with Iran as an asset in its dispute with the West, aware that it could defy the sanctions and that it has great influence in areas that could be of assistance in resolving the nuclear issue. Although some observers viewed the recent agreement between Russia and Iran to provide reactors to the Bushehr plant as evidence of this, others stressed that the deal fits the argument promoted by the P5+1 in the negotiations to reduce Tehran's needs to produce atomic energy within its borders.[4]

Despite some encouraging signs, it is clear that the negotiations and possibilities of an agreement over Iran's nuclear programme are also threatened by several factors. The extension of the dialogue exposes it to the influence of hardliners on both sides, which have expressed their scepticism from the start, if not open rejection, and are willing to boycott it. On the Iranian side, powerful sectors, such as the top brass of the Republic Guard, have openly questioned it, although they lowered the tone of their criticism after an appeal from Ayatollah Khamenei. The supreme Iranian Leader, who has the final say on nuclear policy, has asked to give the negotiations a chance, but has also adopted a cautious and suspicious attitude towards the intentions of the United States and its Western allies.

In the United States, the victory of the opposition Republican Party in the recent elections, which furthered its majority in the House of Representatives and will control the Senate in January for the first time since 2007, will not only reduce Obama's room for manoeuvre, but will also increase the odds that unilateral sanctions will be promoted against Iran. This would contravene the agreements necessary for the negotiations to begin, weaken the Iranian leadership that promoted the talks, lead to a resumption of Iran's nuclear activities that have been frozen so far and create divisions within the P5+1. For this reason, various analysts have warned of the strategic cost of a measure of this kind, since the United States could be held accountable, even by some of its partners, for setting off an escalation and increasing the possibilities of violent confrontation.[5] Polls also indicate that the US population supports diplomatic negotiation to address the nuclear issue over any alternatives.

However, the Israeli government has been fiercely opposed to the negotiations from the start. At any time, the Israeli government could choose to attack Iran's nuclear

3. Ebrahim Mohseni, Nancy Gallagher and Clay Ramsay, *Iranian Attitudes on Nuclear Negotiations: A Public Opinion Study*, Center for Security Studies at Maryland, September 2014, http://worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/2014/iranian_attitudes_on_nuclear_negotiations__final__091614.pdf.
4. Ellie Geranmayeh, *Prospects for the Iranian Nuclear Talks*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 13 November 2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_prospects_for_the_Iranian_nuclear_talks349.
5. ICG, op. cit. and George Perkovich, *Iran Talks Extended, Again*, Q&A, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 25 November 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/11/25/iran-nuclear-talks-extended-again.

facilities directly (in August Tehran claimed that it had shot down an Israeli drone flying over the Natanz nuclear complex). Israel has adopted this policy in the past, when it attacked the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981, and when it conducted another strike in Syria in 2007, in order to guarantee its position as the sole nuclear power in the region. Israel, which unlike Iran has not signed the NPT, pursues a policy of nuclear "ambiguity", neither confirming nor denying whether it possesses nuclear arsenals. The Israeli government's position could be influenced by the upcoming Knesset elections in March, but overall the policies promoted by Netanyahu have isolated Israel internationally, thus limiting its ability to mobilise against Iran. Meanwhile, it must be borne in mind that developments in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria may have implications for the nuclear negotiations, although for the first year the negotiating parties managed to hold the talks in safety, despite the regional turmoil.

The coming months will show whether cooperation and the search for consensus will prevail over confrontation. What is certain is that any achievement would require both parties to be flexible and to make difficult concessions, with political costs among their respective domestic audiences. Any agreement would therefore require education about its advantages, stressing the risks involved in scenarios other than a negotiated solution. A positive outcome could strengthen the nuclear weapon non-proliferation system in an especially tumultuous zone, help to bury a dispute that has affected Iran's international relations for decades, facilitate some normalisation between Washington and Tehran and create a scenario that could aid collaboration between regional and international powers in efforts to stabilise the Middle East. The timeframe is limited. Iran and the P5+1 have the first quarter of 2015 to grasp this opportunity for peace—or to let it slip away.

5.2. Sudan's National Dialogue, one of the last hopes for peace in the country

The history of Sudan has been marked by a nearly constant atmosphere of violence and instability. Over the course of the last 50 years, the marginalised peripheries of the country have confronted a predatory client state in an attempt to halt the inequality and exclusion that has characterised the country since its independence. The construction of this state, based on the Arabic cultural assimilation of the non-Arab periphery through repression and violence to ensure its dominance by extracting resources from the marginal areas, provided structural conditions and provided political and economic reasons for various insurgencies to appear. Three years after losing one-fourth of its population and territory as a result of the secession of South Sudan in 2011 after more than 20 years of war, Sudan remains immersed in violence because it has not dealt with the deep causes of this instability. According to some analysts, for several years there has been growing agreement that resolving the different domestic conflicts facing the country (from Darfur, which goes back more than a decade, to South Kordofan and Blue Nile, in addition to pressure from the political opposition and various attempted coups d'état carried out by parts of the Sudanese Army) would require a global approach, instead of the failed individualised treatment of the government of Omar al-Bashir in an attempt to remain in power. Whether due to internal influence, international pressure (especially from the United States and the European Union), political calculations or the conviction that it is the only way out of the Sudanese labyrinth, on 27 January 2014 President Omar al-Bashir called on the political parties and the insurgencies to commit to the National Dialogue process to build peace in the country and discuss possible constitutional reform, which some analysts believe could be one of the best opportunities for peacebuilding in the country in recent years. The international community and internal political opposition hailed the proposal, though the insurgents regarded it with scepticism. The main points of his appeal were national unity and peace, the economy, basic freedoms and rights, national identity and governance and constitutional reform.

The National Dialogue is an initiative coordinated on the technical level by a committee in charge of organising the process, known as the 7+7 Committee, which takes its name from the number of members composing it: seven from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and seven from opposition parties. Nevertheless, the initiative displayed great fragility from the beginning. First, the process was delayed many times and events on the ground are not consistent with the good intentions and declarations of the president of the country.[6] The pressure on the media, the restrictions of political parties' freedoms and the ongoing wars in Darfur and in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are a sign of this. At mid-year, a political advisor and member of the NCP's inner circle, Qutbi al-Mahdi, announced that the National Dialogue would include civil society organisations, women's groups, students, workers and national figures, but no concrete initiative for inclusive participation in it has been made public thus far.

However, from the start the coalition National Consensus Forces (NCF), which unites the main opposition parties, stated that it would not participate in the National Dialogue unless the government puts an end to the various wars affecting the country and creates an environment favourable to holding talks after two of its main parties said they were willing to participate, the Popular Congress Party (PCP) and the National Umma Party (NUP). The PCP, headed by its historical leader Hassan al-Turabi, expressed its readiness to participate in the initiative, dividing the opposition bloc. The initiative was stalled for various months, especially after the arrest on 17 May of another opposition leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi of the NUP, also a member of the NCF. His arrest prompted his party to announce it was suspending meetings to participate in the National Dialogue. Al-Mahdi was arrested because of his harsh criticism of the government's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for crimes and atrocities committed in the conflict zones. However, one month later he was released due to the negative impact surrounding the arrest of an opposition leader and because the central committee of the NUP, hoping to regain lost confidence, expressed its support for the Sudanese Armed Forces and said that al-Mahdi's statements regarding the RSF could come from information that "may not be entirely true".[7] Despite the setbacks and following months of deadlock, the 7+7 Committee unveiled the road map of the National Dialogue on 8 August, establishing that it would begin in September and last three months. This timeframe was not respected, however, as the National Dialogue has yet to start.

Nevertheless, the insurgency and political opposition have expressed their willingness to move forward with the process. The National Dialogue was given significant impetus in August, when the NUP and armed opposition coalition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)[8] signed the Paris Declaration,[9] by which the SRF pledged to observe a unilateral two-month ceasefire,

---

6. Some analysts expressed scepticism about the lack of progress in the process, which they described as a "monologue" by the ruling party. See Copnall, James, "Sudan: is the National Dialogue really dead? (And did it ever really exist anyway?)" *African Arguments*, 25 June 2014.
7. Sudan Tribune, "Sudan's NUP to set new conditions on participation in national dialogue", 18 June 2014.
8. Supporting a comprehensive approach to the Sudanese conflict, in November 2011 an opposition coalition was created, the SRF, bringing together the SLA-AW, SLA-MM and JEM, the three main armed groups in Darfur that have still not signed the DDPD agreement, and the SPLM-N, active in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. See McCutchen, Andrew, *The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development,* Small Arms Survey, October 2014.
9. See "Agreement on the National Dialogue and Constitutional Process", 4 September 2014, Addis Ababa, https://radiotamazuj.org/sites/default/files/Agreement%20on%20the%20National%20Dialogue%20and%20Constitutional%20Process%20~%20París%20Declaration%20Group.pdf

make the effort necessary to end the war and start talks with all political forces leading to the formation of a transition government and more democracy. SRF leader Malik Agar said that both groups had agreed to join political forces and work for a broad dialogue to preserve the unity of the country (in reference to South Sudan). They also agreed to boycott the general elections in April 2015 unless they are organised by an inclusive transition government. The remaining parties welcomed the declaration. Al-Bashir said that the National Dialogue only required three months, which is why he had announced that the 2015 elections would not be postponed, since according to him that would create a constitutional vacuum. He also said that a transition government would not be established and that the National Dialogue would start on 25 November. The Paris Declaration, which was sponsored by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on 4 September, helped the SRF, NUP and 7+7 Committee to sign a statement in Addis Ababa about their participation in the National Dialogue with the facilitation of the AUHIP, ending months of stalemate in the process. Although al-Bashir rejected the Paris Declaration, he welcomed the signing of the agreement in Addis Ababa by the same groups that participated in Paris and the 7+7 Committee.[10] The members of the Troika (the United States, United Kingdom and Norway)[11] hailed these efforts and backed the AU in its initiatives and positioning.

The first meeting of the general assembly to prepare for the National Dialogue was held on 2 November and presided over by Omar al-Bashir. Around 100 political players and members of political parties participated in the assembly, which approved the report of the 7+7 Committee (the road map for the National Dialogue) and the Addis Ababa agreement signed on 4 September, as well as plans to agree on a timetable for the National Dialogue. Other important parties like the Reform Now Movement (RNM), led by Ghazi Salah al-Din Attabani, also participated in the meeting. Various subcommittees for preparing the National Dialogue started to hold meetings and gather ideas.

Meanwhile, even though a significant push was given to the peace processes in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile in November, with parallel meetings held in Addis Ababa, no agreement was reached due to al-Bashir's refusal to take a sweeping approach to resolve the conflicts in the country, as requested by the armed groups. Nevertheless, al-Bashir repeated his call for the armed groups to join the dialogue process. Thus far, the Sudanese government had kept its negotiations with the Two Areas (as the peace process in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is known) and Darfur separate from the National Dialogue, while the SPLM-N wanted to include aspects of the National Dialogue (the Paris Declaration) in it and bring the Darfur peace process under a single peace process coordinating both lines of negotiation and leading to the National Dialogue.

Even though the National Dialogue is proceeding slowly and no agreement has been achieved in Darfur or the Two Areas enabling the involvement of armed groups in it, the fact that the AUHIP is bringing these processes together[12] and coordinating them so they may be united with the National Dialogue means that the African Union understands a comprehensive approach is essential and wants to move the negotiations in that direction. However, al-Bashir refuses to accept the convergence of the National Dialogue with efforts to resolve the armed conflicts in Sudan.[13] Led by Thabo Mbeki, the AUHIP has urged the 7+7 Committee to persuade the armed groups to join the National Dialogue and supports all mediation efforts moving in the same direction.[14] Chadian President Idriss Déby also encouraged former allies of his, armed groups from Darfur, to participate in the process. The German government and Berghoff Foundation did the same, holding a seminar in Berlin in October after the SRF announced plans to form a strategic alliance with the opposition bloc NCF and other opposition parties. Internationally, there is a clear desire to support the process, as the European Union has demonstrated on many occasions, such as when it announced its promise to forgive Sudan's foreign debt if the process reached its stated objectives. Even if the initiative fails, meaning that a negotiating process takes place that is not inclusive and does not resolve the conflicts in the country due to the slow progress of the National Dialogue, the complexity and number of groups involved, the accumulation of mistrust between the parties and the persisting violence on the ground, it can be said that the beginning of a process of change is now under way.

The National Dialogue could be one of the best opportunities for peacebuilding in the country in recent years

---

10. Sudan Tribune, "Bashir reiterates rejection of Paris Declaration, but welcomes Addis Ababa deal", 2 November 2014.
11. The United States, the United Kingdom and Norway form what is known as the Sudan Troika, a group whose governments backed the peace negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 2005.
12. African Union Press Release, "The African Union Welcomes the Outcomes of the Visit of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel to Sudan", 7 November 2014.
13. On 3 December, the "Sudan Call" was signed in Addis Ababa between the leader of the NCF coalition, Farouk Abu Issa, the vice president of the armed SRF coalition, Minni Minawi, the head of the NUP, al-Sadiq al Mahdi, and the chief of the Alliance of Sudanese Civil Society Organisations, Amin Maki Madani. This agreement is a call to end the war, dismantle the single-party state, sign a comprehensive agreement and undertake a democratic transition in the country. Al-Bashir has condemned alliances between the political opposition and the insurgency, reasserting that the two conflicts will not be negotiated in the same forum, as the insurgencies would like. See Sudan Tribune, "Sudan's Bashir vows to quash rebellion by the end of the year", Sudan Tribune, 13 December 2014.
14. African Union, "Communiqué of the 456th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council", 12 September 2014.

5.3. The inclusion of the reduction of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda

Throughout 2015, states will formally start negotiations to define the new development agenda, known as the Post-2015 Agenda, which will replace the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed in the year 2000. Although the Millennium Declaration in 2000 addressed issues of peace, security and disarmament, they were not subsequently included directly or specifically in the MDGs. In recent years, various initiatives and reports produced by international organisations, governments and NGOs have been fuelling a growing consensus about the need to explicitly include the prevention and reduction of armed violence and the promotion of security in the Post-2015 Agenda. Despite all the political and methodological criticism that accompanied the design and follow-up of the MDGs, most agree on the point that the explicit inclusion of the reduction of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda would be a historic opportunity by situating such a sensitive issue at the centre of the debate and of the international community's efforts while forcing states to mobilise resources and make agreements to adopt concrete and quantifiable strategies and measures to achieve the goals finally agreed.

Various reports establish a clear connection between violence and levels of development, stating that no country affected by high levels of violence has managed to achieve a single Millennium Development Goal

Armed violence is currently estimated to kill around 740,000 people each year,[15] of which only around one-third may be attributed to armed conflicts and preventable diseases affecting vulnerable people in war zones. Furthermore, each year 500,000 to 750,000 people are injured in contexts other than armed conflicts[16] and 51.2 million people had been forcibly displaced at the end of 2013 (16.7 million refugees, 33.3 million displaced persons and 1.2 million asylum seekers). Other reports calculate that around 1.5 billion people live in contexts of fragility, armed conflict or large-scale organised crime.[17]

Beyond the direct impact of armed conflict, several reports have established a clear connection between violence and development, as well as between violence and many variables (rates of poverty, income inequality, unemployment, illiteracy, infant mortality, lack of access to healthcare and education, etc.). According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Violence and Development* (p. 5),[18] "People in fragile and conflict-affected states are more than twice as likely to be undernourished as those in other developing countries, more than three times as likely to be unable to send their children to school, twice as likely to see their children die before age five and more than twice as likely to lack clean water. On average, a country that experienced major violence over the period from 1981 to 2005 has a poverty rate 21 percentage points higher than a country that saw no violence" (WDR 2011, p. 5). Both the UNPD and the Geneva Declaration, for example, have indicated that no country affected by high levels of violence has managed to achieve even one MDG while various reports by the Geneva Declaration and other centres show a clear correlation between levels of violence and seven of the eight MDGs.[19] According to the World Bank, the average cost of a war is equivalent to 30 years of growth of the GDP of a medium-sized developing country.[20] Violence has an obvious effect on the macroeconomic level (lower levels of investment and savings, brain drain and capital flight, migration and forced displacement, interrupted economic activity, damaged infrastructure, rise in the prices of staple products, etc.), but also on the microeconomic one (less productivity and less participation in the labour market, for example), which directly affects the state's ability to fulfil some of its main obligations, such as the guarantee of security and basic services and the redistribution of wealth. In addition, high levels of violence often lead to significant expenditure of public funds on issues that do not directly affect the population's welfare.

