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UAB Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

alert 2023!

Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding

Icaria editorial

Alert 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding

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Index

List of tables, boxes, graphs and maps ____ 6
Executive Summary ____ 7
Conflict overview 2022 ____ 17

Chapters

1. Armed Conflicts ____ 19
1.1. Armed conflicts: definition ____ 23
1.2. Armed conflicts: analysis of trends in 2022 ____ 23
1.2.1. Global and regional trends ____ 23
1.2.2. Impact of conflict on the civilian population ____ 28
1.3. Armed conflicts: annual evolution ____ 31
1.3.1. Africa ____ 31
- Great Lakes and Central Africa ____ 31
- Horn of Africa ____ 41
- Maghreb - North Africa ____ 45
- Southern Africa ____ 47
- West Africa ____ 48
1.3.2. America ____ 54
1.3.3. Asia and the Pacific ____ 56
- South Asia ____ 56
- South-east Asia and Oceania ____ 60
1.3.4. Europe ____ 65
- Eastern Europe ____ 65
- South-east Europe ____ 68
1.3.5. Middle East ____ 69
- Mashreq ____ 69
- The Gulf ____ 75

2. Socio-political crises ____ 79
2.1. Socio-political crises: definition ____ 79
2.2. Socio-political crises: 2022 trend analysis ____ 86
2.2.1. Global trends ____ 86
2.2.2. Regional trends ____ 87
2.3. Socio-political crises: annual evolution ____ 91
2.3.1. Africa ____ 91
- Great Lakes and Central Africa ____ 91
- Horn of Africa ____ 96
- North Africa – Maghreb ____ 98
- West Africa ____ 101
2.3.2. America ____ 104
- North America, Central America and the Caribbean ____ 104
- South America ____ 108
2.3.3. Asia and the Pacific ____ 112
- Central Asia ____ 112
- East Asia ____ 114
- South Asia ____ 116
- South-east Asia and Oceania ____ 119
- The Pacific ____ 120
2.3.4. Europe ____ 121
- Eastern Europe ____ 121
- Russia and Caucasus ____ 124
- South-east Europe ____ 125
2.3.5. Middle East ____ 126
- Mashreq ____ 126
- The Gulf ____ 129

3. Gender, peace and security ____ 133
3.1. Gender inequalities ____ 133
3.2. The impact of violence and conflicts from a gender perspective ____ 134
3.2.1. Sexual violence in armed conflicts and socio-political crises ____ 135
3.2.2. Response to sexual violence in armed conflict ____ 139
3.2.3. Other gender-based violence in socio-political crises or armed conflict ____ 140
3.3. Peacebuilding from a gender perspective ____ 144
3.3.1. Resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda ____ 144
3.3.2. Gender in peace negotiations ____ 146
3.3.3. Civil society initiatives ____ 147

4. Opportunities for peace ____ 149
4.1. Ethiopia, facing a new window of opportunity for peacebuilding ____ 150
4.2. "Total Peace", an ambitious peace policy for Colombia ____ 152
4.3. A more conducive domestic, regional and international context for a negotiated resolution to the crisis in Venezuela ____ 154
4.4. Decisive opportunity? Challenges for a sustainable and inclusive peace in Yemen ____ 157
4.5. Promoting dialogue in a time of multipolar international order ____ 159

5. Risk scenarios ____ 161
5.1. Sudan-South Sudan: the deterioration of political transitions threatens regional stability ____ 162
5.2. Great Lakes: on the brink of a third Congolese war? ____ 164
5.3. Rising military tension on the Korean peninsula ____ 166
5.4. Intersecting challenges in Moldova in a time of war in Europe ____ 169
5.5. Women's rights under threat: gender apartheid in Iran and Afghanistan ____ 171

Glossary ____ 173
Escola de Cultura de Pau ____ 179

List of tables, boxes, graphs and maps

Map 1.1. Armed conflicts 18

Table 1.1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2022 20

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2022 23

Graph 1.2. Intensity of the armed conflicts in 2022 26

Graph 1.3. Intensity of the armed conflicts by region 26

Graph 1.4. Percentage of high intensity armed conflicts in the last decade 26

Box 1.1. Regional trends in armed conflict 27

Map 1.2. The 10 countries reporting the highest figures of internally displaced people as a result of conflict and violence 30

Map. 2.1. Socio-political crises 78

Table 2.1. Summary of socio-political crises in 2022 80

Box 2.1. High intensity socio-political crises in 2022 86

Graph 2.1. Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2022 87

Graph 2.2. Intensity of the socio-political crises by region 87

Map 3.1. Gender, peace and security 132

Table 3.1. Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality 134

Table 3.2. Countries affected by socio-political crises with a medium-low or low level of gender equality 135

Table 3.3. Armed actors and sexual violence in conflicts 136

Map 3.2. Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population 143

Table 3.4. Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population 143

Table 3.5. Countries which have National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 and which are participating in peace negotiations and processes 145

Map 4.1. Opportunities for peace 149

Map 5.1. Risk scenarios 161

Executive Summary

Alert 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding is an annual report analyzing the state of the world in terms of conflict and peacebuilding based on three main axes: armed conflict, tensions, gender and peace and security. The analysis of the most relevant events in 2022 and the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main scenarios of armed conflict and social and political tension around the world allows for a regional comparative vision and also allows identifying global trends and elements of risk and preventive warnings for the future. Furthermore, the report also identifies peacebuilding opportunities or opportunities to scale down, prevent or resolve conflicts. In both cases, one of the main objectives in this report is to make available all the information, analyses and identification of warning factors and peace opportunities for decision-makers, those intervening for the peaceful resolution to conflicts, or those giving a greater political, media or academic visibility to the many situations of political and social violence in the world.

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

Some of the most relevant conclusions and information in the *Alert 2023!* report are listed below:

- Thirty-three armed conflicts were reported in 2022, a slightly higher figure than the previous year. Most of the armed conflicts were concentrated in Africa (16) and Asia (nine), followed by the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and the Americas (one).

- For the first time in a decade, high-intensity armed conflicts accounted for more than half (52%) of all cases worldwide.

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine increased the number of international conflicts (9% of the total) in 2022, although most armed conflicts were internationalised internal ones (79%).

- 30% of the armed conflicts in 2022 reported higher levels of violence than the previous year.

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered one of the two international armed conflicts in the world in 2022, setting off high-intensity violence, a serious humanitarian crisis and global repercussions in several different areas, such as the global rise in fuel and food prices and food insecurity.

- Following the trend reported in previous periods, Africa was home to the largest number of armed conflicts globally. The continent registered 16 cases, representing 49% of the total, although the percentage of high-intensity cases was slightly reduced.

- Asia continued to be the only region in the world with internal armed conflicts, except the conflict in Ethiopia (Oromia) in Africa. The three armed conflicts of this type, in the Philippines (NPA), India (CPI-M) and Thailand (south) accounted for one third of the cases in the region.

- OCHA warned of the development of the largest global food crisis in modern history caused by conflicts, climate shocks, the threat of global recession and escalating global insecurity.

- During 2022, the use of sexual and gender-based violence against civilians by state and non-state armed actors, and especially against women and girls, continued to be reported.

- During 2022, there were 108 socio-political crises reported around the world. The crises were mainly concentrated in Africa (36) and Asia and the Pacific (33), while the rest took place in the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11).

- Half the cases identified in 2022 got worse compared to the previous year.

- Not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year.

- 23 of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality, while three occurred in countries with a medium-low level of gender equality.

- 24 of the 33 ongoing armed conflicts occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the implementation of legislation or policies criminalising the LGBTQ+ population.

- The use of sexual violence was reported in Haiti, the Ethiopian region of Tigray, South Sudan, and in Ukraine in the context of the Russian invasion.

- Two peacekeeping missions, MONUSCO and MINUSCA, accounted for 90% of the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

- In 2021, 45,000 women were murdered by their partners or family members, which represents 56% of the total number of female homicides worldwide.

- *Alert 2023!* identifies five opportunities for peace in Ethiopia; Venezuela; Colombia; Yemen; and in relation to the promotion of prevention and dialogue.

- The report highlights six risk scenarios regarding including the tension between DRC and Rwanda the instability of the transitional processes of Sudan and South Sudan; extreme gender discrimination in Iran and Afghanistan; Molvoda; and North Korea and South Korea.

Structure

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

Armed conflicts

The first chapter (Armed conflicts)[1] describes the evolution, type, causes and dynamics in active conflicts during the year; global and regional trends in armed conflicts in 2022 are analyzed, as well as the impacts of such conflicts on the civilian population.

33 armed conflicts were reported in 2022

In 2022, there was a slight increase in the number of armed conflicts compared to the previous year. In total, 33 cases were reported, compared to 32 conflicts in 2021 and 34 in 2020, 2019 and 2018. The escalation of violence in the Oromia region (Ethiopia) led that case to be reclassified as an armed conflict, which pitted the Ethiopian federal security forces supported by the Amharic Fano militia against the Oromo armed group OLA. Another significant change in 2022 was the transformation of the violence in Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 expanded the previous armed conflict in the eastern part of the country, giving way to an international conflict with serious multidimensional consequences.

The trend of previous periods was upheld in the geographical distribution of the armed conflicts. The vast majority continued to be concentrated in Africa (16) and Asia (nine), followed by the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and the Americas (one). Therefore, almost half the cases (49%) took place in Africa.

Regarding the relationship of the actors involved in the conflicts and the scene of the hostilities, armed conflicts were identified as internal, international and, for the most part, internationalised internal. In keeping with the trend of previous years, four of the 33 cases in 2022 (12%, 9% in 2021) were internal armed conflicts and three of these four cases took place in Asia. These are the conflicts in the Philippines (NPA), India (CPI-M) and Thailand (south). The other internal armed conflict was in Ethiopia (Oromia), in Africa. Three other cases, which account for 9% of the total (6% in 2021), were international in nature: the conflict in the western African region of the Sahel, the Palestinian-Israeli dispute in the Middle East and the war between Russia and Ukraine. Thus, Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to an increase in the number of international conflicts. Although interstate wars remained a minority, some analysts said that the invasion had put an end to assumptions about the post-Cold War international order, such as the exceptionality of war between states. The remaining 26 cases, which account for 79% (85% in 2021), were internationalised internal. These cases are characterised by the fact that one of the disputing parties is foreign, the armed actors in the conflict have bases or launch attacks from abroad and/or the dispute spills over into neighbouring countries. In many conflicts this factor of internationalisation took the form of the involvement of third-party actors as disputing parties, including international missions, ad-hoc regional and international military coalitions, states and armed groups operating across borders –such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or others.

Armed conflicts continued to be caused by multiple factors in 2022. 67% of the armed conflicts were primarily caused by questioning of the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state and/or disputes around the domestic or international policies of the respective governments, among other main factors. Questioning of the system was more significant and was seen together with other causes in 17 conflicts (52% of the cases), largely linked to the high presence of jihadist armed actors with particular interpretations of Islamic precepts. This was the case in conflicts in the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region, Mali, the DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Mozambique (north), Libya, Afghanistan, the

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 infrastructure or of natural resources) and on human safety (e.g., injured or displaced people, sexual violence, food insecurity, impact on mental health and on the social fabric or the disruption of basic services); and b) aims to achieve objectives different from those of common crime normally related to:
   - demands for self-determination and self-government or identity-related 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.

Armed conflicts in 2022*

AFRICA (16)	ASIA (9)	MIDDLE EAST (5)
Burundi -2015-	Afghanistan -2001-	Egypt (Sinai) -2014-
Cameroon (Ambazonia/ Northwest and Southwest) -2018-	India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Iraq -2003-
DRC (east) -1998-	India (CPI-M) -1967-	Israel-Palestine -2000-
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Myanmar -1948-	Syria -2011-
Ethiopia (Oromiya) -2022-	Pakistan -2001-	Yemen -2004-
Ethiopia (Tiger) -2020-	Pakistan (Baluchistan) -2005-	
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-	Philippines (NPA) -1969-	**EUROPE (2)**
Libya -2011-	Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Turkey (south-east) -1984-
Mali -2012-	Thailand (South) -2004-	Russia – Ukraine -2022-
Mozambique (North) -2019-		
RCA -2006-		**AMERICAS (1)**
Somalia -1988-		
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-		Colombia -1964-
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-		
South Sudan -2009-		
Western Sahel Region -2018-		

*The start date of the armed conflict is shown between hyphens

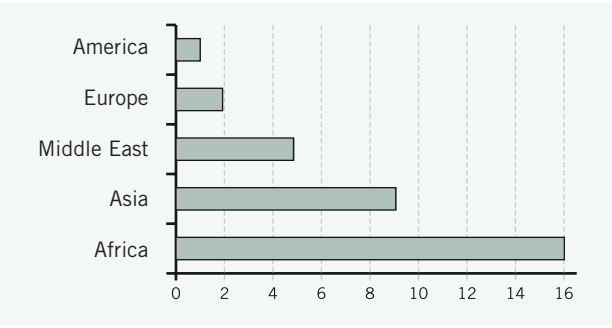
Philippines (Mindanao), Pakistan, Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Syria and Yemen. In three other cases, Colombia, the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), disputes about the system were associated with other types of insurgencies, with another type of ideological line.

Other notable motivations behind the armed conflicts were disputes around demands for identity and self-government, as one or both were seen in 20 or the 33 cases (61%). Of these, identity-related demands were more significant (61%). Demands for self-government were behind 42% of the cases. Here the conflict in Ethiopia (Oromia) stood out due to the escalation of fighting that pitted the Ethiopian security forces and Amharic Fano militia against the Oromo armed group OLP. Lastly, there were also many armed conflicts mainly caused by struggles to control territory and/or resources, alongside other main causes. These amounted to 39% of the total number of conflicts (13 of 33). Of the two, disputes over resources was more common (present in 33% of all conflicts), whereas control over territory was one of the main causes in fewer cases (6% of all armed conflicts). The armed conflicts that involved disputes over resources were mainly concentrated in Africa, though they were also indirectly present conflicts in other regions, perpetuating violence through economies of war.

In terms of their **trend**, levels of violence rose in 30% of the armed conflicts in 2022 compared to the previous year. This was true of the conflicts in Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, the Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), Somalia, Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), Myanmar, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Russia-Ukraine. Some of these conflicts seriously escalated. In the Western Sahel, rising violence against civilians caused 49% more deaths than was reported in 2021 and in the conflict in Mali, attacks by the two main jihadist groups against civilians increased fourfold. Somalia witnessed an escalation of violence unprecedented in previous years. In the Oromia region, the increase in clashes between security forces and the armed group OLA led to its reclassification as an armed conflict in 2022. Russia's invasion of Ukraine set off a high-intensity interstate international armed conflict that caused a serious humanitarian crisis. Another 15 armed conflicts (accounting for 46% of all cases) observed levels of violence and fighting similar to those reported in 2021. In eight armed conflicts (24% of all worldwide) did the levels of armed violence and its impacts decrease: Ethiopia (Tigray), CAR, Colombia, Afghanistan, Philippines (Mindanao), India (CPI-M), Thailand (south) and Yemen. In some of these cases the reduction in violent incidents was related to ceasefire agreements as part of negotiating processes -Ethiopia (Tigray), Yemen- or to their development or positive prospects, like in Thailand (south) and Colombia.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to an increase in the number of international conflicts

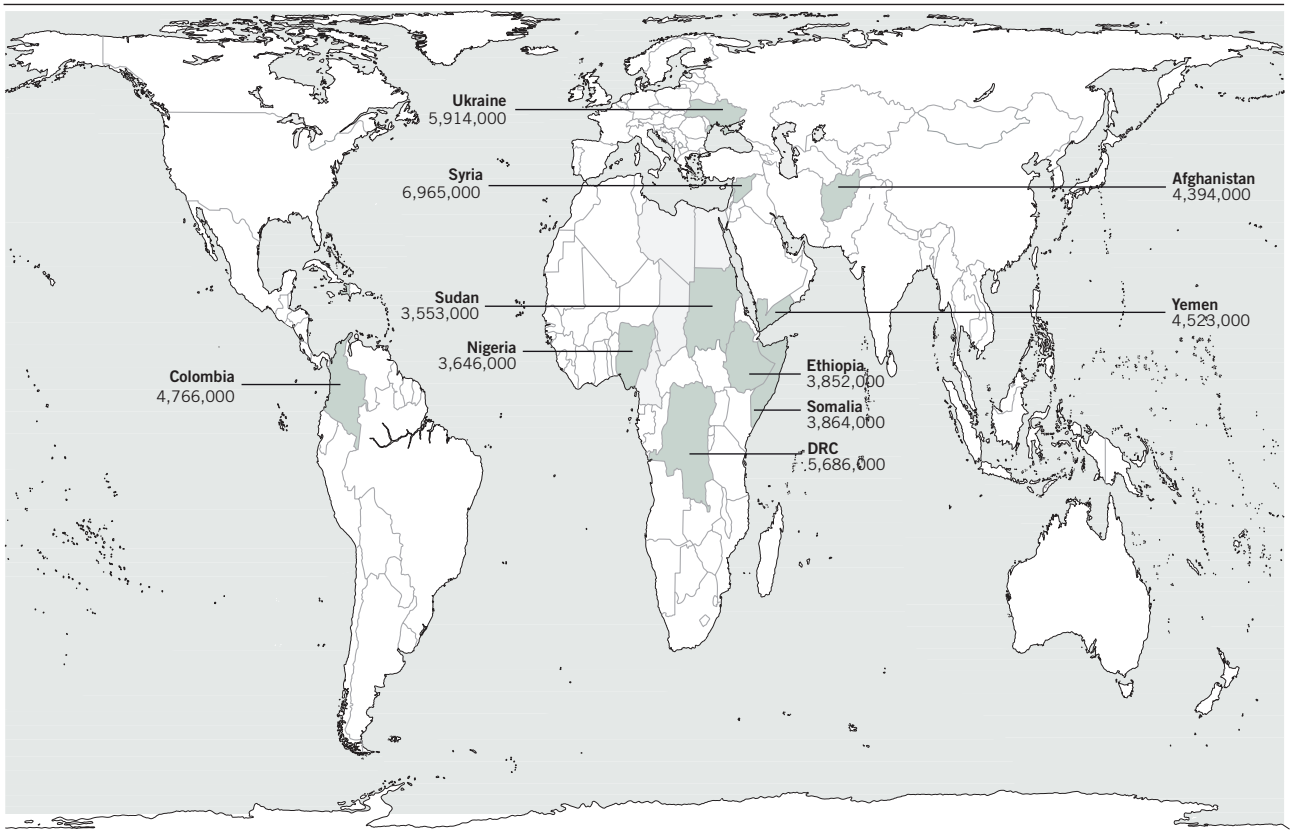
Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2022



The intensity of the armed conflicts in 2022 accentuated the trend of an increase in serious cases over the last 10 years. In other words, contexts characterised by levels of lethality of over a thousand victims per year, in addition to serious impacts on the population, massive forced displacements and severe consequences in the territory. If high-intensity conflicts accounted for around a quarter of all cases a decade ago, in recent years this proportion has been growing to represent practically half the conflicts (see Graph 1.4). During the last five years, high-intensity armed conflicts accounted for 40% of all armed conflicts in 2016 and 2017. They fell to between 27% and 32% between 2018 and 2019, respectively, and increased significantly in 2020, when they reached 47%. In 2021, high-intensity conflicts were even more prevalent, reaching 53% and exceeding half of all cases for the first time in the last decade. In 2022, this trend continued and there were 17 high-intensity armed conflicts (52% of all cases). In line with what was observed in 2021, the largest proportion of high-intensity conflicts in 2022 took place in Africa. The continent registered 12 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts identified around the world, or 70% of all high-intensity cases.

Civilians continued to suffer very serious consequences stemming from armed conflicts in 2022, as the United Nations and international and local organisations have regularly denounced. In addition, the impacts of armed conflicts continued to intertwine with other crises, aggravating the human security situation and violations of rights in conflict areas. The development of the various armed conflicts in 2022 confirms the persistence of the pattern of systematic abuse against civilians. Cases such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine stood out, which caused thousands of civilian fatalities and in which Russian military forces violated human rights with extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, forced deportations (including of minors), forced disappearances, torture and mistreatment and other impacts. In March 2022, the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Prosecutor's Office began to gather evidence for an investigation into past and present allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013. In 2022, the Human Rights Council established a commission of inquiry into violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Ukraine. Local and international human rights organisations denounced and documented serious human rights violations by Russian forces, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity. Many other armed conflicts in 2022 involved serious attacks against civilians. Among other cases, the Western Sahel experienced a rise in attacks against civilians by the security forces, the Wagner Group and the two main jihadist groups, and several massacres were reported. In the escalating conflict in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Armed Forces, the pro-government Amharic Fano militia and the armed group OLA were all accused of deliberate attacks

The 10 countries reporting the highest figures of internally displaced people as a result of conflict and violence in 2022



Source: Map prepared by the authors on the basis of the data provided in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023. Internal displacement and food security*, IDMC, 2023

against civilians, caught in the crossfire and subjected to extrajudicial and mass executions, arbitrary arrests and kidnappings, among other forms of violence based on ethnic identity or political opinions. Massacres and killings of civilians also took place in the DRC (east), Colombia, Myanmar and elsewhere.

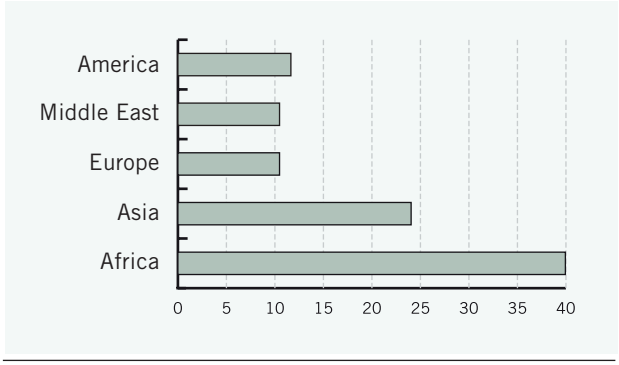
Armed conflicts continued to cause and/or worsen humanitarian crisis situations, which were aggravated by other conditions such as the pandemic, the effects of the war in Ukraine, the economic crisis and the climate emergency. Global humanitarian needs continued to grow, reaching a record threshold. According to the annual report Global Humanitarian Overview 2023, issued by the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA, one of every 23 people in the world is in need of humanitarian assistance, in contrast to the 274 million people in early 2022. As part of the worrying humanitarian outlook, OCHA warned that the biggest global food crisis in modern history was unfolding, caused by conflicts, climate shocks and the threat of global recession.

Armed conflicts also continued to have specific impacts on some population groups. Published in mid-2022, the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict documented almost 23,982 serious violations against children (of which around 22,645 took place in 2021 and another 1,337 had been previously committed, but could only be documented in 2021).

Sexual violence occurred in many armed conflicts. The 2022 annual report of the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed actors who were reasonably suspected of having committed or of being responsible for rape or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict situations on the UN Security Council's agenda. In a total of 10 conflicts (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria), most of the actors indicated by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors (39) and another 12 were government armed actors. According to the United Nations, 70% of identified actors in conflict were persistent perpetrators.

The repercussions of the armed conflicts also include forced displacement. According to UNHCR data, this continued to intensify and break record figures. The UNHCR report for the first half of 2022 estimated the refugee population at 32.5 million and internally displaced persons at 53.1 million (IDMC data on internal displacement referring to the end of 2021). Just over three quarters (76%) of the refugee population and the population in need of international protection came from six countries: Syria (6.8 million people),

Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2021



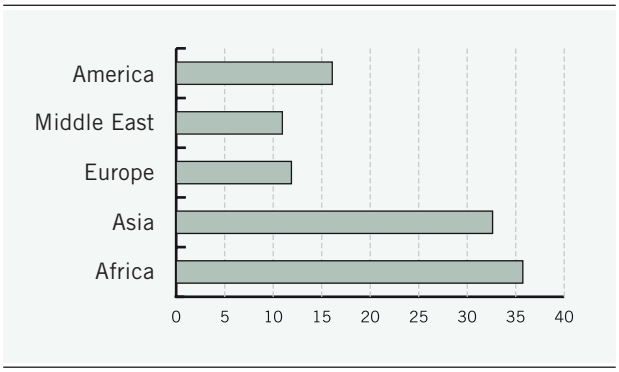
Venezuela (5.6), Ukraine (5.4), Afghanistan (2.8), South Sudan (2.4) and Myanmar (1.2). Furthermore, 69% lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin, according to UNHCR data. There were 1.1 million new asylum applications in the first half of 2022. In any case, the final calculation of 2022 will show even more internal and external forced displacement. Thus, during the year many conflicts were the scene of serious situations of forced displacement. In the crisis in Ukraine, it was estimated that there were 5.9 million internally displaced people, 7.9 million people registered as refugees in Europe and 4.9 million refugees from Ukraine registered to receive temporary protection in Europe or other similar national protection mechanisms at the end of 2022.

Socio-political crises

The second chapter (**Socio-political crises**)[2] looks at the most relevant events regarding social and political tensions recorded during the year and compares global and regional trends. **One hundred and eight socio-political crises were identified in 2022, 10 more than in 2021**, in line with the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises that has been reported in recent years (25 more since 2018). Africa and Asia were the regions with the highest number of socio-political crises (36 and 33, respectively), followed by the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11). Regarding the variation compared to the previous year, 15 new crises were identified and another five were no longer classified as socio-political crises, most of them in Africa: The Gambia, Ethiopia (Oromia), which transitioned to an armed conflict, the DRC-Uganda, Rwanda-Uganda and Spain (Catalonia). The socio-political crises that were added to the list, for whatever reason, were mainly concentrated in Asia and the Americas: Brazil; China – USA; Korea, DPR; Ecuador; USA; Fiji; Jamaica; Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands); Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan; Moldova;

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

Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2022



Papua New Guinea; Russia; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) and Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan).

One of the most outstanding aspects in analysing the socio-political crises in 2022 is that although no significant changes were observed in 32% of them and the tension fell in 18% of them compared to 2021, half the cases identified in 2022 got worse compared to the previous year. This was reflected in part by a substantial rise in the number of high-intensity crises, from 19 in 2021 to 28 in 2022: Burkina Faso; Chad; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC-Rwanda; Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland); Sudan; Ecuador; Haiti; Mexico; Peru; Venezuela; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India-China; India-Pakistan; Indonesia (West Papua); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Papua New Guinea; Sri Lanka; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh); Iran-USA, Israel; Iran; and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. In addition to the 28 high-intensity cases, which accounted for over a quarter of the total, 42% of the 108 socio-political crises were of low intensity (50% in 2021) and 32% were of medium intensity (31% in 2021). Therefore, not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year. This growing intensity was especially concentrated in Europe (where 92% of the cases escalated) and in Asia (where 56% did).

The main causal factors of the crises analysed included opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a government, at 71%; demands of self-determination and self-government and identity-based aspirations, at 38%; and control of resources or territory at 31%. These figures are roughly continuous with respect to those of the previous year, though crises associated with control of territory or resources increased from 21% to 31%. In a disaggregated analysis of factors, opposition to internal or international government policies was the most common cause, found in 64% of the 108 socio-political crises, which was exactly the same percentage as the previous year. The second most prevalent factor was identity-based aspirations (36%), which was especially important in regions such as Europe (67%) and the Middle East (46%). Next, at very similar percentages, came demands for self-determination and self-government (24%), control of resources (23%), opposition to the political, social or ideological system of the state as a whole (22%) and control of territory (19%).

Gender, peace and security

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

23 out of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality – Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region , CAR, DRC (east), DRC (east-ADF), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria, Yemen – or a medium-low level of gender equality – Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), and Mozambique (north). There was no data available on Somalia, a country currently experiencing an

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

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

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Cameroon (2)** Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest) Lake Chad Region **CAR** **Chad** Lake Chad Region **DRC (2)** DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) **Egypt** Egypt (Sinai)	**Iraq** **India (2)** India (Jammu and Kashmir) India (CPI-M) **Mali (2)** Mali Western Sahel Region **Niger (2)** Lake Chad Region Western Sahel Region **Nigeria** Lake Chad Region	**Palestine** Israel-Palestine **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan) **South Sudan** **Syria** **Sudan (2)** Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) **Yemen**
Medium-low level of equality		
Burkina Faso Sahel Region	**Ethiopia (2)** Ethiopia (Oromia) Ethiopia (Tigray)	**Mozambique** Mozambique (north)

*The country is indicated in bold and under each country the armed conflict or conflicts in that country in 2022 are specified. In parentheses the number of armed conflicts in that country is indicated when there is more than one.

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

Low level of equality		
Algeria **Bangladesh** **Benin** **CAR (2)** CAR Central Africa (LRA) **Chad** **Côte d'Ivoire** **DRC (3)** DRC DRC – Rwanda Central Africa (LRA) **Egypt (2)** Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan **Guinea** **Haiti**	**India (6)** India India (Assam) India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan **Iran (4)** Iran Iran (northeast) Iran (Sistan and Baluchestan) Iran – USA, Israel **Iraq** Iraq (Kurdistan) **Lebanon** Lebanon Israel – Syria –Lebanon **Mali** **Morocco** Morocco – Western Sahara **Niger**	**Nigeria (3)** Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta) **Palestine** **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan India – Pakistan **Senegal** Senegal (Casamance) **South Sudan (2)** Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) **Sudan (5)** Sudan Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan **Syria** Israel – Syria –Lebanon
Medium-low level of equality		
Burkina Faso **Ethiopia (3)** Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia	**Guatemala** **Mozambique** **Saudi Arabia**	**Tajikistan (3)** Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno- Badakhshan) Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan

armed conflict. Regarding the intensity of conflicts, 12 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (70% of cases) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality (in the case of Somalia, there was no data from the GDI). Furthermore, in eight other countries in which one or more armed conflicts were taking place, the level of discrimination was lower: according to the GDI, the level of equality in Libya, Colombia, Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Israel was high, while Myanmar showed a medium level of equality. Meanwhile, 47 of the 108 socio-political crises that were active in 2022 occurred in countries with a low or medium-low level of gender equality.

23 out of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality

As in previous years, during 2022 sexual violence was present in a large number of active armed conflicts. Its use, which in some cases was part of the deliberate war strategies of the armed actors, was documented in different reports, as well as by local and international media. The annual report submitted in 2022 by the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed groups which were strongly suspected of having committed or having been responsible for rapes or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict settings on the agenda of the UN Security Council. Most of the actors identified by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors (37), with an additional 12 being government-sponsored armed actors, across a total of 10 settings (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria). According to the United Nations, 70% of the identified actors in conflict were considered persistent perpetrators, since they had been included in the UN annex for five or more years. Beyond the list of perpetrators of sexual violence, the Secretary-General's report addressed the developments in 18 settings. Twelve of the 18 armed conflicts that were analysed in the UN Secretary-General's report experienced high levels of intensity in 2022 –Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel region, DRC, DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria and Yemen–, topping 1,000 fatalities during the year and producing serious impacts on people and the territory, including conflict-related sexual violence. Six of these also saw an escalation of violence during 2022 compared to the previous year – Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Western Sahel region, DRC (east), Somalia and Myanmar. Most of the armed actors identified by the Secretary-General as responsible for sexual violence in armed conflict were non-state actors, some of whom had been included on UN terrorist lists.

In 2022, 21 countries involved in peace negotiations had a National Action Plan in place to promote the participation of women in these processes. Nine of these countries were in Africa (Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan); two in Asia (South Korea and the Philippines); eight in Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Kosovo, and Ukraine); and two in the Middle East (Palestine and Yemen). Neither of the two countries in the Americas with ongoing negotiations had a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Thus, in 21 of the 39 active negotiations during 2022, at least one of the negotiating government actors had a plan of action that was supposed to guide its activity in terms of inclusion of the gender perspective and women's participation. The 21 negotiations and peace processes took place in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Morocco–Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, Korea (Republic of Korea - DPRK, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo, Russia-Ukraine, Palestine and Yemen. However, even if they had this tool, most peace negotiations continued to exclude women and did not include the gender perspective into their dynamics, calling into question the effectiveness of action plans as inclusive peacebuilding tools.