Given this situation, in the last 10 years a series of initiatives and efforts have been undertaken to create consensus on including the reduction and prevention of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda. Notable among them has been the consensus approval of the UN General Assembly's resolution on "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence" in 2008, which urged the Secretary-General to explore the views of member states regarding the interrelations between armed violence and development, as well as the Secretary-General's subsequent report bearing the

---

15. Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011. Lethal Encounters*, http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/global-burden-of-armed-violence-2011.html.
16. Alvazzi del Frate, Anna, "A matter of survival: non-lethal firearm violence", in *Small Arms Survey, 2012: Moving Targets*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 79-105, www.smallarmssurvey.org
17. International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, 2010, http://www.newdeal4peace.org/; International Alert, *Crime, violence and conflict: rethinking peacebuilding to meet contemporary challenges*, http://www.international-alert.org/.
18. World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Violence and Development,* https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/
19. Geneva Declaration, *More Violence, Less Development. Examining the relationship between armed violence and MDG achievement*, 13 September 2010, http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/armed-violence-and-development.html; Geneva Declaration, *Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction. A Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, June 2008, http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/armed-violence-and-development.html; Geneva Declaration, *Reducing Armed Violence, Enabling Development*, July 2012, http://www.genevadeclaration.org/advocacy/mdg-review-process.html.
20. World Bank, op. cit.

same title, which was published in November 2009. This report acknowledged that armed violence is a clear obstacle to development and to attaining the MDGs and also made a series of recommendations, including the design of goals, targets and indicators for measuring the reduction of armed violence. Both the UN General Assembly's resolution and the Secretary-General's report, as well as many of the initiatives developed afterwards, originally emerged through the impetus of the Geneva Declaration, a document initially adopted by 42 states at a ministerial summit organised by the UNDP and the Swiss government in June 2006 that has currently been signed by more than 100. The initiative achieved an important consensus between states, NGOs and the donor community to significantly reduce levels of armed violence in 2015 and beyond. Another significant initiative was the Conference on Armed Violence held in Geneva under the auspices of the Norwegian government, where more than 60 countries signed the "Oslo Commitments", pledging to include measures to prevent and reduce armed violence in their strategies to achieve the MDGs. Also in 2010, representatives of many different governments met in Timor-Leste and approved the Dili Declaration, which identifies seven targets for peacebuilding and statebuilding and outlines specific commitments for governments and the donor community.[21] Later, in November 2010, many countries and the donor community approved the document *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,* in which the signatories pledged to work to include five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals in the Post-2015 Agenda.[22]

More specifically with regard to the process of reflection on the definition of a global development agenda after 2015, the UN Secretary-General promoted various initiatives to achieve the greatest possible consensus between member states and civil society.[23] The subjects of peace, security and armed violence are explicitly addressed in some of these preparatory efforts and the documents to be used as a basis for negotiations between states, which will be developed in 2015. First is the report created in 2012 by the United Nations System Task Team, *Realising the future we want for all*,[24] which identified "peace and security" as one of the four interdependent dimensions upon which the entire development agenda should be articulated beyond 2015. Second, the report issued in 2013 by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons and entitled *A New Global Partnership to Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development* indicated that the new universal development agenda should drive five major changes, one of which was to "build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all", stating that "freedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies". This report also proposed targets and goals that, according to some analysts, might be adopted in the end in the Post-2015 Agenda.[25] Third, one of the 11 global thematic consultations led by the United Nations was on "Conflict, Violence and Disaster, and the 2015 Development Agenda"[26] and considered the reduction of violence a priority for the international community beyond 2015.

Despite the consensus on the need to include issues related to peace, insecurity, conflict and violence in the Post-2015 Agenda, some political and methodological challenges and dilemmas regarding operationalisation and precision remain. Prominent in the political arena is the eminently political nature of many phenomena that give rise to armed violence and insecurity, the management of which many states view as one of their core areas of sovereignty. Therefore, they are reluctant to agree on strategies involving the observational capacities of the international community. Historically, states have been opposed to third-party intervention in managing and resolving armed conflicts, which is viewed as tacit political acknowledgement of the groups conducting the armed struggle and especially acceptance that the state (with its legal and economic instruments and means of enforcement) is unable to resolve a conflict. In fact, the staunch opposition of many states to any form of foreign interference in what they consider to be domestic affairs was notable in the long discussion that led to the birth of the "Right to Protect" concept. Thus, some experts have opined that the inclusion of politically sensitive issues (such as armed conflict or state fragility) in the Post-2015 Agenda could undermine the consensus that could help to reduce violence or struggle against insecurity.

---

21. These targets include: a) strengthening agreements, processes and inclusive political dialogue; b) establishing and strengthening basic security; c) achieving the peaceful resolution of conflicts and access to justice; d) developing effective and accountable government institutions to facilitate the provision of services; e) creating the foundation for inclusive economic development, including sustainable livelihoods, employment and the effective management of natural resources; f) developing social skills for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence; and g) strengthening regional stability and cooperation.

22. The five goals are: a) legitimate politics – foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution; b) security – establish and strengthen people's security; c) justice – address injustices and increase people's access to justice; d) economic foundations – generate employment and improve livelihoods; and e) revenues and services – manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.

23. See the United Nations System Task Team on the UN Post-2015 Agenda (created in January 2012 in order to bring analysis and technical and analytical knowledge to the discussion about the Post-2015 Agenda, it brings together over 60 UN organisations and agencies and other international organisations); the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons; the Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning; the national consultations that have been held in 88 countries; and the 11 global thematic consultations, as well as a participatory process in which anyone can share their views on the priorities for development in the Post-2015 Agenda.

24. United Nations System Task Team, *Realising the future we want for all*, June 2012, http://www.undp.org/content/undp/es/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/realizing-the-future-we-want/.

25. The goal would be to "ensure stable and peaceful societies" and the targets would be to: a) reduce by x the violent deaths per 10,000 people and eliminate all forms of violence against children; b) ensure that institutions of justice are accessible, independent, equipped with sufficient resources and respectful of the rights of due process; c) curb factors of external tension that lead to conflicts, including those related to organised crime; and d) improve the capacity, professionalism and accountability of security forces, the police and the judiciary.

26. This global consultation was led by UNDP, UNICEF, UNISDIR and UNPBSO with the support of the governments of Finland, Indonesia, Liberia and Panama. For more information see the final report by the Government of Finland: "The Global Thematic Consultation on Conflict, Violence and Disaster, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda" at http://www.az.undp.org/content/azerbaijan/en/home/library/post2015/synthesis_report/.

In this sense, another dilemma with which the states must deal is whether to approach topics linked to "peace and security" comprehensively or in isolation. While most experts agree on the appropriateness of creating a global and multidimensional objective to include goals that specifically address each aspect of violence and insecurity, what is clear is that the nature and management strategies of phenomena such as armed conflict, organised crime, common crime, intra-household violence, forced displacement, child recruitment and terrorist attacks differ widely. Moreover, several experts have warned that even if agreement on a global "peace and security" objective is reached, the structural nature of the causes of armed conflicts, violence and insecurity (such as poor governance, inequality or social exclusion) advise and make it inevitable that some of these structural causes cover targets and indicators included in other objectives. As for the universal character of the objective in question, most analysts indicate that violence is a phenomenon affecting every country in the world, and as a result the objective, targets and indicators must be global and shared, but the times and strategies for achieving those objectives and targets must take into consideration the specific aspects and capacities of each state.

In recent years, a consensus has been growing about the need to include the prevention and reduction of armed violence in the new development agenda that states will begin to discuss in 2015

Beyond the criticism, dilemmas, problems and resistance that could be prompted by including the reduction of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda, most analysts indicate that it provides a historic opportunity. Even though armed violence causes hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect victims each year, the management of issues such as violence and insecurity have traditionally been considered the internal affairs of states. Thus, the many initiatives and publications launched in recent years to include violence and insecurity in the Post-2015 Agenda have not stressed questioning states' legitimacy and capacity to deal with these phenomena, but rather have linked high levels of violence to low abilities to reach sustainable rates of development and attain the MDGs. In this sense, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Violence and Development* (p. 1) says that "while much of the world has made rapid progress in reducing poverty in the past 60 years, areas characterised by repeated cycles of political and criminal violence are being left far behind, their economic growth compromised and their human indicators stagnant". The link between violence and development, however, could prevent or temper the suspicions of some states fearful of ceding national sovereignty or facilitating new forms of interference in their internal affairs, and thereby encourages the international community to struggle together against violence.

5.4. The confluence of global efforts against child recruitment

The recruitment of children continues to be a serious problem around the world and a prevalent practice among armed groups, governments and opposition forces in conflict. In 2013, the United Nations documented over 4,000 cases of recruitment and use of children and estimated that the real number was much higher, and in 2014 at least 57 armed groups in 15 countries in conflict recruited or used children, according to the latest report by the UN Secretary-General on childhood and armed conflicts.[27] Boy and girl recruits perform many functions, including combat, message delivery, logistics, cooking, transport and sexual slavery. Whether forced or voluntary, their participation in armed groups has a serious impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing, including abuse, sexual violence and long-term psychosocial damage. There are also specific impacts on gender. International human rights law sets the minimum age for recruitment and participation in combat at 18 and international humanitarian law bans the recruitment and use of children under the age of 15, which is stipulated as a war crime by the International Criminal Court. Given this extremely serious situation, various players aimed at fighting and preventing the use of boys and girls by armed groups have increased their efforts on different levels in recent years, making the problem more visible and putting practical measures in motion. Thus, in 2014 a host of initiatives came together to give fresh impetus to the issue. Prominent among these initiatives was the United Nations campaign backed by the UN Security Council addressed to governments that recruit children; agreement on new UN action plans with parties in conflict; other *ad hoc* mechanisms aimed at armed opposition groups; and initiatives from regional stakeholders. These efforts could pay dividends in 2015 and for years to come in terms of new releases of minors, a greater commitment from armed actors to obey the child recruitment ban, the empowerment of civil society groups in this field and greater awareness of the problem in the international peace and security agenda. However, to the extent that child soldiers are used in armed actors' strategies, the obstacles only grow.

Standing out in this tide of local and international efforts is the United Nations global campaign "Children, not soldiers" (a title using more inclusive language from a gender perspective), launched in March 2014, which aspires to end the recruitment and use of minors by the security forces of governments involved in armed conflict.[28] The UN Security Council's adoption of its objectives (Resolution 2134 (2014)) broadens its scope. In practical terms, the campaign plans to create road maps with eight governments that have already signed action plans with the UN (Afghanistan, Chad, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia

and DR Congo) or that have shown a willingness to do so (Yemen, which finally signed an action plan in May 2014, and Sudan). In consultation with the governments, the road maps will indicate priorities, challenges, benchmarks and timelines. While there is a clear risk of default, it will come at the cost of breaching an explicit and voluntary commitment. And at the additional risk of countries whitewashing their image and continuing with policies that seriously violate human rights in many areas, the campaign and mechanisms provided are themselves a practical and pragmatic tool for making concrete progress in an area that affects a vulnerable group, that of children and child recruits, which is already a significant improvement over previous periods.

Another arena of international effort has been the action plans between the UN and parties in conflict, whether governments or armed opposition groups, that appear in the annual reports of the UN Secretary-General as actors that serious violate children's rights. In late 2014, there were 23 action plans signed between the UN and parties in conflict (11 state forces and 12 non-state forces, covering 14 countries), of which nine had already been implemented and completed, with the actors implicated being removed from the lists of the annual report. The oldest action plan dates to 2005 (with Forces Nouvelles, of Côte d'Ivoire, which has already been implemented, removing its leaders from the list like other players with actions plans in the country). The action plans have been adopted at a slow but steady rate, with four new signatories in 2011, three in 2012, the renewal of a previous one in 2013 and a new plan for Yemen in 2014. As such, it is slow and long-term work that has achieved some positive results (new signatories and cases of complete implementation and removal from the lists). The action plans cover matters such as the issuance of orders to ban child recruitment, the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for child recruitment, the release of children identified in armed groups, authorised and unobstructed access to military camps and bases to verify that there are no minors among the groups and many other measures that vary depending on each case. The action plans include concrete steps and specific timelines.

The instruments led by the UN, whether addressed to governments or to both governmental and non-governmental forces, are accompanied by other complementary initiatives promoted by civil society and regional stakeholders aimed at achieving commitments and concrete measures and at enhancing awareness and visibility of the issue of child soldiers. The main example from civil society is the Deed of Commitment mechanism from the NGO Geneva Call, which promotes the observation of humanitarian norms

---

27. UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/67/845-S/2013/245, 15 May 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/339&referer=/english/&Lang=S
28. For more detailed information about the campaign, see https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/children-not-soldiers/.

by non-governmental armed groups through verifiable public commitments. This tool takes shape when a Deed of Commitment is signed by the armed opposition group, Geneva Call and the government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.[29] In addition to the Deed of Commitment for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action and the Deed of Commitment for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination, Geneva Call promotes a third mechanism, the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict. Among other aspects, their adoption by armed groups includes the promise to ban the use of minors in hostilities, guarantees that they will not recruit minors, whether voluntarily or by force, and pledges to release minors. During 2014, Deeds of Commitment to protect children were signed with the CNA of Myanmar, the YPG and YPJ of the Kurdish parts of Syria and the GPRN/NSCN of northeastern India. Furthermore, two Palestinian factions, the PLO and the Palestinian National Coalition ("Tahaluf"), an umbrella organisation, adopted a declaration committed to the highest standards of child protection, including measures to prevent 18-year-olds from participating in hostilities. Geneva Call plans to continue the dialogue to make progress in implementation. In relation to the armed groups' positions on child recruitment, the UN Secretary-General highlighted the rise in the number of public statements and orders issued by armed groups banning the recruitment and use of minors.[30]

Efforts from regional organisations also increased, boosting operational efforts against child recruitment and giving the subject more visibility. The African Union's Peace and Security Department is working together with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, UNICEF and experts to create guidance and bring a child protection perspective to AU policies and activities. Likewise, in March 2012 the European Parliament ratified a statement urging non-state armed groups to commit to ending child recruitment. This statement was adopted after discussions initiated by Geneva Call. The text recommends that the bodies of the European Commission engage with armed opposition groups directly or indirectly (through specialised NGOs or humanitarian organisations) to address the issue of child protection and to urge those groups to sign Geneva Call's Deeds of Commitment. It also endorses supporting humanitarian organisations that engage with armed groups to promote respect for international humanitarian law.

We are witnessing a coming together of efforts on multiple levels, including international organisations and civil society, to achieve progress in preventing and ending the recruitment and use of children by armed groups in conflict

Despite the coming together of effort on many levels, the many hurdles ahead should temper our optimism. For instance, there are still only a few armed groups involved in active conflicts accused of serious violations of the rights of children that are participating in mechanisms to end child recruitment (of the 57 armed groups accused of recruiting or using minors in 15 countries in conflict, including conflicts not dealt with by the UN Security Council, only five parties had agreed on action plans, according to estimates in May 2014). In other words, armed groups that continue to recruit or use minors for economic, strategic, logistic or military reasons are still in the majority, regardless of whether they are aware of international humanitarian law against doing so. In contexts where armed groups and especially opposition groups try to maximise armed struggle, they may see little incentive to stop recruiting or using children. Added to this are troubling patterns of violence against children in 2014 in places such as Syria, the Central African Republic and Nigeria, among many others, where rather than seek external legitimacy through greater respect for international humanitarian law, armed groups step up their violations of the rights of minors, apparently as a strategy of terror and to maximise human and material resources. Despite the enormous difficulties and challenges, we are witnessing an obvious swell of effort on multiple fronts, including the immense labour of many civil society stakeholders, which boosts the struggle against child recruitment and strives to prevent the recruitment and use of minors and could result in positive new outcomes in 2015 and beyond. This enhanced visibility could also lead to greater importance of the subject of child recruits in the agenda of DDR programmes and peace processes. The obstacles are many, yet the coming together of efforts and initiatives invites the consideration that some clearly necessary progress has been made.

29. For more detailed information on Geneva Call's Deeds of Commitment, see http://www.genevacall.org/how-we-work/deed-of-commitment/
30. UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, 15 May 2014, A/68/878 – S/2014/339.

5.5. Integrating peace and development: progress on the international agenda for gender equality

The year 2015 may be decisive for progress in gender equality internationally, due to the coincidence of different events and the possible approval of new instruments that may advance the equity agenda worldwide and represent an endorsement for the women, peace and security agenda that began in 2000. The year 2015 is the deadline set by the United Nations to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and marks the 20th anniversary since the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995, when the Beijing Platform for Action was signed. Third, it will be the 15th anniversary since the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. All three of these tools will be subject to review in 2015. The timing may be important in giving new impetus to the gender agenda in an international context in which women's rights are seriously threatened by different factors such as the international financial crisis and the growing conservatism of many governments intending to regressively reform international commitments acquired previously, to the detriment of women.[31]

With a strong push from women's organisations, the international gender equity agenda has made significant progress since 1995, when the conference in Beijing marked a turning point with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. It was certainly the most important moment since 1979, when the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was approved. The platform made a number of strategic objectives to achieve the empowerment of women and improve their living conditions worldwide by achieving gender equality in 12 areas. This conference, which brought together tens of thousands of women worldwide, created unprecedented momentum for the women's movement and served as a springboard for working towards gender equity in the international arena. In 2000, as part of the Millennium Summit, the United Nations adopted the MDGs, which included two explicit gender goals: 1) to promote equality between the sexes and the empowerment of women[32] and 2) to improve maternal health. Other objectives were also included that addressed gender issues in their development, such as the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Thus, the impetus given by the conference in Beijing also affected the agenda for international development, albeit timidly. Meanwhile, in 2000 the agenda for peace and international security also began the process to integrate a gender perspective by approving UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which later became what is called the women, peace and security agenda. For the first time, the UN Security Council was the arena for discussion on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and the role that women play in peacebuilding locally and internationally. After the approval of Resolution 1325, six other resolutions have been passed to develop and complete this first one.[33]

A process to review these three processes will take place during 2015, first to evaluate the application of the MDGs, the Beijing Platform for Action and Resolution 1325, and second to improve their implementation and in some cases to ratify new instruments, like the new goals that will replace the MDGs. Women's organisations have called for this new development agenda to include gender equity to a larger extent (whose integration into the MDGs was very weak) and for greater integration of the women, peace and security agenda, arguing that peace and security are necessary and essential conditions for development, which cannot be achieved without gender equality. Two parallel processes have been undertaken in preparation for the Post-2015 Agenda: the UN Secretary-General called a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to conduct a report with recommendations to create a new agenda[34] and agreement was reached on the creation of an open working group to define a set of objectives for sustainable development during the Rio+20 Conference on sustainable development.[35] As a result of both processes, two proposals have been presented for objectives to continue the process begun in 2000. Meanwhile, civil society has monitored these processes exhaustively and contributed many proposals.

On the positive side, both official proposals envisage the creation of gender equality as an objective unto itself, the empowerment of women and human rights for women and girls much more ambitiously than in the MDGs, which only focused on the subject of education. The new proposals, which are different but share some points in common, believe that gender equality, the empowerment of women and human rights for women and girls may only be achieved by eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence against them, in addition to eradicating harmful practices such as child marriage, recognising the right of women to own land and guaranteeing equal and effective participation in political, economic and public life. This includes universal access to healthcare, respect for sexual and reproductive rights and lower child mortality. The Rio+20 proposal also explicitly refers to unpaid work and domestic work. Thus, the dimension of gender has become much more relevant

31. For example, see the document *Statement of Feminist and Women's Organisations on the Very Alarming Trends in the Negotiations of Outcome Document of the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women*, http://cwgl.rutgers.edu/program-areas-151/gender-based-violence/csw57/statement-on-outcome-document.
32. This objective resulted in the following goal: "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015".
33. See Escola de Cultura de Pau "The women, peace and security agenda in 2013" *Gender and Peace* no. 1, April 2014. http://escolapau.uab.cat/genero/img/ge01e.pdf.
34. High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, http://www.post2015hlp.org/.
35. Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html.

than before, showing that it is a central and crucial aspect of sustainable development that cannot truly be achieved while exclusion and discrimination against women and girls continue. Despite the reluctance of many states, some proposals by women's organisations have finally penetrated official documents, in line with all the international commitments that have arisen so far to promote gender equity. Meanwhile, it may also be considered progress that both documents set out the objective of promoting or guaranteeing peaceful, inclusive and stable societies.[36]

However, civil society organisations and particularly women's organisations have also discussed the shortcomings of both proposals and the need for them to be much more ambitious to genuinely attain global sustainable development, full gender equity and international peace. Specifically, while these proposals are considered a step forward regarding the MDG agenda, it is also clear that once again, structural issues are excluded that substantively question the current neoliberal economic model and the macroeconomic policies behind many of the deepest economic inequalities, such as poverty, including its increasingly female face and intergenerational transfer, and the perpetuation of some armed conflicts. In other words, they do not address the serious impact of the global financial crisis or the dire consequences that austerity policies are having on the welfare of the world's population, and particularly on women. Furthermore, great emphasis is placed on the role of private individuals in promoting development without showing its direct responsibility for the difficult and unfair living conditions of a very important part of the world population. Another major point of criticism is the lack of a focus on human rights, which has been replaced by one of an instrumentalist nature indicating the economic value of equality and equal rights more than their intrinsic value. With regard to the inclusion of peace and security in the development agenda, there are some significant gaps from a gender perspective, since crucial aspects have been left out such as disarmament, demilitarisation and indicators to gauge the impact of violence that are more sensitive to

The new proposed development goals for 2015 include gender equity and the empowerment of women and girls more substantively than the MDGs

gender. For example, the High-Level Panel's report proposes that peaceful societies measure their achievements in the target of violent deaths, leaving out other impacts that particularly affect women, such as sexual violence and forced mass displacement, since the chances of dying violently are much higher for men than for women, while sexual violence has a much more pronounced impact on women. An additional risk lies in the fact that ambitious documents with comprehensive goals may be welcomed by civil society, but not implemented by governments later.

A comprehensive review of the implementation of Resolution 1325 is expected to be coordinated by former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women Radhika Coomaraswamy in consultation with a group of experts from civil society, the United Nations and other spheres. Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will be reviewed during the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Although the possibility of organising another world conference on women was debated, the idea seems to have been discarded due to various issues like the disapproval of documents that would be a step backwards from previous progress, given the position of some states in this regard.

Despite the major criticism that can be made and the caution that must be taken, the coming together of these three processes should be recognised as an important opportunity to move towards a much firmer and more substantial commitment to real sustainable development in which gender equality and the empowerment of women and children are also a cornerstone for peacebuilding. The United Nations and various states have the chance to demonstrate that international instruments are not worthless, but true platforms for promoting real change. The year 2015 will be one of review and could also become a year of significant progress if civil society can forcefully articulate its demands and states can keep their promises to avoid backsliding, which would have dire consequences for the lives of women and girls.

---

36. For more information, see "The inclusion of the reduction of armed violence in the Post-2015 Agenda" in this chapter.

6. Risk Scenarios for 2015

Based on studies of contexts of armed conflict and socio-political crisis in 2014, in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace identifies seven scenarios whose conditions could worsen and turn into sources of even more serious instability and violence in 2015. These warning scenarios in 2015 include the threat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, with the consequent risks to human safety and the impact on the regional scene; the delicate situation in Libya, which has become a land of fragmentation, institutional fragility and growing violence; the escalation of violence in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, where a pattern of deterioration has been seen in recent years; high levels of urban violence in the Pakistani cities of Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, which have become arenas for multiple conflicts and sources of tension; the dim prospects of a solution to the war in Ukraine; the risk of a power vacuum and the worsening institutional crisis in Haiti; and, finally, the expanding activities of the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in Kenya.

Map 6.1. Risk scenarios for 2015
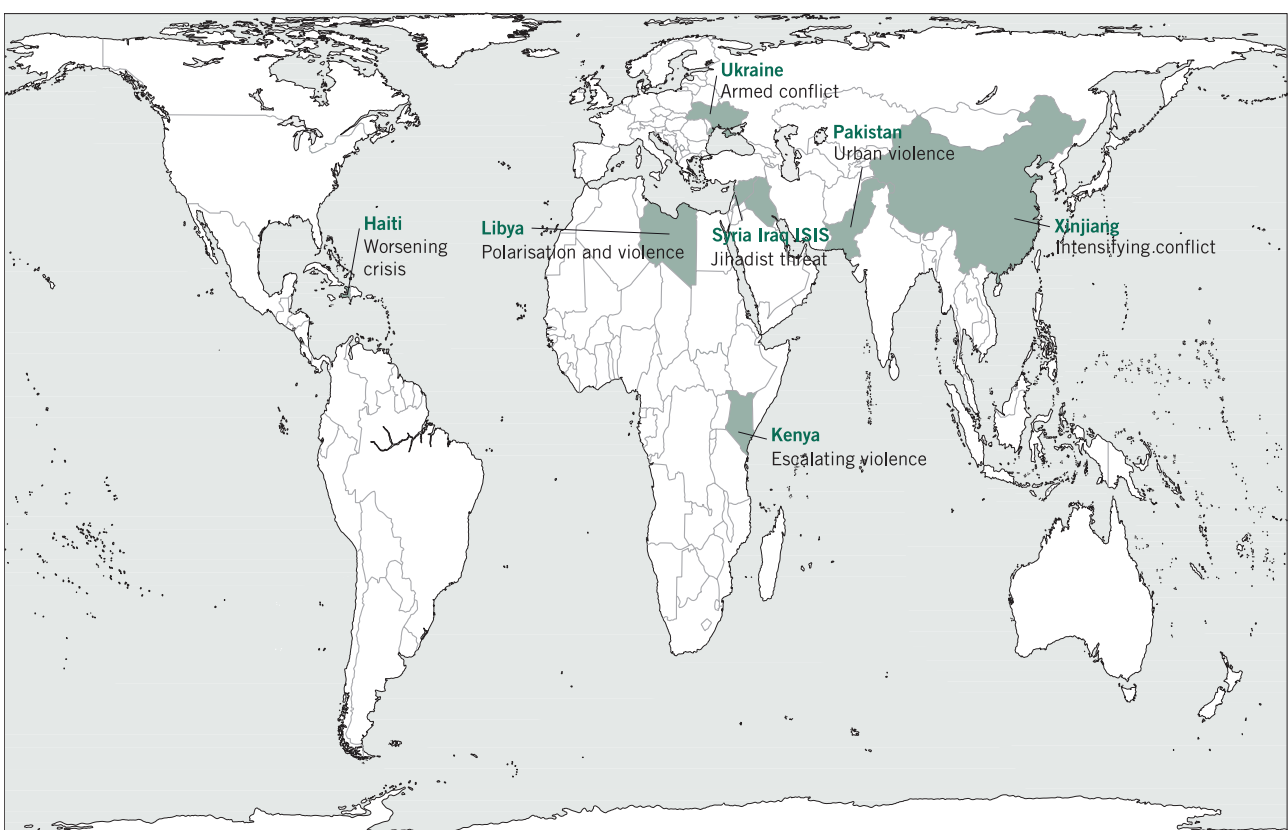
6.1. The threat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria: risks for human security and impacts on the region

The armed jihadist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) rose dramatically in 2014. The declaration of a caliphate in the land under its control in Syria and Iraq last summer was not just a blow, but also marked a turning point. After the surprising capture of Mosul (the second-largest city in Iraq), a statement by the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, confirmed its ambitions to establish a political entity in the heart of the Middle East, defying the borders drawn by Western powers after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. The accelerated offensive launched by ISIS in Iraq and Syria has had serious repercussions for the civilian population, called the territorial integrity of both countries into question, forced regional and international powers to make new strategic calculations and encouraged debates and dilemmas on how to deal with a complex phenomenon that well exceeds military and security challenges. In 2015, ISIS will continue to be one of the main threats to the population and regional stability, and its development will continue to depend closely on how the conflicts are managed in Iraq and Syria. Predictably, ISIS will also continue to grab international attention over other dynamics that keep tearing the region apart.

The emergence and expansion of ISIS is inseparable from a series of conditions in Iraq and Syria. Its beginnings in Iraq were facilitated by the Sunni community's sense of grievance and exclusion after the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein (2003), a situation exacerbated by the government policies of Nouri al-Maliki, a Shia Muslim. Thus, it must be stated that the roots of ISIS are linked to the creation of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2004 amidst armed struggle against the foreign occupation forces, the mass exclusion of members of Saddam Hussein's party from the structures of power ("debaathification") and the dismantling of the armed and security forces. Jihadist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi took advantage of this context to promote the establishment of a radical armed Sunni group that became al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq. However, there were tensions with al-Qaeda's central leadership from the beginning, partly due to concern that the leaders could be sidelined by al-Zarqawi's upstart branch, which showed an independent nature and ability to attract foreign fighters and partly due to AQI's attacks on the Shia population, which have become one of its hallmarks since it evolved from AQI into Islamic State. Al-Qaeda is wary of the use of violence against other Muslims in the region.[36] AQI's campaign against Shia symbols and populations stoked a climate of sectarian violence that hit its worst levels in 2006 and 2007, with 20,000 to 30,000 fatalities per year.

The evolution of AQI was then determined by the death of al-Zarqawi in a US air strike (2006), by the rise of new leadership that created the "Islamic State in Iraq" (ISI) to demonstrate its interest in creating a caliphate and by a joint campaign by the USA and armed Sunni groups that decided to act against AQI partly in rejection of its brutal practices. After weakening under this offensive for a while, ISI regained ground amidst the growing alienation of the Sunni community under al-Maliki's leadership and after the withdrawal of US forces from the country (2011). Crackdowns on peaceful anti-government protests fostered a climate of radicalisation and empowerment of armed groups that was capitalised on by ISI. By early 2014, the group had advanced towards Fallujah and Ramadi, and in June it took control of Mosul after the Iraqi security forces routed.

The penetration of the Islamic State in Syria was assisted by the militarisation and radicalisation of the conflict between the regime of Bashar Assad and the opposition forces, together with the growing atmosphere of sectarian tension in the region. The evolution of the anti-government revolt from a peaceful popular demonstration to an open war among many different armed groups increased hostilities between Sunnis and Shia throughout the area because the narrative of the dispute was presented as a confrontation pitting the Alawite regime, close to Shiism and Iran, against the Sunni majority opposition. Syria became the scene of an increasingly internationalised conflict after the involvement of different regional and international actors by lending political, economic and military support to various factions. The Syrian groups that gained ground included jihadist organisations such as al-Nusra Front, considered al-Qaeda's branch in Syria. In this scenario, ISI, which had been under al-Baghdadi's leadership since 2010, saw the chance to expand its objectives and operations into Syria. In a unilateral decision rejected by al-Qaeda and al-Nusra Front, ISI announced its merger with al-Nusra Front and renamed itself Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, a reference to Greater Syria, which led to the acronym ISIS ("Daesh" in Arabic), as it is most commonly known today. Throughout 2014, ISIS was involved in a series of clashes with armed Syrian groups, mainly from the opposition. This caused it to be viewed with suspicion from the rebel side and as a foreign group more interested in seizing territory in order to establish a caliphate.

Thanks to this combination of turmoil and sectarianism and the power vacuum, ISIS has thrown the territorial integrity of Syria and Iraq into question, though this is more attributable to the ineptness of its adversaries than to its own merit, according to some observers.[37] In the second quarter of 2014, ISIS controlled or claimed to be present in wide swathes of Iraq and Syria, an area that according to some sources extended from 40,000 to 90,000 square kilometres (equivalent to countries such as Belgium and

36. Jean Pierre Filiu, *Al-Qaeda is Dead, Long Live Al-Qaeda*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 22 April 2014, http://carnegieendowment. org/syriaincrisis/?fa=55401, and "Le califat de la terreur", *Afkar/Idees* no. 43, Autumn 2014, IEMED, Barcelona.
37. Peter Harling, "IS Back in Business", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1 September 2014, http://mondediplo.com/2014/09/04islamicstate.

Jordan). Around eight million people were estimated to live fully or partially under its control.[38] The march of ISIS became synonymous with terror and multiple human rights abuses. Various reports from the UN and international NGOs have summarised the macabre crimes committed by Islamic State in its offensives and in areas under its control. In addition to the beheading of Western hostages, which brought greater international attention to its actions, it has perpetrated massacres and summary executions, mass abductions, widespread sexual violence and sexual slavery, indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, such as Shia, Yazidis, Christians and Turkmen, forced conversions to Islam, the destruction of priceless religious and cultural heritage and the forced displacement of tens of thousands of people. In areas fully or partially under its control, Islamic State is applying a rigorous and exclusive interpretation of Sunni Islam, imposing severe restrictions on the population, limiting the presence of women in public places and meting out harsh physical punishment (whipping, beatings, stonings and even crucifixions) to those that break its rules.