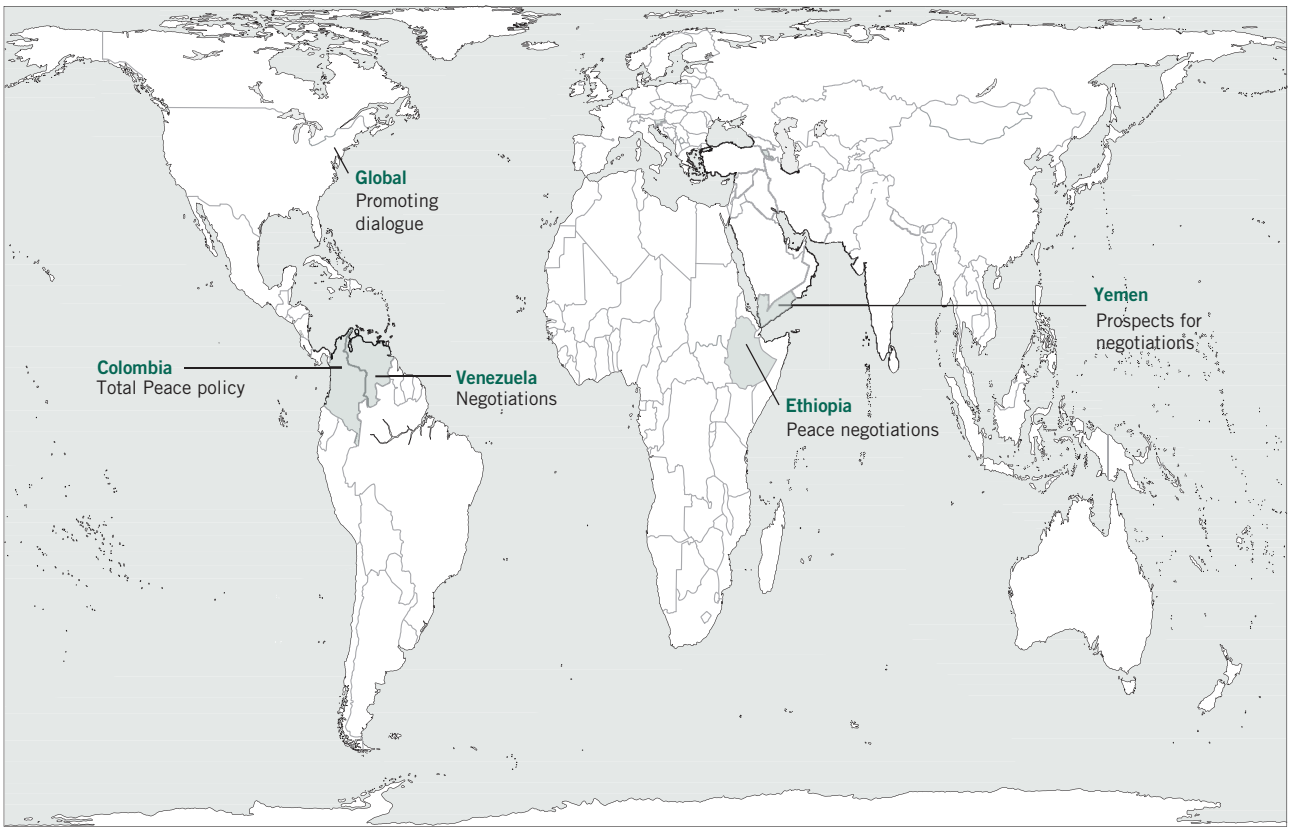
Peace Opportunities and Risk Scenarios

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

- **Ethiopia:** Ethiopia is immersed in a complex range of challenges, profound changes and instability aggravated in recent years. Added to this instability was the outbreak of the armed conflict in the Tigray region in November 2020 and the serious escalation of violence in the Oromia region in 2022, which seemed to push the country to the brink of the abyss. The permanent cessation of hostilities reached between the Ethiopian federal government and the political and military authorities of Tigray, as well as the start of peace talks with the armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), could give the country a new opportunity to start moving down a new political path, albeit beset with risks and fragility.

- **Colombia:** The government of Colombia is promoting a public peacebuilding policy known as "Total Peace" through dialogue with all active armed actors in the country. It is an ambitious project, as it seeks to resolve a multifaceted and entrenched conflict led by many different armed actors. The Colombian government must be able to conduct different negotiating processes simultaneously to establish peace in the country, which is beset with risks and obstacles.

Opportunities for peace



- **Venezuela:** The coming to power of new governments in Latin America and a certain regional depolarisation regarding the crisis in Venezuela; rapprochement between the governments of the US and Venezuela after Russia's invasion of Ukraine; the adoption of more conciliatory, pragmatic and possible positions by the Venezuelan government and opposition; the signing of an agreement between both parties in November 2022; and the holding of an international conference on Venezuela in Bogotá all seem to indicate the parties' greater predisposition to overcome the country's crisis through dialogue.

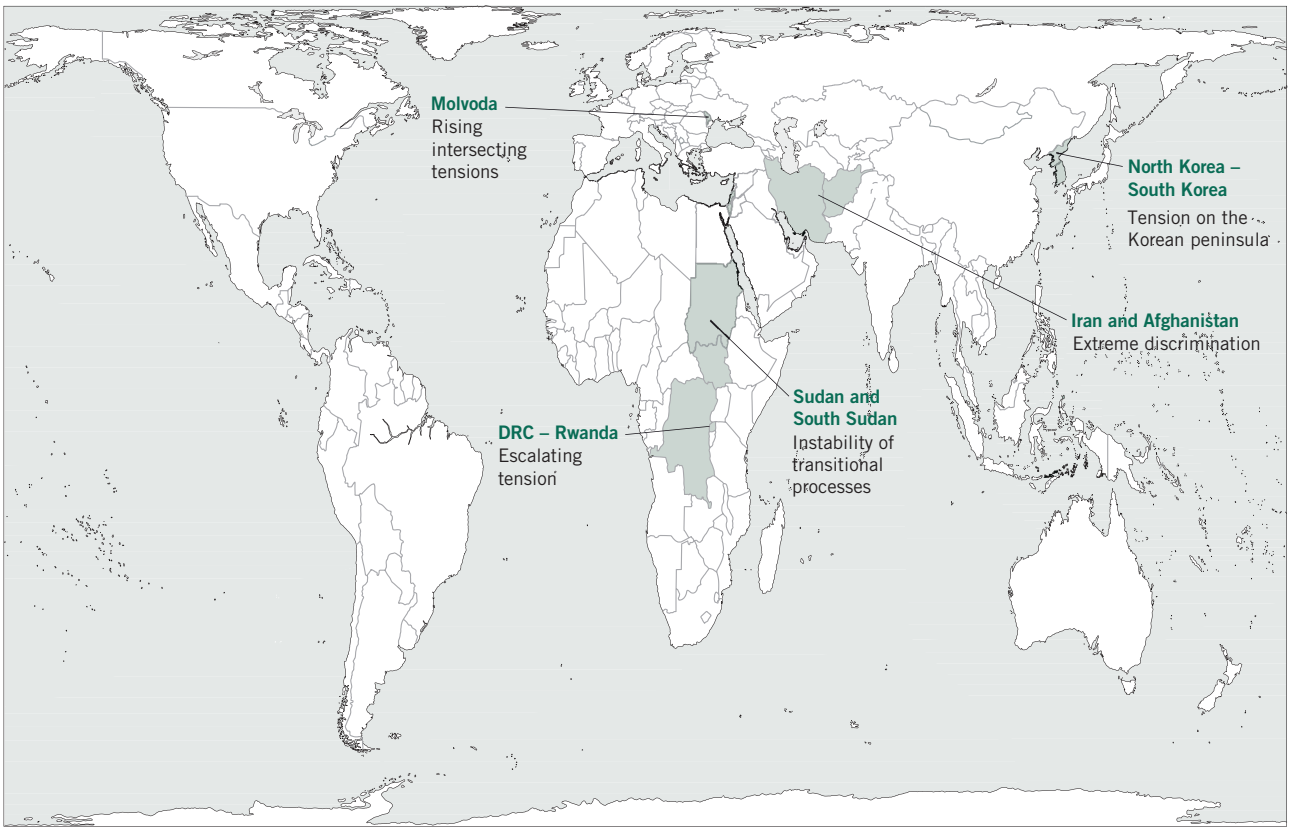
- **Yemen:** After eight years of high-intensity conflict, Yemen faces a decisive opportunity to try to end the hostilities. This expectation reflects several intertwining dynamics: a truce that has significantly reduced the violence and that in practice has been upheld, despite not being formally renewed; the establishment of a negotiating channel between Riyadh and the Houthis under the mediation of Oman; and the rapprochement and restoration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran with the possibility of repercussions in Yemen given the role of both countries in the conflict, among other factors. However, there are still important challenges ahead before we see firm prospects for a sustainable and inclusive peace in Yemen.

- **Promotion of conflict prevention and dialogue:** There is a serious deterioration in the human security of many populations around the world due to conflicts, hand-in-hand with climate change, armed conflicts of increasing intensity and geostrategic rivalry. At the same time, armed conflict prevention and the promotion of negotiated solutions to conflicts are still relevant and needed and have been accompanied by an expansion of actors, mechanisms and architectures in recent decades. The UN-backed New Agenda for Peace and the scenario of conflicts across the world increase the urgent need and opportunity to reinvigorate conflict prevention and support for dialogue.

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

- **Sudan-South Sudan:** Both countries face major crises in their transitional processes, marked by the power struggle between their main leaders, the problems in building a unified army and the timing and forms of devolving power to the people. The latest episode in the crisis in Sudan, in April 2023, which has resulted in fighting between the Sudanese Army and paramilitary forces, threatens to end the fragile transition in the country, aggravate the humanitarian crisis in the region and create a ripple effect of instability in neighbouring countries and particularly in neighbouring South Sudan.

- **DRC – Rwanda:** The relationship between the DRC



and Rwanda seriously deteriorated in 2022 as a result of sporadic clashes between both countries' security forces in the border area and accusations of Rwanda's military and logistical support for the offensive of the armed group M23 in North Kivu. Different regional diplomatic initiatives have so far failed to reverse the situation. A more detailed analysis is essential to understanding the local, regional and international dynamics at the origins of this conflict in order to try to resolve it.

- **Korean Peninsula:** After a brief period of rapprochement in inter-Korean relations and dialogue between North Korea and the US about the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula (2018-19), the political and military tension on the Korean peninsula has escalated dramatically in recent years, and very clearly since 2022. This escalation has included rising military tension and belligerent episodes between North and South Korea on the land and sea border, an unparalleled increase in the number of North Korean missile launches, South Korea's growing assertiveness in responding to those weapons tests, Pyongyang's resumption of its nuclear programme and manufacture of new weapons, heightening tension between North Korea and Japan and increasing cooperation between the US and South Korea on nuclear matters.

- **Moldova:** The country is the scene of rising multidimensional and intersecting tensions influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The deterioration of the situation has been reflected in risks of the conflict spreading to Moldova, reports of covert coup plans, risks of greater polarisation with territorial expression and the socio-economic crisis. In the short and medium term, Moldova risks rising or chronically intertwined tensions that require strengthened international support to help to prevent the increase of tension resulting from the conflict in Ukraine and to promote democratic cohesion and human security.

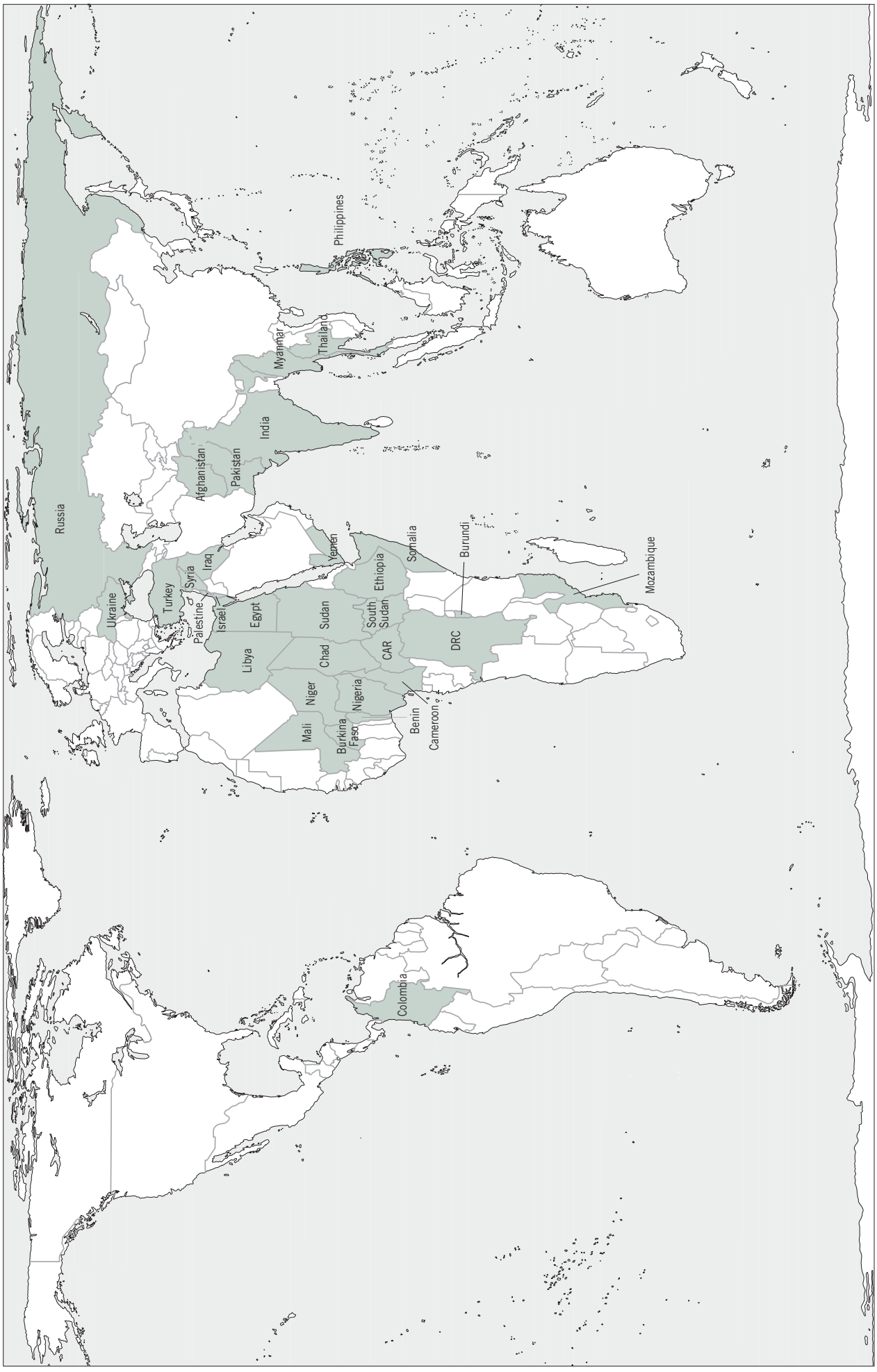
- **Iran and Afghanistan:** The worsening of discriminatory policies against women and intensified attempts to control their lives and bodies in Iran and Afghanistan have been in the media spotlight, in part due to protests and demonstrations led by women against misogyny and systematic violations of their rights and freedoms. Given the extreme, systematic and structural discrimination against women in both countries, a proposal has even been articulated to recognise the situation as a crime of gender apartheid. Many different actors have criticised this trend against women and expressed their alarm at the regimes' repressive response. Despite the international outcry, there is a risk that both Tehran and Kabul will persist in their policies and that the situation of women in both countries will drag on or get worse, that media coverage will fade and that some actors in the international community take for a utilitarian approach to the defence of women's rights, promoting or ignoring them based on conjunctural interests.

Conflict overview 2022

Continent	Armed conflict			Socio-political crises			TOTAL
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	
Africa	*Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West South West)* *DRC (east)* DRC (east-ADF) Ethiopia (Oromia) *Ethiopia (Tigray)* Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) *Mali* Mozambique (north) *Somalia* *Sudan (Darfur)* *South Sudan* West Sahel Region	*CAR* *Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)*	Burundi *Libya*	Burkina Faso *Chad* *DRC – Rwanda* Ethiopia Kenya *Mali* Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland) *Sudan*	Algeria Benin Côte d'Ivoire Djibouti DRC Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan Guinea Guinea-Bissau *Morocco – Western Sahara* Tunisia Uganda	Central Africa (LRA) Equatorial Guinea Eritrea *Eritrea – Ethiopia* Eswatini *Mozambique* Niger Nigeria (Delta Niger) Rwanda Rwanda - Burundi *Senegal (Casamance)* *Sudan – South Sudan* Tanzania Zimbabwe	
SUBTOTAL	**12**	**2**	**2**	**10**	**12**	**14**	**52**
America		*Colombia*		Ecuador *Haiti* Mexico Peru *Venezuela*	Brazil Chile El Salvador	Bolivia Colombia Cuba Guatemala Honduras Jamaica Nicaragua USA	
SUBTOTAL		**1**		**5**	**3**	**8**	**17**
Asia and Pacific	*Myanmar*	Afghanistan *Pakistan* Pakistan (Baluchistan)	India (CPI-M) India (Jammu and Kashmir) Philippines (Mindanao) *Philippines (NPA)* *Thailand (south)*	India – China India – Pakistan Indonesia (West Papua) Kazakhstan Kirgizstan – Tajikistan *Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea* *Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea* Papua New Guinea Sri Lanka	Bangladesh China – Japan China – Taiwan Pakistan South China Sea Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)	China (Hong Kong) China (Tibet) China (Xinjiang) China – USA Fiji India *India (Assam)* India (Manipur) *India (Nagaland)* Indonesia (Sulawesi) Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands) Kirgizstan Korea, DPR Lao, RPD Thailand Uzbekistan	
SUBTOTAL	**1**	**3**	**5**	**9**	**8**	**16**	**42**
Europe	*Russia - Ukraine*	Turkey (southeast)		*Armenia - Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)*	Belarus Bosnia and Herzegovina Moldova *Moldova, Rep. de (Transnistria)* Russia *Serbia – Kosovo* Turkey Turkey - Greece, Cyprus	*Georgia (Abkhasia)* *Georgia (South Ossetia)* Russia (North Caucasus)	
SUBTOTAL	**1**	**1**		**1**	**8**	**3**	**14**
Middle East	Iraq *Syria* *Yemen*		Egypt (Sinai) Israel – Palestine	Iran *Iran – USA, Israel* Israel – Syria – Lebanon	Egypt Iran (northwest) Iran (Sistan Balochistan) Lebanon	Saudi Arabia Bahrein Iraq (Kurdistan) *Palestine*	
SUBTOTAL	**3**	**0**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**16**
TOTAL	**17**	**7**	**9**	**28**	**35**	**45**	**141**

Armed conflicts and socio-political crises with ongoing peace negotiations, whether exploratory or formal, are identified in italics.

Map 1.1. **Armed conflicts**



1. Armed conflicts

- Thirty-three armed conflicts were reported in 2022, a figure slightly higher than the previous year. Most of the armed conflicts were concentrated in Africa (16) and Asia (nine), followed by the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and the Americas (one).
- High-intensity armed conflicts accounted for over half (52%) of all conflicts worldwide.
- During 2022, there was an escalation in fighting between the Ethiopian security forces supported by the Amharic Fano militia and the armed group OLA with serious consequences for civilians in the Ethiopian region of Oromia. Meanwhile, violence in the neighbouring region of Tigray decreased after the peace agreement was signed in November, which could put an end to one of the most serious armed conflicts in recent years.
- Attacks by al-Shabaab and the offensive launched by the federal government of Somalia and its local and international allies triggered an escalation of violence in 2022 that was unprecedented in recent years.
- In Mali, attacks against civilians carried out by the two main jihadist groups active in the region, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS or ISWAP), increased fourfold.
- The tri-border region in the Western Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) experienced the largest escalation of violent events linked to jihadist groups than any other region in Africa, increasing 36% compared to 2021.
- The offensive in the eastern DRC by the Rwandan-backed armed group March 23 Movement (M23) intensified during the year, straining relations between Kinshasa and Kigali.
- The dynamics of violence in South Sudan persisted due to clashes between the South Sudanese Armed Forces and irregular groups and between dissident Kitgwang factions of the SPLA-IO and to continued episodes of intercommunity violence that affected many different regions in the country.
- The conflict worsened in Pakistan, despite attempts at negotiations amid a serious political crisis and the impact of climate change.
- The armed conflict in Myanmar between the Army of the Military Junta and the ethnic armed groups and the Popular Defence Forces intensified, with serious humanitarian consequences.
- Russia launched a military invasion against Ukraine in February 2022, which led to an international armed conflict, a serious humanitarian crisis and global multidimensional impacts.
- Iraq continued to be the scene of a high-intensity armed conflict in a context characterised by political tensions that made it difficult to form a new government for months.
- After over a decade of armed conflict, the humanitarian crisis in Syria was at its worst since the start of the war.
- In 2022, Yemen saw a significant drop in hostilities and in the number of deaths from violence as a result of the truce that was in effect for six months.

The present chapter analyses the armed conflicts that occurred in 2022. It is organised into three sections. The first section offers a definition of armed conflict and its characteristics. The second section provides an analysis of the trends of conflicts in 2022, including global and regional trends and other issues related to international conflicts. The third section is devoted to describing the development and key events of the year in the various contexts. Furthermore, a map is included at the start of chapter that indicates the conflicts active in 2022.

Table 1.1. **Summary of armed conflicts in 2022**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties[3]	Intensity[4] / Trend[5]
AFRICA			
Burundi -2015-	Internationalised internal	Government, Imbonerakure Youth branch, political party CNDD-FDD, political party CNL, armed groups RED-Tabara, FPB (previously FOREBU), FNL	1
	Government		=
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) -2018-	Internationalised internal	Government of Cameroon, Government of Nigeria, political-military secessionist movement including the opposition Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT, including IG Sako, to which belong the armed groups Lebialem Red Dragons and SOCADEF) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC, including IG Sisiku, whose armed wing is the Ambazonia Defence Forces, ADF), multiple militias and smaller armed groups	3
	Self-government, Identity		=
CAR -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups that are members of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC, made up of anti-balaka factions led by Mokom and Ngaïssona, 3R, FPRC, MPC and UPC), other local and foreign armed groups, France, MINUSCA, Rwanda, Russia, Wagner Group	2
	Government, Resources		↓
DRC (east) -1998-	Internationalised internal	Government of DRC, FDLR, splinter factions of the FDLR (CNRD-Ubwiyunge, RUD-Urunana), Mai-Mai militias, Nyatura, APCLS, NDC-R, LRA, Ituri armed groups, South Kivu community-based militias, Burundian armed groups, Burundi, Rwanda, MONUSCO, EAC Regional Force (EACRF)	3
	Government, Identity, Resources		↑
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Internationalised internal	DRC, Uganda, Mai-Mai militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO	3
	System, Resources		↑
Ethiopia (Oromia) -2022-	Internal	Government of Ethiopia, Oromia State Regional Government, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), pro-government Amharic militia Fano	3
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Ethiopia (Tigray) -2020-	Internationalised internal	Government of Ethiopia, Government of Eritrea, security forces and militias of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), security forces of the Amhara and Afar regions, Amharic militia Fano	3
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↓
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government of Nigeria, Civilian Joint Task Force pro-government milita, Boko Haram factions (ISWAP, JAS-Abubakar Shekau, Ansaru, Bakura), civilian militias, Multinational Joint Task Force MNJTF (Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger)	3
	System		=

1. This column includes the states in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict.
2. This report classifies and analyses armed conflicts using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following main causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or the struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). In respect of the second type, the armed conflicts may be of an internal, Internationalised internal or international nature. An internal armed conflict is defined as a conflict involving armed actors from the same state who operate exclusively within the territory of this state. Secondly, an internationalised internal armed conflict is defined as that in which at least one of the parties involved is foreign and/or in which the tension spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Another factor taken into account in order to consider an armed conflict as internationalised internal is the existence of military bases of armed groups in neighbouring countries (in connivance with these countries) from which attacks are launched. Finally, an international conflict is one in which state and non-state parties from two or more countries confront each other. It should also be taken into account that most current armed conflicts have a significant regional or international dimension and influence due, among other factors, to flows of refugees, the arms trade, economic or political interests (such as legal or illegal exploitation of resources) that the neighbouring countries have in the conflict, the participation of foreign combatants or the logistical and military support provided by other states.
3. This column shows the actors that intervene directly in the hostilities. The main actors who participate directly in the conflicts are made up of a mixture of regular or irregular armed parties. The conflicts usually involve the government, or its armed forces, fighting against one or several armed opposition groups, but can also involve other irregular groups such as clans, guerrillas, warlords, armed groups in opposition to each other or militias from ethnic or religious communities. Although they most frequently use conventional weapons, and more specifically small arms (which cause most deaths in conflicts), in many cases other methods are employed, such as suicide attacks, bombings and sexual violence and even hunger as a weapon of war. There are also other actors who do not directly participate in the armed activities but who nevertheless have a significant influence on the conflict.
4. This column compares the trend of the events of 2022 with those that of 2021. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2021 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.
5. 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.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
Libya -2011-	Internationalised internal	Unity Government with headquarters in Tripoli, government with headquarters in Tobruk, armed groups including the Libyan National Army (LNA, also called Arab Libyan Armed Forces, ALAF), ISIS, AQIM, mercenaries, Wagner Group; Turkey	1
	Government, Resources, System		=
Mali -2012-	Internationalised internal	Government, CMA (MNLA, MAA faction, CPA, HCUA), Platform (GATIA, CMPFPR, MAA faction), MSA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, MRRA, al-Mourabitoun, JNIM/GSIM, Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP) –also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Katiba Macina, MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Holland, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Russia, Wagner Group	3
	System, Self-government, Identity		↑
Mozambique (north) -2019-	Internationalised internal	Government, Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) or Islamic State in Mozambique Province (ISMP) -formerly Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ)-, al-Qaeda, South African private security company DAG (Dyck Advisory Group), Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Mission in Mozambique of the Southern African Development Community (SAMIM), "Naparama" local militias	3
	System, Identity		=
Somalia -1988-	Internationalised internal	Federal Government of Somalia, pro-government regional forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan militias and warlords, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, Turkey, AMISOM/ATMIS, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Combined Task Force 151, al-Shabaab, ISIS	3
	Government, System		↑
South Sudan -2009-	Internationalised internal	Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), Kitgwang dissident factions of the SPLA-IO led by Peter Gatdet Simon Gatwech Dual and Johnson "Agwalek" Olony, SPLM-FD, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, NAS, SSUF (Paul Malong), SSOA, communal militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwelek), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups (NSSSOG), previously the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA, composed of NAS, SSUF/A, Real-SPLM, NDM-PF, UDRM/A, NDM-PF, SSNMC), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		=
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-government militias *janjaweed*, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, other groups, community militias, UNITAMS	3
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		=
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed group SPLM-N, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) armed coalition, PDF pro-government militias, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, South Sudan	2
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		↑
Western Sahel Region -2018-	International	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), Joint Task Force for the Liptako-Gourma Region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom), Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM), Islamic State in the Province of West Africa (ISWAP) -also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)-, Katiba Macina, Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups and community militias, Russia, Wagner Group	3
	System, Resources, Identity		↑
AMERICA			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, ELN, groups that emerged from the FARC, paramilitary groups	2
	System		↓
ASIA			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Taliban government National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF)	2
	System		↓
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)	1
	System		↓
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Governments, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Muhammad, United Jihad Council, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), The Resistance Front (TRF)	1
	Self-government, Identity		=

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
ASIA			
Myanmar -1948-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups (Ceasefire signatories: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; Non-signatories: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP), PDF	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias (Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan -TTP-, among them), international insurgents	2
	System		↑
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, Baloch Raji Aojoi Sangar, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura), ISIS	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		=
Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/ Dawlay Islamiyah/ Maute Group, Ansarul Khilafah Mindanao, Toraife group, factions of MILF and MNLF	1
	Self-government, System, Identity		↓
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, BRN and other separatist armed opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
EUROPE			
Turkey (south-east) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
Russia – Ukraine -2022-	International	Russia, Wagner Group, Donbas militias, Ukraine	3
	Government, Territory		↑
MIDDLE EAST			
Egypt (Sinai) -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (branch of ISIS), pro-government militia Union of Sinai Tribes (UST)	1
	System		=
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Iraqi military and security forces, Kurdish forces (peshmerga), Shia militias Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and Saraya Salam, Sunni militias, ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, USA, Iran, Turkey	3
	System, Government, Identity, Resources		=
Israel-Palestine -2000-	International[6]	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups, brigades of Jenin, Nablus and Tubas, Lion's Den	1
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		=
Syria -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, pro-government militias, Free Syrian Army (FSA), Ahrar al-Sham, Syrian Democratic Forces (coalition that includes the YPG/YPJ militias of the PYD), Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, Turkey, Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, Israel	3
	System, Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Yemen -2004-	Internationalised internal	Armed forces loyal to the internationally recognised Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabaab al-Mumen/Ansar Allah), tribal militias linked to al-Alhmar clan, Salafist militias (including Happy Yemen Brigades), armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, separatist groups under the umbrella of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), Joint Forces (including the Giants Brigades), AQAP, ISIS, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE)	3
	System, Government, Identity		↓

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

6. Despite the fact that "Palestine" (whose Palestinian National Authority is a political entity linked to a specific population and territory) is not an internationally recognised state, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered "international" and not "internal" because it is an illegally occupied territory with Israel's alleged claim to the territory not being recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution.

1.1. Armed conflicts: definition

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

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

1.2. Armed conflicts: analysis of trends in 2022

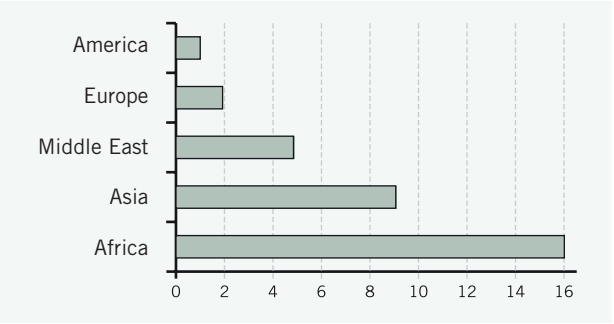
This section offers an analysis of the global and regional trends in armed conflicts in 2022. This includes an overview of conflicts as compared to that of previous years, the geographical distribution of conflicts and the main trends by region, the relationship between the actors involved and the scenario of the dispute, the main causes of the current armed conflicts, the general evolution of the contexts and the intensity of the conflicts according to their levels of violence and their impact. Likewise, this section analyses some of the main consequences of armed conflicts in the civilian population, including forced displacement due to situations of conflict and violence.

Almost half the armed conflicts in 2022 took place in Africa, with a total of 16 (49%), followed by Asia (nine conflicts), the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and the Americas (one)

1.2.1 Global and regional trends

In 2022, there was a slight increase in the number of armed conflicts compared to the previous year. In total, 33 cases were reported, compared to 32 conflicts in 2021 and 34 in 2020, 2019 and 2018. The escalation of violence in the Oromia region (Ethiopia) led that case to be reclassified as an armed conflict, which pitted the Ethiopian federal security forces supported by the Amharic Fano militia against the Oromo armed group OLA. Another significant change in 2022 was the transformation of the violence in Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 expanded the previous armed conflict in the eastern part of the country, giving way to an international conflict with serious multidimensional consequences.

Graph 1.1. **Regional distribution of the number of armed conflicts in 2022**



The trend of previous periods was upheld in the geographical distribution of the armed conflicts. The vast majority continued to be concentrated in Africa (16) and Asia (nine), followed by the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and the Americas (one). Therefore, almost half the cases (49%) took place in Africa.

Regarding the relationship of the actors involved in the conflicts and the scene of the hostilities, armed conflicts were identified as internal, international and, for the most part, internationalised internal. In keeping with the trend of previous years, four of the 33 cases in 2022 (12%, 9% in 2021) were internal armed conflicts and three of these four cases took place in Asia. These are the conflicts in the Philippines (NPA), India (CPI-M) and Thailand (south). The other internal armed conflict was in Ethiopia (Oromia), in Africa. Three other cases, which account for 9% of the total (6% in 2021), were international in nature: the conflict in the western African region of the Sahel, the Palestinian-Israeli dispute in the Middle East and the war between Russia and Ukraine. Thus, Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to an increase in the number of international conflicts. Although interstate wars remained a minority, some analysts said that the invasion had put an end to assumptions about the post-Cold War international order, such as the exceptionality of war between states.[7]

The remaining 26 cases, which account for 79% (85% in 2021), were internationalised internal. These cases are characterised by the fact that one of the disputing parties is foreign, the armed actors in the conflict have bases or launch attacks from abroad and/or the

7. Haas, Richard, "The Dangerous Decade. A Foreign Policy for a World in Crisis", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022.

dispute spills over into neighbouring countries. In many conflicts this factor of internationalisation took the form of the involvement of third-party actors as disputing parties, including international missions, ad-hoc regional and international military coalitions, states and armed groups operating across borders –such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or others.