The situation of the populations under ISIS' orbit of influence is of special concern, given that the use of excessive violence is a part of the group deliberate strategy to terrorise its enemies, force the population to accept its precepts and discourage insurgencies

The use of excessive violence is a part of ISIS' deliberate strategy to terrorise its enemies, force the population to accept its precepts and discourage insurgencies. For this reason, from the standpoint of human security, the main concern regarding ISIS in 2015 will be the situation of the populations under its orbit of influence. One particular aspect of Islamic State is the fact that it has focused its actions against the "near enemy" rather than the "distant enemy" represented by Western states, and especially against Shia minorities and populations considered infidels, with the intent to set up an idealised caliphate. According to some experts, ISIS' possible expansion strategy in Jordan and Lebanon is a matter of regional concern.[39]

ISIS has therefore erected a new model for international jihadism in defiance of al-Qaeda. As its name indicates, it is committed to statebuilding with a deliberate strategy sustained by a highly defined organisation. With a pragmatic attitude, its has avoided (or postponed) clashes with adversaries perceived as more powerful or effective and in some areas has chosen the route of cooptation and submission without using the direct and brutal violence that it has applied in other. From an economic standpoint, ISIS has sought to become self-sustaining and has devoted effort to capturing key infrastructure, oil fields and refineries. Though like other groups it has benefitted from outside funding, most of the resources managed by Islamic State come from the sale of oil and gas (ISIS is calculated to be earning between one and two million USD per day from selling petrol on the black market), from money taken from banks seized in cities such as Mosul, from selling

archaeological remains and from kidnapping, extortion, theft and tax collection in areas under its control.

In addition, Islamic State has demonstrated the sophisticated use of new technologies as a mechanism of propaganda, to obtain new followers and attract militants to the caliphate. Though accurate figures are hard to come by, it is estimated that one-third of the approximately 30,000 combatants that ISIS has in Syria and Iraq are foreigners coming from more than 80 countries to join its ranks in recent years, of which 2,500 come from Western countries. Various analysts have suggested that Islamic State has become a powerful lure for some disaffected Sunni Muslim youth attracted by its promises of victory and salvation. Looking ahead, especially in Western countries, there is great concern about the flow of fighters not only because it boosts the capabilities of ISIS, but because of the possibility that these militants might activate cells or take action in the name of Islamic State when they return to their countries of origin. Moreover, the rise of ISIS has also led to a series of demonstrations of solidarity and declarations of loyalty from other armed groups in various countries beyond the Middle East. Groups such as Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia and Libya, Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt, Taliban commanders in Pakistan and armed groups in India and the Philippines, among others, have declared their allegiance to ISIS in an attempt to ride the jihadist wave of success. In this context, these and similar organisations may undertake actions in their spheres of influence throughout 2015, claiming responsibility for them under the label of Islamic State.

Against a backdrop of turmoil and strife amplified by the last few years of armed conflict in Syria (the war has turned into an existential struggle for powers like Saudi Arabia and Iran and has stoked tensions between Russia and the West), the expansion of ISIS has brought new strategic dilemmas for regional and international powers. The organisation has been identified as a common enemy, but the possibilities of developing a coordinated strategy for it have been limited by other sources of antagonism, mistrust and reluctance to benefit one's adversaries. Still, tacit alliances have been observed in practice that may only have seemed unlikely at first glance, but have placed the USA, Iran and Hezbollah in the same offensive against the jihadist group. Meanwhile, the Syrian regime has tried to present itself as a necessary ally, and in practice as a "lesser evil" in the fight against the organisation, framing its discourse within the fight against terrorism.

Overall, the strategy to combat ISIS has favoured military means (the USA is leading an armed coalition in conjunction with Arab countries, while Iran is lending tactical and military support to the governments of Syria and Iraq).

38. BBC, "What is Islamic State?", *BBC*, 26 September 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144; and New York Times, "How ISIS Works", *New York Times*, 16 September 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/16/world/middleeast/how-isis-works.html.
39. Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "The Islamic State's Regional Strategy", *The Islamic State Through Regional Lens*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2 October 2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_islamic_states_regional_strategy326.

However, even some supporters and advocates of an armed response to the ISIS challenge have acknowledged its limitations, while sceptics have highlighted its risks, which, alongside the bombardments, bring a constant flow of weapons into the region, favouring the proliferation of arsenals and spiralling violence. Many experts and analysts agree that a more complex approach is required for dealing with Islamic State, which among other issues includes effectively blocking the flow of supplies and smuggling that support ISIS (some observers indicate that one of the caliphate's main weaknesses is its sustainability, since it commands great resources, but not enough to keep the state operational), bolstering the strategies questioning ISIS from within Islam (denouncing the atrocities committed by the group and the aberration of its actions from a doctrinal point of view) and especially discussing the factors that made its rise and expansion possible in Iraq and Syria. Among other things, this implies addressing the problem of the marginalisation of the Sunni community in Iraq and supporting a new political architecture that ensures a more inclusive scheme (the main challenge facing the new prime minister, after Nouri al-Maliki was forced to resign due to the crisis unleashed by the advance of ISIS). In the case of Syria, efforts must be stepped up to end the armed conflict and find a political solution to the severe crisis affecting the country since 2011. It remains to be seen in 2015 whether progress is made in this regard, although the scenario will predictably provide great obstacles, such as those that have prevented a negotiated solution in both theaters to date.

Finally, ISIS' actions will continue to be a foreseeable focus of international media attention. Without minimising the seriousness of its activities, it is important to note that there is a risk that Islamic State may invite a simplification of the dynamics of conflict in the Middle East and divert attention away from the equally troubling excesses of other players. We must remember that ISIS is not the only group perpetrating abuse in the region, as recalled by the recent condemnation of the massacres of Sunnis by Shia militias in Iraq, the executions of prisoners by Iraqi security forces (in both cases in retaliation for the actions of ISIS) and the UN and human rights organisations' constant denouncing of the many abuses committed by the Damascus government and Syrian opposition groups as part of the armed conflict. Some analysts have stressed that, to some extent, the international response to the challenge of ISIS may have sent a problematic message to the populations of the region. The complexity arises from the fact that the decision to mobilise resources and efforts against ISIS may be perceived primarily as a response to the threat to certain minorities or to states' own interests (for example, the decapitation of Western hostages, the fear of ISIS' advance on the Kurdish city of Erbil with a large presence of international interests and worries about possible attacks), since similar concerns were not observed despite the severe suffering endured by millions of people throughout the region in recent years. Furthermore, this situation has been marked by the US invasion of Iraq and the international community's failure to stop the war in Syria by means of negotiation. It must be remembered that over 200,000 people have died in Iraq since 2003, that a similar amount have lost their lives in Syria over the last three years and that the area has become an epicentre of the worst crisis of forced displacement of our times. The death count is dramatic enough to underscore the need for a comprehensive approach and the adoption of measures that favour a political solution and stop the bloodshed in the region.

6.2. Libya: a land of fragmentation, institutional fragility, regional disputes and mounting violence

The political, institutional and security crisis in Libya worsened considerably over the course of 2014, leading the country to the worst escalation of violence since the bloody battles that led to the ouster of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. Three years after the long-time Libyan dictator was deposed (and executed), the situation in the North African country has departed radically from expectations of stability, peace and democracy that mobilised many Libyans during the revolts. In fact, Libya is currently characterised by severe polarisation and fragmentation, institutional weakness reflected in the establishment of two parallel governments, the intensification of clashes between scores of formal and informal armed groups of various stripes, the presence of all kinds of illegal trafficking and the serious impact of different types of violence on civilians. Furthermore, some regional rivalries are being projected onto Libya, taking the form of proxy wars amidst the upheaval occurring in North Africa and the Middle East. Among other factors, these aspects give rise to the expectation that Libya will be one of the main risk scenarios for 2015, bearing in mind that all mediation attempts in search of a negotiated solution to the conflict have failed thus far. Further attempts must be able to circumvent major obstacles if this is to change.

In 2014, the dynamics of conflict in Libya continued to be marked by the superimposition of lines of confrontation: struggles between groups close to political Islam and secular groups, fighting between former regime loyalists and "revolutionaries", disputes between cities and regions, also linked to competition for control over land, resources and power, patronage networks and tribal loyalties and grudges. Against this backdrop of persistent complexity, the way events developed over the course of the year led to the formation of two large rival power blocs. The emergence of the first bloc was linked to the offensive launched in the eastern city of Benghazi, the second largest in the country, by retired General Khalifa Haftar. General Haftar, who defected from the Gaddafi regime and spent more than two decades in exile in the USA, launched attacks by land and air against the Islamist militias controlling Benghazi, presenting the campaign, which he called Operation Dignity, as an attempt to correct the course of the revolution and to assume the security challenges in the country due to the government's ineffectiveness. Operation Dignity ended up forming a coalition of disaffected members of the military, federalist sympathisers and tribes from the eastern part of the country.

In this context of growing internal tension, new developments fostered the rise of a second pole of power. The elections for a new Parliament held on 25 June constituted a setback for

Islamist groups. In response, an alliance of Islamist forces in conjunction with armed groups from the city of Misrata launched an offensive that ended with their capture of Tripoli as part of what they called Operation Dawn. The struggle for the capital included fierce battles over the airport, which had been controlled thus far by a militia from Zintan. The escalating violence prompted the elected legislature, the House of Representatives, to relocate to the western port city of Tobruk, near the Egyptian border. In Tripoli, the previous legislative body, the General People's Congress, remained in office. Therefore, in late 2014 Libya had two Parliaments, which in turn had elected two governments headed by Prime Minister Omar al-Hasi, in Tripoli, and by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni, in Tobruk, the latter being recognised by most of the international community. After overcoming some initial misgivings, al-Thinni's government ended up allying itself with Operation Dignity, whereas Tripoli backs Operation Dawn.

The instability associated with this power struggle and increased hostilities had severe repercussions on the civilian population and led most foreigners to leave the country, including the entire staff of the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL). In these conditions, the impact of the crisis could not be documented properly, which obscures its true dimensions, but a UN report published in September warned of a series of highly worrisome trends that had killed hundreds of people and wounded many others.[40] These included human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, like indiscriminate attacks conducted by various armed groups using a great variety of weapons in residential areas of Tripoli and Benghazi, serious damage to infrastructure, including hospitals, the killing of activists, journalists and human rights advocates, arbitrary detentions, abductions, torture and summary executions. Figures from UNHCR in late 2014 indicated that the violence in Libya had forcibly displaced around 400,000 people since May. According to some analysts, the situation was leading some parts of the population to wonder if they had not been better off under the former regime.[41]

Coping with the uncontrolled use of violence in the country is a complex task due to the proliferation of militias that operate with total impunity, the mass availability of weapons and the unique aspects of the security system in the country. The policies promoted by the National Transition Council, which took power after the overthrow of Gaddafi, did not achieve the disarmament of revolutionary groups but instead created a system of complex interconnections between the state and different armed organisations

---

40. United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, *Overview of Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law during the Ongoing Violence in Libya*, UNSMIL-OHCHR, 4 September 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/documents/countries/ly/overviewviolationslibya_unsmil_ohchr_sept04_en.pdf.
41. Alan West, "How we are failing in Libya", *al-Jazeera*, 23 October 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/10/how-are-failing-libya-2014102373724312689.html.

that participated in the revolt. Many of the militias were subcontracted by various government agencies, which led to the coexistence of formal forces (the Libyan Armed Forces and police) and informal groups that claim legitimacy through their relationships with government bodies. This security system, described by some analysts as hybrid,[42] means that armed groups and militias operate relatively effectively as security forces in some parts of the country, but in other cases are motivated by their own ideological agendas and by political, economic and criminal interests. In this regard, many local conflicts in different parts of the country have often been motivated by competition for control over resources or trafficking routes of all kinds, such as of goods, people, weapons and drugs, taking advantage of the weakness of the central government and the geographical characteristics of Libya, a vast country with population centres concentrated along the coast.[43] Thus, in 2014 militias of various types were involved in many disputes, including for control over oil fields and ports, and did not hesitate to take up arms to pressure the authorities and enforce the adoption of certain policies.

In terms of political and institutional power, the main challenge facing Libya lies in the existence of two parallel governments that claim legitimacy as the highest authority in the country. Though internationally recognised, the Parliament and government established in Tobruk present a series of weaknesses.[44] The legislative body is the result of elections that had a low turnout, equivalent to only one-fourth of the electorate, with 1.5 million registered voters compared to 2.8 million in 2012, of which only one half voted, partly as a consequence of the atmosphere of insecurity and disappointment about political developments in the country. Insecurity prevented people from voting in some areas, which meant that they could not vote for the 200 seats of the House of Representatives. Of the 188 representatives elected, 30 have boycotted the sessions since it moved to Tobruk. The legislative body and government operating in Tripoli, however, have persisted in defending their own legitimacy and were supported by a ruling of the Libyan Supreme Court in November that declared the Parliament in Tobruk unconstitutional due to problems calling for elections. The al-Thinni government rejected the decision. This climate of fragmentation and polarisation has led to a stalemate that some analysts have described as a "balance of weaknesses" between the different political and armed actors, in which none of them are able to impose themselves on the others.

To this scenario is added the projection of regional tensions through the foreign intervention of various players in the

In terms of political power, the main challenge facing Libya lies in the existence of two parallel governments that claim legitimacy as the highest authority in the country

country. This internationalisation of the conflict took form in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) participation in attacks against Libyan Islamist forces. Both countries were accused of being involved in air strikes against positions of the Islamist group Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi and of Operation Dawn in Tripoli. Meanwhile, Qatar, Turkey and Sudan were identified as allegedly backing Islamist factions in Libya. The involvement of regional actors in the Libyan crisis is not new, however, as some countries reportedly lent military and logistic support to similar armed groups during the revolt against Gaddafi. In this context and in line with a regional trend, both General Haftar and the authorities based in Tobruk have tried to frame their dispute with armed groups in Benghazi and Tripoli as part of the "global war on terror" against jihadist groups, even though the complexities of the turmoil in Libya owe to more than just Islamist stances versus secular ones. This discourse particularly echoes the policy adopted in Egypt by the general and current President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi after the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) government there.[45] Cairo is especially concerned about controlling flows across the border between Libya and Egypt, given the fact that the area has become a gateway for weapons and combatants headed for Sinai and Syria. According to a UN report issued in early 2014, Libya was a key source of illegal arsenals transferred to at least 14 countries on different continents, including Chad, Mali, Tunisia and Lebanon. In late 2014, reports that jihadists were training in Libya for the purpose of fighting for Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq raised international concern about the situation in the country.

Despite this rhetorical concern, overall the story in Libya was eclipsed by other issues on the global agenda in 2014, such as ISIS and the crisis in Ukraine, and the international community showed no active commitment to resolving the conflict. In August, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2174, which condemned the use of violence against civilians and demonstrated its willingness to impose sanctions on whomever threatened peace and stability in the country. The efforts expended to promote initiatives of dialogue and peace in 2014 were not successful. None of the various initiatives promoted by UNSMIL could establish a truce between the armed factions. After being appointed the special envoy for Libya, Spanish diplomat Bernardino León contacted the parties, leading to the first meeting between rival political groups in the western city of Ghadames. While the talks resulted in a commitment to bridge their differences peacefully, they did not lead to a ceasefire, given the limited influence of political forces on the various armed groups, which rejected a truce.

42. Frederic Wehrey, *Ending Libya's Civil War: Reconciling Politics, Rebuilding Security*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 24 September 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brief-Wehrey_Libya.pdf.

43. Mark Shaw and Fionna Mangan, *Illicit Trafficking and Libya's Transition: Profits and Losses*, United States Institute of Peace (USIP), http://www.usip.org/publications/illicit-trafficking-and-libya-s-transition-profits-and-losses.

44. Frederic Wehrey and Wolfram Lacher, "Libya's Legitimacy Crisis", *Foreign Affairs*, 6 October 2014, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142138/frederic-wehrey-and-wolfram-lacher/libyas-legitimacy-crisis.

45. Frederic Wehry, "Is Libya a Proxy War?", *Washington Post*, 24 October 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/24/is-libya-a-proxy-war.

A new meeting was planned in Ghadames at the end of the year, aimed at reaching an agreement to manage what remains of the transition period until a new Constitution is adopted and a consensus to curb the violence is reached. The alternatives included allowing the assembly in charge of drafting the Constitution to assume leadership of the transition period or forming a national unity government based on the current distribution of forces in the country.[46] However, the conditions imposed by the parties to participate in the dialogue, which provoked several postponements, demonstrated the difficulties in overcoming the polarisation in Libya. The authorities in Tobruk demanded to know the list of participants and insisted that the "terrorist" armed groups must be dismantled and could not participate in the negotiations, while the government in Tripoli pressed the need to acknowledge the Supreme Court's ruling that the Parliament in Tobruk is unconstitutional. Meanwhile, the UN special envoy seemed to have stepped back from the UN's initial position regarding its recognition of the authorities in Tobruk. León has made it clear that in the current scenario, neither the representatives in Tobruk nor those in Tripoli are in a condition to claim legitimacy[47] and stressed the urgency of moving forward in the talks before the country plunges into a state of total chaos.

Resolving the current situation in Libya is therefore extremely complex. Among other issues, the challenges include ensuring the cessation of violence through ceasefire agreements, the configuration of an inclusive power scheme, the reconfiguration of the security system leading to the disarmament of combatants, arms control and submission to the civilian authorities, in addition to a pledge by regional players not to interfere in the conflict (several countries, including the UAE, Egypt, Turkey and Qatar signed a commitment in this regard in September, but its effective implementation remains to be seen). Meanwhile, the needs of the Libyan population must be addressed, as it has been severely affected by the recent dynamics of violence, the consequences of the war against Gaddafi and the legacy of his repressive and authoritarian government. It was known from the beginning that after decades of authoritarianism the reconstruction of Libya would be complex, since it would require statebuilding in a context with serious institutional weaknesses. The evolution of the conflict in 2014 has confirmed that the challenge is turning out to be even more difficult than expected.

---

46. Mustafa Fetouri, "UN envoy balances rival factions in risky Libyan talks", *Al-Monitor*, 8 December 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/libya-tripoli-parliament-recognize-united-nations-envoy.html.
47. Ibid.

6.3. The escalation of violence in the Chinese region of Xinjiang

In 2014, the eastern region of Xinjiang in China (also known as East Turkestan) reached unprecedented levels of violence. Although access restrictions imposed by the Chinese government make it difficult to confirm the accuracy of the figures and information, it is estimated that in 2014 around 330 people lost their lives and several hundred people were injured. This confirms the rising trend observed in the region in recent years: in 2013, the government acknowledged the death of around 110 people, although journalistic and academic sources raised that number to around 130 and Uyghur organisations in exile put it much higher. In 2012, Beijing admitted that around 200 episodes of violence and terrorism had been reported. Previously, the region had garnered some media attention for the attacks that occurred in 2008 during the Olympic Games in Beijing and the outbreak of violence in the city of Urumqi in 2009, which caused the deaths of about 200 people. In addition to the increased frequency and intensity of the acts of violence, various analysts think that their greater sophistication and media visibility means that insurgent organisations have achieved a higher degree of organisation and combat and logistic abilities.

Given this situation, Beijing has repeatedly recognised that the Uyghur insurgency is the most real and immediate national security threat facing the country and has bolstered its counterinsurgency efforts, notably increasing its police and military presence in the province, doubling the budget for the fight against terrorism, intensifying military manoeuvres and antiterrorist exercises in Xinjiang and starting a one-year campaign in late May aimed at reducing levels of violence and weakening insurgent organisations in Xinjiang. According to various media sources, six months after the campaign began, 115 terrorist cells had been broken up (40% of them thanks to the information obtained during the interrogation of detainees), 117 centres of religious education had been closed (and 238 people responsible for them were arrested), dozens of people had been sentenced to death and executed for participating in various episodes of violence and around 18,000 documents had been seized that were deemed to encourage terrorism and religious extremism.

Some media outlets have referred to Xinjiang as "China's Chechnya" and have identified the conflict as one of those that could create the most instability in Asia.[48] However, in the immediate future the situation of violence could be exacerbated by three different factors. First is Beijing's stated intention to step up its fight against Uyghur insurgent organisations, which could have a serious impact on the human rights situation in the region and boost their

legitimacy and membership. Second is the possibility that the armed groups operating in Xinjiang effectively have or could develop links with transnational organisations giving them greater organisational, logistic and financial abilities to carry out large-scale attacks. Third is the new geostrategic scenario opening up in the region with the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan, and which among other issues is provoking greater pressure from China on neighbouring countries (especially Afghanistan and Pakistan) to fight and expel Uyghur armed organisations from their territory.

Regarding the first point, there are several reasons to think that Beijing will intensify repression and militarisation in Xinjiang. For instance, Beijing thinks that this strategy has been relatively successful on other occasions and in other contexts to clamp down on social unrest while deterring the emergence of outbreaks of violence, like in Tibet or Inner Mongolia, or in the region of Xinjiang itself in the 1990s.[49] Second, thus far the international community has not unanimously applied political pressure on Beijing to end the many mass human rights violations reported by human rights organisations and Uyghur groups in exile, and in some cases, like in countries bordering with China, has strongly supported Beijing's strategy and collaborated in its execution. Third is the strategic importance that Xinjiang has for China, both economically and in terms of national security. Xinjiang is key to energy efficiency in China, and therefore to its economic development in the coming decades. It is currently the third-largest oil-producing province in China and it is estimated that only a small part of the reserves it holds have been discovered. A major generator of gas (approximately one-third of national production) and a top source of coal and wind energy, Xinjiang is also essential to China's energy supply because it is where the main oil and gas pipelines are located that import hydrocarbons from Central Asia and the Middle East, the country's largest two sources of energy. Note that China is currently the second-largest importer of oil worldwide and one of the most petrol-dependent countries in the world. The alternative to the oil and gas pipelines crossing Xinjiang would be the transport of energy by sea, which would increase time, costs and risks, since it would have to navigate geostrategically sensitive regions like the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca, one of the hotspots of international piracy. In terms of national security, the fact that Xinjiang shares a border with several countries in Central Asia is also geostrategically relevant, due to both the influence that China hopes to have in Central

---

48. The Economist, "A Chechnya in the making", *The Economist*, 9 August 2014, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21611067-iron-fist-xinjiang-fuelling-insurrection-chinas-leadership-must-switch-tactics; *Hurriyet Daily News*, 'China's Chechnya:' Terrorism in Xinjiang", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 16 August 2014, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chinas-chechnya-terrorism-in-xinjiang.aspx?PageID=238&NID=70494&NewsCatID=418; Mostafa Elmadboly, "China's Chechnya? Why There is More to Xinjiang Than Terrorism", *Fordham Political Review*, 2014, http://fordhampoliticalreview.org/chinas-chechnya-why-there-is-more-to-xinjiang-than-terrorism/.
49. Kilic Kanat, "Repression in China and Its Consequences in Xinjiang", *Hudson Institute*, 28 July 2014, http://www.hudson.org/research/10480-repression-in-china-and-its-consequences-in-xinjiang.

Asia in the coming decades and to the influences and dynamics that may enter China from some adjacent countries that have suffered armed conflicts in recent decades with the enormous potential to destabilise the region, like Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some analysts think that Xinjiang could serve as a barrier to the entry of potentially destabilising organisations or ideologies into China, but also as a gateway for them.

Another factor that could worsen the situation of violence in Xinjiang is the possibility, raised by the Chinese government and various analysts, that Uyghur armed organisations may boost their capacity for combat due to contacts with foreign organisations considered terrorists by Beijing or even the infiltration of foreign combatants into Chinese territory. In this regard, some caution that the armed groups' modus operandi could be changing, as demonstrated by the ability to carry out significant attacks beyond Xinjiang (in Tiananmen Square in late 2013 and in the Kunming train station in mid-2014, in an attack described by various media outlets as "11 September in China"), the use of car bombs, indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population and the use of suicide attacks. However, the weapons used in most of the incidents of violence, usually knives or manufactured explosive devices, as well as their seemingly disorganised nature and the high number of fatalities among the assailants, appear to indicate that the insurgent groups are still weak in terms of organisation and professionalism.

Traditionally, the Beijing government has accused the armed Uyghur groups, and especially the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), of maintaining ties to various organisations that it considers terrorists, such as the IMU (a movement formed in the early 1990s that initially operated in Uzbekistan, but over the course of time has extended its radius of action to other parts of Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan), al-Qaeda and Taliban militias in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Chinese government upholds such accusations in its own intelligence reports, indicating that Uyghur militants receive continuous and stable military training in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, in the lengthy detention of 22 Uyghurs in the prison at Guantanamo, in the death of various Uyghurs during the air strikes that the Pakistani Armed Forces conducted in one of the tribal areas of Pakistan in the first half of 2014 and in the United Nations' inclusion of the ETIM in its list of terrorist organisations since 2002. In addition to the presence of Uyghur fighters in other countries, Beijing also recently denounced the infiltration of foreign fighters into Xinjiang, especially from groups coming from Syria. Although the leadership of the ETIM has denied these accusations on several occasions and has even shown some ideological and organisational distance from al-Qaeda, the Chinese government has insisted on the connection between Uyghur separatism and transnational Islamic extremism and has linked its counterinsurgency

efforts to the so-called "global war on terror", thereby obtaining some international support for its policies and a certain degree of silence regarding the consequences of those policies for the Uyghur community in Xinjiang.

Thus, Beijing considers the support that some Central Asian republics have given it in its struggle against Uyghur separatism through bilateral relations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to be especially important. This is not only because it facilitates issues such as extradition treaties, but because in this way Beijing neutralises the possible support that the Uyghur cause could gain in some countries due to cultural, linguistic or historical affinities among several Turkic peoples in the region. Historically, the Uyghur community has had cultural ties with other Turkic-speaking peoples and its identity has had a certain transnational component. From Beijing's perspective, this makes the Uyghur community especially receptive to a certain kind of pan-Turkism promoted by some Central Asian republics and particularly resistant to assimilationist policies pursued by the Chinese government in recent decades. In any event, despite the transnational dimension of Uyghur identity, the potential links between the ETIM and foreign organisations and its alleged closeness to radical Islamism, various analysts maintain that the Chinese government has tended to exaggerate the threat of Uyghur secessionism. At the least, the ETIM has never been able to pose a serious threat to the Chinese government or to uphold a major insurgent struggle due to its lack of support at the international level and the scarce human and material resources available to it.

Some media outlets have referred to Xinjiang as "China's Chechnya" and have identified the conflict as one of those that could create the most instability in Asia

The final factor that could motivate an increase in tension in Xinjiang is the security vacuum in the region that could supposedly be triggered by the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan. This could have a twofold effect on the conflict. First, some organisations could take advantage of the new scenario opening up in Afghanistan to increase their presence in Xinjiang just as some Uyghur organisations could temporarily or stably establish themselves more easily in Afghanistan. The partial withdrawal from the region of a power like the USA is leading to some rearrangement of the area in geostrategic terms, as demonstrated by the talks that took place throughout 2014 between China, Russia, India and Pakistan to tackle future scenarios and risks regarding security issues. The second effect that the new geostrategic scenario could have on the conflict in Xinjiang is a rise in clashes pitting the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan against Uyghur organisations allegedly located in both countries, the result of bilateral agreements that China is establishing with both governments to increase military pressure against the ETIM.

In this regard, in late October the governments of Afghanistan and China signed an agreement by which Kabul pledged to fight with the ETIM and any other armed Uyghur organisation and expel them from its territory in exchange for economic support from China (especially for building infrastructure and forming state security bodies and forces).

New Afghan President Ashraf Ghani publicly reaffirmed the commitment to cooperate closely with China on security matters, as the government of Hamid Karzai had expressed previously in 2014. In addition to China's approach to the Afghan government through bilateral economic cooperation and the support that it gave it to achieve observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Beijing has also quietly contacted Taliban militias so they do not extend their armed actions into Xinjiang or boost their cooperation with the ETIM or other armed Uyghur organisations. In exchange, China would provide the Taliban insurgency with some political recognition and may have even made some deals on the extraction of resources in northern parts of the country bordering with Pakistan. China's interest in maintaining good relations with Afghanistan and playing a larger role in the region once the withdrawal of US and NATO troops begins is not only a matter of internal security, but also demonstrates its desire to participate actively in the exploitation of the vast natural resources located in Afghanistan (especially gas and petrol) and their importation into China.[50]

Moreover, Pakistan and China have been strategic allies for decades, in such a way that in recent years the Pakistani government had committed to fight actively against the ETIM and to collaborate closely with Beijing in terms of security. In 2013, for example, it banned the ETIM, IMU and Islamic Jihad Union and prohibited their presence on its territory. In 2014, it stepped up its engagement with the Chinese government. In June,

It is estimated that in 2014, around 330 people lost their lives and hundreds were wounded in Xinjiang in an unprecedented rise in violence

for example, several Uyghur fighters were killed during an offensive launched by the Pakistani Armed Forces in North Waziristan in which approximately 1,100 people lost their lives. Furthermore, bilateral cooperation increased in various respects in 2014 (in November, for instance, 20 agreements of various types were reached), while both the prime minister and president of Pakistan publicly vowed to redouble their efforts to reduce the presence and activity of Uyghur organisations in the country.[51]

Although Uyghur separatism has been active in Xinjiang for decades, it had not captured the attention of the media or the international community until relatively recently. Under the cover of the "global war on terror", Beijing had been able to justify its counterinsurgency policies in Xinjiang, silencing human rights violations reported by Uyghur organisations and ensuring the support of the great powers and neighbouring countries in the struggle against terrorism. Yet in recent years, and especially in 2014, both the increase and greater visibility of armed action by Uyghur separatists has provoked greater repression and militarisation in Xinjiang. In the immediate future, the intensification of Beijing's counterinsurgency policies, the enhanced combat abilities of armed Uyghur organisations and some changes in their modus operandi, as well as the new geostrategic scenario opening up in the region with the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan, could lead to even higher levels of violence and instability in Xinjiang.

50. Opencanada, "NATO, China, and Afghanistan at the Security-Development Nexus", *Opencanada*, 4 February 2014, http://opencanada.org/features/the-think-tank/comments/nato-china-and-afghanistan-at-the-security-development-nexus/.
51. South Asia Monitor, "Xinjiang an important determinant in Sino-Pakistan relations", *South Asia Monitor*, 2 December 2014, http://southasiamonitor.org/detail.php?type=sl&nid=9772.

6.4. Urban violence in Pakistan: Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, scenarios of conflict and tension

Pakistan is the scene of various armed conflicts and socio-political crises. These contexts have had a serious impact on the population in terms of mortality directly linked to the armed violence, general security conditions and the country's economy and development. Although the violence is spread across different parts of the country, with a serious effect on tribal areas in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, several large cities, particularly the provincial capitals Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi, are also being shaken. The impact of the violence on large cities is a subject of concern around the world, though it is not necessarily linked to the dynamics of armed conflict or political violence like it is in Pakistan, whose conflicts have a direct impact on its cities. This concern has led to the development of concepts like "fragile cities", highlighting the serious security and development challenges facing large contemporary cities to ensure the wellbeing of the people residing in them.[52]

The four Pakistani provincial capitals, Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi and Lahore (and especially the first three), are operational and financial bases for armed groups and criminal networks, often linked to armed groups, that are active in the cities or other parts of the country.[53] Though each city has its peculiar aspects and is the setting for some dominant type of violence, they all clearly share some features in common to a greater or lesser extent: they are a base for Taliban or other kinds of insurgent organisations (like Balochi nationalist groups) currently fighting against government security forces; they are a scene of sectarian violence, mainly between Sunni and Shia communities; and they are heavily militarised with an enormous presence of different security forces and troops in public that has a serious impact on the private sphere as well.

Geographically speaking, Peshawar, the capital of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, lies on the route to Afghanistan and the fact that it is bordered almost completely by the FATA makes it a strategic place for the insurgency that operates on both sides of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where many groups have set up their headquarters. During the regime of General Pervez Musharraf, many Taliban groups and groups linked to al-Qaeda were allowed to establish bases in the province while an Islamist political coalition (MMA) was formed to act as a counterweight to traditional parties (ANP and PPP). This encouraged the spread of a radical Islamist political programme, creating an atmosphere conducive to extremism and making the area a hotbed for the Taliban insurgency.[54] The growing Taliban presence in Peshawar

has been demonstrated by various attacks of great impact, the most serious of which took place on 16 December 2014 in which 141 people (including 132 boys and girls) were killed in an armed assault on a school. Another enormously important attack caused the deaths of 80 people when a car bomb exploded in a church in September 2013. According to figures gathered by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, during the first 11 months of 2014, at least 191 people were killed and 361 were wounded as a result of terrorism-related incidents. Furthermore, many criminal organisations active in the province have ties to insurgent groups, which has contributed to the entrenchment of violence. Alongside the Taliban's attacks, sectarian violence also became established in the city, with Sunni extremist organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) heavily implicated. The close links between LeJ and the insurgent group Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP), demonstrated by the dual membership of some of their members and leaders, complicate the field of players responsible for the violence in the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa even further and show the group's ability to penetrate the city. Dozens of Shia have died as a result of sectarian violence perpetrated by radical Sunni groups in Peshawar, which have also targeted moderate Sunnis.