As in previous years, United Nations international missions were maintained in 2022, especially in the context of armed conflicts in Africa. Throughout the year, the UN continued to operate in counties such as the CAR (MINUSCA), the DRC (MONUSCO), Mali (MINUSMA) and South Sudan (UNMISS). In some of these cases, they participated in hostilities with armed actors. The scope of international missions and their involvement in conflicts was affected by projected international tensions between Russia and Western actors. Thus, the mandate of MINUSCA was extended in 2022, though Russia, China and Gabon abstained in the vote due to disagreements over the Wagner Group being in the CAR. In Mali and the Western Sahel Region, the deterioration of diplomatic relations between the military junta and its traditional allies due to the Malian military government's rapprochement with Russia and the Wagner Group had repercussions for the regional and international military situation, such as Mali's blockade of MINUSMA operations. Several countries also withdrew their troops from this mission (Germany, United Kingdom, Côte d'Ivoire). This diplomatic deterioration also had an impact on the missions and operations of regional organisations and other countries: the EU suspended its EUCAP and EUTM Mali missions, several countries withdrew troops from the European Operation Takouba, France ended Operation Barkhane and Mali withdrew from the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine increased the number of international conflicts (9% of the total) in 2022, although most armed conflicts were internationalised internal ones (79%)

Regional organisations also continued to be involved in numerous armed conflicts in the form of military missions or operations, as in the case of the African Union (AU) –with the AMISOM mission in Somalia, which was transformed into the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in 2022– or the European Union (EU) –EUNAVFOR in Somalia. Countries of the East African Community (EAC) approved the deployment of a military mission in the eastern DRC to combat the armed group M23 in 2022. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Mozambican authorities agreed to extend the mandate of the SAMIM mission and approved its transition to a multidimensional mission. Also in 2022, SAMIM and Rwandan troops deployed in Mozambique expanded their actions against the insurgency in the Cabo Delgado region.

Hybrid missions, involving regional organisations and states, also continued to operate, such as the maritime military operation in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean –known as the Combined Task Force 151,[8] led by the US in collaboration with EUNAVFOR. The international coalition against the armed group ISIS, formed in September 2014 under the leadership of the US, which has since deployed actions in Iraq and Syria, is another example. In December 2021, in the face of increased activity by ISIS-linked groups on the continent, the coalition established a special task force on Africa. The coalition has 85 members, including states and organisations, including the Arab League and the EU.[9]

Third-country involvement remained important to many internationalised internal conflicts, aggravating their complexity. In 2022, this factor could be found in cases such as the DRC (east), where Rwanda supported the M23, a Congolese insurgency that resumed activity after being dormant for almost a decade. The DRC and Rwanda carried out mutual military raids, which escalated tension. Uganda announced its military participation in Operation Shuja against the ADF jihadist insurgency in the DRC in 2022 and reports indicated that its involvement was linked to economic interests. Different conflicts continued to be characterised by various third countries' military involvement in the dynamics of violence, such as Yemen, Iraq and Syria. In 2022, Turkey intensified its military actions against Kurdish actors in Iraq (PKK) and Syria (YPG), with impacts on civilians. Russian air raids continued in Syria, Israel continued with strikes in different parts of the country and the US also launched attacks against militias with alleged ties to Iran and continued with raids against ISIS, such as the one that killed the group's leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi in February 2022. In many conflicts, non-state armed groups carried out cross-border offensive actions. This was the case of the conflict in Yemen, among many others. In relation to this conflict, in early 2022 the Houthi forces launched attacks against Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which responded in an escalation that generated concern about its regional impact. Armed groups from the CAR regularly crossed the border into Cameroon and kidnapped civilians. The al-Shabaab insurgency carried out attacks in Ethiopia and Kenya during the year, going after regional targets. In the Western Sahel Region, armed actions by jihadist groups

8. There are four international operations conducted by the Combined Maritime Forces (coalition of 34 countries led by the USA). See Combined Maritime Forces [online, viewed on 15 January 2023].
9. For further information, see The Global Coalition Against Daesh.

continued to be reported, affecting countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo and Ghana.

Armed conflicts continued to be caused by multiple factors in 2022. Sixty-seven per cent of the armed conflicts were primarily caused by questioning of the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state and/or disputes around the domestic or international policies of the respective governments, among other main factors. Questioning of the system was more significant and was seen together with other causes in 17 conflicts (52% of the cases), largely linked to the high presence of jihadist armed actors with particular interpretations of Islamic precepts. This was the case in conflicts in the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region, Mali, the DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Mozambique (north), Libya, Afghanistan, the Philippines (Mindanao), Pakistan, Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Syria and Yemen. In three other cases, Colombia, the Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M), disputes about the system were associated with other types of insurgencies, with another type of ideological line.

Armed conflicts were multi-causal in nature and 61% had disputes about identity as one of their main causes

Other notable motivations behind the armed conflicts were disputes around demands for identity and self-government, as one or both were seen in 20 or the 33 cases (61%). Of these, identity-related demands were more significant (61%). Demands for self-government were behind 42% of the cases. Here the conflict in Ethiopia (Oromia) stood out due to the escalation of fighting that pitted the Ethiopian security forces and Amharic Fano militia against the Oromo armed group OLP. This factor also helped to cause other conflicts, such as the one between the government of Cameroon and the political and military secessionist movements in the English-speaking western regions of the country (Ambazonia/North West and South West). Also, the conflicts in Ethiopia (Tigray), the Philippines (Mindanao), Pakistan (Balochistan), Thailand (south) and Turkey (southeast), to mention just a few, were partly caused by disputes about identity and/or self-government.

Lastly, there were also many armed conflicts mainly caused by struggles to control territory and/or resources, alongside other main causes. These amounted to 39% of the total number of conflicts (13 of 33). Of the two, disputes over resources was more common (present in 33% of all conflicts), whereas control over territory was one of the main causes in fewer cases (6% of all armed conflicts). The armed conflicts that involved disputes over resources were mainly concentrated in Africa, though they were also indirectly present conflicts in other regions, perpetuating violence through economies of war. The DRC (east) continued to be an emblematic case of armed conflicts with an important background linked to the control of resources, with much fighting related to the extraction of gold, coltan and other minerals. Mining areas were also scenes of acts of violence in Pakistan (Balochistan), another armed conflict partially caused by a dispute over resources and also in India, in the context of the conflict with the Naxalite insurgency. In Sudan and South Sudan, intercommunal disputes over access to resources were intertwined with other dynamics of violence. Issues related to the control of territory were especially significant in the case of Palestine-Israel. In any case, the conflicts were sustained and influenced by the dynamics of war economies. In Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West), local sources warned that the dynamics of violence were changing in 2022, hand in hand with the growth of a war economy that involved kidnapping and ways to extort the civilian population and that that war economy reduced incentives to seek negotiated settlements.

30% of the armed conflicts in 2022 reported higher levels of violence than the previous year

In terms of their **trend**, levels of violence rose in 30% of the armed conflicts in 2022 compared to the previous year. This was true of the conflicts in Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, the Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), Somalia, Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), Myanmar, Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Russia-Ukraine. Some of these conflicts seriously escalated. In the Western Sahel, rising violence against civilians caused 49% more deaths than was reported in 2021 and in the conflict in Mali, attacks by the two main jihadist groups against civilians increased fourfold. Somalia witnessed an escalation of violence unprecedented in previous years. In the Oromia region, the increase in clashes between security forces and the armed group OLA led to its reclassification as an armed conflict in 2022. Russia's invasion of Ukraine set off a high-intensity interstate international armed conflict that caused a serious humanitarian crisis. Another 15 armed conflicts (accounting for 46% of all cases) observed levels of violence and fighting similar to those reported in 2021. In eight armed conflicts (24% of all worldwide) did the levels of armed violence and its impacts decrease: Ethiopia (Tigray), CAR, Colombia, Afghanistan, Philippines (Mindanao), India (CPI-M), Thailand (south) and Yemen. In some of these cases the reduction in violent incidents was related to ceasefire agreements as part of negotiating processes -Ethiopia (Tigray), Yemen- or to their development or positive prospects, like in Thailand (south) and Colombia.[10] However, in Afghanistan, despite the drop in direct armed violence,

10. For more information, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

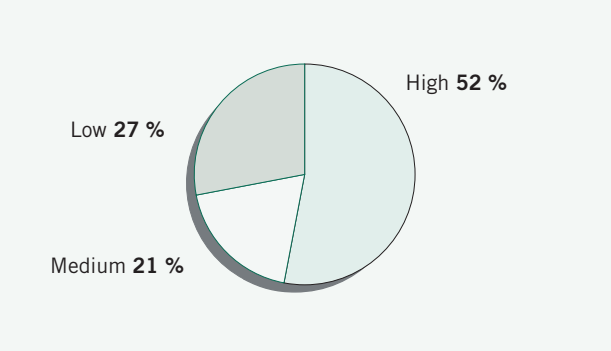
people continued to suffer from serious human rights abuses.

The **intensity of the armed conflicts** in 2022 accentuated the trend of an increase in serious cases over the last 10 years. In other words, contexts characterised by levels of lethality of over a thousand victims per year, in addition to serious impacts on the population, massive forced displacements and severe consequences in the territory. If high-intensity conflicts accounted for around a quarter of all cases a decade ago, in recent years this proportion has been growing to represent practically half the conflicts (see Graph 1.4). During the last five years, high-intensity armed conflicts accounted for 40% of all armed conflicts in 2016 and 2017. They fell to between 27% and 32% between 2018 and 2019, respectively, and increased significantly in 2020, when they reached 47%. In 2021, high-intensity conflicts were even more prevalent, reaching 53% and exceeding half of all cases for the first time in the last decade. **In 2022, this trend continued and there were 17 high-intensity armed conflicts (52% of all cases).** In line with what was observed in 2021, the largest proportion of high-intensity conflicts in 2022 took place in Africa. The continent registered 12 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts identified around the world, or 70% of all high-intensity cases. Twelve of Africa's 16 armed conflicts (75%) were of high intensity, slightly less than in 2021 (80%), a percentage much higher than that observed in recent years (in 2019, only 44% of Africa's armed conflicts were of high intensity). After Africa, the region with the second-highest number of high-intensity cases was the Middle East, with a total of three (6% of the total high-intensity conflicts worldwide, but 60% of the conflicts in the region). High-intensity conflict was identified in Asia and in Europe, respectively, while no conflicts of this type were reported in the Americas. The 17 cases of serious armed conflict in 2022 were: Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), Mali, Mozambique (north), the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Western Sahel Region, the DRC (east), the DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Russia-Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

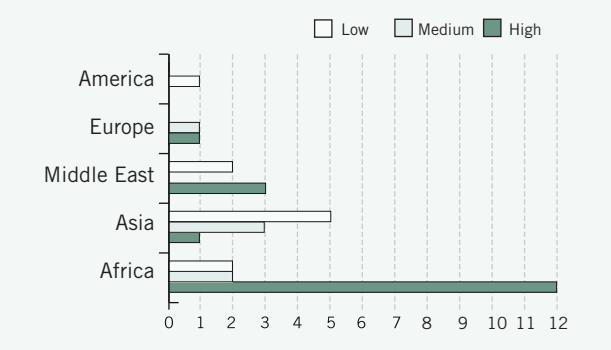
52% of the armed conflicts were of high intensity in 2022

In some of the high-intensity armed conflicts, the hostilities and multiple dynamics of violence claimed well over 1,000 lives per year. In the Russian invasion of Ukraine alone, the US Department of Defense estimated at the end of 2022 that around 100,000 soldiers had been killed or wounded on each side, though this figure cannot be verified.[11] Regarding civilian victims, the OHCHR estimated at least 6,884 people dead and 10,947 injured between the start of the invasion and late December 2022, though it warned that the real figures could be considerably higher. In the Western Sahel conflict, the fatality rate increased significantly, with around 9,700 fatalities (compared to around 5,300 in 2021). On the other hand, some conflicts that had had very high levels of fatalities in previous years, such as Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria, had fewer deaths in 2022, though they did still have a serious impact on other dimensions of human security. Thus, in Afghanistan there were 3,970 fatalities according to ACLED data, well below the nearly 42,000 in 2021, the 20,000 in

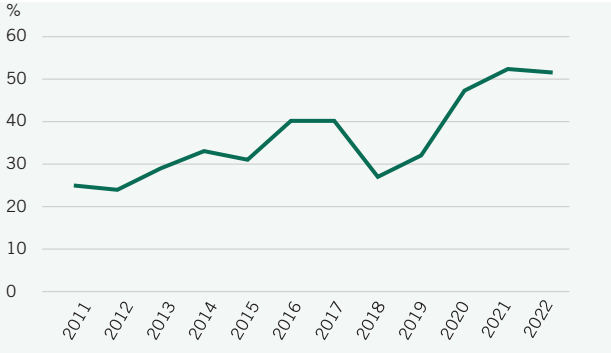
Graph 1.2. **Intensity of the armed conflicts in 2022**



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



Graph 1.4. **Percentage of high intensity armed conflicts in the last decade**



* Percentage of high-intensity armed conflicts compared to the yearly total

11. Lamothe, Dan, Liz Sly and Annabelle Timsit, "'Well over' 100,000 Russian troops killed or wounded in Ukraine, U.S. says," *The Washington Post*, 10 November 2022.

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

AFRICA	• Following the trend reported in previous periods, Africa was home to the largest number of armed conflicts globally. The continent registered 16 cases, representing 49% of the total. • The percentage of high-intensity armed conflicts in Africa fell, from 80% in 2021 (12 of the 15 cases in that region in that year) to 75% (12 of the 16 cases). It remained well above the 44% in 2016 (seven of the 16 conflicts then). • Hostilities only fell in two cases, while 50% of the conflicts remained at similar levels and violence escalated in 37.5%. One of those two cases of falling violence was the conflict in Ethiopia (Tigray), a war that was the scene of serious human rights violations in 2021 and 2022. • All the armed conflicts in Africa were internationalised internal ones, except for the one taking place in the Western Sahel Region, which is considered to be international in nature, and the conflict in Ethiopia (Oromia), considered internal in nature. • The armed conflicts in Africa had different causes, such as disputes over identity, which stood out as a factor in 10 of the 16 conflicts (63%). Competition for resources was also prominently found in nine of the conflicts (56% of all conflicts in the region).
AMERICA	• The region registered a single armed conflict, that of Colombia, one of the longest in the world. • The start of peace negotiations with the ELN, as well as rapprochements with other armed groups as part of the Gustavo Petro government's Total Peace policy led to a reduction in violence in the country. However, clashes and other acts of violence continued to be reported, such as the killings of social leaders and human rights activists. There were also warnings of a deteriorating humanitarian situation. • Although there was only one armed conflict in the Americas, the region continued to report extremely high levels of violence as a result of other dynamics of tension and criminality and stood out for its high homicide rates.
ASIA	• After Africa, Asia contained the second-largest number of armed conflicts, with nine, accounting for 27% of the total worldwide. • The armed conflict in Myanmar stood out for its intensity. In 2022, clashes intensified between the Burmese Army and various ethnic armed groups as well as between the Burmese Armed Forces and the armed groups that emerged after the 2021 military coup. The number of internally displaced persons also doubled. • In continuity with the previous year, the conflicts in Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Myanmar trended towards higher levels of violence and hostility. Armed violence fell in 2022 in Afghanistan, where violence had escalated in 2021, but the Taliban consolidated its power and there were serious violations of human rights, including those of women. With the exception of the Americas, Asia was the region with the highest regional percentage of cases that saw a drop in violence (44% of the conflicts there). • Asia continued to be the only region in the world with internal armed conflicts, except the conflict in Ethiopia (Oromia) in Africa. The three armed conflicts of this type, in the Philippines (NPA), India (CPI-M) and Thailand (south) accounted for one third of the cases in the region. • The causes of the conflicts related to disputes about the system, government policies, demands for self-government and identity appeared in similar percentages in Asia, some of which were present in 56% of them.
EUROPE	• Europe was the scene of two armed conflicts, accounting for 6% of the conflicts worldwide. • Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered one of the three international armed conflicts in the world in 2022, setting off high-intensity violence, a serious humanitarian crisis and global repercussions in several different areas, such as the global rise in fuel and food prices and food insecurity. • Though only two armed conflicts were reported in Europe, the region witnessed great mobilisation and military spending in 2022, a trend that had started before the Russian invasion but that has stepped up since then.
MIDDLE EAST	• Five armed conflicts were reported in the region, which accounted for 15% of all cases worldwide. In total figures, the region remained at the same level as in 2021. • The Middle East was the part of the world where the second-most high-intensity armed conflicts took place, after Africa. More than half the cases in the region (three out of five, equivalent to 60%) were of high intensity: Iraq, Syria and Yemen. These three conflicts had significantly less fatalities in 2022 than in previous years, but remained affected by serious impacts on human security. • The vast majority of the conflicts in the region (80%) were internationalised internal, with external actor involvement, which increased their complexity and the prospects for resolution, as in Syria and Yemen. • The conflicts in the region had different causes, with a notable presence of cases where the motivations were linked, together with other factors, to the search for a change to the system (80%) or to identity-related demands (80%). Internal or international political disputes were one of the main causes of three of the conflicts (60%). Control of resources and territories was behind two of them (40%).

2020 and the 40,000 in 2019. However, there were many human rights violations during the year, including against women, with activists describing the situation in Afghanistan as gender apartheid. In Yemen, the armed conflict claimed at least 6,721 lives, according to ACLED data (compared to 22,000 deaths in 2021, 20,000 in 2020 and 23,000 in 2019), a drop mainly due to a ceasefire agreement that was in force for a significant part of the year. However, more than 80% of the Yemeni population had problems meeting their basic needs. In Syria, the levels of mortality in 2021 were maintained in 2022, at between 3,800 and 5,700 deaths, significantly fewer than in previous years (30,000 in 2018; more than 50,000 in 2016 and 2015, respectively; over 70,000 in 2014), but the humanitarian crisis in the country was at its worst since

the war began. Other armed conflicts that stood out for their deadliness in 2022 were Somalia, with over 6,400 fatalities (around 3,200 in 2021); Mali, where around 4,842 people were estimated to have been killed that year (1,887 in 2021); Ethiopia (Oromia), with around 4,500 deaths; the DRC (east), with more than 5,600 people killed by violence; and the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), with 3,782 fatalities, according to various accounts.

1.2.2. Impact of conflicts on the civilian population

Following the trend of previous years, civilians continued to suffer very serious consequences stemming from armed conflicts in 2022, as the United Nations and international and local organisations have regularly denounced. In addition, the impacts of armed conflicts continued to intertwine with other crises, aggravating the human security situation and violations of rights in conflict areas. The annual report of the UN Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, published in May 2022, which studied the events of 2021 and early 2022, warned of challenges such as the conflict in Ukraine, which caused serious impacts on civilians there, such as fatalities, forced displacement, serious destruction of civilian infrastructure and other effects, and global impacts, with disrupted global supply chains and effects on vulnerable populations in other conflicts.[12] In his report, the UN Secretary-General also pointed out other challenges such as the combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and armed conflict, as well as intersections between armed conflict and intercommunal violence, violent protests, organised crime or other forms of violence and growing concerns about human rights violations and abuses in various countries, which made distinctions between armed conflict and other forms of violence difficult. Other threats to civilian security noted in the report included the impacts of the climate crisis on conflicts via intensifying food insecurity and escalating humanitarian crises. The report's analysis of the global state of the protection of civilians in armed conflicts reveals that armed conflicts have continued to be characterised by very high levels of civilian deaths, in addition to many people injured and seriously affected by psychological trauma, torture, disappearances, sexual violence and the destruction of homes, schools, markets, hospitals and other essential civil infrastructure such as drinking water and electricity systems.

OCHA warned of the development of the largest global food crisis in modern history caused by conflicts, climate shocks, the threat of global recession and escalating global insecurity

The development of the various armed conflicts in 2022 confirms the persistence of the pattern of systematic abuse against civilians. Cases such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine stood out, which caused thousands of civilian fatalities and in which Russian military forces violated human rights with extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, forced deportations (including of minors), forced disappearances, torture and mistreatment and other impacts. In March 2022, the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Prosecutor's Office began to gather evidence for an investigation into past and present allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013.[13] In 2022, the Human Rights Council established a commission of inquiry into violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Ukraine. Local and international human rights organisations denounced and documented serious human rights violations by Russian forces, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Many other armed conflicts in 2022 involved serious attacks against civilians. Among other cases, the Western Sahel experienced a rise in attacks against civilians by the security forces, the Wagner Group and the two main jihadist groups, and several massacres were reported. In the escalating conflict in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Armed Forces, the pro-government Amharic Fano militia and the armed group OLA were all accused of deliberate attacks against civilians, caught in the crossfire and subjected to extrajudicial and mass executions, arbitrary arrests and kidnappings, among other forms of violence based on ethnic identity or political opinions. Massacres and killings of civilians also took place in the DRC (east), Colombia, Myanmar and elsewhere.

The use of explosive weapons had a special impact on the civilian population. Recent studies indicate that civilian victims of this type of weapon in populated areas accounted for 89% of all victims of explosive weapons in 2020.[14] Examples of this were the conflicts in Somalia and the DRC (east-ADF), where armed groups increased the use of explosive devices against the civilian population in urban environments.

As part of the attacks against the civilian population and infrastructure, attacks and threats against medical staff continued in 2022, as well as attacks against hospital infrastructure, practices that are considered to violate international humanitarian law. According to data from the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC), in 2022 there were at least 1,892 attacks in this area worldwide, including 215 deaths of health workers, 287

12. UN Secretary-General, *Protection of civilians in armed conflicts*, S/2022/381, 10 May 2022.
13. In March 2023, a date falling outside the window of analysis of this chapter, the ICC issued an international arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin, charged with war crimes for deporting minors.
14. Jennifer Dathan, *Explosive Violence Monitor 2020*, Action on Armed Violence, 2021.

kidnappings and 628 damaged facilities. More than one third of the attacks on the healthcare sector in 2022 occurred in Ukraine as part of the Russian invasion. A joint investigation by various organisations identified 707 attacks against hospitals, healthcare workers and medical infrastructure in Ukraine between the start of the invasion and the end of December.[15] The investigation cites an average of two attacks per day against the healthcare sector in that country and points to deliberate and indiscriminate attacks by Russia against the Ukrainian healthcare system as part of broader attacks against the civilian population and infrastructure.

Armed conflicts continued to cause and/or worsen humanitarian crisis situations, which were aggravated by other conditions such as the pandemic, the effects of the war in Ukraine, the economic crisis and the climate emergency. Global humanitarian needs continued to grow, reaching a record threshold. According to the annual report *Global Humanitarian Overview 2023*,[16] issued by the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA, one of every 23 people in the world is in need of humanitarian assistance. A record 339 million people were expected to need humanitarian assistance by 2023, in contrast to the 274 million people in early 2022. As part of the worrying humanitarian outlook, OCHA warned that the biggest global food crisis in modern history was unfolding, caused by conflicts, climate shocks and the threat of global recession. According to the report, global insecurity is escalating, with at least 222 million people in 53 countries facing severe food insecurity by the end of 2022. OCHA warned of different trends, including the impact of climate change on humanitarian crises. Of the 15 countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis, 12 were scenes of humanitarian responses. Many conflicts continued to make humanitarian emergency situations worse in 2022. One conflict that stood out during the year was the one in the Western Sahel Region, with combined instability, violence, forced displacement, loss of livelihood, food insecurity, climate change and disease. The WHO estimated that 37.7 million people will need humanitarian assistance in that region in 2023, and it is considered one of the fastest growing crises and the most forgotten. Ukraine witnessed a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis, with three million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection at the start of the year and close to 17.7 million people by the end of the year. In Yemen, 17 million people faced food insecurity at the end of the year and over 80% of the population had problems meeting their basic needs, including food, clean water and access to health services. In Syria, 12 million people faced food insecurity at the end of 2022 and it was estimated that 70% of the country's population would need humanitarian aid in 2023 and that 90% of the population would live below the poverty line. In Pakistan, the impact of severe flooding caused by climate change was compounded by the consequences of armed violence. In the DRC, 26.4 million people, a quarter of the country's population, suffered from a serious food emergency in January 2023.

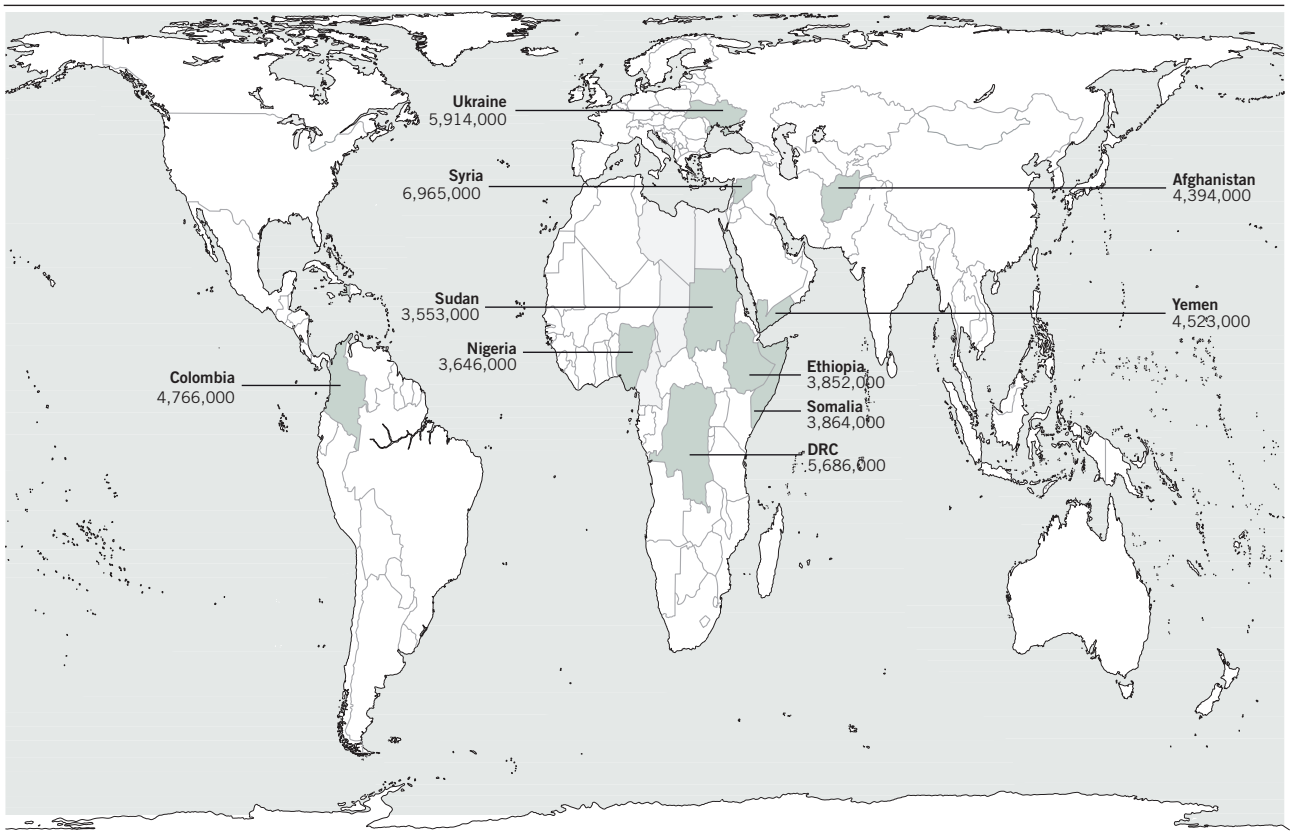
The DRC, the Western Sahel Region, Somalia, Pakistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Syria and other many places suffered serious humanitarian crises in 2022

Armed conflicts also continued to have specific impacts on some population groups. Published in mid-2022, the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict documented almost 23,982 serious violations against children (of which around 22,645 took place in 2021 and another 1,337 had been previously committed, but could only be documented in 2021).[17] The report warned that factors such as the worsening of armed conflicts, the proliferation of armed actors, the use of mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive weapons in populated areas, the intensification of humanitarian crises and violations of IHL and international human rights law had serious impacts on the protection of minors. The report, which covers the events of 2021, particularly discusses the impact on minors of the violence and conflicts in the central Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions, as well as coups d'état and the seizing of power in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan. It also states that the highest levels of serious violations took place in Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine, Syria, the DRC, Somalia and Yemen. Worrisome indicators include the 20% increase in the number of kidnappings, the 20% rise in sexual violence against minors and the 5% spike in attacks against schools and hospitals. Fifty-five per cent of the documented rights violations were committed by non-state armed groups and 25% by state forces, while the rest were due to crossfire, improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and land mines or were committed by unidentified perpetrators. The data disaggregated by gender showed that most minors affected by serious rights violations were boys (70%) and that was on the decline, while an increase was identified in violations against girls that involved death, mutilation, kidnapping or sexual violence, especially in the Lake Chad Basin.

The data on armed conflicts in 2022 in the *Alert 2023!* report indicate ongoing abuses, with examples in various contexts. In Afghanistan, the Taliban regime was responsible for many different human rights violations against girls in 2022, such as the prohibition of the right to education. Armed violence in Afghanistan continued to affect minors during the year, including an attack against a school in a Hazara-majority neighbourhood

15. De Vos, Christian et al., *Destruction and Devastation One Year of Russia's Assault on Ukraine's Health Care System,* eyeWitness to Atrocities, Insecurity Insight, Media Initiative for Human Rights, Physicians for Human Rights and Ukrainian Healthcare Center, February 2023.
16. OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2023*, December 2022.
17. UN Secretary-General, *Children and armed conflict*, A/76/871-S/2022/493, 23 June 2022.

Map 1.2. **The 10 countries reporting the highest figures of internally displaced people as a result of conflict and violence in 2022**



Source: Map prepared by the authors on the basis of the data provided in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023. Internal displacement and food security*, IDMC, 2023

that killed 53 people, mostly girls and young women students. In Cameroon, the armed conflict has deprived some 600,000 minors of schooling and secessionist armed actors continued to attack schools, students and teachers in 2022. Meanwhile, Israel's policies of expelling the population from Palestine, demolishing homes and building settlements continued to have an impact on Palestinian minors, including through forced displacement. Palestinian minors were also affected by detention practices. As of mid-December 2022, Israel had detained 452 Palestinian minors. In Syria, although the death toll in 2022 dropped significantly, minors continued to die, with 319 dying in 2022 according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, in addition to many different human rights violations of boys and girls there.

The use of sexual and gender-based violence against civilians by state and non-state armed actors, and especially against women and girls, continued to be reported in 2022

Sexual violence occurred in many armed conflicts. The 2022 annual report of the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed actors who were reasonably suspected of having committed or of being responsible for rape or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict situations on the UN Security Council's agenda.[18] In a total of 10 conflicts (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria), most of the actors indicated by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors (37) and another 12 were government armed actors. According to the United Nations, 70% of identified actors in conflict were persistent perpetrators due to their inclusion in the United Nations' annex for five or more years. Beyond the annex, the annual report also studied how the problem of the use of sexual violence was developing in the conflicts in Afghanistan, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, addressed issues related to crimes of sexual violence in the post-war contexts of the Western Balkans, Nepal and Sri Lanka and discussed other contexts inviting concern about sexual violence (Ethiopia and Nigeria). Taken together, the report noted how the intersection of humanitarian, security, and political crises intensified the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence, including militarisation, weapons proliferation, impunity, institutional collapse, structural gender inequality and harmful social norms. Sexual violence continued to be

18. UN Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence*, S/2022/272, 29 March 2022.

committed in various conflicts in 2022. Ukraine stood out, where Russian forces committed sexual violence as a weapon of war in areas under military occupation as part of the invasion. Sexual violence had a particularly serious impact on the conflict in the Tigray region. In Cameroon, human rights organisations complained that both security forces and secessionist fighters had committed serious abuses, including extrajudicial killing, rape, kidnapping and torture.

The repercussions of the armed conflicts also include forced displacement. According to UNHCR data, this continued to intensify and break record figures. The UNHCR report for the first half of 2022 estimated the refugee population at 32.5 million and internally displaced persons at 53.1 million (IDMC data on internal displacement referring to the end of 2021). Just over three quarters (76%) of the refugee population and the population in need of international protection came from six countries: Syria (6.8 million people), Venezuela (5.6), Ukraine (5.4), Afghanistan (2.8), South Sudan (2.4) and Myanmar (1.2). Furthermore, 69% lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin, according to UNHCR data. There were 1.1 million new asylum applications in the first half of 2022. In any case, the final calculation of 2022 will show even more internal and external forced displacement. Thus, during the year many conflicts were the scene of serious situations of forced displacement. In the crisis in Ukraine, it was estimated that there were 5.9 million internally displaced people, 7.9 million people registered as refugees in Europe and 4.9 million refugees from Ukraine registered to receive temporary protection in Europe or other similar national protection mechanisms at the end of 2022. Ukraine was therefore the main country of origin of refugee populations in the world, according to UNHCR data, beating out Syria, which had held the title in recent years. In the Western Sahel Region, 2.9 million people were displaced by violence, including internal and external displacement. In Ethiopia, there were an estimated 2.7 million internally displaced people in early 2023, though that did not include the displaced population of the Tigray region or areas of the Afar region due to obstacles to access. In northeastern Nigeria, the country most affected by the Boko Haram factions, an estimated 2.2 million people were internally displaced by the violence, which as a whole for the country amounted to 3.2 million. In Somalia, three million people were internally displaced a result of the conflict, insecurity and the effects of climate change. In the DRC, there were 5.76 million internally displaced people in 2022, slightly more than the 5.6 million in 2021, which included around three million minors. Between March and December, over 510,000 people were displaced within the DRC and another 7,000 sought refuge in Uganda. By mid-2022, it was estimated that there were over three million internally displaced people and 844,260 refugees outside Sudan due to violence, to which should be added the million refugees that the country is hosting from the crises in South Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia and elsewhere. In Asia, the case of Myanmar stood out, where at the end of 2022 there were 1.5 million internally displaced people, more than double the number in 2021. In Pakistan, the violence and political and economic crisis was aggravated by serious floods caused by climate change that affected millions of people and displaced almost eight million people.