The violence in Quetta has some similarities to that of Peshawar, as well as some features and dynamics all its own. Quetta is a scenario of various armed conflicts occurring simultaneously: those pitting the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban insurgencies against the Pakistani and Afghan governments and one between the Balochi nationalist insurgency and the Pakistani government. With regard to the Taliban insurgency, the capital of Balochistan has been a tremendously important logistic centre for both sides involved in the armed conflict in Afghanistan, international forces and the Taliban rebels,[55] and is the seat of the shura of Quetta, a group of Taliban leaders headed by Mullah Omar. Quetta has also been the setting for different attacks carried out by the Balochi nationalist insurgency against what it considers the seat of Pakistani colonial power over the Balochi population. The heavy militarisation and many human rights violations committed by the state security forces have also driven many young students in the capital to support insurgent organisations and even to join their ranks. Moreover, many acts of sectarian violence have been committed in Quetta by LeJ against ethnic Hazara, which are predominantly Shia, causing dozens of fatalities.

Karachi may be the Pakistani city where problems of violence are most evident. A megacity (the usual name for cities with more than 10 million inhabitants), it has 21 million residents and may be the most violent city

---

52. Muggah, Robert. "Deconstructing the fragile city: exploring insecurity, violence and resilience". *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 26(2): pp. 345-358, 2014.
53. International Crisis Group. *Policing Urban Violence in Pakistan*. International Crisis Group, Asia Report no. 255, 2014.
54. Ibid.
55. Gazdar, H., S.Ahmad Kakar, I. Khan. *Buffer Zone, Colonial Enclave or Urban Hub Quetta: Between Four Regions and Two Wars.* CSRC Working Papers, Crisis States Research Centre (CSRC), 2010.

in the world, with a homicide rate of 12.3 per 100,000 residents. To this are added grave demographic problems, as demonstrated by the fact that between 2000 and 2010, its population soared by over 80%.[56] This demographic increase owes partially to the displacement of populations coming from areas affected by conflicts and violence. Karachi is the scene of an ethnic and political conflict among the supporters of its three main political parties: the MQM (the main political party in Karachi, representing the Muhajir community), the PPP (the main party in the country and second-largest in Karachi) and the ANP (the third-largest party in the city), which represents the growing Pashtun community. All three political parties have their own armed organisations that clash essentially for control of political power in the city. The demographic changes in Karachi as a result of the massive influx of Pashtuns displaced from the northwestern part of the country have aggravated these political rivalries. Moreover, the government's inability to ensure the provision of basic services in the city, together with poverty and unemployment, have strengthened the criminal mafias competing for resources there.[57] Although a drop was reported in the number of violent deaths in 2014 compared to previous years (approximately 1,600 in the first nine months of the year compared to nearly 3,400 in 2013 and 3,100 in 2012, the situation remained extremely serious. The lowest murder rates are attributable to the security operation begun in September 2013, which however has clearly been proven to be insufficient because the use of large-scale violence has persisted. One of the most serious examples of the impact of the violence in the city is provided by the

Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi are bases for insurgent organisations fighting against security forces, heavily militarised and arenas of sectarian violence

district of Lyari Town, a traditional PPP stronghold with a robust presence of armed organisations and where heavy weapons have even been used in clashes between different groups.[58] Alongside this violence, the Taliban insurgency has also penetrated the city in an attempt to consolidate its presence by taking advantage of the fragility there.

The situation of the three Pakistani cities studied shows the importance of paying attention to urban environments as scenes of conflict and large-scale violence. While cities have traditionally been considered relatively safe places where populations have sought refuge from armed conflict, it is also certain that movements of people towards cities and large-scale changes that are not solely demographic in nature, but also political and economic, may lead to high-intensity situations of confrontation there[59] with complex connections between political and economic elites and armed and criminal groups and serious impacts on resident populations. In Pakistan, there is a clear risk that the different insurgencies may boost their presence in urban environments, especially in provincial capitals, and that cities may become increasingly militarised, with serious consequences for the future of the country. Pakistani cities run the risk of turning into a scenario of increasingly serious and fatal attacks with severe repercussions for the daily life of the population. Thus, the authorities must focus significant effort in trying to prevent the entrenchment of violence in the cities and take steps to address the deep causes and different dynamics of these conflicts, since cities also provide important opportunities for transforming violence and creating safe environments for people.

56. Taimur Khan, "Cooking in Karachi". *Foreign Policy* , 3 September 2013.
57. International Crisis Group, op. cit.
58. Ibid.
59. Beall, Jo, Tom Goodfellow and Dennis Rodgers. *Cities and Conflict. Policy Directions*. Crisis States Research Centre, June 2010.

6.5. The war in Ukraine: few prospects of a solution

Ukraine has been considered in transition since it gained independence after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. With a population of over 44 million, this extensive country of great geostrategic importance is currently undergoing a major socio-political crisis and armed conflict in its eastern regions and is the scenario of the most serious crisis between the West and Russia since the Cold War. After the dizzying succession of events between late 2013 and early 2014 (mass pro-European demonstrations, known as "Maidan", the fall of the regime of President Victor Yanukovich, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, anti-Maidan and pro-Russian demonstrations and a militaristic trend in the east of the country that resulted in armed conflict), instability in eastern Ukraine skyrocketed, leading to war with thousands of casualties and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (soaring from several hundred between April and June to over 3,000 in late September). The dispute pits armed pro-Russian militias that emerged from the anti-Maidan protests, backed by Russia and joined by international combatants against Ukrainian state forces fighting alongside paramilitary groups under the umbrella of the new pro-European authorities. Background issues such as political status, the degree of decentralisation and language protection are joined by others such as the international crisis between Russia and the West. The development of the war in eastern Ukraine provides few or no prospects for improvement in 2015, with forecasted scenarios that could range from a frozen new future conflict in the OSCE zone to the resumption of a relatively limited active conflict or a drift to a conflict broader in scope. Many factors appear to reduce the possibilities for a peaceful settlement, such as military reinforcement of the parties and a strengthening of their belligerent stances, the limitations of the dialogue process (among others, the agreements have not been implemented), fait accompli policies (e.g., elections "respected" by Russia in the provinces in conflict) and an international context of political, military and economic antagonism among the actors backing the warring parties (the West and Russia), among others. Meanwhile, the negative effects of the continuation of the war, and especially the harmful risks of further escalation with uncertain consequences for the continent, could act as deterrents and force the parties and international powers (the European Union and Russia) to redirect the conflict or at least to limit its scope. However, the outlook at the end of 2014 is worrisome.

Various factors come into play in negative or uncertain future scenarios. First is the militarisation and belligerence of the parties to the conflict. Russia has repeatedly been accused of directly and indirectly supporting the pro-Russian rebels, especially by providing them with weapons, military technology and human resources as they take advantage of a porous border not controlled by Ukraine. In addition to Russia's "usual suspects" (NATO and the USA), the OSCE, analysts and journalists have indicated or become convinced of these multiple forms of support.

Russia denies this support formally and categorically. It also denied at first that the unmarked troops in Crimea were Russian, though it later admitted that they were. However, everything indicates that support is being given to the militias, combined with attempts to keep up the appearance of genuine local authorities. For example, Russian citizens presented as leaders of the rebel forces replaced local leaders at first, but were replaced in turn by local leaders in August 2014. NATO announced support for Ukraine to improve its defensive abilities in several areas, including on issues such as logistics and cyber defence, while allies like the USA and Canada pledged non-lethal military aid. Meanwhile, Ukraine has also decided on military strategies with a serious impact on human security that have fuelled the violent direction of the conflict (including an antiterrorist operation at first instead of other possible strategies; bombardments of population centres, forcibly displacing residents; and collective punishment by cutting off state funding in the Donbas region, which includes the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk and effects hospitals and schools, based on the argument that the funds would end up in rebel hands). Thus, Ukraine has combined peace proposals and talks with aggressive military practices and has shown itself ready and willing to fight a broader war. In other words, both sides are reinforced, with foreign backing, and predisposed to fight, although mechanisms of dialogue have remained active with uneven results.

Second, the initiatives of dialogue implemented thus far have not been successful and have shown limitations that are difficult to overcome in lieu of the parties' willingness to do so and given the heavily antagonistic context. Various mechanisms of peace, security and dialogue have been used and agreements reached: the OSCE observation mission since March 2014; the agreement signed in Geneva on 17 April between the interim Ukrainian government, Russia, the EU and the United States; the dialogue through the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE) and its engagement with the political and military structures of pro-Russian groups in the east that resulted in various agreements (a ceasefire and peace plan on 20 June, the Minsk Protocol on 5 September, the Minsk Memorandum on 19 September and the separate ceasefires in December in Donetsk and Luhansk); bilateral and multilateral diplomatic meetings with Germany as the main Western government dealing with Russia; and a multilateral meeting in Milan during the ASEM summit in October, among other examples. The scope of the different agreements, most of them extensive and substantive, addressing security and political issues, decentralisation and language protection, has stood in contrast to the lack of implementation of ceasefire commitments in different areas. The special representative of the rotating chairperson-in-office of the OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group, Heidi Tagliavini, a diplomat with extensive experience in the region, described the 5 September agreements as a great achievement in the final months of 2014, saying that the ceasefire was still being observed in large areas

of Donbas. Though she also considered the situation "terrible" in some areas, overall she showed confidence in the process. In early December, the possibility of new rounds to produce partially positive results was hinted at, through the challenge consisted of greater implementation and maintenance of the agreements, issues closely linked to Russia's role (as an actor with power over the militias in practice) and international relations, a key and mostly worrisome and uncertain aspect.

This leads to a third set of arguments about the conflict's reasons for concern, related to its international dimension. The crisis in eastern Ukraine is not just an internal armed conflict. International issues have been projected onto it, making for the worst crisis between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War and adding obstacles to its resolution. The crisis has opposing narratives. One is the Euro-Atlantic perception of aggressive Russian policies, which in some cases have broken international law, and of the gap between rhetoric and facts (Russian pressure on Ukraine in 2013 not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, the capture and subsequent annexation of Crimea in 2014, support for pro-Russian militias, accusations that Russia is party to and an arbiter in the conflict, among others). Russia's fait accompli policy has assisted the military escalation and has made containing and resolving the conflict enormously difficult. Meanwhile, the West's position is linked to Russia's alleged expansionist ambitions and its attempts to impose (or maintain) control over the former Soviet satellite states, among other aspects, with the ability to destabilise sovereign territories. As such, the West views its own approach to the region as a reflection of the sovereign interests of the populations and governments of these countries to freely strengthen their relations with the European Union and NATO as part of their processes of democratisation and the search for security guarantees. According to this narrative, Russia cannot oppose the road chosen by these countries, even by Ukraine. Meanwhile, other analyses indicate that Russia views the expansion of NATO and the EU's economic and democratising agenda into what it considers its area of influence as unacceptable. For example, Russia equates it to a situation in which a military power rivalling the United States tries to integrate a neighbouring country into its orbit. Russia views this Euro-Atlantic advance as a threat, a tipping of the balance and a breaking of the security scheme in the OSCE zone after the end of the Cold War and also claims that it intends to promote regime change in Russia's area of influence and finally in Russia itself. Therefore, Moscow has been more supportive of a neutral status for Ukraine, a position that in fact was favoured by most of the Ukrainian population

prior to the events of Maidan and the armed conflict. Some in the West and elsewhere have also voiced support for a solution of neutrality, even if it is perceived as pro-Russian in mainstream Euro-Atlantic circles, displaying a lack of self-criticism by the EU regarding the course of events and the clear pro-Euro-Atlantic position of the newly elected Ukrainian authorities. In addition, some analysts also point to Russia's fears of possible contagion of the path taken by Ukraine (the Maidan protests, the overthrow of the government, new pro-European authorities emerging from the elections) in its own territory, despite the Kremlin's strong vertical control of freedoms of speech and the press.

The future scenarios in the conflict in eastern Ukraine are worrisome given the antagonism of the parties, the fragility and poor implementation of the agreements, Russian support for rebel groups and the projection of rivalries between Russia and the West, among other aspects

Instead of better relations between Russia and the West, the mutual discomfort grew during 2014, as did actions respectively interpreted as aggressive. These included Russia's annexation of Crimea, the West's subsequent sanctions against Russia and NATO's decision to create a rapid reaction force in 2014 (provisional in 2015 and permanent in 2016), which will not have a fixed base but will have pre-positioned facilities in Eastern European countries. In response, Russia also warned in 2014 that it would review its strategy towards NATO and indicated that it considered Ukraine's entry into NATO to be a red line, although analysts indicated that in practice, the collective defence organisation was unlikely to accept Ukraine as a member. Furthermore, although in November Germany's foreign ministry indicated possible new approaches that would include meetings between the European Union and the Eurasian Union, demonstrating the importance of improving international relations projected in the conflict, events did not move in that direction. After first presenting itself as the main Euro-Atlantic bridge to Russia in 2014, Germany also began to toughen its stance towards it. Meanwhile, Russia delved into patriotic and belligerent rhetorical discourse.

Despite the complicated internal and international atmosphere, there are still factors that could help to limit or prevent the most negative scenarios, including the continuation of channels of dialogue through frameworks and players accepted by both parties, the international presence on the ground (OSCE), the deterrent effect of the uncertain risks of a conflict of greater scope and others. In any case, given the gravity of the situation and the unwillingness of the parties to implement the agreements achieved thus far, as well as the deterioration in international relations projected over the conflict, the future prospects for Ukraine and its eastern provinces do not give grounds for optimism and call for a redoubling of peacebuilding efforts.

6.6. Haiti: the risk of a power vacuum and a worsening political and social crisis

The political and social crisis in Haiti worsened in 2014, with continuous demonstrations demanding the departure of President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, as well as institutional paralysis resulting from the confrontation between executive and legislative power that culminated in the resignation of Lamothe and the entire government in mid-December. The catalyst of the protests and the institutional impasse was the inability to hold legislative and local elections that have been postponed since 2011 and 2010, respectively. Some analysts think that the situation of political tension, social polarisation and institutional failure to govern in Haiti may be exacerbated significantly in 2015, since the term of the legislature expires on 12 January, opening the door for Martelly to rule by decree. In such a scenario, the opposition has already declared its intention to call massive and continuous protests and the international community has expressed its fear of outbreaks of violence.[60]

The term of one-third of the Senate ended in May 2012 and the terms of another third of the Senate and the entire Chamber of Deputies end in January 2015, which would leave the legislature non-operational as a whole and create a crisis of legitimacy and an institutional vacuum. Faced with such a prospect and the international community's repeated concerns, talks began between the executive and legislative branches of government. Following several months of disagreement, a historic deal facilitated by the Catholic Church was achieved in March 2014 between the government, legislature and main political parties to hold elections and reduce the social and political tension of recent years. The most notable aspects of the agreement included the formation of a much more inclusive government, the creation of a new electoral body to replace the Provisional Electoral Council, the ratification of several amendments to the electoral law and the holding of the elections postponed since 2011 on 26 October.[61] Some points of the agreement were later implemented, such as a major shakeup in the government (the fifth since Martelly took office in May 2011), with the addition of 10 new ministers, some of them close to opposition groups. However, the distance between the parties' stances grew in the second half of 2014, with the opposition accusing the government of mismanagement and corruption and demanding the resignation of the president, while the government accused six opposition senators of blocking the passage of amendments to the electoral law, necessary for holding the elections.

Given this fresh political and institutional crisis, in late

The catalyst of the protests and the institutional impasse was the inability to hold legislative and local elections that have been postponed since 2011 and 2010, respectively

September Martelly began two months of consultations with opposition representatives and various sectors of Haitian society. Yet by the end of November, no significant agreement had been reached and not even any common ground had been found, partially due to the opposition's boycott of the consultations. Martelly then appointed an 11-person advisory committee to propose recommendations designed to remedy the situation and resolve the crisis. In early December the committee made its recommendations public, which included the resignation of the prime minister, the chairman of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and the members of the Provisional Electoral Council. A few days later, Martelly accepted the recommendations and Laurent Lamothe immediately tendered his resignation and that of his bloc government. Nevertheless, the opposition said that the recommendations in the report issued by the 11-person committee were insufficient and announced its intention to continue leading mass protests in various cities, including those timed with the visit of US Secretary of John Kerry to the country in mid-December. In fact, the stances of the government and part of the opposition remained distant and relatively unchanged throughout 2014. The opposition complains that the amendments to the electoral law required to hold elections that have been passed by the Chamber of Deputies are unconstitutional and believes that talks between the government and the opposition should not be restricted to simply resolving the institutional crisis, but should also address issues like the release of detained members of the opposition and the resignation of the president, who they accuse of negligence and corruption. In fact, the opposition thinks that the initiatives for dialogue promoted by the government at the end of the year were purely cosmetic and solely aimed at reducing pressure from the international community.