1.3. Armed conflicts: annual evolution

1.3.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

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

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

As in previous years, political violence and sporadic attacks by armed actors and government counterinsurgency activity continued in 2022,

as well as repression, arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances of members of the political opposition by the security forces and the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD). The research centre ACLED released a death toll of 245 in the country in 2022 resulting from these activities.[19] These data show a slight improvement compared to 2021, when 285 deaths were reported. The main armed actions of the year included the attack carried out in late September by the security forces against the group FNL in the Kibira forest (Cibitoke province), resulting in the death of 42 rebels and a dozen soldiers, according to reports released in mid-October. The clashes forcibly displaced hundreds of people. As a sign of the climate of repression and silencing of the political opposition, the government banned various opposition candidates from running in local elections and disrupted opposition meetings and electoral rallies. In addition, in the context of local elections, the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD, the Imbonerakure, carried out politically motivated violent attacks. In August, the secretary general of the CNDD-FDD, Révérien Ndikuriyo, confirmed that it was legitimate to kill anyone who threatened national security and urged the Imbonerakure to continue conducting night patrols, which they used to intimidate and repress the opposition with total impunity. At the end of 2022, there were 259,279 Burundian refugees, mainly in the DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, according to UNHCR.[20] Over 206,000 Burundian refugees have returned to their country of origin since September 2017, including 20,348 from January to October 2022. Another consequence linked to the armed conflict that created a serious atmosphere of tension and demonstrations was the forced expropriations of land by Imbonerakure groups in October to deliver members of the ruling party and to build a military base (a process begun in August against more than 5,000 families).

The special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi said that the country's human rights record had not improved significantly since 2015

The government carried out a national training campaign in which groups of Imbonerakure members received military training in September and later joined an offensive against the armed group RED-Tabara in the Congolese province of South Kivu, according to military sources. In mid-September, the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi, Fortuné Gaétan Zongo, said that the country's human rights record had not improved significantly since 2015. Nevertheless, in late October the EU announced that it was lifting sanctions against three senior officials, including Prime Minister Gervais Ndirakobuca and the top presidential advisor, General Godefroid Bizimana, after an "intensified dialogue" with Bujumbura on the country's human rights record. In February, both Brussels and Washington restored flows of aid to the nation after lifting the sanctions imposed in 2015, citing political progress under Ndayishimiye. In their decision to reinstate aid, authorities in both capitals noted that civil society groups had returned. The BBC also received authorisation to broadcast again from the country. Finally, the EU, Burundi's largest foreign donor, praised its efforts to combat corruption.[21]

Burundi continued to improve relations with neighbouring countries and regional organisations to end its international isolation and boost its image in relation to the violence and security in the country. On 22 July, President Évariste Ndayishimiye was elected chair of the East African Community (EAC) for a one-year term. On 15 August, Burundi announced the deployment of at least 600 soldiers in eastern DRC as part of a bilateral agreement between both countries. On 27 July, the NGO Burundi Human Rights Initiative said that Burundi had secretly sent hundreds of soldiers and Imbonerakure to fight the RED-Tabara group in South Kivu since late 2021. Congolese sources claimed that Burundian military contingents were carrying out their operations as part of the regional force of the EAC, though Burundian military sources claimed there was a bilateral agreement. There were also changes in several key positions in the government amidst the power struggle between President Évariste Ndayishimiye and the secretary general of the CNDD-FDD, Révérien Ndikuriyo. Tension escalated in September as a result of a major purge resulting from the president's announcement of an alleged coup attempt. Prime Minister Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, who had been an important ally of the president, was replaced by Interior Minister Gervais Ndirakobuca and five other ministers were also removed from office. Ndayishimiye also replaced General Gabriel Nizigama, his presidential chief of staff, a position described in the country as a super prime minister, with Colonel Aloys Sindayihebura, who was in charge of internal intelligence in the National Intelligence Service. The president also sacked or transferred 54 provincial police commissioners.

The president of Burundi purged the government as the result of an alleged coup attempt

19. ACLED, Dashboard. [Viewed on 31 January 2023]
20. UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Burundi, 31 January 2023.
21. Kuwait Times, "Burundi president sacks PM after warning of coup plot", *Kuwait Times*, 7 September 2022.

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

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

The attacks led by armed groups that withdrew from the 2019 peace agreement in December 2022 continued and the political situation in the country deteriorated due to the polarisation caused by the attempt to reform the Constitution. According to the research centre ACLED, there were 256 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) in 2022 that killed 837 people. This figure is significantly lower than that of 2021, which rose to 1,700 fatalities, coinciding with the attempted coup and the rebel offensive that gained momentum in late 2020 and early 2021. According to UNHCR data, by the end of 2022, more than 739,134 people were refugees in neighbouring countries and over 515,665 were displaced within the country.[22]

The security situation throughout the country remained highly unstable, with continued attacks by armed groups that are part of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), as well as actions carried out by mercenaries of the Russian private security group Wagner and Central African security forces, denounced for committing serious human rights violations against civilians. The CPC consolidated its presence in the prefecture of Vakaga, in the northeastern part of the country, making the commune of Ouandja its stronghold. Fuel shortages as a result of restrictions on global supply chains, especially in June, limited the operations of state security forces and MINUSCA forces. Armed groups took advantage of this by attacking areas where the state's authority was weaker or completely absent, according to the UN Secretary-General's report in October. The groups regained control of some mining areas, committed abuses against civilians and imposed illegal taxation. In addition, rebels from the CAR may have regularly crossed the border with Cameroon to kidnap civilians for ransom. On 22 June, Cameroonian and CAR officials met to discuss the security situation on their shared border and curb the activities of criminal gangs, armed groups and highwaymen involved in the trafficking of arms and natural resources.

On 14 November, the UN Security Council extended MINUSCA's mandate for one year, though Russia, China and Gabon abstained due to disagreement over the lifting of the ban on MINUSCA's night flights, an issue included in the resolution. Bangui had ordered this ban years ago to limit interactions with flights operated by Wagner, but on 3 October, three wounded MINUSCA soldiers could not be evacuated at night and died as a result of their injuries, which was mentioned in the UN Secretary-General's report in October as an obstacle to the work of the UN forces. Thus, the two permanent members abstained from voting on the resolution by failing to remove the reference to the government ban, which highlights the tensions between the Western countries of the UN Security Council and Russia, which has Chinese support. Tensions between France and the CAR escalated in late November following an airstrike on a military base in Bossangoa on which a local pro-government organisation blamed France. Russia said that the CAR was under threat from some external actor and accused the international community of supporting the rebellion. On 16 December, the head of the Russian

22. UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - CAR Situation. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].

cultural centre in Bangui received a package bomb that injured him. As a result, the owner of the Wagner group blamed France for promoting terrorism, an accusation that France described as propaganda. In mid-December, the last contingent of France's Operation Sangaris withdrew. The last French troops deployed in the CAR left after relations cooled due to the strengthening of ties between Bangui and Moscow. As the nation's former colonial overlord, France had sent up to 1,600 soldiers to the CAR with a mandate to help to stabilise it after a 2013 coup sparked the armed conflict in which the country is still mired today. Operation Sangaris was the seventh French military intervention in the CAR since it gained independence in 1960. It ended in October 2016 after the elections, leaving a residual French presence.

After multiple delays, the national dialogue known as the Republican Dialogue announced after the attempted coup in January 2021 was held between 21 and 27 March 2022, though the political opposition and the armed groups that withdrew from the 2019 peace agreement in December 2022 did not participate. After the Republican Dialogue was concluded, the government created a monitoring committee in 2022, formed by representatives of presidential majority, opposition parties, including Gabriel Jean-Edouard Koyambounou as the coordinator to lead the committee, civil society organisations and religious leaders.[23] Polarisation between the government, pro-government parties and the political and social opposition grew following the Republican Dialogue due to the pro-government attempt to promote a referendum to amend the Constitution to allow the current president to run for a third term. In July, a broad platform against the constitutional reform was created, known as the Civil Society Organisation Action Group for the Defence of the Constitution of 30 March 2016. The Republican Bloc for the Defence of the Constitution was also created, which included key opposition figures that called for protests against the constitutional reform. In August, pro-government organisations and political parties staged demonstrations in support of the reform and the Bureau of the National Assembly called on the government to start the constitutional reform process and establish an inclusive constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The government responded by creating a drafting committee to submit a draft proposal for a new constitution to the presidency within three months of its establishment and appointed its members. Several political and civil society actors, including the Catholic Church, turned down a seat on the committee. The PATRI party, the Republican Bloc and the Civil Society Organisation Action Group filed appeals against the presidential decree to start the constitutional reform before the Constitutional Court. On 23 September, the Constitutional Court declared the processes undertaken to draft a new constitution unconstitutional, which led to threats from supporters of the reform. The independent station Ndeke Lukae was also threatened for reporting on the issue. Although the government accepted the constitutional ruling, in December the National Assembly approved a law to regulate referendums in the country, opening the door to holding a referendum to promote the constitutional reform once again.

DRC (east)	
Start:	1998
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of DRC, FDLR, splinter factions of the FDLR (CNRD-Ubwiyunge, RUD-Urunana), Mai-Mai militias, Nyatura, APCLS, NDC-R, LRA, Ituri armed groups, South Kivu community-based militias, Burundian armed groups, Burundi, Rwanda, MONUSCO, EAC Regional Force (EACRF)
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

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

The situation in the eastern part of the country worsened during the year because of the offensive of the March 23 Movement (M23) in North Kivu. Since November 2021, this group had resumed its activities after being inactive for virtually a decade. Beginning in May 2022, it launched a powerful offensive, expanding its presence and control of the territory in the province of North Kivu. **This escalation and the actions of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and other groups in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu further contributed to a general deterioration in the security situation**. Added to this situation was the increase in tension between the DRC and Rwanda. According to ACLED data,[24]

23. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
24. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].

2,660 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) were reported in the five eastern provinces of the country (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika) in 2022 that cost the lives of 5,681 people. In the country as a whole, there were 6,145 fatalities as a result of violence. These figures are higher than those reported in 2021, when more than 2,300 episodes of violence and 4,723 fatalities were reported in these five provinces alone, and 4,865 people in the country as a whole.

According to UNHCR, there were 5.76 million internally displaced people in 2022, slightly more than the 5.6 million internally displaced people in 2021, which highlights the persistence of insecurity and violence preventing the population from returning to their places of origin. This figure includes around three million minors. There were also 1,016,000 refugees in neighbouring countries in 2022, up from 942,000 in 2021, which continues to make the DRC the site of the largest displacement crisis in Africa in recent years. The DRC also hosted more than half a million refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries. In January 2023, the World Food Programme (WFP) indicated that 26.4 million people, a quarter of the country's population, suffered from a serious food emergency situation.[25]

During the year, the March 23 Movement's (M23) offensive intensified with the seizure of different towns, and especially Rumangabo, the main Congolese military base in North Kivu in May. The Congolese Army pulled back from the offensive, describing it as a strategic withdrawal. The M23 also took the town of Bunagana, on the border with Uganda, in the territory of Rutshuru (North Kivu) on 12 June. Since then, the group has operated the border post with Uganda and has been expanding its command over neighbouring towns in Rutshuru. This escalation of the M23 and the actions of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and other armed groups in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu (such as the Nyatura factions, Mai Mai militias, the APCLS group, the Nduma Défense du Congo-Rénové group, the group of Rwandan origin FDLR, from among the 120 armed groups active in the eastern part of the country) further contributed to a general deterioration in the security situation. OCHA estimated that more than 510,000 people may have been displaced between March and the end of the year and another 7,000 may have sought refuge in Uganda as a result of the M23 attacks. The M23 offensive, which began in late 2021, may have had the support of Rwanda, according to the UN in August, and together with the cross-border bombings and incursions by DRC soldiers into Rwanda and Rwandan soldiers into the DRC, escalated tension between the two countries. The crisis led to regional efforts to try to de-escalate the conflict and to promote contacts leading to peace negotiations between the DRC and the M23 and between the DRC and Rwanda. In August, the UN Group of Experts indicated that it had solid evidence on Rwanda's support for the M23. Rejected by Rwanda, the report claimed that the Rwandan Army had launched military incursions in Congolese territory since November 2021, providing military support for specific M23 actions.

In April, the EAC countries, including the DRC (which joined the organisation in March), approved the deployment of a military mission in the eastern DRC starting in August. This mission would combat the armed group M23 and support the government in putting an end to the atmosphere of violence due to the resumption of hostilities by the M23, a decision ratified in June. However, in addition to the delay in the deployment, which became partially effective in November, some details remained unknown, such as the financing of the mission, the protection of the civilian population and coordination with MONUSCO. In August, Burundi became the first country to send troops to the DRC, which will form part of the EAC's regional force, though experts expressed concern that Burundi has its own interests and security agenda, like other neighbours of the DRC, such as Uganda and Rwanda, which have been accused of supporting the M23. Only Tanzania, South Sudan and Kenya have no conflicts of interest in the DRC. The DRC vetoed Rwanda's participation in the mission.

The Congolese government expelled the Rwandan ambassador due to the escalation of the offensive in October, including new territorial conquests with the seizure of the towns of Kiwanja and Rutshuru and the cutting of the RN2, the main artery that connects the provincial capital, Goma, with the northern part of the province and with Uganda. On 31 October, thousands of people in Goma protested against Rwanda, asking for weapons to fight out of concern that the armed group could occupy the capital, as it did in 2012, rejecting and expressing their frustration at international passivity and demanding that the international community impose sanctions on Rwanda for supporting the M23, as evidenced by UN reports. On 30 October, the AU called for a ceasefire and negotiations during the third round of the inter-Congolese dialogue to be held in Kenya between 4 and 13 November, which was postponed to December and in which the M23 did not participate.[26] On 23 November, the leaders of the DRC, Rwanda (through its foreign minister), Burundi and Angola met in Angola and agreed to establish a ceasefire as of 25 November, demanded that the M23 withdraw to its initial positions and warned that if the M23 refused to stop fighting, the EAC force deployed in Goma would use all the means at its disposal to dismantle the group. However, no representative of the M23 was present at the meeting. Its

25. WFP, *Democratic Republic of the Congo December Situation Report #44*, 17 January 2023.
26. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

leader, Bertrand Bisimwa, issued a statement that same day thanking the regional leaders for helping to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict, and though he initially announced that he would respect the ceasefire, hours later the group stated that said agreement did not concern it since they were not present at the meeting. The M23 demands a direct dialogue with the Congolese government while the latter rejects any direct talks, by mandate of the National Assembly, considers the M23 a terrorist group and demands its withdrawal from Congolese soil before engaging in any negotiations. Between 29 and 30 November, the M23 committed a massacre in the towns of Kishishe and Bambo, in Rutshuru territory. The group tried to downplay its importance, claiming that 10 people had died, whereas the Congolese government announced the death of about 50 civilians. This massacre was unanimously condemned by the international community and many countries demanded that Rwanda end its support for the armed group. A preliminary investigation by the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) determined that 131 people had been killed (102 men, 17 women and 12 minors), in addition to cases of looting, rape and kidnapping in retaliation for previous actions by militias in the area. The UNJHRO later raised the death toll to 171 people. Since then, fighting between the group and Congolese forces has persisted. At the same time, some armed groups and Mai Mai militias and group coalitions, such as CODECO, the Nduma Défense du Congo-Rénové, the APCLS and the Coalition of Movements for Change (CMC) signed agreements with the government to join forces to fight against the M23 as part of the policy of alliances and manipulation of support that characterises the volatile security situation and governance crisis affecting the eastern part of the country.

Meanwhile, the situation remained very volatile during the year in the province of Ituri, in northern North Kivu, with armed actions against civilians by the CODECO and Zaire militias and other Mai Mai militias to control mining resources. The Ugandan and Congolese Armed Forces also led military actions against the ADF and prominent actors. Lastly, in the province of South Kivu, local and foreign armed actors continued to carry out attacks against civilians and the security forces, mainly in the territories of Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira, alongside the Burundian Armed Forces' military operations in the province in pursuit of the armed groups based there.

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

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

One year after the Ugandan Armed Forces (UPDF) began a military offensive on Congolese soil against the armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in retaliation for bomb attacks in the Ugandan capital on 16 November 2021, for which the ADF claimed responsibility, the UPDF's military operations continued, as did the joint offensive between the UPDF and the Congolese Armed Forces against the ADF. This Ugandan military campaign, known as Operation Shujaa, continued its activities, though different analysts questioned its success. In April, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni revealed that 4,000 UPDF soldiers formed part of Operation Shujaa. The Ugandan troops belonged to the Mountain Division Specialised Force that had been trained by the French Special Forces "in mountain warfare" since 2016. In 2019, the Mountain Division was officially inaugurated.

There were several changes in the management of Operation Shujaa in 2022. In October there were changes to the command structure. Its commander, Lieutenant General Kayanja Muhanga, was transferred to army headquarters as commander of the UPDF ground forces. His predecessor, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the son of Yoweri Museveni, promoted the success of the operation and returned to his predetermined position as the main presidential advisor on special operations. Replacing Kayanja in 2022 was Major General Dick Olum, who had been the defence attaché at the Ugandan embassy in Kinshasa and had also commanded operations against Joseph Kony in the CAR. Like Kayanja, Olum had also served as commander of the UPDF contingent in the fight against al-Shabaab militants in Somalia.

Despite the changes in the management of the operation, the ADF continued to conduct attacks against civilians in North Kivu province and **expanded further into Ituri province, where it carried out many different attacks in the areas of Mambasa and Irumu,** where they clashed with the UPDF and the Congolese Armed Forces. In February, the UPDF announced that they had evicted the ADF from the "Triangle of Death" in Mukakati, Erigeti, Kainama, Tchabi, River Semliki Bridge and Burasi. In June, the Congo Research Group and the Congolese Ebuteli Institute[27] published a report suggesting the possibility that the UPDF was driven by profit instead of their initial mission to dismantle the ADF, responsible for insurgent activity and for recruiting followers in the DRC and in Uganda. This report also questioned the military achievements of the Ugandan Army, noting how the military operation was also likely aimed at promoting Uganda's economic interests and particularly at protecting its oil deposits and infrastructure around Lake Albert and road construction to expand Uganda's freight market. Dott Services, a Ugandan construction company, and Total Energies, a French multinational oil company, were directly involved in developing their interests around the lake. Analysts had noted that Rwanda was wary of Uganda's presence on Congolese soil and had also identified Uganda as a source of support for the revival of the M23. However, the M23' offensive did push Congolese troops back towards the territory of Rutshuru, in the southern part of North Kivu province, to face this new military front that weakened activity against the ADF.

According to the report of the Panel of Experts on the DRC published in December,[28] the ADF continued its territorial expansion despite Operation Shujaa and conducted attacks against civilians around Beni and Lubero, in North Kivu and in southern Ituri. The ADF continued to operate in small groups, launching simultaneous attacks on several fronts. They also used improvised explosive devices in urban environments, carrying out more visible attacks through well-established networks. Their attacks and movements were mainly aimed at resupplying, searching for suitable locations for setting up new camps, diverting the attention of the ADF as the primary target of military operations and retaliating for those operations, among other actions, all to undermine popular support for Operation Shujaa.

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

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

As in previous years, the same dynamics of violence persisted due to clashes between the South Sudanese Armed Forces and irregular groups and between the

27. Congo Research Group and Ebuteli, *Uganda's Operation Shujaa in the DRC, Fighting the ADF or Securing Economic Interests?*, June 2022.
28. UN Security Council, *Letter dated 16 December 2022 addressed to the President of the Security Council from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, United Nations, S/2022/967, 16 December 2022.

dissident Kitgwang factions of the SPLA-IO. There were also ongoing episodes of intercommunity violence that affected many regions in the country. According to data collected by ACLED, 597 violent events were reported (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) that cost the lives of 1,898 people (figures very similar to those reported in 2021, when there were 699 episodes and 1,936 associated deaths).[29] In the last quarter of the year, according to the UN mission in the South Sudan (UNMISS), there was a significant rise in violence that mainly affected civilians, increasing the number of people injured by 87% compared to the same period in 2021. **The lingering violence, the effects of the severe flooding that affected the country in 2022, pre-existing community tensions, food insecurity, the interruption of livelihoods and the economic crisis aggravated the humanitarian emergency in the country for yet another year**. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 6.6 million people (over half the population of the country) are affected by acute food insecurity, malnutrition, hunger and violence, warning that this figure could rise to 7.8 million during the first half of 2023.[30] Previously, on 14 June, the WFP had announced that nearly one third of the food aid to the country had been cut despite growing needs due to a shortage of funds and rising costs. Moreover, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that South Sudan continues to be the most violent context for aid workers, followed by Afghanistan and Syria. In 2022, nine aid workers were killed in the country while conducting their aid work. In addition, according to UNHCR data, 2,362,756 people were refugees due to violence by mid-2022.[31]

Over half the population of South Sudan is affected by acute food insecurity, malnutrition, hunger and violence

Although progress in implementing the 2018 peace agreement between the South Sudanese government and the SPLA-IO remained slow and the peace talks in Rome with the groups that had not signed the 2018 peace agreement were briefly resumed,[32] these efforts were **insufficient to contain the violence in the country, which was characterised by various different scenarios:** fighting throughout the year between the South Sudanese Army (SSPDF) and the forces of the National Salvation Front (NAS) led by General Thomas Cirillo in the region of Equatoria; episodes of intercommunity violence, primarily concentrated in the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, Warrap, Lagos, Unity, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, the Abyei Area and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, caused by tension over access to resources and cattle theft; and clashes that involved the government, SPLA-IO forces loyal to Vice President Riek Machar and the different factions that spun off from the SPLA-IO. In relation to the latter, which increased throughout the year, in January it was announced that the SPLA-IO Kitgwang faction, led by General Simon Gatwech Dual, which split from the SPLA-IO headed by Vice President Machar in August 2021, would sign the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).[33] This agreement included a permanent ceasefire and prompted Machar to order his SPLA-IO forces to halt hostilities with the Kitgwang forces. However, the ceasefire did not last long, and in February fighting began between SPLA-IO forces loyal to Machar and the Kitgwang faction and government troops in the states of Upper Nile and Unity. These clashes led the SPLA-IO to announce its withdrawal from the peace monitoring mechanism in late March, while the SSPDF declared that it was "officially at war" with the SPLA-IO. Later, in July, the Kitgwang faction split again when its deputy leader, General Johnson Olony, attempted to replace General Simon Gatwech as the faction's leader. The crisis cleaved the Kitgwang faction into two groups headed by Gatwech and Olony, respectively, and led to an escalation of violence between them in the states of Upper Nile and Jonglei, displacing thousands of people. As on other occasions in the war in the country, the conflicts were manipulated and acquired an ethnic-identity dimension, triggering clashes between members of the Nuer ethnic group, to which Gatwech belongs, and the Shilluk (Agwalek) ethnic group, of which Olony is a member. The UNMISS mission deployed additional troops to deter attacks against civilians and expressed deep concern over the violence, urging the parties to halt the fighting. The South Sudanese government also reinforced the SSPDF soldiers that fought with the Agwalek troops to stop General Gatwech's offensive. However, the fighting continued at the end of the year.

Sudan (Darfur)	
Start:	2003
Type:	Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, pro-government militias janjaweed, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary unit, Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, other groups, community militias, UNITAMS
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

29. ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
30. OCHA, *Violent clashes in South Sudan intensify the humanitarian situation*, 29 December 2022.
31. UNHCR, Refugee Data Finger [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
32. See the summary on South Sudan in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
33. See the agreement.

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 uprising 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, concluding its deployment at the end of 2020.

The Darfur region continued to be the epicentre of armed violence in the country. According to data from the research centre ACLED, 409 violent events were reported in Darfur 409 (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) that cost 951 lives. These figures show a slight decrease compared to the previous year, when 1,027 deaths were reported, but they are still far higher than in previous years, such as the 555 deaths in 2020 and the 268 in 2019.[34] The clashes between members of different Arab and non-Arab communities (mainly due to disputes over land ownership or access to resources), the activity of the pro-government Janjaweed militias integrated into the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti), and the fighting between the Sudanese security forces and the faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid al Nur (SLM/A-AW) continued to be the main causes of violence in the region, in addition to the lack of protection resulting from the definitive withdrawal of the UNAMID mission.

Sudan ranked eighth in the world and third in Africa regarding the number of people who have left the country due to violence and eighth in the world in terms of the number of refugees it hosts, coming in second place in Africa behind Uganda

These dynamics of violence upheld the trend in the previous year in relation to forced displacement in Sudan. According to UNHCR data, **by mid-2022, over 844,260 people had sought refuge outside the country due to the violence, most of them coming from the Darfur region, and 3,036,593 were internally displaced.**[35] These statistics rank Sudan the eighth country in the world and the third in Africa regarding the number of people who have left due to violence, behind South Sudan and the DRC, and ninth in the world in terms of the amount of internally displaced persons. **Sudan also ranked among the top 10 countries in the world hosting refugees, with 1,112,300 people coming mainly from the crises in South Sudan, the CAR, the DRC and Ethiopia**, putting it in second place in Africa, behind Uganda (which hosts 1,489,600 refugees).[36] The UNHCR also criticised the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country, which primarily affects displaced persons due to the combined effects of the violence in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the rise in the cost of living due to the domino effect of the war in Ukraine, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. According to OCHA data, 15.8 million people are in need, which represents a third of the country's population.[37]

The **definitive withdrawal of the African Union and UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur** (**UNAMID)** in early 2021, whose mandate (to protect the civilian population, facilitate access to humanitarian assistance and guarantee security) was transferred to a joint force for Darfur deployed by the government in September 2021, composed of around 20,000 troops coming from the Sudanese Armed Forces, the General Intelligence Service, the RSF, the police forces and members of armed groups that signed the October 2020 peace agreement, was unable to reduce the dynamics of violence. In January, these forces were accused of looting for former UNAMID headquarters in the capital of North Darfur, El Fasher, stealing vehicles and equipment. Days earlier, gunmen had looted World Food Programme warehouses in the same city, prompting the agency to suspend operations in North Darfur. These incidents resulted in new armed clashes between the military and armed groups around the former UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher in February. Later, in April, armed clashes between Arab herders and non-Arab Massalit tribesmen in the Kreinik area of Western Darfur killed at least 200 people in what was the worst event of the year. Fighting later spread to the regional capital of El Geneina pitting pro-government Janjaweed militias integrated into the RSF against a local militia known as the coalition of Sudanese forces, led by Khamis Abdullah Abakar, the governor of West Darfur and a former rebel leader. The fighting forced over 37,000 people to flee to the border with Chad. Although the violence subsided in May, there was a new outbreak in June over a land

34. ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
35. UNHCR, Refugee Data Finger [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
36. UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends. 2022*, October 2022.
37. OCHA, *Sudan Situation Report*, 12 February 2023.

dispute between the non-Arab Gimir and Arab Rizeigat communities that left at least 126 people dead, mostly Gimir, in the Kulbus district, and displaced around 50,000. Amidst the wave of violence, representatives of the Rizeigat and Misseriya groups on the one hand and of Arab and Massalit groups on the other signed various reconciliation agreements in El Geneina between June and July. These agreements managed to contain the violence in West and South Darfur in the following months, helping to stabilise the area. In the Jebel Marra area in Central Darfur, factions of the armed group that did not sign the peace agreement, SLA/AW, battled with the RSF throughout the year.

The southern Sudanese region of Blue Nile became the epicentre of violence in the region, with the rise in intercommunity violence causing 484 deaths

Finally, in April a **trial began at the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman**, also known as "Ali Kushayb", the ICC's first prosecution at the behest of the UN Security Council. Abd-Al-Rahman is charged with 31 war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Darfur that began in 2003, pitting Sudanese government forces, backed by Janjaweed militias, against rebel movements.

Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	
Start:	2011
Type:	Self-government, Resources, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, armed group SPLM-N, Sudan Revolutionary Front (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.

Violence and instability in the region intensified during the year due to intercommunity clashes, mainly in the Blue Nile region. In 2022, ACLED reported 562 deaths caused by fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Most of them took place in the second half of the year, with the Blue Nile region as the epicentre, accounting for 484 deaths, while 78 deaths were reported in South Kordofan. These figures show a significant rise in instability compared to the previous year, when 193 deaths associated with the armed conflict were reported, most of them in the South Kordofan region (182). This rise in violence, which forcibly displaced thousands, owed to an increase in intercommunity disputes, which also spread to West Kordofan. This region reported 214 deaths during the year, most of them in October.

The most notable violent episodes of the year included various incidents in **South Kordofan**, mainly due to intercommunity disputes, though they were less intense than those that occurred in 2021. These included a battle in June between members of the Kenana and Hawazma communities that claimed at least 19 lives in the town of Abu Jubayhah. On 18 August, the SPLM-N announced that the group was splitting into two factions headed by Malik Agar and Yasir Arman. Days later, the creation of the SPLM-Revolutionary Democratic Current was announced, led by Yasir Arman. The national crisis and the open dialogue to restore democracy between the military junta and the opposition parties blocked the negotiating process between the SPLM-N al-Hilu (one of the groups that did not sign the October 2020 peace agreement) and the transitional government, with no progress being made during the year.[38]

Neighbouring **West Kordofan** was affected by the rising dynamics of intercommunity violence in the latter part of the year. On 12 September, fighting broke out over land demarcation in the city of Abu Zabad between members of the Hamar and Misseriya communities. On 19 September, representatives of both groups signed an agreement to cease hostilities. Later, members of the Hamar community put up roadblocks to demand the secession of West Kordofan and the formation of a new state, "Central Kordofan". In October, there were new clashes between members of the Misseriya and Nuba groups over disputed territories, which left at least 19 people dead and 34 injured and displaced around 65,000 people. In December, clashes between members of the Hamar and Misseriya groups over cattle rustling caused at least 30 deaths in the Abu Koa area. Finally, the **Blue Nile** region became the epicentre of violence in the area when intercommunity fighting broke out in the middle of the year. In July, clashes caused by land disputes between members of the Berti and Hausa communities killed at least 105 people and displaced 30,000, forcing the declaration of a state of emergency, a curfew and the deployment of additional troops. Although a cessation of hostilities agreement was signed between the communities involved on 3 August, major clashes flared up in the area again in

38. See the summary on Sudan in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace talks in focus 2022: report on trends and scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

September. Tensions escalated into another major episode of violence on 19 October when members of the Hausa community launched an attack against Hamar, Funj, Berti and Gumuz communities in the town of Wad al-Mahi, killing over 257 people and injuring 570. These events led the governor of Blue Nile to declare a state of emergency in the entire region for 30 days and the Sudanese Army appointed a new commander in the state to contain the violence.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia (Oromia)	
Start:	2022
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government of Ethiopia, Oromia State Regional Government, armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), pro-government Amharic militia Fano
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

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

The situation in the Ethiopian region of Oromia worsened significantly in 2022, with an escalation in the fighting and the counterinsurgency activity of the federal security forces, supported by pro-government militias from the neighbouring Amhara region, the Fano militias, against the armed group OLA. At the same time, security forces and pro-government militias committed many acts of violence against civilians of the Oromo community, which accelerated at the end of the year at the same time as the peace agreement between the federal government and the political-military authorities of the Tigray region was reached. These negotiations had drawn the attention of the international community at the expense of the situation in Oromia, according to various analysts.

According to data collected by ACLED,[39] there were 707 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) in the Oromia region that claimed 4,533 lives in 2022. Thus figure must be taken with a grain of salt since it combines violence directly linked to the armed conflict with crackdowns on protests against government action and the ethnic cleansing of civilians. The figure also includes acts of violence against the Amhara minority community in the Oromia region carried out by members of the Oromia regional government and the OLA, as well as clashes between community-based militias from Somali herding communities and Oromo farming communities that claim hundreds of lives each year. In April, the government launched a military operation to expel the armed group OLA that was operating in the western, central and southern parts of the region. The fighting intensified in October, coinciding with the negotiations that culminated in the peace agreement in November between the federal government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region.[40]

Human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch condemned the escalation of violence and the counterinsurgency campaigns, which included telecommunications cuts and blackouts and indicated that the clashes had led government security forces to commit serious abuses, including summary execution and arbitrary detention. HRW also reported that the armed groups had kidnapped or killed members of minority communities in the region and government representatives. It also said that the armed conflict and peace negotiations related to the Tigray region may have eclipsed the conflict in the neighbouring region and the need for peace negotiations to de-escalate the tension and tone down the growing violence.[41] A report by the independent government organisation Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published in December said that civilians in the region have been caught in the crossfire and subjected to alarming crimes, such as extrajudicial and mass killings that would constitute

39. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
40. Nosmot Gbadamosi, "Ethiopia's Other War", *Foreign Policy*, 16 November 2022.
41. HRW, "Ethiopia's Other Conflict. Ethiopia's Tigray War Overshadows Ongoing Cycles of Violence in Oromia", *HRW*, 4 July 2022.

serious violations of human rights in the course of attacks by armed groups, government forces and the Amharic Fano militia. The OLA's actions included the destruction of farming locations and supplies and civil infrastructure, the looting of state property and the interruption of essential services. The clashes may have caused hundreds of fatalities and injuries. Covering the period between August and December, the report indicated that civilians had been deliberately targeted based on ethnic criteria or political opinions and that the clashes and ethnic cleansing had forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of people who ended up in deplorable conditions and with no access to humanitarian assistance.[42] The OLA spokesperson indicated that federal security forces carried out drone attacks in populated areas that caused the death of over 300 civilians between the last week of October and the first week of November, coinciding with the negotiations in South Africa. An ACLED body count of five of those days found that more than 55 civilians had been killed in shelling in three towns.[43] The AU-facilitated peace negotiations in relation to the armed conflict in the Ethiopian region of Tigray drew the attention of the international community, diverting it away from the acts of war in Oromia according to these analyses. A US-based organisation, the Amhara Association of America, stated that it had received information that the OLA and parts of the regional government of Oromia had made a deliberate and concerted effort to ethnically cleanse the Amhara minority population in the region.