In addition to the distance between the government and opposition's positions, other factors partially explain the magnitude of the current political crisis and the problems in finding a short-term solution. First, because of the impossibility of holding the delayed elections, the crisis arises in a context of several transitions and lines of polarisation. For example, the International Crisis Group indicates that since the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986, the country has been undergoing five different transitions simultaneously: from armed violence to peace and reconciliation; from an anti-democratic political culture to a democratic one; from a failed state to a modern nation state; from a system with high rates of poverty and inequality to another with greater social justice; and from a country physically devastated by the earthquake in 2010 to another in which reconstruction

---

60. Peter Granitz, "Haiti's Political Crisis Is About to Get Worse", *Foreign Policy*, 24 November 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/24/haitis-political-crisis-is-about-to-get-worse/.

61. Shortly after signing the agreement, the government announced that the local elections would be held on 28 December, while the highest electoral authority should set the date for the second round of the legislative elections.

62. International Crisis Group, *Governing Haiti: Time for National Consensus*, Latin America/Caribbean Report N°46, 4 February 2013, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/latin-america-caribbean/haiti/046-governing-haiti-time-for-national-consensus.aspx.

may be leveraged for other systemic transformations.[62]

In this regard, the current crisis over the institutional vacuum that could occur starting in mid-January is just one (but hardly the only) visible line of tension in the country, and in fact some analysts believe it may have become a catalyst for significant parts of Haitian society to express a deeper malaise. Many related protests were held in 2014 against issues such as poor service delivery, the precarious economic situation and the continuous vulnerability tens of thousands of victims of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, claiming the lives of over 300,000 people and leaving more than 1.5 million homeless. At the beginning of the year, for example, there were protests to demand better socio-sanitary conditions or relocate the population in some of the 271 camps where OCHA claims that over 146,000 people are still living. Another source of recent tension was the demonstrations staged by supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in early 2014 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his departure from the country, which he and his sympathisers consider forced, and to protest an arrest warrant dictated by a judge in mid-August after Aristide failed to appear to testify as part of an investigation into a case of corruption and money laundering that took place during his presidency. Although the arrest warrant had still not been executed by late September, the judge did order the surveillance of Aristide's home to make sure he could not leave, putting the former leader under de facto house arrest. This situation prompted many demonstrations by Aristide's supporters and incidents and clashes between protestors and police on various occasions during the year. Recently, the country has also seen large and violent demonstrations linked to demands made by former soldiers to receive compensation from the state or to re-establish the Haitian Army, broken up by Aristide in the mid-1990s. There have also been protests against the presence of the UN mission in the country (MINUSTAH), which has been accused on various occasions of political bias (against the groups closest to Aristide), of committing various human rights abuses and violations, of being an occupation force and not a peacekeeping mission and of reintroducing cholera into the country, which caused the deaths of thousands of people.

Another factor hindering the prospect of a peaceful and negotiated solution to the crisis is the fact that it comes within a context of enormous social and political polarisation, confrontation and mistrust between the branches of government and political practices in which facing off has prevailed over agreement. In fact, since Aristide returned to power in the mid-1990s after the military coup that deposed him, every Haitian president has faced mass demonstrations led by the opposition. Some of them have forced the president to resign, as was the case with Aristide in 2004, while others have chipped away significantly at the president's (or government's) legitimacy, as happened to René Préval. From 2006 to late

The situation of political tension, social polarisation and institutional failure to govern in Haiti may be exacerbated significantly in 2015, since the term of the legislature expires on 12 January, opening the door for Martelly to rule by decree

2014, seven people have stood at the helm of government (eight if counting Lamothe's replacement). In the current situation, a significant part of the opposition has already announced its intention to led demonstrations until Martelly resigns. For example, Fanmi Lavalas, the party founded by Aristide and one of the political forces that can mobilise the most people across the country, accuses the government of political persecution and rejects any kind of dialogue as a mechanism for resolving the crisis, preferring public demonstrations.

Regarding the mistrust between the branches of government, Martelly lacks significant legislative support, which tends to cause problems in passing legislation to sustain government action. For example, Laurent Lamothe was the fourth candidate that Martelly proposed for prime minister (two others were rejected and the third stepped down a few months after being nominated), which provoked a long period of government paralysis. Virtually none of the presidents in the last five decades have represented stable political parties, but have headed electoral alliances, often with short-term interests. This reflects the fragility and volatility of the party system and the tendency to fill this vacuum with charismatic figures that can weave electoral alliances. The mistrust that has affected relations between the presidency and the legislature since Martelly came to power has been stoked by breaches of previous agreements (two of the most recent examples of which are the agreement of December 2012 to reform the Provisional Electoral Council and the agreement of March 2014 to hold the postponed elections), the government's accusations that the opposition is trying to accomplish through political and social instability what it is not certain to achieve through the ballot box and suspicions among the opposition that, faced with a legislature not allied with him, Martelly has actually been preparing for some time for the right situation to govern by decree, as could happen if the legislature's term expires in mid-January 2015. Moreover, several analysts have echoed the opposition's fears about Laurent Lamothe's intentions to run in the presidential election scheduled for late 2015, as well as Martelly's manoeuvring to assist the plans of Lamothe, a personal friend of his.

Furthermore, the open dispute between the executive and legislative branches of government has also ended up affecting the establishment and consolidation of the democratic institutions of the state. After several decades of iron dictatorships, the Constitution of 1987 aimed to prevent any concentration of power under the executive branch and created important mechanisms to share and balance powers in such a way that the design and function of some of the country's main institutions depend on consensus between the executive and legislative branches. Thus, the impasse of some bodies such as the Permanent Electoral Council, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and the Constitutional Council (separate from the Supreme

Court) is undoubtedly linked to the troubled relationship between the government and the legislature in recent years. The weakness of the state's democratic systems is not just an outcome of the chronic political conflict in Haiti, but has also ended up exacerbating the conflict and undermining the legitimacy and capacity of some of these institutions to arbitrate the political crisis. For example, the lack of agreement about the composition and functions of a new electoral body to replace the interim one active provisionally in Haiti for years is closely related to the frequency with which elections have been postponed in recent years, systematically low turnout and the many controversies that have come up recently (the publication of results, the logistic organisation of election day, the admission and revelation of candidates, etc.).[63]

In light of the overall situation, the international community has repeatedly voiced its concern about the immediate future of the country, as indicated by the attempts of the US Embassy to facilitate talks between the government and the opposition in late 2014 and the organisation of an international conference in Vatican City in January 2015 regarding the humanitarian situation in Haiti five years after the earthquake. Furthermore, hopeful signs have appeared in recent months regarding the capacity

for dialogue and agreement between the parties, like the deal facilitated by the Catholic Church in March 2014, the round of talks Martelly held with several political and social representatives and the president's acceptance of the recommendations of a committee of eminent people to overcome the current crisis. Thus, at the end of 2014, even though the effects that the resignation of Lamothe and his government had on the political crisis still remained to be seen, some analysts thought there could be a clearly positive impact. In any case, the prospect that all possible elections (Senate, Chamber of Deputies, presidential and local) could take place in Haiti in 2015 is also hardly conducive to the atmosphere of dialogue and agreement necessary to overcome the current impasse, since some of the largest demonstrations in the country in recent times have come during elections. Furthermore, the conditions of structural instability framing the current crisis, the institutional weakness of the country, the ongoing confrontation between the government's branches of power, the opposition's refusal to sit down for talks with the government, the accusations of mismanagement levelled at Martelly's government and the continuous and mounting demonstrations in the main cities in the country, which have already caused several episodes of violence in recent months, are also detrimental to a climate suitable for resolving the crisis.

---

63. Clare Lockhart, Johanna Mendelson Forman, "Why Haiti Needs a National Dialogue", *Foreign Policy*, 28 July 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/07/28/why-haiti-needs-a-national-dialogue/.

6.7. The expansion of al-Shabaab into Kenya: at the doors of a new armed conflict

The operation launched by the Kenyan Armed Forces in Somalia in October 2011, on the grounds that the threat of the armed Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab had to be prevented from expanding its activities beyond the borders of Somalia, has led to an increase in violence and attacks by al-Shabaab and groups allied with the Islamist insurgency in Kenya. Since 2013, around 200 people have died as a result of these actions in Kenya. In addition to the military activities undertaken by traditional Somali enemy Ethiopia and the USA since 2006, Nairobi's military operation in Somalia has helped to justify al-Shabaab's reason for existence, the fight against foreign troops in Somalia. Alongside and because of that, the Kenyan government has increased pressure on the Somali community in Kenya as part of its antiterrorist policy to halt the wave of violence. This has not only helped to foster support for al-Shabaab among the Somali community and stoke resentment of Kenya's institutions and security forces, but has also fuelled anti-Somali sentiments in the country. The current situation is increasingly explosive for what had thus far been one of the most stable countries in the region after surmounting the post-electoral violence of 2008, with one of the most dynamic economies in East Africa.

Armed violence has escalated in Kenya since the beginning of Kenya's Operation Linda Nchi ("Protect the Country" in Swahili) against al-Shabaab on Somali soil in October 2011, in coordination with the Ethiopian Armed Forces and Somali Armed Forces. Nairobi's military occupation of southern Somalia was motivated by the desire to create a buffer zone to prevent the conflict in Somalia from spilling over its borders. Soon it became apparent that the operation, which at first seemed solely aimed at rolling al-Shabaab back from the border, assumed the look of conventional war and permanent occupation. Until that time, Kenya had not been affected by the conflict raging in neighbouring Somalia. Since the fall of the Islamic Courts Union in 2008, its armed wing, al-Shabaab, had taken control of the centre and south of the country, approaching Kenya, but without conducting any direct attacks against Kenyan interests or populations.

However, by June 2011 the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea[64] had already identified indigenous networks outside Somalia that were involved in recruitment, radicalisation and the movement of resources on behalf of al-Shabaab, primarily in Kenya. They also said that this trend, demonstrated by the attacks in Kampala in July 2010, indicated not only that al-Shabaab was willing and able to carry out these kinds of attacks, but that it was giving rise to a whole new generation of jihadist groups in

Three years after the military intervention in Somalia began, the Kenyan government has still not elaborated a real strategy for resolving the conflict or adequately explained why the operation continues

East Africa. According to some analysts, if al-Shabaab did not take any action in Kenya until 2011, it was because it considered the country a safe rearguard. In the past, al-Shabaab's presence in Kenya had mainly centred on the Somali ethnic community, but in 2009 the group expanded its influence, attracting new members among Kenyans of non-Somali origin that according to the Monitoring Group's estimates are currently the largest and structurally best organised non-Somali group operating under al-Shabaab. Kenya began to recruit and train Somali pro-government militias in 2009 and al-Shabaab threatened Kenya over the issue in early 2011. Various actions and attacks were carried out in the border area by al-Shabaab in 2011. Together with the abduction and killing of tourists and aid workers in Kenya, which was blamed on al-Shabaab (although the authorship was never clear), this armed activity gave a boost to the most militaristic voices and led to the beginning of the military operation in October. In March 2012, Kenya announced the integration of the military contingent into AMISOM, a decision that became effective in June. Yet three years after the military intervention in Somalia began, the Kenyan government has still not elaborated a real strategy for resolving the conflict or adequately explained why the operation continues.[65]

Meanwhile, actions proliferated and grew in various parts of Kenya, including in a suburb of Eastleigh (Nairobi) known as Little Mogadishu, in Mombasa and in towns in the north and northeast of the country (Garissa, Wajir, the Daadab refugee camp and the Mander border area). Yet it was the attack on Westgate mall in Nairobi, from 21 to 24 September 2013, which marked a turning point in the country's views of the menace posed by the Islamist group. This attack on a shopping centre in a wealthy district of the capital, Westlands, caused the deaths of 67 people and wounded 175. However, the three-day siege, the chaos and lack of control of the situation, the hostage-taking and the visibility of some of the victims, including 19 foreigners of various nationalities, such as a relative of the country's president, an important pregnant Kenyan journalist, a Canadian diplomat and a Ghanaian poet and diplomat, made it the worst attack in Kenya since the one that hit the US Embassy in Nairobi in 1998, which killed 200 people. That attack marked the beginning of major changes in perceptions of the global threat of Islamist insurgencies worldwide. The successive attacks in 2014, the most prominent of which were in Mpeketoni and Poromoko in June, which killed 60 people, and in Mandera in November, which claimed around 40 lives, have created an atmosphere of insecurity psychosis, with Western embassies warning off tourists and sending home all non-

---

64. UN Security Council, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, submitted in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010),* 18 July 2011, S/2011/433.
65. Boru Halakhe, Abdullahi, "To prevent more Mpeketonis Kenya must define Somalia exit plan", *African Arguments,* 19 June 2014.

essential staff. This situation has hurt one of the main sources of income in the country due to the serious impact on the tourist industry, with a sharp drop in tourist arrivals, thousands of layoffs and closures of hotels on the coast. The government interpreted this reaction as an attempt to damage tourism in the country and began a populist anti-Western discourse that was joined by criticism of the ICC's action against President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Prime Minister William Ruto for their responsibility for the post-election violence in early 2008.

These acts of war by al-Shabaab in Kenya provoked a harsh government response in an attempt to restore an aura of security and national and international credibility, but at the same time it triggered a climate of fear and mistrust in society by carrying out measures that consisted of collective punishment against the Somali community in Kenya, placed under suspicion as a whole. Measures such as the Nyuma Kumi initiative ("Know your neighbour" in Swahili), which divides houses into groups of 10, turning neighbours into informants that watch out for suspicious activities, has shown to be ineffective and has been blasted by many analysts. In April 2014, the government launched Operation Usalama Watch for the purpose of verifying and detecting the existence of illegal immigration, arresting suspects of participating in terrorist activities and curbing crime in general. Around 4,000 Somalis were detained and transported in inhumane and degrading conditions to Kasarani state, prompting harsh criticism from human rights organisations and the Somali government. As a result, at least 300 people were deported, but that did not improve the climate of security and damaged relations between the Somali community and the Kenyan government. Although al-Shabaab is identified as a Somali group, as a Salafist-Wahhabi organisation it does not recognise the borders of the nation state and habitually makes appeals to the Muslim community of the Horn of Africa more so than to the Somali people, which in Kenya includes 4.3 million (11% of the population). This is two times the Somali population in Kenya, estimated at 2.4 million, according to a census in 2009. However, only some of the Muslims in Kenya follow the Wahhabi creed from Saudi Arabia, according to the International Crisis Group,[66] which could place them within al-Shabaab's orbit, while all other Muslims in Kenya have always been closer to the government, meaning that they oppose the movement. In this sense, al-Shabaab has also tried to exploit religious and ethnic divisions and social and economic grievances in the country to deepen the political divide, especially on the coast, where the government has at times accused the Mombasa Republican Council and groups with criminal ties of being connected to the attacks in order to divert attention away from serious safety shortcomings. The government's actions against Muslim organisations in Mombasa like the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) and the killing of its leader, as well as the new counterterrorism law approved in 2012, were opposed by Muslim organisations and human rights groups that considered it discriminatory, stoking anti-government sentiment among groups of Muslims across the country.

The regular retaliation against the Somali Muslim population and xenophobic reaction triggered after several incidents helps to increase support for the actions of al-Shabaab and its allies.

The regular retaliation against the Somali Muslim population and xenophobic reaction triggered after several incidents helps to increase support for the actions of al-Shabaab and its allies

Although the military action undertaken by the international community has weakened the Islamist group in Somalia, al-Shabaab's main threat is the internal division between international jihadism and Somali nationalism: from being residual, the former has become dominant, and the leader killed in September, Ahmed Godane, was a fervent supporter of the internationalist faction, having executed opposition leaders and expelled or cut back the power of the most nationalist sectors to the point where al-Shabaab is now a de facto transnational jihadist movement.[67] His successor, Ahmed Omar (also known as Abu Ubaidah), has continued along the same lines. Thus, aside from the invasion and occupation of Somalia (as part of the Muslim world) by the Kenyan Armed Forces, al-Shabaab is justifying its attacks in Kenya by referring to the oppression, intimidation and extrajudicial killings suffered by the Muslim population there. As a result, it is imperative that Nairobi reconsider its policy towards Somalia, its efforts in the fight against the Somali al-Shabaab insurgency and its policies towards the Muslim and Somali communities in Kenya. Despite having helped to weaken the activities and power of al-Shabaab in Somalia, this has led to the emergence of the group in Kenya and is a growing factor of instability and violence that may have even more serious consequences in the near future.