Ethiopia (Tigray)	
Start:	2020
Type:	Government, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Ethiopia, Government of Eritrea, security forces and militias of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), security forces of the Amhara and Afar regions, Amharic militia Fano
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓

Summary:
The appointment of Abiy Ahmed as Ethiopia's new prime minister in early 2018 brought about important and positive changes domestically and regionally in Ethiopia. However, Abiy's actions to reform the Ethiopian state led to its weakening. They gave a new impetus to the ethnic-based nationalist movements that had re-emerged during the mass mobilisations initiated in 2015 by the Oromo community that eventually brought Abiy Ahmed to power, as well as strong resistance from key actors such as the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party, formerly the leading party of the coalition that has ruled Ethiopia since 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which established the system of ethnic federalism after he came to power. The Tigray community leadership perceived a loss of power and privilege in the changes enacted by Abiy Ahmed. The TPLF is resisting the loss of power resulting from its non-participation in the new party forged from the ashes of the EPRDF coalition, the Prosperity Party (PP), which if it joined, would lead to the dilution of its power within a new party. These tensions intensified under Abiy Ahmed's liberalising reforms. As the EPRDF tightened its grip, new opportunities, grievances and discourses emerged from regional leaders and civil society actors. This triggered an escalation of political violence throughout the country and increased tension between the federal Government and the TPLF, culminating in the outbreak of armed conflict between the Ethiopian security forces and the security forces in the Tigray region. Moreover, the crisis took on regional dimensions due to the involvement of Eritrea, as well as militias and security forces from the neighbouring Ethiopian region of Amhara.

Two years after the start of one of the most serious armed conflicts in Africa in recent years, the federal government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region reached a peace agreement that could put an end to the serious atmosphere of violence and human rights violations committed in the regions by all the warring parties that have caused one of the main displacement crises in the Horn of Africa in recent years. The serious human rights violations identified (extrajudicial killings, serious atrocities such as widespread sexual violence used as a weapon of war, sexual slavery and mass rape, acts of ethnic cleansing according to human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and HRW) could be considered war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by all the actors involved in the conflict, according to various analysts. In addition to the cessation of hostilities, the peace agreement reached on 2 November included important concessions by the TPLF, such as the systematic and coordinated disarmament of its security forces. The federal government agreed to remove the TPLF from its list of terrorist organisations and start (Article 10.2) a political dialogue on the political future of Tigray, without the agreement defining any kind of supervision or monitoring of the dialogue.[44]

According to data collected by ACLED,[45] 145 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) were reported in the Tigray region in 2022, which claimed the lives of 698 people. If the Amhara and Afar regions are included, where serious fighting also took place between the TPLF and the coalition of federal security forces, local security forces and regional militias from both provinces and the Eritrean Armed Forces deployed in the country, there were 388 episodes of violence that killed 1,359 people.

42. Ethiopia Observer, *'Serious human rights violations' in Oromia region: EHRC report,* 8 December 2022.
43. ACLED, EPO Weekly, 29 October – 4 November 2022, in Gbadamosi, Nosmot, "Ethiopia's Other War", *Foreign Policy*, 16 November 2022.
44. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
45. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].

These figures are significantly lower than those reported from when the conflict started in November 2020 until the end of 2021, when more than 800 violent events and 4,075 fatalities were reported in the Tigray region alone. If the adjacent provinces of Amhara and Afar are included, there were 1,473 episodes of violence and 8,436 fatalities, although these figures must be taken with caution due to the difficulties in getting reliable death counts due to restrictions on access to humanitarian staff, the media and independent sources.

The Ethiopian federal government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region reached a peace agreement in 2022 that could put an end to the serious climate of violence that has affected the region in the last two years

According to UNHCR, there were over 2.7 million internally displaced people in the country at the start of 2023, though this figure does not include the displaced population in Tigray due to difficulties operating in the region, nor does it include statistics from parts of the region of Afar, which also remained inaccessible as a result of the conflict and insecurity.[46] In January 2023, the UNFPA indicated that over 26 million people, more than 20% of the population of the country, suffered from a serious food emergency situation and depended on humanitarian aid. This figure includes 20 million people affected by the drought and other climate disasters in the eastern and southern regions of the country. Conflict and displacement, severe drought, disease and the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are the main factors contributing to the situation. Following the agreement reached in November, humanitarian actors stepped up their response due to improved access to populations affected by the conflict. Commercial flights between Mekelle and Shire, electricity, telecommunications and banking services were restored in various parts of Tigray, which had a positive impact.[47]

The peace agreement reached in November was preceded by a breakdown of the humanitarian truce in force between March and August 2022, after which there was a serious escalation of violence between the parties. In October, the AU-led mediators got the parties to accept their invitation to travel to South Africa to discuss a cessation of hostilities, but it was postponed for logistical reasons. Ethiopia could have used this delay to accelerate the military offensive together with Eritrea to come to the negotiating table in a stronger position, according to some analysts.

Two years after the outbreak of an armed conflict that has caused thousands of deaths in the region, displaced more than two million people and forced almost one million out of the six million people that live in the Tigray region into starvation, there was a new escalation of fighting in late August between the militias and security forces of Tigray and the Ethiopian federal troops supported by Eritrea and the security forces of the Amhara region. The rise in violence sounded alarms for serious violations of human rights against civilians and led to an intensification of diplomatic initiatives to convince the parties of the need to reach a ceasefire. However, a humanitarian truce had been in force from March until the end of August. Both sides traded blamed for breaking the truce, which led to new fighting and the resumption of the humanitarian blockade. After the ceasefire agreement was signed in November, there were some sporadic clashes and continued abuse by Eritrean troops, as well as acts of looting and attacks against civilians. For instance, the Tigrayan authorities accused the federal security forces of having carried out attacks against civilians in the town of Maychew after the agreement was signed. However, in general the parties respected the agreement and in late December, Eritrea began to withdraw its troops from various locations in the region, including the strategic locations of Shire and Axum, coinciding with the arrival of the AU monitoring mission included in the agreement. Meanwhile, the forces and security forces of the Tigray region began to deliver heavy weapons in compliance with the agreement.[48] In turn, fighting in the border area between the Ethiopian and Sudanese armies and Sudanese militias in 2021, which hindered the displacement of people fleeing the conflict, also subsided during the year. In December 2022, Ethiopia and Sudan reached a cooperation agreement on peace and security.

Somalia	
Start:	1988
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Federal government, regional pro-government forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan and warlord militias, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, USA, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM/ATMIS, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Combined Task Force 151, al-Shabaab, ISIS
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. This situation led to a new fight within this

46. UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Ethiopia, 31 January 2023.
47. UNFPA, *UNFPA Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Situation Report*, 31 December 2022.
48. BBC, "Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: TPLF forces hand over weapons in peace move", *BBC*, 11 January 2023.

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

The armed conflict in Somalia was much more intense than in the previous period. The year was marked by the rise in attacks by the armed group al-Shabaab, by the operations of the African mission in the country (AMISOM, transformed into the AU Transitional Mission in Somalia, ATMIS, in April) and **of the Somali National Army and its international allies and by the culmination of the electoral process**. The Somali security forces and ATMIS continued to be the main target of the attacks, which were mainly carried out with improvised explosive devices. The states most affected by the activity of al-Shabaab and the counterinsurgent operations of the federal government and its allies were the rural areas and urban centres in the central and southern part of the country, especially in the state of Hirshabelle (especially the regions of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle); the state of Galmudug (the region of Galgudug); the state of South West (especially the regions of Benadir, which includes the capital, Mogadishu, and also Lower Shabelle, Bay and Bakool); and Jubaland (especially the Gedo region, which borders Ethiopia).

Attacks by al-Shabaab and the counterinsurgent operations of the federal government and its local and international allies caused an unprecedented escalation of violence in 2022

The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS)[49] reported that there was a 133% rise in deaths linked to the violence of militant Islamist groups during 2022. There were 6,484 violent deaths reported in Somalia in 2022, according to ACLED data, an increase from 3,181 the previous year. This is a record number of deaths and exceeds the total of 2020 (3,232) and 2021 (3,181) combined.[50] This was reflected in an increase in armed activity compared to the previous year, with a total of 2,936 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices), compared to the 2,545 events of the previous year, but the slight difference shows that the actions in 2022 were much more lethal.

The escalation of confrontations and government combat actions increased after the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in May and his call for an all-out offensive against al-Shabaab. This offensive expelled al-Shabaab from the main cities it had previously controlled, which provoked reprisal attacks. The government offensive against al-Shabaab caused an increase in actions by part of the rearguard, responding in pursuit of easy targets, such as the October attacks in Mogadishu that caused around one hundred deaths and injured hundreds more.

The conflict was also marked by a 34% increase in attacks with improvised explosive devices in 2022 and a doubling of the deaths resulting from them. The UN reported that 613 civilians died and 948 were injured that year, most of them by improvised explosive devices planted by al-Shabaab, which exacerbated the already dire humanitarian and human rights situation of the civilian population, according to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk.[51] State security forces, clan militias and other unidentified actors were also responsible for civilian casualties, as were aerial operations with drones from the US and Turkey.

In humanitarian terms, the ACSS said that Somalia experienced its fifth rainy season with hardly any precipitation and was expected to see a sixth season of below-average rains in March-June 2023, which could affect 8.3 million people. Much of the area facing the most extreme food insecurity, including possible famine, is in territory that al-Shabaab controls or disputes. This underscores the challenges of humanitarian access and occasionally the total sabotage of food aid deliveries. UNHCR reported that there were three million internally displaced people in the country as a result of the conflict, insecurity and the effects of climate change.[52]

In addition to the activities of al-Shabaab and the severe drought and famine affecting the country, legislative and presidential elections were held as part of the implementation of the electoral agreement reached on 27 May 2021. The presidential election was won by Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who became the new president of the country, ending the serious climate of tension between parts of the government and

49. Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, "Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent", 6 February 2023.
50. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
51. OHCHR, "Somalia: Türk decries steep rise in civilian casualties amid surge in Al-Shabaab attacks", *OHCHR*, UN, 14 November 2022.
52. UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Somalia, 31 January 2023.

the federated states and opposition groups, which had triggered several different negotiations to overcome the dispute.[53] Meanwhile, the AU mission in Somalia ended its mandate on 31 March 2022 and was replaced by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), established on 1 April. The mission has the mandate to strengthen both the military and institutional autonomy of the Somali government as it proceeds to withdraw from the country. Its mandate will end in late 2024, when Somalia's security forces and bodies are expected to fully assume the country's security responsibilities, guided by Somalia's Transition Plan. The first ATMIS troop drawdown took place in December 2022.

The elections also concluded with the formation of Parliament.[54] Outgoing President Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmajo" Mohamed acknowledged his defeat and President Mohamud took the oath of office immediately. The presidential election was considered transparent and widely accepted by the country's interested parties. Mohamud assumed full presidential powers on 23 May and was invested on 9 June. Since taking office, the president has intensified contacts with the leaders of the federal states to improve relations between the federal government and the federal states. President Mohamud said that he needed to weaken al-Shabaab militarily, economically and ideologically. In line with the president's determination to fight al-Shabaab beyond military means, the new government prominently appointed al-Shabaab's former second-in-command, Mukhtar "Abu Mansour" Robow Ali, who had defected from the armed Islamist group in 2017, to be the new minister of religious affairs. Abu Mansour had been threatened by al-Shabaab for being considered critical of it and for advocating peace negotiations with the government. He was arrested in December 2018 when he was running for the presidency of the state of South West and imprisoned without trial until his appointment. In a break with previous public statements, on 15 June the current second-in-command of al-Shabaab and leader of its intelligence services, Mahad Karate, told British media Channel 4 that the group could consider negotiations with the government when the time was right.[55] In an interview with *The Economist* published days before, President Mohamud stated his intention to roll back al-Shabaab before striking up peace talks.

According to the report of the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia published in October,[56] despite the efforts made by Somali and international forces to reduce al-Shabaab's capacities, it was still able to carry out complex and asymmetric attacks in Somalia. Its cross-border offensives in Ethiopia and Kenya during the year highlighted its interest in expanding its ability to attack abroad and revealed its regional ambitions. Al-Shabaab kept large areas of central and southern Somalia under its control and continued to exert its influence over areas where security forces have been deployed. Therefore, the insurgent group retained its freedom of movement, which allowed it to organise ambushes and set up improvised explosive devices that hindered the movement of government forces. The Panel of Experts' investigations into the finances of al-Shabaab, whose economy is based on extortion in several sectors, such as livestock and property, revealed a solid financial position capable of sustaining its insurgent campaign, generating income and exercising control over companies and individuals in areas that it does not physically control, especially in large urban centres such as Mogadishu. This was facilitated by threats of violence against people and communities, as well as by the absence of constant pressure on its financial resources. Furthermore, the Panel of Experts has not seen enough indications that the federal government has attempted to curb al-Shabaab's extortion strategy outside of traditional military operations by its security forces.[57]

Maghreb - North Africa

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

Summary:
In the context of the uprisings in North Africa, popular protests against the government of Muammar Gaddafi began in February 2011. In power since 1969, his regime was characterized by an authoritarian stance repression of dissent, corruption and serious shortcomings at the institutional level. Internal conflict degenerated into an escalation of violence leading to a civil war and an international military intervention by NATO forces. After months of fighting and the capture and execution of Gaddafi in late October,

53. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
54. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia*, S/2022/665 de 31 August 2022.
55. Jamal Osman, "Inside Al Shabaab: The extremist group trying to seize Somalia", *Channel 4*, 15 June 2022.
56. UN Security Council, *Letter dated 10 October 2022 addressed to the President of the Security Council following Resolution 751 (1992) relating to Somalia by the Panel of Experts on Somalia, United Nations*, S/2022/754 of 10 October 2022.
57. Ibid.

the rebels announced the liberation of Libya. However, the country remains affected by high levels of violence derived from multiple factors, including the inability of the new authorities to control the country and ensure a secure environment; the high presence of militias unwilling to surrender their weapons; and disputes over resources and trafficking routes. The situation in the country deteriorated from mid-2014 onward, with higher levels of violence and persistent political fragmentation. Efforts to solve the situation have been hampered by this scene of fragmentation and a climate of instability has assisted the expansion of ISIS in the North African country. The dynamics of violence have been accentuated by the involvement of foreign actors in support of the various opposing sides, motivated by geopolitical and economic interests, given Libya's strategic location in the Mediterranean basin and its great oil wealth.

The situation in Libya during 2022 was characterised by **growing polarisation and a new institutional fault line amid difficulties and deadlock in the negotiations over the future of the country**.[58] This atmosphere of tension and impasse, which lasted until the end of the year and took shape in the establishment of two parallel governments, together with the intermittent fighting between armed groups in the country, stoked concerns about the political future and the security situation in Libya. **However, in general terms, levels of violence remained similar to those of the previous year and well below what was observed in previous periods.** Following the trend observed since the ceasefire agreement was signed in October 2020, 157 people were reportedly killed in 2022 as a result of the armed conflict, according to the ACLED study centre. This figure is slightly higher than that of 2021, when 115 deaths were reported, but significantly lower than those of 2020 and 2019, when over 1,000 people were killed as a result of the hostilities (1,500 and 2,000, respectively). As in previous years, the perpetrators of the violence were armed groups aligned with the main factions in conflict in the country, organised armed groups engaged in illegal activities and, to a lesser extent, the local Islamic State branch, which was involved in some sporadic actions. Its leader, considered responsible for the kidnapping and beheading of 21 Egyptian citizens in Sirte in 2015, was killed in September by armed groups that control the eastern part of the country. During 2022, the United Nations and human rights organisations continued to warn about the impact of hostilities on civilians, the harassment of civil society actors by armed groups and the many different risks faced by the migrant and refugee population in the country, subjected as it was to abuse, mistreatment and arbitrary arrest.

Uncertainty about how the conflict in Libya was developing had already intensified by the end of 2021 after the general elections scheduled for 24 December were cancelled. Given the failure to hold them, some questioned the legitimacy of the unity government headed by Abdul Hamid Mohamed Dbeibah, chosen in February 2021 as part of the peace process led by the UN with a mandate to lead the country until the elections. Thus, the House of Representatives, which is based in Tobruk (in the eastern part of the country), decided to appoint Fathi Bashagha as the interim prime minister in February. Hours before the vote, Dbeibah's convoy was attacked by armed men. Though Dbeibah himself was unharmed, it was described as an assassination attempt. In March, Bashagha, who is said to have made agreements and formed ties with an old rival, General Khalifa Haftar, a leading figure in the eastern part of the country, appointed his own government in a disputed process that was not recognised by the United Nations. Both Dbeibah and Bashagha announced different formulas and road maps for holding elections and resolving the crisis. There were mediation attempts to bring the different sides closer in the following months, but in practice the June 2022 deadline to end the transition phase (established in the 2020 agreement) elapsed without them reaching any agreement. At the same time, the main actors indulged in threatening and warmongering rhetoric and several incidents took place that raised the tension. In April, pro-Haftar and pro-Bashagha forces forced the closure of oil and gas fields and export terminals to weaken Dbeibah's access to resources coming from the sale of petrol (production was not restored until July). In May, Bashagha tried unsuccessfully to install his government in Tripoli. After clashes in the capital, his forces were eventually driven out of the city by armed groups loyal to Dbeibah. In July, there were a series of protests in Tripoli, Benghazi and Tobruk, including an assault on and burning of the legislative building in Benghazi, which demonstrated the population's frustration with the political leaders' inability to reach agreements and the problems with living conditions. **The most serious acts of violence occurred in August, when the worst clashes in Tripoli in several years claimed the lives of around 30 people and injured over 150**. Two days of fighting between forces allied with Dbeibah and Bashagha ended without the latter managing to drive the former out of the capital. During the second half of the year, Dbeibah consolidated his control over Tripoli, though violence between rival armed factions was reported. In the final months of the year, the main contending parties made demonstrations of force through military parades, exhibited aggressive rhetoric and, according to some reports, pursued intensive recruitment. At the end of the year, the UN reported minimal progress on a new road map to overcome the crisis and the obstacles to the talks led by representatives of the two rival legislative bodies became clear.

58. See the summary on Libya in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks 2022 in Focus. Analysis on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

Although the ceasefire generally remained in force, an atmosphere of confrontation throughout the year influenced the development of the negotiations backed by the UN and other international actors, including in the security sector. The political crisis had an impact on the work of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, made up of representatives of the main rival military coalitions (five delegates from the Government of National Accord, the predecessor of the Government of National Unity, and another five linked to General Haftar's armed group, the Libyan National Army, renamed the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (known as LNA or LAAF). In April, members of the commission loyal to Haftar announced that they were ending their participation in it and called to overturn the confidence-building measures established under the ceasefire agreement. This development was attributed to the Government of National Unity's problems in paying salaries to LAAF members, but it was also interpreted as an attempt to pressure Dbeibah to hand over power to Bashagha. The meetings of the Joint Military Commission resumed at the end of October, in Sirte, after the appointment of the new UN special representative and head of the UN mission in the country (UNSMIL), Abdoluaye Bathily, and led to the establishment of a DDR subcommittee. Meanwhile, work continued on a plan to withdraw mercenaries and foreign combatants, another one of the important points stipulated in the truce agreement, given the proliferation of foreign forces in the country in recent years in support of one side or the other and the projection of many different regional and international actors' interests in the conflict. The withdrawal of a few hundred mercenaries from various parts of the country was reported during the year. About 300 Chadian mercenaries left eastern Libya in January, while 1,000 pro-Moscow Syrian mercenaries and another 200 members of the Russian paramilitary organisation Wagner Group reportedly departed the country in April. This latest move was attributed to the repercussions of the war in Ukraine. According to media outlets, around 5,000 pro-Russian mercenaries remained in the country in support of Haftar's forces in April. Tensions also rose in 2022 due to economic and maritime agreements between the Tripoli-based Libyan government and Turkey that open the door to joint exploration of oil and gas in an area of the Mediterranean disputed with Greece and Egypt. These agreements between Tripoli and Ankara, which also signed deals to strengthen their military cooperation, were rejected by Cairo, Athens and the EU.

Southern Africa

Mozambique (north)	
Start:	2019
Type:	System, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) or Islamic State Mozambique Province (ISMP)-formerly Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ)-, al-Qaeda, South African private security company DAG (Dyck Advisory Group), Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), "Naparama" local militias
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

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

The year was characterised by an increase in violent episodes against civilians in the province of Cabo Delgado, though there was a slight dip in armed violence-related deaths compared to the previous year. According to data collected by ACLED, 905 deaths were reported in the northern part of the country, concentrated in the province of Cabo Delgado, in 2022. These 905 deaths were slightly fewer than the deaths caused by violence in 2021 (1,067).[59] However, the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) reported that the number of violent incidents related to jihadist groups in the province rose by 29% in 2022 (437), returning to the levels of 2020 before the intervention of the South African Development Community

59. ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 6 January 2023].

(SADC) and Rwandan forces. These episodes were distinguished by high levels of violence against civilians, whose deaths increased by 57% compared to the previous year. Violence against civilians accounted for 66% of all violent events in northern Mozambique, which according to the ACSS was the highest percentage reported in Africa.[60] Since the outbreak of violence in the region in late 2017, it is estimated that the conflict has claimed the lives of around 4,400 people. Cabo Delgado remains one of the five focal points of violence waged by jihadist groups in Africa, which also include the Sahel, Somalia, the Lake Chad basin and North Africa. As a result of the increase and expansion of violence against civilians, by the end of 2022, over one million people had been internally displaced in the four northern provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula and Zambezia.

The Mozambican government maintained a narrative that it had control over the situation in Cabo Delgado during the year, but many local and international analysts said that the conflict is far from over

The most significant scenarios during the year were characterised by the armed actions of groups affiliated with Islamic State that targeted civilians, the Mozambican security forces and international forces deployed in the country since mid-2021; the counterinsurgent actions carried out by the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM), the deployed Rwandan forces and the reserve force of the SADC Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) in Cabo Delgado; and the counterinsurgent operations of local self-defence militias, known locally as "Naparama". Throughout the year, armed activity led by groups linked to Islamic State continued in much of the province of Cabo Delgado (districts of Meluco, Maconia, Nangade and Namuno), which called into question the narrative that the government's security situation had "normalised". The self-styled Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) claimed responsibility for this activity. ISCAP is a branch of ISIS that also includes the DRC and Uganda and in May, ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks and referred to Mozambique as a separate branch, "Wilayah de Mozambique" (Islamic State Mozambique Province, or ISMP), which raised doubts about whether it has been granted independent status, as happened in March with its affiliated group from the Sahel.

The Rwandan and SAMIM forces maintained and expanded their operations against the insurgency during the year. On 12 April, the heads of state of the SADC, the representatives of the countries that support SAMIM and Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi agreed to extend SAMIM's mandate and approved the mission's transition from that of a "rapid deployment" force to that of a "multidimensional" force that assumed greater peacekeeping possibilities. South Africa extended its own contingent of troops in the SADC mission for 12 months, while Rwanda expanded its troops in the country, as well as in its area of operation in the province of Cabo Delgado. A new 12-month extension of SAMIM's mandate was agreed in August. At the end of the year, there were around 4,500 foreign soldiers and police officers in Cabo Delgado, of which around 2,000 were deployed by SAMIM (more than half of which were members of the South African National Defence Force) and the rest came from Rwanda.

Finally, the year was also characterised by the re-emergence of a new actor in the conflict: local militias known as "Naparama". These militias had been part of the armed conflict in the country in the 1980s and they returned to the scene after the FRELIMO secretariat in Cabo Delgado encouraged them to take an active role in the conflict, setting up checkpoints in the main access roads and conducting patrols. To enable their operationalisation, the Mozambican government proposed legislating it as a temporary and transitional force to be used in the context of the conflict in Cabo Delgado. The Mozambican Parliament passed an amendment to Article 7 of the Law on National Defence and on the Armed Defence Forces of Mozambique to incorporate local forces into the structure of the FADM. The amendment was not supported by the opposition parties RENAMO and Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM). Most of the members of these militias are affiliated with the Combatants Association of National Liberation Struggle (ACLIN), an organisation linked to FRELIMO that brings together veterans of the Mozambique liberation war.

Western Africa

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

60. Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, "Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent", 6 February 2023.

Summary:
After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Cameroon came under the mandate of the League of Nations and was divided between French Cameroon and British Cameroon. In 1961, the two territories that made up British Cameroon held a referendum limiting their self-determination to union with the already independent Republic of Cameroon (formerly French Cameroon) or union with Nigeria. The southern part of British Cameroon (a region currently corresponding to the provinces of North West and South West) decided to join the Republic of Cameroon, whereas the north preferred to join Nigeria. A poorly conducted re-unification in the 1960s based on centralisation and assimilation has led the English-speaking minority of what was once southern British Cameroon (20% of the country's population) to feel politically and economically marginalised by state institutions, which are controlled by the French-speaking majority. Their frustrations rose in late 2016, when a series of sector-specific grievances were transformed into political demands, which caused strikes, riots and a growing escalation of tension and government repression. This climate has led a majority of the population in the region demanding a new federal political status without ruling out secession and has prompted the resurgence of identity movements dating back to the 1970s. These movements demand a return to the federal model that existed between 1961 and 1972. Trust between English-speaking activists and the government was shaken by the arrest of the main figures of the federalist movement in January 2017, which has given a boost to groups supporting armed struggle as the only way to achieve independence. Since then, both English-speaking regions have experienced general strikes, school boycotts and sporadic violence. Insurgent activity has escalated since the secessionist movement's declaration of independence on 1 October and the subsequent government repression to quell it.

The armed conflict between the state security forces and the separatist political and military movements in the two Anglophone provinces in southwestern Cameroon since 2017 remained active and has already caused the death of around 6,000 people, according to International Crisis Group. It has also forcibly displaced more than 710,000 people, a figure that includes over 87,000 refugees in Nigeria, according to UNHCR data from December 2022. According to the UN, 2.2 million of the four million inhabitants of the English-speaking regions needed humanitarian assistance in 2022, while around 600,000 minors were unable to attend school due to the conflict. The armed groups committed some attacks in the neighbouring provinces of Littoral, Centre and West in 2022 to expand the conflict beyond the two secessionist regions. Tension and violence rose on the eve of 20 May, the national holiday, considered a key date marking the beginning of the conflict, when a constitutional referendum abolished the English-speaking federal state of West Cameroon and the French-speaking federal state of East Cameroon in 1972, as well as the eve of 1 October, the anniversary of the self-proclaimed Federal Republic of Ambazonia. On 1 October, Anglophone separatist movements held armed marches in the provinces of North West and South West and government forces carried out punitive crackdowns on pro-independence demonstrations in various towns, burning houses and arresting dozens of civilians on 1-2 October.

Human rights organisations reported that both the security forces and the separatists fighters had committed serious abuses that include extrajudicial killings, rape, kidnapping and torture.[61] The separatist movements continued to attack schools, students and teachers, destroying buildings and depriving hundreds of thousands of children of their right to education. In February, following an attack on a girls' secondary school dormitory in Okoyong, Mamfe, South West province, international diplomats jointly condemned the attack and part of the secessionist political and military leadership, the Ambazonian Governing Council (AGovC), called for the attacks on the schools to cease on the same day. Months later, the Mamfe district hospital was destroyed in an attack by secessionist militias. One of the few humanitarian organisations still operating in the area, Doctors Without Borders, confirmed that it was leaving South West province on 29 March, citing government harassment. Local sources also warned that the dynamics of violence had recently been changing with the growth of a lucrative war economy, which generally involves kidnapping and other ways to extort the civilian population. According to analysts, the political and economic spoils of the war have reduced incentives to find a negotiated settlement.[62] Meanwhile, desertions among the security forces increased. In particular, on 5 and 16 February, the police announced that a total of 12 officers did not show up in different parts of North West province. As in previous years, various insurgent leaders and militia commanders were killed during the year, such as General Ebube in the village of Alabukam (North West) in February and "Field Marshal" Lekeaka Olivier Fongunueh in July, whose corpse was exhibited by the security forces in the city of Kumba. The commander of the special forces' Rapid Intervention Battalion, Major Eyenga Essama, was also killed during clashes in Kumba in July. Essama is the highest-ranking military officer to have fallen in battle since the conflict began in 2017. On 19 July, Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo condemned the military's abuses against Anglophone civilians and ordered soldiers to stop their human rights violations.

Speculation continued about the health and succession of octogenarian Paul Biya, who made a private five-day trip to Switzerland in May. Around Biya's 89th birthday on 13 February, there was talk of succession plans and of the growing power of First Lady Chantal Biya. Meanwhile, official celebrations and ceremonies were held in November to commemorate Biya's 40 years in power, during which plans for his son Franck Biya

61. Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon, Events of 2022", *World Report 2023,* HRW, 13 January 2023.
62. R. Maxwel Bonne, "Why the spoils of war may outweigh incentives for peace in Cameroon", *The New Humanitarian*, 19 July 2022.

to succeed him were revealed. Traditional authorities, ruling party officials and residents of the northern region, a stronghold of the ruling party, greeted his son Franck with honours on 6 November.

In November, the UN working group on arbitrary detentions called for the "immediate and unconditional" release of Sisiku separatist leader Julius Ayuk Tabe and nine other prisoners, describing their arrest in Nigeria in 2018 as arbitrary. In recognition of the plight of the English-speaking regions, and after years of campaigning by activists and dozens of civil society groups, on 15 April the US government granted Temporary Protected Status to all Cameroonian immigrants, allowing them an 18-month stay until their individual status is determined.

Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	
Start:	2011
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government of Nigeria, Civilian Joint Task Force pro-government militia, Boko Haram factions (ISWAP, JAS-Abubakar Shekau, Ansaru, Bakura), civilian militias, Multinational Joint Task Force MNJTF (Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger)
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. The scope of its attacks has widened, aggravating insecurity in the country as the government proves incapable of offering an effective response to put an end to the violence. International human rights organizations have warned of the crimes committed by the group, but also on government abuses in its campaign against the organization. In 2015 the conflict expanded to the Lake Chad Basin and affected border areas of neighbouring countries with the Nigerian region: the Extrême Nord region in Cameroon, Diffa in Niger and the province of Lac in Chad. Since mid-2016 Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon have developed a regional strategy of military pressure on BH through the implementation of a regional joint military force (MNJTF), which has highlighted the group's resilience and also the unwillingness of the Nigerian political and military authorities to deal with the situation, in addition to the shortcomings of the Nigerian Armed Forces, which have serious internal corruption problems. BH has split into four factions: The Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (JAS) faction, led by Abubakar Shekau, leader of BH since 2009; Ansaru, which aligned with al-Qaeda in 2012 and had not committed any military actions since 2013 until early 2020; Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which split from JAS in 2016; and finally Bakura, an ISWAP splinter group that emerged in 2018 and subsequently moved closer to Shekau in opposition to ISWAP.