---

66. International Crisis Group, *Kenya: Closer to Home,* International Crisis Group, Africa Briefing no. 102, 2014.
67. Boru Halakhe, op. cit.

Glossary

ABM: Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis

ADF-NALU: Allied Defence Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda

ADSC: All Darfur Stakeholders Conference

AFISMA: African-led International Support Mission to Mali

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

AKR: New Kosovo Alliance

ALBA: Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)

ALP: Arakan Liberation Party

AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia

APCLS: Alliance de Patriots pour un Congo Libre et Souverain

APHC: All Parties Hurriyat Conference

APRD: Armée Populaire pour la Réstauration de la République et de la Démocratie (Popular Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy)

AQAP: Al-Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula

AQIM: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

ARMM: Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

ARS: Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASWJ: Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a

ATLF: All Terai Liberation Front

ATMM: Akhil Tarai Mukti Morcha

ATTF: All Tripura Tiger Force

AU: African Union

BDP: Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)

BH: Boko Haram

BIFF: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters

BIFM: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement

BINUCA: United Nations Integrated Office in the Central African Republic

BLA: Baluch Liberation Army

BLF: Baluch Liberation Front

BLT: Baloch Liberation Tigers

BNUB: United Nations Office in Burundi

BRA: Balochistan Republican Army

CAP: Consolidated Appeal Process

CARICOM: Caribbean Community

CEMAC: Monetary and Economic Community of Central Africa

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CHD: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

CNDD-FDD: Congrès National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy)

CNDP: Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (National Congress for People's Defence)

CNF: Chin National Front

CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement

CPI-M: Communist Party of India-Maoist

CPJP: Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace)

CPN-UML: Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DHD: Dima Halim daogah

DHD (J): Dima Halim Daogah, Black Widow faction

DHD (Nunisa): Dima Halim Daogah (Nunisa faction)

DKBA: Democratic Karen Buddhist Army

DMLEK: Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrean Kunama

DPA: Darfur Peace Agreement

EA: Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity)

ECCAS: Economic Community of Central African States

ECOMIB: ECOWAS mission in Guinea-Bissau

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

EDA: Eritrean Democratic Alliance

EEBC: Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission

EFDM: Eritrean Federal Democratic Movement

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

EPP: Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (Paraguayan Popular Army)

EPPF: Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)

ETIM: East Turkestan Islamic Movement

ETLO: East Turkestan Liberation Organization

EU: European Union

EUAVSEC SOUTH SUDAN: EU Aviation Security Mission in South Sudan

EUBAM: EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine

EUBAM LIBYA: EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya

EUBAM Rafah: European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah

EUCAP NESTOR: EU Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity-Building in the Horn of Africa

EUCAP SAHEL NIGER: EU CSDP Mission in Niger

EU NAVFOR SOMALIA: European Union Naval Force in Somalia – Operation Atalanta

EUFOR ALTHEA: European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina

EUJUST LEX: EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq

EULEX KOSOVO: EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo

EUMM: EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia

EUPOL AFGHANISTAN: EU Police Mission in Afghanistan

EUPOL COPPS: EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories

EUPOL RD CONGO: EU Police Mission in DR Congo

EUSEC RD CONGO: EU Security Sector Reform Mission

in DR Congo

EUTM Mali: EU Training Mission in Mali

EUTM SOMALIA: EU Somalia Training Mission

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)

FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas

FDLR: Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)

FDPC: Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain (Central African People's Democratic Front)

FEWS NET: USAID Net of Famine Early Warning System

FFR: Front des Forces de Redressement (Front of Forces for Recovery)

FIS: Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)

FJL: Freedom and Justice Party

FLEC-FAC: Frente de Liberação do Enclave de Cabinda (Cabinda Enclave's Liberation Front)

FNL: Forces Nationales de Libération (National Liberation Forces)

FOMUC: Force Multinationale en Centrafrique (CEMAC Multinational Forces in Central African Republic)

FPI: Front Populaire Ivorien (Ivorian Popular Front)

FPR: Front Populaire pour le Rédréssement (Popular Front for Recovery)

FRF: Forces Republicaines et Federalistas (Republican and Federalist Forces)

FRODEBU: Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi (Burundi Democratic Front)

FRUD : Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et la Démocratie (Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy)

FSA: Free Syrian Army

FTG: Federal Transition Government

FUC: Front Uni pour le Changement Démocratique (United Front for Democratic Change)

FUDD: Frente Unido para la Democracia y Contra la Dictadura (United Front for Democracy and Against Dictatorship)

FURCA: Force de l'Union en République Centrafricaine (Union Force in the Central African Republic)

GAM: Gerakin Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement)

GEI: Gender Equity Index

GIA: Groupe Islamique Armé (Armed Islamic Group)

GIE: Gender Inequality Index

GSPC: Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat)

HAK: Armenian National Congress

HDZ: Croatian Democratic Union

HDZ 1990: Croatian Democratic Union - 1990

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

HPG: Humanitarian Policy Group

HRC: Human Rights Council

HRW: Human Rights Watch

HUM: Harkat-ul-Mujahideen

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

IBC: Iraq Body Count

ICC: International Criminal Court

ICG: International Crisis Group

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

ICR/LRA: Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA

ICTR: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia

ICU: Islamic Courts Union

IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

IFLO: Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia

IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IHL: International Humanitarian Law

IISS: International Institute for Strategic Studies

IMU: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

INLA: Irish National Liberation Army

IOM: International Organization for Migrations

IRA: Irish Republican Army

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force

ISF: International Stabilisation Force

ISIS: Islamic State

JEM: Justice and Equality Movement

JKLF: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front

JTMM: Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (People's Terai Liberation Front)

KANU: Kenya African National Union

KCK: Koma Civakên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Communities Union)

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party

KFOR: NATO Mission in Kosovo

KIA: Kachin Independence Army

KIO: Kachin Independence Organization

KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army

KLNLF: Karbi Longri National Liberation Front

KNA: Kuki Liberation Army

KNF: Kuki National Front

KNPP: Karenni National Progressive Party

KNU: Kayin National Union

KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army

KPF: Karen Peace Force

KPLT: Karbi People's Liberation Tiger

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government

KYKL: Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (Organization to Save the Revolutionary Movement in Manipur)

LeT: Lashkar-e-Toiba

LJM: Liberation and Justice Movement

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

M23: March 23 Movement

MAP-OAS: OAS Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia

MB: Muslim Brotherhood

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

MEND: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta

MFDC: Mouvement de las Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance)

MIB OAS: Good Offices Mission in Ecuador and Colombia

MICOPAX: Mission de Consolidation de la Paix en République Centrafricaine (CEEAC Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic)

MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MINURCA: United Nations Mission in Central African Republic

MINURCAT: United Nations Mission in Central African Republic and Chad

MINURSO: United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MINUSTAH: United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti.

MISCA: African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

MISMA: International Mission of Support in Mali

MIT: Turkish National Intelligence Organisation

MJLC: Mouvement des Jeunes Libérateurs Centrafricains (Central African Young Liberators Movement)

MLC: Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of Congo)

MMT: Madhesi Mukti Tigers

MNLA: Mouvement National pour la Libération de L'Azawad (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad)

MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front

MONUC: United Nations Mission in DR Congo

MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MOSOP: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People

MOVADEF: Movimiento por Amnistía y Derechos Fundamentales (Amnesty and Fundamental Rights Movement)

MPRF: Madhesi People's Rights Forum

MQM: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (United National Movement)

MRC: Mombasa Republican Council

MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctor's Without Borders)

MUJAO: Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa

MVK: Madhesi Virus Killers

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NC: Nepali Congress Party

NCP: National Congress Party

NDF: National Democratic Front

NDFB: National Democratic Front of Bodoland

NDPVF: Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force

NDV: Niger Delta Vigilante

NGO: Non Governmental Organization

NLD: National League for Democracy

NLFT: National Liberation Front of Tripura

NMSP: New Mon State Party

NNC: Naga National Council

NNSC: Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission

NPA: New People's Army

NSCN-IM: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muivah

NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang

NTC: National Transitional Council of Lybia

OAS: Organization of American States

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OFDM: Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement

OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

OLF: Oromo Liberation Front

OMIK: OSCE Mission in Kosovo

ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front

OPC: Oromo People's Congress

OPM: Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Organization)

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

PALU: Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (Unified Lumumbist Party)

PARECO : Patriotes Résistants Congolais (Coalition of Congolese Patriotic Resistance)

PCP : Partido Comunista de Perú (Comunist Party of Peru)

PDLF: Palestinian Democratic Liberation Front

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PJAK: Party of Free Life of Kurdistan

PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Worker's Party)

PLA: People's Liberation Army

PNA: Palestinian National Authority

POLISARIO Front: Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro

PPP: Pakistan People's Party

PPRD: Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy)

PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak

PREPAK Pro: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak Progressive

PYD: Democratic Union Party

RAMSI: Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

RENAMO: Mozambican National Resistance

RFC: Rassemblement des Forces pour le Changement (Coalition of Forces for Change)

RPF: Revolutionary Patriotic Front

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

RSADO: Red See Afar Democratic Organization

RTF: Regional Task Force

SADC: Southern Africa Development Community

SADR: Saharan Arab Democratic Republic

SAF: Sudanese Armed Forces

SCUD: Socle pour le Changement, l'Unité Nationale et la Démocratie (Platform for Change, National Unity and Democracy)

SSA-S: Shan State Army-South

SSC: Sool, Saanag and Cayn

SFOR: NATO Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina

SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

SLA: Sudan Liberation Army

SLA-Nur: Sudan Liberation Army-Nur

SLDF: Sabaot Land Defence Forces

SNNPR: Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region

SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM-N: Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North

SSA-S: Shan State Army-South

SSDM/A: South Sudan Democratic Movement/ Army

SSLA: South Sudan Liberation Army

SSNPLO: Shan State Nationalities People's Liberation Organization

TAK: Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons)

TFG: Transitional Federal Government

TIPH: Temporary International Presence in Hebron

TMLP: Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party

TPLF: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

TTP: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

UAD: Union pour l'Alternance Démocratique (Union for Democratic Changeover)

UCPN-M: Unified Communist Party of Nepal

UFDD: Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Union of Forces for Democracy and Development)

UFDG: Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (Democratic Forces Union of Guinea)

UFDR: Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (Union of Democratic Forces Coalition)

UFF: Ulster Freedom Fighters

UFR: Union des Forces de la Résistance (United Resistance Forces)

ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam

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

UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEF: United Nations Emergency Force

UNFICYP: United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

UNHCHR: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Fund

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNIOGBIS: United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau

UNIPSIL: United Nations Peace-building Office in Sierra Leone

UNISFA: United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

UNITAF: Unified Task Force

UNLF: United National Liberation Front

UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo

UNMIL: United Nations Mission in Liberia

UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNMIT: United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

UNMOGIP: United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

UNOCA: United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

UNOCI: United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

UNOGBIS: United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau

UNOWA: United Nations Office in West Africa

UNPOS: United Nations Political Office in Somalia

UNRCCA: United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UNSCO: United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East

UNSCOL: Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon

UNSMIL: United Nations Support Mission in Libya

UNMIT: United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

UNSOM: United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation

UPDS: United People's Democratic Solidarity

UPPK: United People's Party of Kangleipak

UPRONA: Union pour le Progrès National (Union for National Progress)

USA: United States of America

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

UVF: Ulster Volunteer Force

UWSA: United Wa State Army

VRAE: Valley between Rivers Apurimac and Ene

WB: World Bank

WILPF: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WFP: World Food Programme

WPNLC: West Papua National Coalition for Liberation

WTO: World Trade Organisation

YPG: People's Protection Units

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

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. It was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, parallel diplomacy, training and awareness raising activities. Its main scope of action includes analysing conflicts, peace processes, gender, human rights and transnational justice, and education for peace.

The 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, human rights and transitional justice, the gender dimension in conflict and peacebuilding, and peace education.

- Second track diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through second track initiatives, including facilitation tasks with armed actors.

- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.

- 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.

- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.
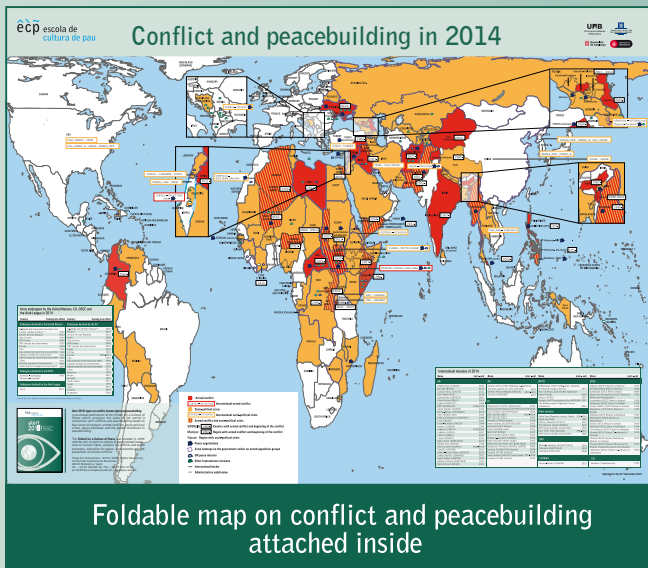

Escola de Cultura de Pau
Plaça del Coneixement, Edifici MRA, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Spain)
Tel: +34 93 586 88 42; Fax: +34 93 581 32 94
Email: pr.conflictes.escolapau@uab.cat / Website: http://escolapau.uab.cat

Alert 2015! 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 four perspectives: armed conflicts, socio-political crises, peace processes and gender issues in peacebuilding. The analysis of the most important events in 2014 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.

Conflict and peacebuilding in 2014

Foldable map on conflict and peacebuilding attached inside

With the support of:

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament
http://cooperaciocatalana.gencat.cat/ca

Generalitat de Catalunya

Ajuntament de Barcelona

This encyclopedic resource offers peace and conflict specialists an opportunity each year to assess the status of peacebuilding and conflict dynamics across time and place. Through statistics, charts, and narratives –including particularly enlightening essays on the gender dimensions of peace and conflict– this yearly volume illuminates new trends and pervasive patterns and flags opportunities and risks for peace. An indispensable contribution to the field, it forces us out of our disciplinary and geographic silos toward a much-needed global vision.

Dr. Virginia M. Bouvier,
Senior Advisor for Latin America for the US Institute of Peace and former member of the Standby Team of the United Nations Mediation Support Unit

For any centre of thought or laboratory of ideas, having reliable information and keeping up to date are essential and basic imperatives. Even more so for a "mediation centre" in its basic activity: Parallel or Second Track diplomacy aiming to prevent or resolve conflicts. Neither one nor the other can function without having thorough analyses of the reality and high-quality diagnoses. Within this demand, *Alert!* is confirmed as a first-rate tool of an unquestionable usefulness. The special care in presenting the facts and trends are specially appreciated, considering –as Heisenberg's principle states– that observation is susceptible of changing the nature of what is being observed. These precautions are especially welcome in the gender approach and dimension, as well as for the impact it all has on the civil population. One specific characteristic that deserves being mentioned is the skilful use of statistics. Nobody can deny the unquestionable eloquence of figures, but processing these figures that meets the analytical usefulness requires special training and experience. The authors of *Alert!* show a special and intuitive intelligence to transform these figures into an argument. In conclusion: for a do/action tank or a conflict transformation tank such as CITpax, the exact information on the status and context is the key element that determines success or failure in the always-unstable labyrinth of conflicts and peacebuilding. All professionals working with these scenarios must genuinely be thankful for such a comprehensive and rigorous publication as *Alert!*

Emilio Cassinello,
Director General of Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax)

Every conflict is unique and the crafting of a peace process has to respond to each specific context. But mediators and mediation support actors draw inspiration from what has been tried before in different settings. Reflecting on other experiences can be a way to capture the imagination of conflict parties and other stakeholders and give a sense of what is possible. *Alert!* is a valuable tool to inspire creativity, help deepen our understanding of the many twists and turns conflicts may take, and identify the sometimes surprising windows of opportunity for constructive resolution. In also highlighting the challenges of protracted conflicts, where peace processes have stalled, *Alert!* reminds us of our collective responsibility to pursue a peaceful resolution of disputes.

Roxaneh Bazergan,
United Nations Department of Political Affairs, Policy and Mediation Division, Mediation Support Unit