Different Boko Haram (BH) factions continued to pursue their activities during the year in the Lake Chad Basin region, which includes northeastern Nigeria, Diffa in Niger and the province of Lac in Chad, despite the counterinsurgency operations against them. These activities caused new population displacements and human rights violations by all the armed actors involved, as indicated by different human rights organisations. **Different clashes and acts of reprisal between armed insurgents were also verified. Meanwhile, the insurgent groups expanded their radius of action beyond the northeastern states of Nigeria and towards other states in north central and northwestern Nigeria**. In northeastern Nigeria, an estimated 2.2 million people had been displaced by violence and 8.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022, according to OCHA. Nigeria is the country most affected by BH faction activity. The IDMC raised the number of internal displaced persons across the country at the end of 2021 to 3.2 million.[63]

The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS)[64] indicated that violence by Islamist armed groups stabilised in 2022 after a sharp 32% drop between 2020 and 2021. According to the ACLED research centre, 3,782 fatalities were reported in the Lake Chad Basin region (the Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa; the Extrême Nord region in Cameroon; Diffa in Niger; and the province of Lac in Chad) in 2022, slightly fewer than the number of deaths in 2021 (4,163). There were 1,002 violent events in 2022, a figure very similar to the 982 in 2021.[65] The ACSS noted that the Lake Chad Basin region is still the third deadliest in Africa, accounting for 20% of all deaths linked to Islamist militants. The region experienced the resurgence of JAS in 2022. Since 2017, JAS had been declining in its relative threat to ISWAP, which intensified after the death of historical leader Abubakar Shekau in 2021. However, during 2022, BH was associated with a 57% increase in violent episodes and a 70% increase in deaths. While ISWAP continues to be associated with more violence in the region, the levels are now comparable. These changes coincide with the geographical expansion of insurgency attacks beyond

63. IDMC, *Figures Analysis 2021- Nigeria*, 19 May 2022.
64. Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, "Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent", 6 February 2023.
65. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].

the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in northeastern Nigeria.[66] According to the database Nigeria Security Tracker (NST), the death toll in the Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa rose slightly from previous years (2,078 in 2022, compared to 1,810 in 2021, 2,603 in 2020, 2,607 in 2019, 2,243 in 2018 and 1,907 in 2017).[67]

In 2022, ISWAP-linked attacks took place in the states of Kano, Kogi, Niger and Taraba, in the north central part of the country. ISWAP was also responsible for the bombing of a church in the southwestern state of Ondo, attacks on a military barracks and a prison on the outskirts of Abuja and an attempted attack on a military barracks near the Benin border in the western state of Niger. JAS and ISWAP were also linked to episodes of violence in various states in northwestern Nigeria, such as Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and others. Meanwhile, in October various Western countries, initially the US and the UK, warned of possible attacks by jihadist armed groups in the capital, Abuja, which escalated tension in an unprecedented deployment of security forces that led to the arrest of dozens of suspects in what was described as the largest counterintelligence operation ever carried out in Abuja. President Buhari tried to calm the panicked public, though local sources reported that "waves" of foreigners were leaving the country. Citing military sources, local media outlets warned of possible sleeper cells of armed groups set up in and around Abuja and hidden among the civilian population. JAS and ISWAP were also linked to relative escalations of violence in Chad and southeastern Niger. Meanwhile, security forces were responsible for the deaths of several JAS and ISWAP commanders, including JAS commander Abubakar Sarki in May and ISWAP commander Alhaji Modu in August. Fighting between jihadist armed groups also escalated during the year, mainly between ISWAP and JAS and especially in December, when JAS commander Aboubakar Munzir was killed by ISWAP forces. Another 200 combatants also lost their lives in clashes between both factions in that same month. Sources noted that following the 2021 death of JAS leader Abubakar Shekau and the weakening of JAS,[68] the group reorganised during 2022 and managed to threaten ISWAP's dominance in the region. The JAS may also be acting under the leadership of Ibrahim Bakura Doron (also known as Abu Umayah), the historical leader of the Bakura faction, which allegedly acts in alliance with JAS.

Mali	
Start:	2012
Type:	System, Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, CMA (MNLA, MAA faction, CPA, HCUA), Platform (GATIA, CMPFPR, MAA faction), MSA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, MRRA, al-Mourabitoun, JNIM/GSIM, Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP) –also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)-, Katiba Macina, MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Holland, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Russia, Wagner Group
Intensity:	3
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 several years had been sheltering the Malian Tuareg insurgency and had absorbed a number of its members into its security forces, created conditions that favoured the resurgence of Tuareg rebels in the north of the country, who demand the independence of Azawad (the name which the Tuareg give to the northern region of Mali). After making progress in gaining control of the area by taking advantage of the political instability in Mali in early 2012, the Tuareg armed group, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), was increasingly displaced by radical Islamist groups operating in the region which had made gains in the north of Mali. The internationalisation of the conflict intensified in 2013, following the military intervention of France and the deployment of a peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA) in the country. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2015 in the north of the country between the Arab-Tuareg groups (CMA and Platform), the exclusion of groups with jihadist agendas from the peace negotiations has kept the war going and extended the dynamics of the war to the central region of the country (Mopti).

During the year, the security situation deteriorated even further in Mali amidst increased tensions between the Malian military junta and the regional and international military and security complex deployed in the country and made up of missions led by France, the UN, the EU

66. Due to the complexity of differentiating acts of violence committed by JAS, ISWAP and other jihadist armed group factions compared to other types of violence, those committed in other states of the country have not been included in the body counts, so the real figures should be higher than those previously cited. These statistics help us to identify trends regarding the increasing geographical expansion of jihadist armed groups.
67. Nigeria Security Tracker, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023].
68. See the summary on the Lake Chad region in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2022! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, March 2022.

and the G5 Sahel. According to data from the research centre ACLED, 1,340 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and actions with improvised explosive devices) were reported across the country in 2022. Concentrated in the northern and central regions, these episodes left a death toll of 4,842.[69] These data account for a significant rise in violence compared to the previous year (2021), when 1,887 deaths were reported, making it one of the most intense years since the conflict began in 2012. The rise in deaths was due to two factors. First, deadly attacks against civilians by Malian security forces, together with members of the Wagner Group, increased as part of an unprecedented anti-terrorist campaign. Second, there was also a nearly four-fold increase in attacks against civilians by the two main jihadist groups active in the region: the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS or ISWAP). These events pushed Mali from seventh to second place on the list of countries with the highest levels of attacks against civilians, behind only the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[70]

Mali became the country with the second-highest levels of attacks against civilians in the world

The increase in instability and insecurity continued to forcibly displace thousands of people and worsen the humanitarian crisis. According to data from the UN Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in the country, the number of internally displaced persons stood at 442,620 in October; 1,950 schools remained closed, affecting over 587,000 boys and girls, particularly in the Mopti region; 5.3 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and only 34% of the necessary funding had been achieved; and over 2 million children under the age of five suffered from acute malnutrition. The UNHCR estimated that 200,471 people had sought refuge outside the country in mid-2022, mainly in Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

In relation to the development of **the armed conflict, the situation remained complex, especially in the northern and central part of the country, as well as in the triple border area that it shares with Burkina Faso and Niger**.[71] In the first few months of 2022, jihadist organisations caused more killings of civilians in the Ménaka and Gao regions in northern Mali than in any previous year of the conflict. In response, the Malian Army and the organisations that signed the 2015 peace agreement launched an offensive in Ménaka between 4 and 5 June to try to retake the strategic city of Andéramboukane from the ISGS. The clashes left at least 115 people killed, including 90 suspected jihadists. On 12 June, the French forces involved in Operation Barkhane arrested ISGS leader Oumeya Ould Albakaye in the Ansongo district of the Gao region. On 7 August, an ISGS attack in the town of Tessit (Gao region) left 42 Malian soldiers dead in what was the deadliest attack against the military since 2019. In July, JNIM-affiliated groups expanded their operations by launching various attacks near the capital, Bamako. In central Mali (Mopti and Ségou), jihadist groups continued to take advantage of intercommunity conflicts to expand their influence and gain new recruits. The deadliest attack against the military in months was reported on 4 March, when at least 27 soldiers were killed at a military base in the city of Mondoro, near the border with Burkina Faso. During the year there were also various massacres of civilians. For example, in the city of Morra (Mopti) in late March, the Malian Army claimed to have killed more than 200 jihadists in a joint operation with Russian forces, though human rights organisations denied this and accused the government of summarily executing 300 civilians. Also, in Diallassagou (Mopti), on 18 June, 132 people were killed in an attack attributed to Katiba Macina.

The security crisis coincided again with the **deterioration of diplomatic relations between the Malian military junta and its traditional security allies**, in part motivated by the decision to associate with the Russian private security company Wagner Group.[72] These disagreements had a profound impact on the international security complex, resulting, for example, in the termination of Operation Barkhane, the anti-terrorist mission in the country; the announcement that different European countries were withdrawing their troops involved in the European Takuba Task Force and that the EU was suspending the EUCAP and EUTM missions in Mali after the massacre in Mopti blamed on the Malian Army and Russian forces in April; the Malian authorities' blockade of the operations of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the withdrawal of troops from different countries from MINUSMA (Côte d'Ivoire, Germany and the United Kingdom); and Mali's withdrawal from all bodies and levels of the G5 Sahel, including the joint military force. In response to these challenges, and particularly those related to the MINUSMA mandate, the UN Secretary-General presented various options for restructuring it to the UN Security Council, which extended its mandate for another year on 29 June (UNSC Resolution 2640). These options were to: 1) increase the uniformed staff (currently set at 13,289 soldiers and 1,920 police officers) with between 3,680 and 2,000 additional troops; 2) establish the mission on the ground to optimise the use of its resources in the most effective implementation of MINSUMA's strategic priorities,

69. ACLED, Dashboard [Viewed on 6 February 2023].
70. ACLED, "Year in Review. Global Disorder in 2022. Escalating Violence and the Worsening Civilian Burden", ACLED, January 2023.
71. See the summary on the Western Sahel in this chapter.
72. See the sumary on Mali in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).

focusing mainly on supporting implementation of the peace agreement by concentrating its forces in northern Mali, drawing down personnel in the centre; and 3) withdraw uniformed personnel and turn MINUSMA into a special political mission based in Bamako.[73]

Western Sahel Region	
Start:	2018
Type:	System, Resources, Identity International
Main parties:	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), Joint Task Force for the Liptako-Gourma Region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), USA, Takouba Task Force (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Mali, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom), Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM), Islamic State in the Province of West Africa (ISWAP) -also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Katiba Macina, Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups and community militias, Russia, Wagner Group
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑

Summary:
The Western Sahel region (northern Mali, northern Burkina Faso and northwestern Niger) is affected by a situation of growing instability caused by several different factors, including but not limited to cross-border criminal networks in the Sahel and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of nomadic Tuareg communities in the region. This marginalisation is rooted in the Tuareg rebellions that took place in the 1960s, in the 1990s and, more recently, between 2007 and 2009, when there were rebellions against the respective governments of Niger and Mali that sought to attain greater autonomy in both countries and reverse the poverty and underdevelopment of the region. In Mali, there was a resurgence of these demands in 2012, prompted by the fall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011.21 Meanwhile, the armed groups of Mali have expanded their activities to the Liptako-Gourma region. This expansion is related to the instability stemming from the spread of the jihadist insurgency of Algerian origin AQIM, its fragmentation and configuration into other similar types of armed groups, some aligned with al-Qaeda and others with ISIS, which currently operate and have expanded throughout the region. This expansion has contributed to further destabilisation in the area and to the creation of different regional and international cross-border military initiatives to try to control the situation, which have also helped to internationalise it. There are also links of the conflict affecting the Lake Chad region as a consequence of the expansion of Boko Haram's activity as a result of the cross-border military intervention.

For yet another year, the insecurity situation in the tri-border region (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) continued to deteriorate due to persisting episodes of violence, governance crises in the region and tensions in the regional and international military and security complex. During the year, according to data provided by ACLED, there were 3,357 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and actions with improvised explosive devices) that caused the death of 9,702 people in the region (almost double the deaths reported in 2021, which amounted to 5,279). There were 1,640 episodes of violence in Burkina Faso that left a death toll of 4,214, compared to the 2,290 fatalities reported in 2021; there were 1,340 violent events concentrated in the north-central and southern parts of Mali that cost 4,842 lives, almost triple those reported in 2021, when there were 1,887 deaths; and in the southwestern regions of Tillaberi, Dosso and Tahoua in Niger (the main area affected by the violence), there were reportedly 289 violent events causing 649 deaths, far fewer than the 1,102 fatalities in 2021.[74]

The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS)[75] noted that the Western Sahel region experienced the greatest escalation of violent events linked to jihadist groups (2,737 violent events) than any other region in Africa, with a 36% rise compared to 2021. In total, the region was the scene of 40% of all violent episodes reported in Africa in 2022, with 90% of them taking place in Burkina Faso and Mali. Behind this rise in violence are mainly the groups linked to the coalition Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM or GSIM), while Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS or ISWAP), continued to have a lesser impact, in keeping with the trend in 2021. Of the total deaths reported, 7,899 were associated with this type of group, mainly the JNIM, which was responsible for 67% of the deaths. This means that these groups caused 63% more deaths than the previous year. A worrying trend is the increase in violence against civilians, which during the year caused 49% more deaths than those reported in 2021. Sixty per cent of all non-combatant deaths caused by violent extremism in Africa, which also includes those in Lake Chad, Somalia, northern Mozambique and northern Africa, occurred in the tri-border area. As such, the ACSS stated that the Wagner Group further intensified violence against civilians, as it was linked to 726 civilian deaths. Though the violence perpetrated by these irregular actors was concentrated in Burkina Faso and Mali, there was also an increase in violence in the coastal states during the year: Benin reported 37 events (compared to five in 2021), while Togo experienced 17 events in 2022 (compared to one in 2021). In western Niger, there was a 43% increase in these types of events (214), but they caused half the deaths of the previous year (539).

73. UN Secretary-General, *The situation in Mali*, S/2023/21, 6 January 2023.
74. ACLED, Dashboard, [Viewed on 6 January 2023].
75. Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, "Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent", 6 February 2023.

Due to the rise in violence, **the trend of forced displacement continued, with over 2.9 million people forced to flee their homes. Burkina Faso remained the place of the most displacement**, accounting for over 1.8 million displaced people. The humanitarian situation remained very concerning across the region due to the combined impacts of instability, violence, forced displacement, loss of livelihood, food insecurity, climate change and disease. The World Health Organisation said that the crisis in the Sahel was both one of the fastest growing and most neglected in the world. According to their estimates, by 2023, over 37.7 million people in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, the far north of Cameroon, Chad and northeast Nigeria will need humanitarian assistance. In Burkina Faso, a total of 2.8 million people will need urgent medical attention; in Mali the level of need is at its highest point since the conflict began in 2012, with 7.5 million people requiring humanitarian assistance (compared to 3.8 million in 2017); and the combination of crises mired Niger in four epidemic-related health crises (meningitis, measles, polio and cholera) in 2022.[76]

The rise to power of military juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso increased insecurity and violence in both countries

This period of increased insecurity coincided with the rise to power of military juntas through **coups d'état** in Mali (August 2020) and Burkina Faso (January and October 2022), which claimed to aim to tackle the security threat in both countries.[77] Instead of ebbing, however, violence has risen in both countries. For example, in the five months after Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba rose to power in Burkina Faso (January 2022), there was a 23% increase in attacks carried out by armed groups compared to the five months leading up to the coup. In response to the rise in violence, the Burkinabe transition assembly granted rapid intervention powers to the military junta on 6 June, decreeing the creation of two military zones in the eastern and Sahel regions (the most affected), forcing civilians to evacuate their homes to enable security force operations.

The rise of these military juntas and the deployment of Russian forces linked to the private security company Wagner Group once again marked the deterioration of relations in the **international security complex in the region**.[78] In mid-August, France announced the definitive withdrawal of the last French troops in Mali, ending Operation Barkhane in the country after nine years. Previously, on 1 July, Paris had already announced the end of its participation in the European Takuba Task Force, from which other European countries also withdrew their forces. French troops will continue in the region with a contingent reduced by half (2,500 soldiers), but operating from Niger, since the Nigerien Parliament passed a bill in April that authorises the deployment of French forces to help to fight the armed groups in the country. Nevertheless, some popular protests were staged against this bill. There was also continuous tension and disagreement between the Malian military junta and the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) during the year. The most notable episodes included the Malian authorities' blockade of MINUSMA operations, the withdrawal of troops from different countries from MINUSMA (Ivory Coast, Germany and the United Kingdom) and the crisis set off between Mali and Côte d'Ivoire due to the arrest of 49 Ivorian soldiers from the mission on charges of being mercenaries. In May, the Malian military junta announced the departure from the country of all bodies and levels of the G5 Sahel, including the joint military force. In August, Niger and Burkina Faso signed a military cooperation agreement aimed at increasing joint operations on the ground and asked Bamako to restore military cooperation as part of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The deteriorating security situation in Niger forced the government to extend the state of emergency in parts of the Tillabery, Tahoua and Diffa regions in late July and prompted the Nigerien Ministry of Defence to announce plans to increase the size of the Nigerien Armed Forces from 33,000 to 100,000 soldiers by 2030.

1.3.2. America

Colombia	
Start:	1964
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, ELN, groups that emerged from the FARC, 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

76. WHO, *Appel-Sahel*, February 2023.
77. See the summary on Mali and Burkina Faso in the chapter on Socio-political crises.
78. See the summary on Mali in this chapter.

quo through a strategy of terror. Drug trafficking activity influenced the economic, political and social spheres and contributed to the increase in violence. In 2016, the signing of a peace agreement with the FARC led to its demobilisation and transformation into a political party.

The armed conflict in Colombia remained active, though the start of the peace negotiations with the ELN and the rapprochement with other armed groups as part of the Total Peace policy pursued by the government of Gustavo Petro led to a drop in violence in the country.[79] After he won the presidential election in June and was inaugurated in August, Gustavo Petro said that one of his main political priorities was to put an end to the different conflicts. However, armed clashes continued to take place between the security forces and the insurgent organisations and between the rebels themselves, in addition to other acts of violence like the persecution and murder of social leaders, human rights defenders and environmental activists and attacks against civilians. The organisation Indepaz reported 94 massacres in 2022, which claimed 300 lives. Especially serious was the massacre that took place in Puerto Leguizamo, in Putumayo, in March, in which 11 people died. The Colombian Army said that it was an operation against FARC dissidents, but various investigations led by journalists and human rights organisations revealed that the people killed included civilians, a minor and several social leaders. Indepaz also stated that 189 social leaders and human rights defenders and 42 former FARC combatants who signed the peace agreement were killed in 2022, raising to 1,413 the number of leaders and defenders killed and to 348 the number of former combatants killed since September 2016, the year the peace agreement was signed. The Ombudsman's Office said that many more defenders and leaders had been murdered than in 2021, since there were 199 homicides in 2022 and 136 in 2021.

Meanwhile, in August the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Colombia warned of the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country, with phenomena such as the displacement, confinement, use of explosive devices and disappearance of people as a result of the conflict. This deterioration occurred mainly in some regions of the country such as Nariño, Cauca, Chocó, Antioquia, Sur de Bolívar, the border with Venezuela in Norte de Santander and Arauca. The ICRC also said that there were six active conflicts in the country in 2022: the conflict between the government of Colombia and the ELN; between the government and the Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC); between the government and the structures of the former FARC-EP not involved in the peace process, led by Iván Mordisco; between the AGC and the ELN; between the Second Marquetalia dissidents and the structures of the former FARC; and between those structures and the dissident group Comando de Frontera.[81] The CERAC research centre said that, even though acts of armed violence attributed to the ELN had increased overall during the year, this was due to the fact that there was a high concentration of these events in February. However, excluding this period, the ELN's violent activity has decreased compared to the previous year. The number of deaths resulting from actions in which the ELN was directly involved also fell. Thus, 53 people died in events involving the ELN, 22% less than in 2021, when 68 people died. In addition, the OCHA noted that while there had been a downward trend in mass population displacement, non-state armed groups were turning to other forms of social control over the civilian population, such as lockdowns and restrictions on mobility and individual trips.[81]

Clashes and armed actions took place throughout the year, but after the new government took office, the armed actors and the government made different announcements regarding possible rapprochement and dialogue. However, coinciding with these announcements, the armed groups also stepped up their violent activity in what could be attempts to consolidate their control over land to start the negotiations from a position of greater strength. Various ceasefires were announced throughout the year. The ELN observed a ceasefire between 10 and 15 March, coinciding with the legislative elections. The ceasefire was not repeated during the presidential election, when some violent incidents took place. After Petro was sworn in as president, the defence minister announced that air strikes against the insurgent groups were suspended. On 19 December, the ELN declared a ceasefire between 24 December and 2 January. On 31 December, President Petro announced a six-month bilateral ceasefire agreement with several insurgent groups, but two days later the ELN denied that any bilateral agreement had been reached.

Meanwhile, Venezuela remained one of the settings of the armed conflict and armed clashes were repeated in the border area between both countries, with attacks by the ELN and other insurgent and criminal armed groups and operations launched by the respective governments' security forces. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that there was no evidence of joint operations between the Venezuelan security forces and the ELN. The areas of Arauca in Colombia and Apure in Venezuela were the scene of multiple clashes between the ELN and the Comando Conjunto de Oriente, a dissident group of the former FARC. Gentil Duarte, one of the leaders of the dissidents, died in combat in Venezuela. However, after the change of government and Petro's inauguration as

79. See then summary on Colombia in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Icaria, 2023.
80. Catalina Oquendo, "La Cruz Roja Internacional: "En Colombia hay seis conflictos armados"", *El País*, 9 August 2022.
81. OCHA, *Tendencias e Impacto Humanitario en Colombia 2022. Enero - Noviembre de 2022*, 19 December 2022.

president, there was rapprochement between the two countries, ending the diplomatic crisis experienced in recent years.

1.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Taliban government, National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF)
Intensity:	2
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, and the refusal of the Taliban government to hand over Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders (on Afghan territory) the US attacked the country aided by a contingent of British forces. After the signing of the Bonn agreements, an interim government was established, led by Hamid Karzai and subsequently ratified at the polls. Since 2006 there has been an escalation of violence, motivated by the rebuilding of the Taliban militias. Following the 2014 presidential and provincial elections, the country was plunged into a crisis sparked by allegations of electoral fraud after the second round in which the two most voted leaders, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, kept the results in the air for months. In September, an agreement was reached to create a two-headed government with Ghani as president and Abdullah as chief executive. In 2011, the international troops began their withdrawal, which was completed at the end of 2014, although the mission "Resolute Support" was deployed on the ground, with a NATO mandate to train Afghan forces and another force to carry out training and counterterrorism operations, made up of US soldiers, "Freedom Sentinel" mission. In 2021, after a significant escalation of violence, the Taliban rose to power again and all international troops were withdrawn from the country.

The Taliban consolidated its power in Afghanistan in 2022 and although violence persisted in the country, the situation changed completely compared to previous years. The armed conflict in Afghanistan centred on fighting between the Taliban government and the armed opposition led mainly by the National Resistance Front (NRF). There were also many attacks by ISIS-KP, the local ISIS branch operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some parts of India. Although there were clashes, attacks and military operations, **the armed violence was considerably less intense than it had been in the previous phase of the conflict** that pitted the Taliban insurgency against the Afghan Armed Forces and the international troops deployed in Afghanistan. There were many violations of women's rights during the year, such as the ban on the right to education for girls and the prohibition of women's participation in all public spheres of the country, in a situation that women's rights activists described as gender apartheid. ACLED indicated that there were 3,970 deaths due to violence in the country in 2022, far below the almost 42,000 people who lost their lives in 2021. However, throughout 2022 the security situation in the country deteriorated compared to the first few months after the Taliban seized power, as stated by the UN Secretary-General's reports on the country. The United Nations indicated that it was aware of the existence of 23 armed opposition groups in the country and that the NRF, the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) and the Afghanistan Liberation Movement (AFL) had claimed responsibility for armed activity in the provinces of Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Nangarhar, Nuristan and Panjshir. The operations of the NRF, the main armed opposition group active in the country, were mainly concentrated in the provinces of Panjshir and Baghlan and the group claimed to have taken control of some districts and areas of the country. Although the group's Tajikistan-based leaders demanded foreign support and supplies of weapons, Russia's refusal to transfer weapons to Afghanistan made any support from other governments impossible. In September, Ahmad Massoud, the leader of the NRF, participated in a meeting in Vienna with various leaders of the political opposition, organised by the Austrian Institute for International Affairs. The armed group stated that it had 3,000 combatants. Armed clashes intensified with the end of winter and in September Taliban forces launched a major offensive against the NRF, in which they claimed to have killed 40 members of the armed group in Panjshir province, including four commanders, though the NRF denied having suffered so many casualties. Fresh fighting in October and November, including in areas close to the border with Tajikistan, led to a rise in tensions between the two countries.

In addition, although the United Nations verified a drop in armed activity by ISIS-KP and fewer attacks, the organisation expanded its operations to more provinces and some major attacks were reported. One of the most serious attacks of the year took place in September during a suicide bombing at a school in Kabul. The school was in a neighbourhood inhabited mostly by the Hazara population, which has been a target of constant persecution by the armed organisation. The United Nations said that 53 people died as a result of the attack, most of them girls and young women who were studying at the school. The attacker detonated the explosives in a classroom occupied by hundreds of

students preparing for university entrance exams, in the area where the women were located. After the attack, dozens of Hazara women demonstrated in the streets to protest the persecution they suffer. Six ISIS-KP members were later killed in an Afghan security force operation against one of the armed group's hideouts in Kabul that ended in a shootout. ISIS-KP also carried out an attack against the Russian embassy in Kabul, in which six people died, including two Russian diplomats. Later, it launched another attack in Kabul against the Wazir Akbar Khan mosque, in what is known as the Green Zone, a neighbourhood where embassies are located, causing the death of seven people and leaving more than 20 injured.

Many violations of women's rights took place in Afghanistan in a situation that women's rights activists described as gender apartheid

India (CPI-M)	
Start:	1967
Type:	System Internal
Main parties:	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)
Intensity:	1
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.

The armed conflict between the Indian security forces and the insurgency remained active, but the intensity of the fighting ebbed, as did the death count linked to the violence. According to data reported by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, there were 136 deaths associated with the armed conflict in 2022, nearly half of those reported in the previous two years, when 237 (2021) and 239 (2020) lost their lives. However, the conflict continued to have a significant impact on civilians, since 53 of the total number of people killed as a result of the violence in 108 lethal incidents were civilians, 15 were members of the security forces and 68 were members of the armed group CPI-M. More than half the fatalities occurred in the state of Chhattisgarh, where most of the fighting also took place, with 62 violent incidents during 2022. According to data provided by the Indian Ministry of the Interior, incidents of Naxalite violence in the country plummeted by 77% between 2009 and 2021. Official data also showed an 85% drop in deaths between 2010 and 2021. In this sense, Director General of the Police Kuldiep Singh said that the Naxalites had been eliminated from the state of Bihar and security forces were entering parts of the state of Jharkhand that had previously been inaccessible due to the insurgent activity. The Indian government also said that the scope of Naxalite activity had been reduced from 96 districts in 2010 to 46 in 2021. Sporadic clashes in different states between security forces and the armed group were repeated throughout the year. Arrests of Naxalites continued, as did attacks against civilians accused of being informers for the security forces. Civilians were also accused of belonging to the insurgent group and killed. In May, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel indicated that the authorities would be willing to begin talks with the Naxalite insurgents if they were willing to lay down their arms and pledge allegiance to the Indian Constitution. The armed group responded by indicating that they could start talks if several conditions were met: the withdrawal of the security forces deployed in the conflict zones, the release of the armed group's detained leaders and the lifting of the ban on the CPI-M. The government responded that the talks would have to be unconditional.

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

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

The armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir persisted, with clashes throughout the year between Indian security

forces and the insurgent groups and body counts very similar to those of the previous year, with a slight drop. According to data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, a total of 253 people were killed as a result of armed clashes in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, while 274 people were killed in 2021. According to data from this research centre, most were insurgents (193). Thirty members of the Indian security forces and 30 civilians also lost their lives. The research centre ACLED reported a very similar death toll associated with the armed conflict, indicating that 287 people died in 2022, compared to 290 in 2021. Therefore, the armed conflict remained at low levels of intensity. The government noted that violence had ebbed since the withdrawal of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. However, armed clashes continued constantly between security forces and armed opposition groups throughout the year, with many operations by Indian forces, which continued to accuse groups originating from Pakistan of infiltrating Indian-administered territory. Clashes broke out throughout the year and armed activity was pursued by groups such as LeT, which continued to be the most active insurgent organisation, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Muhammad. However, the International Crisis Group (ICG) warned of the emergence of new groups such as the Resistance Front, Kashmir Tigers, People's Anti-Fascist Front and United Liberation Front of Kashmir. Indian security forces said that these were LeT splinter groups and that their main objective was to circumvent money laundering legislation.[82] In August, three soldiers and two insurgents were shot dead after rebels attacked Indian military facilities in the district of Rajouri on the eve of Indian Independence Day celebrations. In October, during a visit by the Indian minister of the interior to the region, two bombs exploded, which the police blamed on LeT.

Moreover, **the killing of nearly 20 Hindu workers in the Kashmir Valley in May and June, several of them public labourers, led to protests by other public labourers, who demanded that they be relocated out of the area until their safety could be guaranteed.** During the 1990s, thousands of Hindu Kashmiris (known as Pandits) left the area as a result of the violence waged by armed groups against them. Some people have returned to the area since 2010, but during 2022, hundreds of Pandits left their places of residence for fear of new attacks and organisations such as Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti, which called for the entire Pandit population to leave Kashmir. Tensions also persisted over new electoral legislation that the government had presented that has been pending approval since the withdrawal of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. This legislation would entail a redistricting in favour of the ruling party (BJP) and would allow anyone residing in the region to participate in the elections even without being a permanent resident, which was interpreted as an electoral manoeuvre to benefit the government. In May there were also many protests after a court sentenced Yasin Malik, the leader of the armed opposition group JKLF, who had been arrested in 2019, to life imprisonment. Meanwhile, human rights organisations continued to denounce the repression in the region. The International Press Institute (IPI) said that press freedom was in serious danger and criticised the severe restrictions on and harassment of communication professionals since the withdrawal of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. Human Rights Watch (HRW) also denounced the serious restrictions on press freedom and the activity of civil society organisations, as well as the impunity for serious human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings.

Pakistan	
Start:	2001
Type:	System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Pakistani Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias (Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan -TTP), international insurgents
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

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

The armed conflict pitting the Pakistani government against the Taliban insurgency worsened in 2022 despite the negotiations between them and the ceasefire in force for a few months. This deterioration occurred amidst a worsening political and economic crisis in the country, with a troubled change of government as a result of a vote of no confidence in April against Prime Minister Imran Khan and an attack against Khan months after he was

82. International Crisis Group, *Violence in Kashmir: Why a Spike in Killings Signals an Ominous New Trend*, Q&A / ASIA, 28 June 2022.

deposed. Added to this situation were the serious floods that the country suffered as a result of climate change, which affected millions of people. According to United Nations figures, at least 1,700 people died, close to 13,000 were injured (including at least 4,000 minors) and nearly eight million were forcibly displaced. Regarding the armed conflict, according to figures collected by the Centre for Research and Security Studies in Pakistan, 1,714 people lost their lives as a result of the violence and different conflicts in the country in 2022. The body count was higher than it had been the previous year. The research centre ACLED verified a rise in violence during the year, and especially in armed clashes, as well as a higher death toll, which counted 2,995 people killed across the country in 2022 and 1,241 in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, compared to 457 deaths reported in the same area in 2021. The border areas with Afghanistan, and especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were the most affected by the violence, and the epicentre of the armed activity of the Taliban insurgents and of the operations carried out by the Pakistani security forces. They were followed by the province of Balochistan, where violence by both the Taliban and the Balochi insurgents was reported.

The armed conflict deteriorated in Pakistan despite the attempt at negotiations amidst a serious political crisis and the impact of climate change

The year began with an escalation of violence in Pakistan as a result of the strengthening of the Taliban insurgency after the Afghan Taliban seized power again in 2021. Pakistan accused Afghanistan of serving as a base for TTP operations on the ground in Pakistan and tensions between both countries rose when Pakistan built a fence on the border. The districts of Dera Ismail Khan and South Waziristan were the scene of attacks and clashes in January that killed policemen, soldiers and insurgents. Pakistan's accusations against Afghanistan continued in February and five soldiers were killed in the district of Kurram in an attack by insurgents who had come to Pakistan from Afghanistan. In April, the conflict escalated significantly when Pakistani government drones carried out attacks against sites that served as hideouts for the TTP in the provinces of Khost and Kunar in Afghanistan. These Pakistani attacks on Afghan soil may have been due to the intensification of the Taliban offensive against Pakistani military objectives; in the days leading up to them, seven Pakistani soldiers were killed in a Taliban attack in North Waziristan. Pakistani drone strikes reportedly killed at least 47 civilians. This escalation of violence was followed by the announcement of a 10-day ceasefire for the Eid religious festival. In June, the Pakistani government and TTP agreed to make the ceasefire indefinite, with the Afghan government mediating. However, security operations against the insurgents continued throughout the following months, as did clashes and attacks against security forces by the Taliban. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the scene of many episodes of violence in which insurgents and members of the security forces were killed.

The violence escalated after the TTP announced on 28 November that it was ending the ceasefire agreement it had made with the government. Following this announcement, which restarted the conflict, different attacks took place in various parts of the country that killed dozens, some of which were blamed on the TTP. The group cited the security forces' military operations as the main reason for ending the ceasefire and called on the insurgents to carry out attacks whenever and wherever they could. However, on 6 November, the TTP had carried out one of the deadliest attacks in recent months when six policemen were killed in an ambush in the district of Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Prior to this attack, there had been other less serious attacks and the local population had complained of a rise in extortion and said that the Taliban insurgency was regrouping in the former tribal areas. After the ceasefire was broken, violence also increased in the province of Balochistan, on the border with Afghanistan. Balochistan served as a refuge for the Afghan Taliban for decades and is the scene of another conflict between the Pakistani security forces and the Balochi nationalist insurgency.

The largest attack carried out by ISIS in Pakistan took place in March, when a suicide attack conducted by ISIS-KP (a branch of ISIS operating in what it calls the province of Khorasan) against a Shia Mosque killed 63 people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and injured 200 others. In December, security forces claimed they had killed four ISIS-KP members as they tried to infiltrate from Afghanistan. This occurred days after an attack against the Pakistani embassy in Kabul that targeted the ambassador. This previous attack was blamed on ISIS-KP and one person was injured.

Pakistan (Balochistan)	
Start:	2005
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, Baloch Raji Aojoi Sangar, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura), ISIS
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑

Summary:
Since the creation of the state of Pakistan in 1947, Balochistan, the richest province in terms of natural resources, but with some of the highest levels of poverty in the country, has suffered from four periods of armed violence (1948, 1958, 1963-69 and 1973-77) in which the rebel forces stated their objective of obtaining greater autonomy and even independence. In 2005, the armed rebel forces reappeared on the scene, basically attacking infrastructures linked to the extraction of gas. The opposition armed group, BLA, became the main opposing force to the presence of the

central government, which it accused of making the most of the wealth of the province without giving any of it back to the local population. As a result of the resurgence of the armed opposition, a military operation was started in 2005 in the province, causing displacement of the civilian population and armed confrontation. In parallel, a movement of the civilian population calls clarifying the disappearance of hundreds, if not thousands, of Baluchi at the hands of the security forces of the State.

The armed conflict in the province of Balochistan continued, pitting the Pakistani security forces against the Baloch nationalist insurgency. The conflict intensified during the year, with many repeated clashes and the use of heavy weapons. Once again, Chinese economic actors in the province were a source of the conflict and there were attacks against Chinese staff and installations in Pakistan. In addition, human rights organisations' complaints of arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial executions in the province persisted, as did the impunity of criminals and the security forces' inaction against this crime. Baloch insurgents reportedly had access to the weapons that the Afghan security forces abandoned after the Taliban took power, which may have increased their operational capacity. Balochistan was especially affected by the severe floods that hit the country in August as a result of the impact of climate change. More than 60% of the houses destroyed in the country were located in this province. According to data collected by ACLED, there were 705 deaths in the province of Balochistan as a result of violence in 2022. The Centre for Research and Security Studies of Pakistan reported that there were 254 fatalities in Balochistan as a result of violence in 2022. However, some of the violence in Balochistan was caused by the Taliban armed group TTP, which also operates in the province. The Baloch armed group BLA remained the most active insurgent organisation there, carrying out several high-profile actions in 2022 that resulted in many casualties, primarily among the ranks of the Pakistani security forces. The year began with several simultaneous attacks carried out by the BLA in various districts. For instance, the group attacked a military camp in the Panjgur district on 2 February, leading to a battle in which six insurgents and three soldiers were killed. It also carried out an attack against a checkpoint in the Nushki district in which nine insurgents and four soldiers lost their lives. In April, the BLA claimed responsibility for its first suicide attack by a woman against a Chinese cultural centre at the University of Karachi, killing three Chinese professors. Also in April, the BLA carried out a bomb attack on a military convoy in Balochistan, killing four soldiers. The BLF clashed with security forces in the Panjgur district and claimed to have killed nine soldiers. According to ACLED, missiles and other heavy weapons had been used in the fighting. Missiles were used again in other attacks carried out by the BLA in May, targeting a checkpoint and the offices of the Pakistani intelligence services in the city of Kharan, killing five members of the security forces. In July, the BLA kidnapped a lieutenant colonel and a relative of his and later executed the officer while an operation was underway to rescue him, in which nine insurgents and one soldier were killed. A new attack in August demonstrated the intensification of the conflict when the BRAS coalition of armed groups claimed to have shot down a military helicopter using anti-aircraft weapons in the district of Las Bela. However, the Pakistani Armed Forces denied that it was an attack and claimed that the helicopter had been involved in an accident due to bad weather. Six members of the security forces died as a result of the incident.

South-east Asia and Oceania

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

Summary:
Since 1948, dozens of armed insurgent groups of ethnic origin have confronted the government of Myanmar, demanding recognition of their particular ethnic and cultural features and calling for reforms in the territorial structure of the State or simply for independence. Since the start of the military dictatorship in 1962, the armed forces have been fighting armed groups in the ethnic states. These groups combined demands for self-determination for minorities with calls for democratisation shared with the political opposition. In 1988, the government began a process of ceasefire agreements with some of the insurgent groups, allowing them to pursue their economic activities (basically trafficking in drugs and precious stones). However, the military operations have been constant during these decades, particularly directed against the civil population in order to do away with the armed groups' bases, leading to the displacement of thousands of people. In 2011 the Government began to approach the insurgency and since then there has been a ceasefire agreements with almost all of the armed groups.

The armed conflict intensified in Myanmar during the year, with clashes intensifying both between the Burmese Army and various ethnic armed groups, and between the Burmese Army and the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), a collection of armed groups that emerged after the military coup in 2021. According to ACLED, 19,324 people died throughout the year as a result of the armed violence. These casualties were considerably more than in the previous year, when 10,362 people lost their lives. In addition, the number

of violent events rose from 6,800 in 2021 to 9,282 in 2022. The United Nations warned of the serious deterioration in the country's humanitarian situation due to forced displacement and food insecurity.[83] In late December 2022, there were 1.5 million internally displaced people in the country, which was more than double the number of displaced persons a year earlier, when there were 660,000. This included 330,400 people living in protracted displacement as a result of previous conflicts, most of them in Rakhine State. The conflict and inflation had a significant impact on the civilian population, with more than 15 million people facing moderate and severe food insecurity, 13 million more than the previous year. In addition, the United Nations' special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar stated that the security forces had killed over 2,000 civilians and detained more than 14,000 people since the coup, including 1,400 children.

The armed conflict in Myanmar intensified, including armed clashes between the Burmese Army and ethnic armed groups and the Popular Defence Forces, with serious humanitarian consequences

The year began with an escalation of violence in Kayah State after the massacre that had taken place on 24 December 2021 in which Burmese security forces killed over 30 civilians. The clashes between the armed group KNDF and the Burmese Armed Forces (known as the Tatmadaw) forcibly displaced 60,000 people (some sources indicated that up to 170,000 people may have been displaced). There was also fighting between the security forces and the KNDF in alliance with Popular Defence Force (PDF) groups, which emerged after the military coup. These clashes were repeated throughout the year. Another one of the areas most affected by the conflict and where intense armed clashes took place was the Sagaing region, the epicentre of fighting between the Tatmadaw and the PDF with the support of ethnic armed groups such as the KNU. Thousands of people were displaced as a result of Burmese military operations, which often destroyed homes with air strikes and mortar fire. As in other northeastern areas of the country, there were significant restrictions on mobility in the Sagaing region, with checkpoints and roadblocks that greatly hindered access to humanitarian aid for the population affected by the armed violence, leaving civilians vulnerable and isolated. In Rakhine State and southern Chin State, clashes between security forces and the armed opposition group AA intensified starting in August, following the breakdown of a ceasefire that had been reached in 2020 after years of fierce fighting. Those areas witnessed intense clashes that displaced thousands of people (23,000 between August and November, according to data collected by the OCHA) and the Tatmadaw conducted air strikes in various parts of both states. In addition, thousands of additional military personnel were deployed to the area, causing serious insecurity among the civilian population. However, a new informal ceasefire agreement was reached in late November, which remained in force at the end of the year, though it was extremely fragile. The AA's refusal to join the talks with the ethnic armed groups proposed by the military junta, as well as the contacts maintained with the National Unity Government (NUG), formed by the opposition to the military regime after the coup d'état, may have been behind the military escalation in August, after months of tension between the AA and the Tatmadaw. Kachin State was also severely affected by the violence and a major escalation in fighting began in October after a Tatmadaw bombardment in Hpakant killed at least 60 people, many of them members of the armed opposition group KIA, including several of its leaders. The attack against the armed group occurred while it was celebrating the 62nd anniversary of its founding and led to an outbreak of violence in the following months. There were also armed clashes in the states of Kayin, Shan and Mon, which destroyed basic infrastructure and displaced civilians.

Regarding the human rights and political situation in the country, **the repression of the political opposition to the military regime continued with thousands of detainees**. By the end of 2022, more than 13,000 political prisoners were still detained in the country and 2,688 activists and political opponents had died at the hands of the security forces, according to data provided by the Association for Assistance to Political Prisoners (AAPP). Aung San Suu Kyi, who remained under house arrest following the coup in February 2021, was transferred to prison and placed in solitary confinement. At the end of the year, a military court extended her sentence by seven more years with five additional corruption charges, bringing her total sentence in Naypyitaw prison to 33 years. The military regime also extended the state of emergency until 2023. After the 2021 coup, the military authorities imposed a state of emergency and announced elections for 2023, which may be held in August, though the date was not specified. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council approved a resolution for the country with 12 members voting in favour and China, Russia and India abstaining. UNSC Resolution 2669 called for an end to violence in the country while expressing concern about the actions of the Burmese military regime. This is the first resolution for the country since 1948, as vetoes by China and Russia had previously prevented the Security Council from ruling on the situation in the Asian country. The resolution demanded the release of everyone arbitrarily detained in the country.

83. OCHA, *Myanmar Humanitarian Update*, no. 25, 30 December 2022.

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.

The many clashes that continued to take place in several provinces of the country between the state security forces and the NPA caused the deaths of at least 160 people, but by the end of 2022, the Philippine Department of Defence and the Philippine Armed Forces declared Manila's strategic victory over the communist insurgent movement. This statement was based on data released by the government in Manila, according to which the number of active NPA military fronts had fallen by over 75% since 2016. Thus, while in July 2016 the NPA had 89 active fronts across the country, according to the government, it only had five effective ones (mainly in Northern Samat and South Cotabato) in September 2022, as well as another 19 fronts that Manila considered severely weakened and in the process of being dismantled. According to these same government data, the number of active NPA combatants had dropped to 2,112, clearly fewer than in recent years and the peak of the communist movement in the 1980s, when it is estimated that the NPA had about 25,000 fighters. The Philippine Armed Forces stated that 10,608 regular NPA fighters had been killed, captured or surrendered in the last five years and that more than 41,000 people belonging to the movement, including some in hiding, had stopped supporting the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NDF. In the same period (2016-2022), according to Manila, 2,890 municipalities affected by violence were reportedly "liberated" and 31,254 towns and 1,386 cities reportedly declared the NPA a persona non grata. Along the same lines, at the end of the year, Eastmincom (the Philippine Army structure in eastern Mindanao, one of the regions with the NPA's greatest historical presence), declared that 4,797 NPA members have been "neutralised" since 2016 (3,579 surrendered, 524 captured and 403 killed), including 101 group leaders. Furthermore, Eastmincom announced the official dismantling of six NPA guerrilla fronts in December, mostly in Davao and Bukidnon.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) flatly denied the official figures and the government's declarations about the defeat or imminent collapse of the communist insurgent movement, though it refused to give data on the current membership of the NPA. Thus, during the celebration of the 53rd anniversary of the founding of the party in late March, the CPP crowed that the government had been unable to defeat them before the end of Duterte's term, as the Philippine Armed Forces and government had assured on several occasions in recent years, and urged the NPA to step up the recruitment of new troops and increase activity in urban areas. The CPP acknowledged that it had suffered some major setbacks of late and said that Manila had notably increased its counterinsurgency efforts and operations in recent years, including by neutralising combatants through localised peace processes and offering aid packages for reintegration. In this regard, in May the Department of Defence declared that at least 26,414 NPA combatants (which the government officially calls the Communist Terrorist Group) had surrendered or turned themselves in. In the middle of the year, the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) recommended that the government pardon NPA combatants, which could benefit between 8,000 and 10,000 NPA fighters. Both the NDF and the CPP strongly opposed the localised peace negotiations, considering them a counterinsurgency strategy aimed at dividing the revolutionary movement, promoting psychological warfare, obtaining intelligence and exercising greater control over people, relatives and communities with ties to the insurgent group. Finally, Jose Maria Sison, the leader and founder of the CPP and the NPA, died of illness at the end of the year. Previously, in August, a battle between the Philippine Armed Forces and the NPA in the province of Samar may have caused the deaths of Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria, historical leaders of the CPP and the NPA. According to some sources, they were the top leaders of the CPP and the armed group. Tiamzon and Austria had been captured in 2014, but they had been released by Duterte to join the NDF negotiating delegation. After the talks collapsed in 2017, they returned to hiding. However, at the end of the year, the Philippine Armed Forces acknowledged that they had been unable to corroborate the deaths of Tiamzon and Austria.

In the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, the leader and founder of the CPP and the NPA, died of illness at the end of the year

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

Summary:
The current situation of violence in Mindanao, where several armed groups are confronting the Government and, occasionally each other, is closely linked to the long-lasting armed conflict between Manila and the MNFL, and later the MILF, two organizations fighting for the self-determination of the Moro people. The failure to implement the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF meant that some factions of this group have not fully demobilized and sporadically take part in episodes of violence, while the difficulties that emerged during the negotiation process between the MILF and the Government encouraged the creation of the BIFF, a faction of the group that opposes this process and was created in 2010 by the former commander of the MILF, Ameril Umbra Kato. On another front, since the 90s, the group Abu Sayyaf has been fighting to create an independent Islamic state in the Sulu archipelago and the western regions of Mindanao (south). Initially this group recruited disaffected members of other armed groups like the MILF or the MNLF, but then moved away ideologically from both organizations and resorted more and more systematically to kidnappings, extortion and bomb attacks, which lead the group to be included on the USA and EU lists of terrorist organizations. Finally, it is important to note that the emergence of ISIS on the international scene led to the emergence of many groups in Mindanao that swore allegiance and obedience to ISIS. In 2016, this group claimed authorship for the first large attack in Mindanao and announced its intentions to strengthen its structure and increase its attacks in the region.

In line with falling levels of violence in recent years, the number of battles and their associated body counts dipped slightly in 2022 compared to 2021. Even so, fighting continued between the Philippine Armed Forces and various armed groups operating in the south of the country, between factions of the same groups and between these factions and private armed militias, often at the service of clans or local political groups. Though the government does not publish official death tolls linked to the armed conflict in Mindanao and it is often difficult to distinguish between clashes with clearly political intent and others linked to family disputes, land disputes or illegal economic activities, the research centre ACLED noted that 168 people had died in 2022 alone in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), slightly fewer than last year. The government stated on several occasions that the decline in insurgent activity and crime rates in the southern part of the country were mainly due to the success of its combatant demobilisation and reintegration programmes. In early November, the Philippine government declared that only since July, coinciding with the beginning of new President Ferdinand Marcos' term, over 1,100 former combatants had surrendered or turned themselves in. Though many of them were members of the Maoist armed group NPA, hundreds of members of the armed groups operating in Mindanao took advantage of government reintegration programmes during 2022, including 174 members of Abu Sayyaf (including 100 in late July, the group's largest collective surrender to date). Dozens of former BIFF combatants also turned themselves in, including around 40 in March and over 110 between late October and early December. Around 30 members of Dawlah Islamiyah Lanao, also known as the Maute Group, demobilised in early March. The figures for combatant demobilisation in 2022 were slightly higher than in previous years. In 2020 and 2021, 372 members of Abu Sayyaf and 418 of the BIFF surrendered or turned themselves in. As part of the strategy to reduce violence in the southern Philippines, Manila said that 15 private armed groups operating in the BARMM had been dismantled in April. The neutralisation of these groups, which sometimes operate as criminal organisations or as militias at the service of certain political clans, was stipulated in the peace agreement signed by the Philippine government and the MILF in 2014. Even though these groups were dismantled, levels of violence during the campaign for the presidential and legislative elections on 9 May were high. On election day alone, seven people died and another 20 were injured in different incidents in the BARMM.

Regarding the dynamics of violence in the conflict, 10 MILF combatants were killed and thousands of people were displaced by two consecutive days of fighting between the Philippine Armed Forces and a contingent of the armed group in the town of Ungkaya Pukan (Basilan province). Both the government and the MILF regretted the incident, stressed the rapid activation of the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation for Hostilities (JCCCH) and Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) and declared that these types of isolated incidents do not affect the smooth implementation of the 2014 peace agreement. However, the two parties had already clashed on previous occasions. For example, in early March the MILF formally complained about an air strike against a contingent of the Maute Group in the province of Lanao del Sur that killed seven combatants (some of them MILF fighters, according to the group). In April, the MILF once again told the government that it was concerned that MILF combatants had been attacked during a counterinsurgency operation by the Philippine Army against Abu Sayyaf in the town of Sumisip. At various times during the year, some MILF leaders warned that problems and delays in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the 40,000 MILF combatants stipulated in the 2014 peace agreement could cause discontent among certain factions of the group. By the end of the year, approximately 20,000

had not yet begun their demobilisation. There were also clashes between factions of the MILF during the year, or between these factions and other armed groups, such as the MNLF, the BIFF and private militias. In February, for example, a MILF commander was killed along with eight other people after a convoy was attacked, according to the government, by a group of people led by MILF members. In late November, several people died during armed skirmishes between two MILF factions in Maguindanao del Sur. In late August, MILF and MNLF factions fought for several days in Basilan, while in November there were clashes between members of the BIFF and the MILF in which a MILF commander was killed. Several MILF members were also killed in firefights with armed militias linked to local political clans throughout the year, often due to political harassment or family or land disputes. The two main BIFF factions (led respectively by commanders known as Karialan and Bungos) continued to carry out sporadic attacks mainly in the provinces of Maguindanao del Norte and Maguindanao del Sur, Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

Abu Sayyaf, a group of autonomous cells operating primarily in the Sulu archipelago, lost dozens of fighters in several different battles there. However, the Philippine government said that Abu Sayyaf combatants' defections and surrenders were clearly weakening it and that by the end of the year it had only about 130 fighters, most of whom belong to the groups led by Radullan Sahiron (a member of the group since the early 1990s, who may have died in 2021, though this is unconfirmed) and Mundi Sawadjaan, who is much closer to ISIS and a nephew of the former leader of Islamic State in Mindanao, Hajan Sawadjaan. Manila repeatedly stated that the trilateral agreement signed in 2017 by the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to jointly patrol the Sulu and Celebes seas and better coordinate their intelligence services was paying off and greatly weakening Abu Sayyaf, which had historically obtained substantial resources from their kidnappings and piracy in the region. Thus, the Philippine government said that there had not been any incident of this nature throughout 2021 and the first three months of 2022 and announced that the agreement with Malaysia and Indonesia would be expanded and strengthened. Finally, regarding Dawlah Islamiyah, which means "Islamic state" in Arabic and is a category that Manila has used to refer to some groups that have sworn allegiance to ISIS in recent years and that cooperate with each other even though they have different territorial strongholds, the Philippine Armed Forces noted that the most active organisations were the Maute Group (operating mainly in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur), two BIFF splinter groups active in central Mindanao (one led by Abu Turaife and another led by Salahuddin Hassan, who died in late 2021) and Dawlah Islamiya-Socsargen Khatiba, a remnant of the defunct Nilong Group and Ansar al-Khilafah Philippines that previously operated in the provinces of South Cotabato and Sarangani. In March, the Philippine Armed Forces declared that Fahrudin Hadji Satar, also known as Abu Zacariah, the leader of the Maute Group, had been appointed the new leader of Islamic State in the region and the new emir in Southeast Asia. Although the military capacity of the Maute Group has clearly declined in recent years, Manila maintains that it continues to pose a threat to the state and that it has deep pockets (due to its occupation of various parts of the city of Marawi for five months in 2017) so it can continue recruiting fighters. According to the Philippine Armed Forces, 64 members of the Maute Group died in combat between January and March alone. In early March, for example, seven members of the Maute Group and one Philippine soldier were killed during air and ground attacks by the Philippine Army in Maguing (Lanao del Sur), while in late March another five combatants died during another operation in the town Butig, also in Lanao del Sur. There were also some armed clashes with the Turaife Group. In late May, Turaife himself was injured in a Philippine Army ground and air operation in which two people died and 17 were injured. Days after the operation, Manila accused the group of orchestrating the consecutive detonation of two explosive devices in the city of Koronadal in South Cotabato province.

Thailand (south)	
Start:	2004
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Government, BRN and other separatist 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.

Alongside the upward trend in the peace negotiations between the Thai government and the BRN, as well as the clear and sustained drop in the violence experienced

in southern Thailand in recent years, the number of armed attacks and episodes fell substantially in 2022. Although the government did not provide official statistics on deaths resulting from the armed conflict, the research centre Deep South Watch noted that between January and the end of March, 30 people had lost their lives and another 57 had been injured. According to more data from the same centre, between January 2004 to March 2022, there were 21,485 violent incidents in which 7,344 people died and 13,641 were injured in the three provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat and in four districts of the province of Songkhla province. Fifty-two per cent of the victims were Buddhists, 45% were Muslims and 15% were women. In comparative terms, violence in the southern part of the country has plunged since 2007, the year when it reached its zenith (892 fatalities and 1,670 injured). In the last decade, violence has also experienced a marked decline. Thus, in 2012, 1,850 episodes of violence were reported (an average of more than five per day) in which 507 people died and more than 1,000 were injured. The decline in violence has become even more pronounced since 2020, when 116 people were killed (compared to 180 in 2019). Although the Thai government argues that the downward trend in violence is mainly due to how it is managing the conflict, several media outlets indicate that there are other explanatory factors, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the start of peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN in early 2020. One of Bangkok's main demands of the BRN in these talks is a reduction of violence and a demonstration that the people who represent the group at the negotiating table have a real impact on the group's military decisions and on levels of violence on the ground. Thus, one of the most important events in terms of the dynamics of the conflict in 2022 was the truce (called the Ramadan Peace Initiative) that the Thai government and the BRN agreed to from 3 April to 14 May, which was not generally or significantly violated. In a new round of negotiations in early August, the government proposed a new truce of three and a half months (from 15 August to 30 November), but the BRN rejected the idea.

Although the Thai government argues that the downward trend in violence is mainly due to how it is managing the conflict, other voices indicate that there are other explanatory factors, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN in early 2020

Another one of the most important aspects of the armed conflict of the year was the reappearance of the armed group PULO, one of the historical insurgent groups in southern Thailand, which had not carried out any armed action since 2016. On 15 April, when the truce between Bangkok and the BRN expired, one person was killed and three policemen were injured after two bombs went off simultaneously in the Sai Buri district (in the province of Pattani). Kasturi Mahkota, one of the group's leaders, said that the attack was a statement that peace talks should be conducted with other armed groups and not just with the BRN. PULO was one of the insurgent groups that participated in MARA Patani, the umbrella organisation for different groups in the three southern Muslim-majority provinces that began negotiations with the Thai government between mid-2015 and late 2019. Later, in early July, the Philippines Armed Forces killed two combatants in the province of Yala and detained another five members of the PULO, which according to Mahkota has five units in southern Thailand. One of the episodes of violence that had the greatest political impact and media coverage was the BRN's simultaneous attack in mid-August against 17 targets in the three southern provinces bordering Malaysia (mainly shops and petrol stations) that killed one person and injured seven. The BRN claimed responsibility for the attacks, lamented the loss of life and said that the businesses that had been attacked were damaging the local economy and according to some media may have been run by groups close to the government. Though some media outlets described it as the biggest coordinated attack in southern Thailand in recent years, the head of the government's negotiating team condemned it and added that it would not interrupt the negotiations. In late November, one policeman was killed and between 31 and 45 people were injured after an improvised explosive device was detonated in an apartment block housing policemen and their families in the Muang district, Narathiwat province. Following this attack, the Thai government renewed the emergency decree in most of the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.

1.3.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

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

Summary:
Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, resulting in the military occupation of southern and eastern parts of the country, and also affected other areas and had serious impacts on human security, including mass forced displacement, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, sexual violence and food and energy insecurity. The invasion of Ukraine was preceded by previous cycles of conflict and failed dialogue:

anti-government protests between late 2013 and early 2014 that led to the fall of the government of President Viktor Yanukovych, Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and war in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 between Russian-backed local militias and the Ukrainian Army. In contravention of international law, Russia's invasion and war targeted Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The antagonism between the US, the EU and NATO on one side and Russia on the other, as well as a failed security architecture in Europe, also influenced the context of the conflict and the prospects for resolution. Between late February and April 2022, Russia and Ukraine held political-military negotiations, which were unsuccessful. The invasion had multidimensional global repercussions, including food security for countries in the MENA region and Africa, a strained international order and greater militarisation in Europe.

Russia launched a military invasion against Ukraine in February 2022, which led to an interstate armed conflict, causing a severe humanitarian crisis and global multidimensional impacts. The invasion, which broke international law, went beyond the previous armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, which had been active since 2014, and dismantled the previous negotiating process. It was preceded by Russia's massive military deployment of troops along the border with Ukraine, including in Belarus, in the final months of 2021, as well as diplomatic contacts between late 2021 and early 2022 to address the crisis, but which failed to redirect it.[84] On 21 February, Russia recognised the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk and ordered troops to those territories, accompanied by a presidential speech in which Putin questioned the historical legitimacy of Ukraine as an independent country. On 24 February, Russia began its invasion with Putin's announcement of a "special operation" in pursuit of "demilitarisation" and "denazification" of Ukraine. It gave way to invasion, war and military occupation, which was still active by late 2022 and without prospects for a short-term resolution. The invasion revolved around Russia's challenge to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and led to an international dispute between Russia and the West, among other developments. The forces on Moscow's side included the Russian Armed Forces, reservists mobilised by decree and mercenaries hired by the Russian paramilitary organisation Wagner Group. Kiev deployed the Ukrainian Army, expanded with the activation of the territorial defence forces. The declaration of martial law by presidential decree in Ukraine prohibited men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country. The military invasion caused severe devastation. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted that at least 8,231 civilians were killed and another 13,734 were injured between the start of the invasion and 18 December 2022, and that the actual numbers could be significantly higher. According to the OHCHR, most of the civilian casualties were due to the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, including heavy artillery attacks, multiple launch rocket systems, missiles and air strikes. Some estimates put the number of combatants killed or wounded on each side in the tens of thousands, or even exceeding 100,000 military casualties killed or wounded on each side. As of mid-December, there were 5.59 million internally displaced people, 7.83 million refugees and 17.7 million people requiring humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA data. The consequences for human security included psychosocial trauma, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war under occupation, increased risks of gender violence and more difficulties in coping with it, the destruction of civil infrastructure, such as homes, the energy network and medical facilities, among other impacts.

Russia launched a military invasion against Ukraine in February 2022, which led to an interstate armed conflict, causing a severe humanitarian crisis and global multidimensional impacts

The Russian land, sea and air invasion began on 24 February from the north, northeast, east and south. Ukraine responded to the invasion with military defence. At the start of the invasion, Russian troops besieged the capital, Kiev, as well as other centres, such as Chernihiv, Kharkov, Kherson and Mariupol, and seized territory in areas to the north, east and south, including the capture of the port city of Kherson on 2 March. There were public protests against the occupation in Kherson and other towns. Between late March and early April, Russia withdrew its troops from the Kiev region and other northern areas. After the Russian withdrawal from the north, evidence emerged of serious human rights violations in previously occupied towns such as Bucha and Irpin, including the extrajudicial killing and torture of civilians. In the following months, the war fronts were focused on the east and south, though Russia also bombarded other parts of Ukraine. In May, Russian forces took the port city of Mariupol (southeast), which had been under Russian siege since the start of the invasion, setting off a serious humanitarian crisis. According to the Ukrainian authorities, 25,000 people died during the long siege and 90% of the buildings were destroyed. Its capture allowed Russia to connect the occupied territories of the southern and eastern parts of the country. Later that month, after also taking Lisichansk (Luhansk), Moscow claimed control over the province of Luhansk. In the summer, Russian control expanded, albeit in a limited way, with the seizure of parts of Donbas, and Russian air strikes took place in areas far from the war fronts.

The Ukrainian Army regained control of the Kharkov region (northeast) in September as part of a military counteroffensive that dislodged Russian troops from the occupied areas, including the towns of Izium and Kupiansk, which are communication hubs. New

84. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace talks in focus 2022: report on trends and scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

testimonies and evidence of the killing and torture of civilians under the occupation emerged in the region and a mass grave was found in Izium with at least 440 bodies, including minors and people showing signs of torture. Russia decreed the annexation of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia and Kherson regions in September, following independence referendums held later that month in the areas of those provinces under Russian military occupation. Also that month, Russia announced the mandatory partial conscription of Russian men, which prompted thousands of citizens to leave Russia to avoid it (hundreds of thousands, according to Reuters). In October, an explosion caused serious damage to part of the only bridge connecting the Crimean peninsula with Russia. The bombing was attributed to Ukraine and was followed by Russian missile attacks against the capital and towns in at least 12 provinces, including from the centre and west, against civilian targets such as homes, offices and the power grid, killing a dozen people and injuring one hundred. In November, the Ukrainian Army retook control of the city of Kherson. In the final months of the year, hostilities increased in areas of Luhansk and Donetsk, including in the town of Bakhmut. A Ukrainian attack on a school converted into a Russian military base in Makiivka (Donetsk) in the early morning of 1 January 2023 caused the death of dozens of Russian soldiers (89 according to Russia and several hundred according to Ukrainian sources). Throughout its invasion in 2022, Russia carried out attacks that left high numbers of civilian casualties, such as an attack in March against a maternity and children's hospital in Mariupol that killed three people and injured 17, including minors; a missile attack against the Kramatorsk (Donetsk) train station in April that killed 60 civilians and wounded one hundred; an attack against a shopping centre in Kremenchuk (Poltava) in June that killed at least 20 civilians and injured 50; a Russian missile attack in mid-July in Vinnitsia that killed 23 people, including three children; and a Russian missile attack in September against a civilian convoy near the city of Zaporizhia that killed 31 people and injured more than 80. Russia also intensified air strikes against the power grid in the last quarter of the year, which worsened the energy and humanitarian emergency situation.

The war escalated at various times due to Russia's threats to use all means at its disposal, alluding to the use of nuclear weapons. Hostilities around the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe and occupied by Russia at the beginning of the invasion, also posed security risks. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deployed a permanent mission at the plant and engaged in dialogue with Russia and Ukraine to establish a security zone around it, without reaching an agreement. Meanwhile, Russia and Ukraine held political and military negotiations with third-party support from the start of the invasion until its blockade in April 2022. Since then, Moscow and Kiev have only maintained open dialogue on humanitarian issues, the export of cereals and the protection of nuclear infrastructure, with third-party support. The few achievements included an agreement in July for grain exports, with the participation of the UN and Turkey.[85]

The invasion and war had an international dimension, with the participation of international actors in the supply of weapons. Western countries provided massive military support to Ukraine, including HIMARS and MLRS missile launch systems, Javelin, Stinger and NLAW anti-tank systems, anti-aircraft missiles, guns and other weapons. At the end of the year, the US announced the shipment of a battery of Patriot anti-aircraft missiles. Ukraine accused Iran of supplying Russia with weapons during the invasion, including various models of drones that were widely used in Russian attacks, while Iran only admitted having sent pre-invasion supplies. Overall, the invasion prompted a rise in militarism around the world and specifically in Western countries. In reaction to the invasion, Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO, though it still required ratification by two NATO members, Hungary and Turkey, at the end of the year. Already in 2021, world military spending had topped two trillion dollars for the first time, with a rise of 0.7% compared to 2020, and the top hundred arms companies had continued to grow.[86] In 2022, Western governments announced new moves to increase military budgets and to militarise the continent. Civil society organisations denounced this militarisation.

In response to the invasion, the United States, European Union, United Kingdom and other actors imposed successive packages of sanctions, including selective ones against Putin and other senior officials, businessmen, the owner and commanders of the Wagner Group, banks and finance companies and military and aviation companies, as well as economic sanctions and the suspension of the visa facilitation agreement. The economic and trade sanctions included an EU ban on the import of Russian crude oil by sea and a ban on shipping companies and insurers from transporting the crude if its sale exceeded a price limit imposed by the EU and the G7. However, the year ended without the sanctions having persuaded Russia to end the invasion and without having a serious economic effect on the country, which benefited from the rise in energy prices and alternative markets to the West, though analysts indicated possible scenarios of greater impacts on the Russian economy at a later date. The invasion and the global impacts of rising energy, food and other costs had repercussions throughout the world, including in countries of the MENA region and Africa, worsening situations of inequality and the lack of human security.

85. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace talks in focus 2022: report on trends and scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
86. SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2022*, 2022.

Since the start of the invasion, there have been initiatives to respond to the humanitarian crisis and calls for an end to the war, as well as action in the field of international justice. The Ukrainian population mobilised massively in the social response to the invasion, providing mutual support and assistance in accessing basic goods, helping with evacuations, searching for missing persons and getting involved in many other activities. Human rights activists and individuals opposed to the war in Russia and Belarus carried out initiatives against the invasion and denounced internal policies that violated human rights. In terms of international justice, in March 2022 the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Court (ICC) began to collect evidence for an investigation into past and present allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013. At the multilateral level, the UN General Assembly condemned the invasion and demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops with a resolution in March 2022 (141 votes in favour, five against and 35 abstentions, Resolution A/ES-11/L. 1). Another resolution in November, with less support, urged Russia to pay war reparations to Ukraine (94 votes in favour, 14 against, 73 abstentions, A/RES/ES-11/1). Players such as China, India, Iran, Pakistan and South Africa abstained. The invasion had repercussions on international relations in multiple areas, including increased Russian rapprochement with and dependence on China and a more tense multifaceted international order.

South-east Europe

Turkey (south-east)	
Start:	1984
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS
Intensity:	2
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 (Democratization Initiative in 2008, Oslo Dialogue in 2009-2011 and the Imrali process in 2013-2015). In 2015 the war was restarted. The armed conflict has caused around 40,000 fatalities since the 80s. The war in Syria once again laid bare the regional dimension of the Kurdish issue and the cross-border scope of the PKK issue, whose Syrian branch took control of the predominantly Kurdish areas in the country.

The armed conflict between Turkey and the PKK remained active in southeastern Turkey and mainly in northern Iraq, where the Turkish Army launched new military operations against the Kurdish armed group. International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated 434 fatalities resulting from the conflict between Turkey and the PKK in Turkey and northern Iraq (323 members of the PKK, 92 members of the security forces and 19 civilians), a body count similar to that of 2021 (420 deaths). **In Turkey, the provinces of Hakkari (77 deaths) and Şırnak (43) suffered the most fatalities (77 and 43, respectively), followed by Diyarbakir (12) and Mardin (11)**. The Turkish Army carried out military operations in these and other provinces (Tunceli, Sanliurfa, Bingöl, Muş, Hatay and Elazığ). On 20 April, an attack with a remote-controlled explosive device against a bus carrying prison guards in the northwestern city of Bursa (the fourth-largest in the country) killed one guard and injured four others. Nobody claimed responsibility for the attack. Days before, Turkey had started a new land and air military operation against the PKK in northern Iraq (Operation Claw-Lock). Also around this time, Duran Kalkan, a member of the PKK executive committee, threatened to expand the war to the cities of Turkey. During the rest of the year, some armed incidents continued to take place in mainly rural areas. In December, a car bomb attack on a police minibus in Diyarbakir province injured eight policemen and one civilian. Nobody claimed responsibility for the attack, though the government blamed the PKK. The YPS and YPS-JIN (organisations linked to the PKK, which pursue an urban guerrilla strategy) also claimed responsibility for various attacks during the year.

Most of the Turkish Army's attacks against the PKK took place in northern Iraq. This region suffered 389 of the 434 fatalities associated with the conflict between Turkey and the PKK in 2022, according to ICG. Turkey carried out Operation Winter Eagle in February against Kurdish forces in Iraq (Sinjar and Majmur) and in northern Syria and a separate air and ground offensive in April against the PKK in the Duhok governorate in northern Iraq (Operation Claw-Lock), which remained active at the end of 2022. During that operation, nine Iraqi tourists were killed, including a child, and 20 were injured in a Turkish attack with artillery shells against a holiday resort in the Zakho district. The Iraqi government

condemned the attack and accused Turkey of violating Iraqi sovereignty.[87] The Kurdish authorities in Iraq also criticised the attack and called for an end to fighting between Turkey and the PKK. Hostilities also took place during the year between the Turkish Army and Syrian Kurdish forces, the YPG, with frequent Turkish attacks in northern Syria and YPG attacks against Turkish targets in Turkish provinces bordering Syria. In November, Turkey blamed the PKK and the YPG for an attack in a central avenue in Istanbul that killed six people and injured 81. In the days that followed, Ankara bombarded Kurdish areas of Syria, including targets near a compound housing US forces. Both the PKK and the YPG denied any involvement in the Istanbul bombing. In the closing months of the year, Turkey threatened a ground invasion against Kurdish-controlled areas in Syria to establish a 30-kilometre buffer zone. Turkey kept up its air strikes, but did not deploy a ground invasion.[88]

Meanwhile, Turkey continued police and judicial persecution against Kurdish civil actors, including politicians, journalists and Kurdish activists, as well as against other members of the political and social opposition and human rights defenders, resulting in dozens of arrests. In April, a court sentenced Turkish philanthropist and democracy and human rights activist Osman Kavala to aggravated life imprisonment and seven other people to 18 years in prison, a sentence blasted by human rights organisations as politically motivated. In June, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey for not complying with the opinion that it had issued in 2019 requiring Kavala's immediate release. Other crisis factors in 2022 included the economic deterioration in the country and the political tension ahead of the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023. Turkey also made geopolitical moves, such as its rapprochement with rival players like Syria, Israel and Armenia. The war in Ukraine provided Turkey with greater international political influence as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine. Finally, Ankara's ability to veto NATO's request to incorporate Sweden and Finland into the alliance prompted it to demand greater persecution against Kurdish actors.

1.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

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

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 armed conflict mainly active in the Sinai peninsula in Egypt continued to simmer with low-intensity levels of violence similar to those reported the previous year. As in previous periods, it was difficult to establish a death toll related to the conflict due to inaccurate or contradictory information on the number of casualties in the hostilities. Nevertheless, the ACLED database reported **a total of 272 people killed in fighting that broke out after detonations and explosive attacks and in actions against civilians**. The conflict continued to pit the regional Islamic State (ISIS) branch, the self-proclaimed Sinai Province, against the Egyptian security forces supported by pro-government militias. Media outlets and human rights organisations said that these **militias made up of local clans, such as the Sinai Tribal Union (STU), became increasingly involved in hostilities in 2022**. Even though the Egyptian president said in April that the military operations against the insurgency in the Sinai was nearing its end, incidents continued

87. See the summary on Iraq in this chapter.
88. See the summary on Syria in this chapter.

throughout the year. The hostilities took place primarily in northern and central parts of Sinai, in places like Arish, Bir al-Abd, Sheikh Zuweid, Rafah, Al-Gafgafa, Maghara and Jilbana, an area very close to the Suez Canal. Later in the year, in an unusual move, ISIS also claimed responsibility for an attack on police officers in Ismailia, west of the Suez Canal.

Following the pattern of previous years, the acts of violence included airstrikes, clashes, ambushes, bomb attacks, suicide bombings, murders, kidnappings and more. **ISIS abducted several civilians and killed people for allegedly collaborating with the Egyptian Army.** One of the deadliest attacks by the armed group occurred in May, when an offensive against a military post in the town of Qantara, west of Bir al-Abd, killed between 11 and 17 soldiers. It was the bloodiest attack for which ISIS claimed responsibility in the area in two years. In September, the ISIS branch suffered one of its biggest setbacks of the year after losing a dozen fighters in a joint military operation with tribal militias. Two senior officers were killed days later. Human Rights Watch (HRW) confirmed the authenticity of videos circulating on social networks showing the extrajudicial killing of at least three detainees by militiamen and members of the security forces. Although the authorities allowed some families expelled from the area in 2021 and 2022 to return, HRW reported that Egypt continued to fail to comply with its obligations towards people forcibly displaced from North Sinai during a massive home demolition campaign between 2013 and 2020, without demonstrating that it was militarily necessary or compensating the uprooted families. In October, the Egyptian Parliament extended the state of emergency in North Sinai for another six months.

Iraq	
Start:	2003
Type:	System, Government, Identity, Resources Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Iraqi military and security forces, Kurdish forces (peshmerga), Shia militias Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and Saraya Salam, Sunni militias, ISIS, international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, USA, Iran, Turkey
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=

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

Iraq continued to be the scene of a high-intensity conflict in 2022, with levels of violence slightly higher than those observed the previous year, though far from the periods with the worst death tolls due to the hostilities (2003-2008 and 2014-2017). **According to data collected by Iraqi Body Count (IBC), 2,013 people lost their lives in 2022 due to multiple episodes of violence, including 740 civilians** (74 minors). Most of these victims died in incidents blamed on ISIS, but others died in clashes and disputes between clans, a growing phenomenon, while still others were killed in actions led by security forces and affiliated armed groups. According to IBC, a total of 1,273 combatants were killed in 2022, including members of ISIS, members of the PKK and related groups, Iraqi and Turkish soldiers, members of the Shia militia Forces or Popular Mobilisation Units (PMUs) and police officers and others. **However, the ACLED database reported a total of 4,477 people killed in 2022** in clashes, bomb attacks, acts of violence against civilians and violent demonstrations. The death toll in 2021 was 1,610 and 2,511 according to IBC and ACLED, respectively. As in previous years, the violence in the country was carried out by many different actors and influenced by political tensions and internal power struggles and by regional and international dynamics, which turned Iraq into the scene of disputes between Iran and the USA and Israel and constant incursions by Turkey and Iran against Kurdish groups with bases in the northern part of the country.

ISIS continued to be an active armed actor in Iraq, carrying out many attacks against Iraqi soldiers, police officers, members of the Kurdish security forces (peshmergas) and civilians in various parts of the country, including Anbar, Bagdad, Kirkuk, Diyala, Nineveh and Salah al-Din. US forces, which formally ended their combat mission in the country, but remain in an "advisory" role for Iraqi forces and peshmergas, especially in the

fight against ISIS, were targeted by drones in January, coinciding with the second anniversary of Washington's assassination in Iraq of the Iranian commander of the Al-Quds Force, Qassem Soleimani. In March, fresh attacks against facilities linked to the US and Israel in Erbil were blamed on Iran, allegedly in retaliation for an Israeli attack in Syria. In May, new attacks in Erbil were blamed on Shia PMU militias. Clashes also took place during the year between Iraqi forces and the Yazidi militia Sinjar Resistance Units (known by the acronym YBS), which is believed to have links to the PKK. In April, the government of Turkish President Erdogan announced that it was launching Operation Claw-Lock, a new offensive against PKK positions in northern Iraq. In July, an attack attributed to Turkey at a tourist resort in Duhok, in Iraqi Kurdistan, killed nine people, injured 30 others and stoked diplomatic tensions between Baghdad and Ankara. Turkey denied responsibility for the attack and blamed it on the PKK, while the Iraqi government and the KRG denounced the attack and other events as repeated violations of the sovereignty of the country and the region. In November, after an attack in Istanbul that Turkey blamed on the PKK, Erdogan's government launched a new offensive against Kurdish positions in northern Iraq and Syria as part of a campaign called Operation Claw-Sword and threatened a land invasion.[89] In 2022, Tehran also stepped up its actions against Iranian Kurdish forces in northern Iraq, especially after protests broke out in Iran over the death in police custody of a young Kurdish woman named Mahsa Amini. The attacks were mainly directed against the PDKI and Komala and caused dozens of fatalities.[90] In September, the United States shot down one of the drones used in these attacks, assuring that it posed a threat to US forces in the area.

ISIS continued to be an active armed actor in Iraq, carrying out many attacks against Iraqi soldiers, police officers, members of the Kurdish security forces and civilians in various parts of the country

Violence in the country also escalated, especially from the middle of the year, as a result of the persistent political blockade and power struggles that made it difficult to form a new government for months. The party of Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr won the October 2021 elections and began efforts to form a government led by his party. The negotiations in 2022 led to a growing gulf among the country's Shia forces, since the Shia Coordination Framework (SCF) coalition, which brings together various pro-Iranian forces and the party of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, pushed to form an alternative government. The deadline for appointing the president, speaker of Parliament and prime minister, in charge of forming the government, expired during the first quarter without any agreement made on filling the offices. By political convention, these positions are traditionally distributed among the different ethnic groups of the country, creating more problems due to power struggles for the appointments.[91] The crisis worsened after the formation of new coalitions (the al-Sadr bloc joined other groups in the Coalition for Saving the Homeland), several failed votes due to a lack of quorum and failed initiatives by independent politicians. In June, al-Sadr ordered the more than 70 MPs of his party to resign. They were replaced by the second-most-voted candidates in the election, most of them SCF members. This coalition then proposed the appointment of Mohamed Shia al-Sudani as prime minister, considered a figure close to al-Maliki, al-Sadr's historical rival. In late July, followers of the Shia cleric staged demonstrations, stormed Baghdad's fortified Green Zone and occupied Parliament to prevent a vote that would ratify al-Sudani. The protests, which later moved to the outskirts of the legislative building, lasted for a month, while al-Sadr demanded that the judicial branch dissolve Parliament and call new elections. This show of force coincided with the release of reports indicating that al-Maliki was arming groups in southern Iraq for a showdown with al-Sadr.

Violence in Iraq escalated, especially from the middle of the year, as a result of the persistent political blockade and power struggles that made it difficult to form a new government for months

Acting Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi called for a political dialogue in which al-Sadr refused to participate. Finally, after al-Sadr's spiritual mentor made some critical statements in a movement supposedly orchestrated by Tehran, in late August al-Sadr announced his withdrawal from politics and the closure of all political bodies linked to his movement. The announcement sparked new protests from his followers and an escalation of violence. **Fighting between the UMP and groups aligned with the SCF, the military wing of al-Sadr's movement (Saraya Salam) and the Iraqi security forces resulted in the death of 30 people and wounded over 700 in the most serious acts of violence in Baghdad in several years**. Iraqi armed groups also clashed in other towns in the southern part of the country. The violence stopped after al-Sadr urged his supporters to leave the streets. According to reports, the influential Iraqi Shia cleric Ali al-Sistani had discreetly intervened so that al-Sadr would publicly call for an end to the violence. **Thus, a year after the elections, the new government was formed**, with the appointment of the Kurdish politician

89. See the summaries on Turkey (south-east) and Syria in this chapter.
90. See the summary on Iran and Iran (northwest) in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
91. According to this political convention, the president is traditionally a Kurdish politician; the parliamentary speaker, a Sunni; and the prime minister, a Shia.

Abdul Latif Rashid as president and al-Sudani as prime minister (Sunni politician Mohamed al-Habousi, the leader of the Taqaddum party, had already been elected as the speaker of Parliament in January). Hours before Abdul Latif Rashid's election, Parliament had been attacked with rockets. The UN special representative in Iraq and head of the mission in the country (UNAMI), who tried to facilitate dialogue between the parties, was openly critical of Iraqi leaders from across the political spectrum for their lack of political will to prioritise the national interest and for getting involved in power struggles that prolonged the impasse. In November, the new Iraqi prime minister met with the Iranian president in Tehran and they announced a commitment to strengthen security cooperation. Al-Sudani was also in favour of keeping US troops in the country to continue the fight against ISIS.

Israel – Palestine	
Start:	2000
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International[92]
Main parties:	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups, brigades of Jenin, Nablus and Tubas, Lion's Den
Intensity:	1
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.

Throughout 2022, violence associated with Israeli occupation policies, clashes between Israelis and Palestinians and conflict-related attacks caused the deaths of at least 211 people, according to OCHA data. The death toll reported last year was relatively lower than that of 2021, in which 350 deaths were reported. Following the trend of previous years, the vast majority of everyone who lost their lives in 2022 were Palestinians (190), compared to 21 Israelis in the same period. Of those injured, 10,345 were Palestinians and 251 were Israelis. Unlike previous periods when most deaths were in Gaza, last year the highest number of people killed and injured was concentrated in the West Bank. **In fact, the United Nations highlighted that 2022 had become the year with the most Palestinian fatalities in the West Bank** since it began to systematically report deaths in 2005 (152 deaths and 9,909 people injured in 2022). According to UN data, 2022 was also the year with the most Israeli civilian casualties since 2015. Among the 16 Israeli civilian deaths in 2022, OCHA specifies that four were settlers, while another five were members of the security forces.

The rise in violence in the West Bank was observed in a context of intensifying and almost daily Israeli military operations characterised by the excessive use of force and increasing actions by settlers

The rise in violence in the West Bank was observed in a context of intensifying and almost daily Israeli military operations characterised by the excessive use of force and increasing actions by settlers. During 2022, and for the sixth consecutive year, a new rise in attacks by Israeli settlers was observed and **UN experts stressed that the evidence that Israeli forces facilitate, support and participate in these attacks makes it difficult to discern between the violence of the settlers and the violence of the Israeli government**.[93] Most of the Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in 2022 occurred amid Israeli military incursions and clashes in the towns of Jenin and Nablus (north), in a context of **resurging Palestinian armed resistance**. Israel's military Operation Breakwater intensified as of March following a series of attacks by Palestinians in Israel and has been aimed at persecuting alleged members of armed groups such as the al-Quds Brigades, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, as well as others formed more recently (2021). These include the Jenin Brigades, which may be supported by PIJ, the Nablus and Tubas Brigades and a group called Lion's Den (Nablus), which gained notoriety in 2022 and fought with the Palestinian security forces during the year. **In Gaza, the most high-profile acts of lethal violence occurred in August** as a result of three days of an Israeli offensive that was part of this same campaign. Fifty-one Palestinians were killed in this

92. Despite the fact that "Palestine" (whose Palestinian National Authority is a political entity linked to a specific population and territory) is not an internationally recognised state, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered "international" and not "internal" because it is an illegally occupied territory with Israel's alleged claim to the territory not being recognised by international law or by any United Nations resolution.
93. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Israel: UN experts condemn record year of Israeli violence in the occupied West Bank", *OHCHR*, 15 December 2022.

raid, including 17 minors. Throughout the year there were also repeated incidents in Jerusalem and Hebron. In November, thousands of settlers celebrating a religious festival entered the part of Hebron under Palestinian control, carrying out attacks and dealing damage. In late November, an attack at a bus stop in Jerusalem killed two Israelis and injured around 20 people in the first attack of its kind since 2016, according to media reports.

The death of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh while covering an Israeli attack on a Jenin refugee camp in May 2022 caused a special international impact. Various investigations concluded that the journalist, who had an extensive career and was well-known in Palestine, was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier despite being clearly identified as a reporter. After initially denying any responsibility for the events, Israel said the journalist's death was an accident and ruled out opening a criminal investigation. The crackdown by Israeli forces during the journalist's funeral caused consternation. **The persecution of Palestinian human rights organisations that Israel declared as "terrorists" in 2021** for their alleged links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) also continued during the year. In August, these groups' offices were searched and closed down. Human rights experts from the UN and several European countries denounced the criminalisation of these NGOs, warning that Israel had not presented credible evidence to support its accusations.[94] People linked to these organisations were also subjected to persecution. Thus, for example, the French-Palestinian lawyer Salah Hamouri of the NGO Adameer, which specialises in assisting Palestinian prisoners, was imprisoned in March and expelled to France in December. Even though the UN approved a resolution in 2016 specifically aimed at stopping Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory (considered contrary to international law), **the Israeli authorities also continued with their expansion policy during 2022 and announced new colony construction plans. Israel also continued with its policies to expel the Palestinian population and demolish homes**. In one of the most emblematic cases of 2022, in May the Israeli Court of Justice rejected appeals against orders to expel the residents of the Palestinian town of Masafer Yatta, designated a firing zone by Israeli forces in the late 1980s. The decision threatens to expel around 1,200 Palestinians, half of whom are minors, in what would be the largest forced displacement from a single town in decades. The UN special envoy for the Middle East voiced concern over the severe restrictions on movement imposed by Israel on the Palestinian population. The United Nations also called attention to the situation of the detainees during the year. As of mid-December, Israel had detained more than 6,000 Palestinians, including 452 minors. This is the highest number of people arrested since 2008, while the number of people in administrative detention has doubled in the last two years.

Early in the year, **Amnesty International published a report denouncing Israel's apartheid policies against the Palestinian population,** thereby adding to previous complaints by Palestinian organisations, Israel human rights organisations and Human Rights Watch.[95] At the end of the year, the UN General Assembly (Resolution 77/400) decided to request an opinion from the International Court of Justice on the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, its settlement and annexation policies, measures to alter the demographic composition and discriminatory laws. Events in 2022 were also marked by the dissolution of the Israeli government in the middle of the year and a new call for elections, the fifth since April 2019. The eight-party coalition led by Prime Minister Neftali Benet and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid collapsed in June, dissolved Parliament (Knesset) and called elections that were held on 1 November and won by the Likud party. **The return to power of Benjamin Netanyahu led to the inauguration of the most far-right government in the history of Israel at the end of 2022**. The new government includes openly supremacist Jewish nationalist groups that have incited further violence against the Palestinian population. Netanyahu noted that settlement expansion would be the top priority of his government.

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

Summary:
Controlled by the Ba'ath party since 1963, the Republic of Syria has been governed since the 1970s by two presidents: Hafez al-Assad and his son, Bashar, who took office in 2000. A key player in the Middle East and the Arab Israeli conflict, internally the regime has been characterised by authoritarianism and fierce repression of the opposition. The arrival of Bashar al-Assad in the government raised expectations for change, following the implementation of some liberalising measures. However, the regime put a

94. OHCHR, "Israel/Palestine: UN experts call on governments to resume funding for six Palestinian CSOs designated by Israel as 'terrorist organisations'", *OHCHR*, 25 April 2022; RFI, "EU resumes funding for six Palestinian NGOs branded as terrorists by Israel", RFI, 7 August 2022.
95. Amnesty International, "Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity", *AI*, 1 February 2022.

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 militarisation and proliferation of armed actors have added complexities to the Syrian scenario, severely affected by regional and international dynamics.

Although the death tolls of the conflict have been falling in recent years, the country continues to be the scene of fighting involving different local, regional and international actors and the number of people killed as a result of the violence continues to rank Syria among the most intense armed conflicts worldwide. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), **2022 was the year with the lowest body count since the armed conflict began over a decade ago, with a total of 3,825 deaths**. Of this total, 1,627 were civilians, including 321 minors and 159 women, and 2,198 were combatants of the various armed groups operating in the country, including members of the forces of Bashar Assad's regime, ISIS, opposition and/or Islamist armed groups, government-backed militias, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) led by Kurdish groups, Iranian-backed militias, Turkish soldiers, members of Hezbollah and other actors. **However, the ACLED database reported a total of 5,649 people killed in Syria in 2022** due to various acts of violence, including clashes, explosions and attacks against civilians. In 2021, the death toll of the conflict was very similar (3,882 according to the SOHR and 5,737 according to ACLED), compared to much higher figures observed in previous periods (nearly 8,000 people killed in 2020, 15,000 in 2019 and 30,000 in 2018).

ISIS carried out its biggest attack since its territorial defeat in 2019 and launched an attack on Kurdish-controlled al-Sina'a prison in the northeastern part of Syria to free detained fighters

In late 2022, the country was still divided into various areas of influence and continued to be targeted by continuous air raids by foreign actors, mainly Russia, Turkey and Israel. One of the most notable acts of violence came in January, when ISIS carried out its biggest attack since its territorial defeat in 2019. **ISIS members launched an attack on Kurdish-controlled al-Sina'a prison in the northeastern part of the country to free detained fighters. In the days that followed, clashes with members of the SDF and the US-led international coalition against ISIS resulted in the deaths of more than 500 people**. These hostilities also forcibly displaced more than 45,000 civilians. During the year, ISIS cells continued to launch attacks mainly in Deraa, Dayr-al-Zawr, Hassakah, Homs and Hama, confirming the resilience of the armed group and its ability to act across different dividing lines.[96] The ceasefire in Idlib agreed in 2020 was formally upheld throughout the year, though periodic violations were reported and the UN warned of an escalation of hostilities throughout the northern part of the country in late 2022. Fighting between pro-government forces and armed opposition groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, continued in both Idlib and Aleppo while Syrian and Russian airstrikes continued, resulting in civilian casualties. Turkey also continued to intervene periodically in the northern part of the country. In November, Ankara intensified its offensives against Kurdish forces in northern Syria and Iraq as part of its Operation Claw-Sword. Airstrikes increased and were accompanied by threats of a new land invasion, which would be the fourth in northern Syria, after a bomb attack in Istanbul killed six people. The Turkish government blamed the attack on the PKK and the YPG, who denied responsibility. In southern Syria, incidents throughout the year were mainly concentrated in the provinces of Deraa, Quneitra and Suwayda. Many murders continued to be reported in this government-controlled area. At the same time, Israel continued with its attacks in different parts of Syria, including one on the Damascus airport that was allegedly intended to prevent the delivery of weapons to Iranian-backed militias, including Hezbollah. The US also launched attacks against militias with suspected ties to Tehran and followed up with raids against ISIS, including one that killed the group's leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, in February.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria fell to its worst level since the start of the war

The Syrian civilian population continued to be severely affected by the armed conflict. In its investigations and reports on Syria, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed that the warring parties were not taking the necessary steps to prevent or minimise loss of civilian life in attacks and clashes, which continued to affect residential areas and deliberately destroyed civilian infrastructure. The hostilities also continued to cause serious explosive contamination throughout the area. An investigation by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (IICCOI) repeated allegations of the systematic use of torture and mistreatment in detention centres. At the end of the year, the UN special envoy confirmed that there was no news of detained and disappeared persons after the presidential amnesty decreed by Assad on 30 April 2022. The decree, which led to the release of a few hundred prisoners, was criticised for its lack of transparency. Families of detainees continued to search

96. International Crisis Group, *Containing a Resilient ISIS in Central and North-eastern Syria*, Middle East and North Africa Report No. 236, 18 July 2022.

for news of the whereabouts of their relatives. According to media reports, more than 136,000 people remained in Syrian government prisons at the end of 2022. **In 2022 the humanitarian crisis in the country fell to its worst level since the start of the war. In December, the UN warned that food insecurity had reached a record of 12 million people. Estimates indicated that 15.3 million people, equivalent to 70% of the population, would need humanitarian aid in 2023 and that 90% of the population lived below the poverty line.** The deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation was also shaped by the rise in food prices and provoked protests against the regime, especially in the southern part of the country. Added to this was growing concern about the spread of a cholera epidemic, with thousands of cases registered in every province in the country. The challenges were especially serious in northern Syria due to difficulties in accessing drinking water and health services. In 2022, the UN and human rights organisations also continued to report the worrying situation of thousands of people detained in the camps at al-Hawl and al-Raj, which mainly house families of ISIS fighters, including around 38,000 minors. Along with overcrowding and insecurity, the high rate of deadly violence drew attention to the situation in the camps, with 42 murders in al-Hawl alone last year, including of 22 women and four minors.

As the conflict evolved, formal diplomatic schemes to address the crisis continued to be implemented, though no progress was made in the search for a political solution. The UN-sponsored Geneva process was blocked from the middle of the year due to Russia and Syria's reluctance to continue talks in the city, as they no longer considered Switzerland an impartial actor. The fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine also prompted closer rapprochement between Moscow and Tehran, which expanded their collaboration beyond Syria, with Iran transferring drones to Russia for its operations in Ukraine. Media outlets also reported the recruitment of Syrians to support Russian forces in Ukraine. Rapprochement between Turkey and Syria was also observed in 2022. The government of Ankara, the main supporter of armed groups and Syrian opposition politicians, said it was willing to sit down and talk with Damascus. In December, the defence ministers and intelligence chiefs of both countries met in Moscow for the first meeting of its type since the war began. **Rapprochement between Turkey and Syria, which Moscow viewed as a priority, caused concern among parts of the Syrian opposition, Kurdish forces and the Syrian refugee population**. Looking ahead to 2023, there were fears of an intensification of the forced return of Syrian refugees, an important issue for the electoral calculations of the Turkish president, who would face general elections in May. A Human Rights Watch report charged that Turkish authorities had arbitrarily arrested, detained and forcibly returned hundreds of Syrian refugee men and boys between February and July 2022.[97]

The Gulf

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

Summary:
The conflict started in 2004, when the followers of the religious leader al-Houthi, belonging to the Shiite minority, started an armed rebellion in the north of Yemen. The government assured that the rebel forces aimed to 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 denied it and accused the government of corruption and not attending to the northern mountainous regions, and also opposed the Sanaa alliance with the US in the so-called fight against terrorism. The conflict has cost the lives of thousands of victims and has led to massive forced displacements. Various truces signed in recent years have been successively broken with taking up of hostilities again. As part of the rebellion that ended the government of Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2011, the Houthis took advantage to expand areas under its control in the north of the country. They have been increasingly involved in clashes with other armed actors, including tribal militias, sectors sympathetic to Salafist groups and to the Islamist party Islah and fighters of AQAP, the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Yemen. The advance of the Houthis to the centre and south of the country in 2014 exacerbated the institutional crisis and forced the fall of the Yemeni government, leading to an international military intervention led by Saudi Arabia in early 2015. In a context of internationalisation, the conflict has acquired sectarian tones and a regional dimension. The conflict has been acquiring a growing regional and international dimension and has been influenced by tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia and between Washington and Tehran. Additionally, Yemen has been the scene of al-Qaeda activities since the 1990s, especially since the merger of the Saudi and Yemeni branches that gave rise to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2009. As of 2014, the group has taken advantage of the climate of instability in the country to advance its objectives and its militiamen have

97. Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Hundreds of Refugees Deported to Syria", *HRW*, 24 October 2022.

been involved in clashes with the Houthis, with government forces, with UAE troops and with tribal militias. Since al-Qaeda's attack on the USS Cole in 2000, the US has been involved in periodic attacks against the group. The conflict in Yemen has also favoured ISIS activity in the country.

In 2022, **Yemen remained affected by a high-intensity armed conflict that claimed at least 6,721 lives, according to data collected by the ACLED database. Nevertheless, this body count is significantly lower than those in the last few years**, in which over 20,000 people died each year (22,000 in 2021, 20,000 in 2020 and 23,000 in 2019). The drop in deaths due to violence in the country was mainly due to the ceasefire agreement between the main parties to the dispute. The truce was in force for six months (2 April to 2 October 2022) and significantly reduced hostilities, provided the population with more freedom of movement and improved access to fuel and humanitarian aid. The armed conflict continued to have a great impact on civilians. According to the body count of the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project initiative, at least 716 civilians died as a result of the armed conflict between January and November 2022 while another 1,602 people had been injured. During the months the truce was in force, civilian casualties dropped off considerably, though various bomb-related incidents occurred in different parts of the country. The highest levels of violence in Yemen were reported in early 2022. The hostilities had already intensified in the final months of 2021, amid the intensification of the Houthis' campaign to control the central area of Maarib and the consequent clashes with forces aligned with the internationally recognised Yemeni government and armed groups mainly supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In January 2022, in retaliation for the setbacks in Maarib, the Houthis launched armed attacks against Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These set off a series of reciprocal attacks, including many airstrikes on Yemeni soil. These events were interpreted as a sign of the risks of regional expansion of the armed conflict and once again elicited harsh criticism against the armed actors involved in the conflict due to the violence against the population and civil infrastructure. In fact, **January was the month with the most civilian victims in three years** (234 people killed and 432 injured) and the hostilities forcibly displaced thousands of people. One of the bloodiest attacks was carried out by the Saudi-led coalition against a detention centre in the capital of Yemen, Sana'a, causing the death of 91 detainees and wounding 236. In this context, in February, the UN Security Council approved UNSC Resolution 2624, renewing financial and travel sanctions against Yemeni actors, including an arms embargo against the Houthis. Brazil, Ireland, Mexico and Norway abstained. The UAE, which became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in January, lobbied various actors with the intention of designating the Houthis as a terrorist group.

In 2022, Yemen reported a significant decrease in hostilities and in the number of people killed from the violence as a result of the truce that was in force for six months

Alongside the hostilities, the UN special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, persisted in his diplomatic efforts with various actors to try to promote a political solution to the conflict.[98] As a result of this initiative, **in late March the main warring parties agreed to begin a nationwide ceasefire for the first time since 2016. The ceasefire would start on 2 April, marking the beginning of Ramadan**, the holiest month in Islam. The five-point agreement included a halt to all types of military offensives (land, air and sea) inside and outside Yemen. The armed actors also promised to remain in their positions until that date. Thus, in the following months there were no airstrikes or large-scale operations, though some incidents continued to be reported along the lines of contact on the various battlefronts. Meanwhile, other aspects of the agreement were implemented, such as the entry of fuel through the port of Al Hudaydah, the resumption of flights from Sana'a airport to two specific destinations (Egypt and Jordan) and the continuation of meetings with the special envoy to try to end the war. No major progress was made on one of the points: talks to reopen the roads, including that of Ta'iz, which has been under siege by the Houthis for years. The ceasefire agreement was initially signed for two months and renewed twice, in June and August, but not in September. The UN special envoy then wanted the truce to be extended for six months and include additional actions such as the urgent release of prisoners and the strengthening of the de-escalation mechanisms of the Military Coordination Committee (established after the April agreement). The Houthis were blamed for blocking the renewal of the ceasefire by including additional demands for its extension, especially their claim that their military forces be paid from the funds for paying public officials. **Some lamented the formal end of the truce and stressed its positive impacts**, such as the reduction (by around 60%) in the number of deaths due to violence, the drop in the levels of forced displacement (by half) and a partial decrease in the amount of people affected by food insecurity. The consequences of the war in Ukraine and the increase in global prices also affected Yemen, an importer of fuel and food (the country bought almost 50% of its wheat

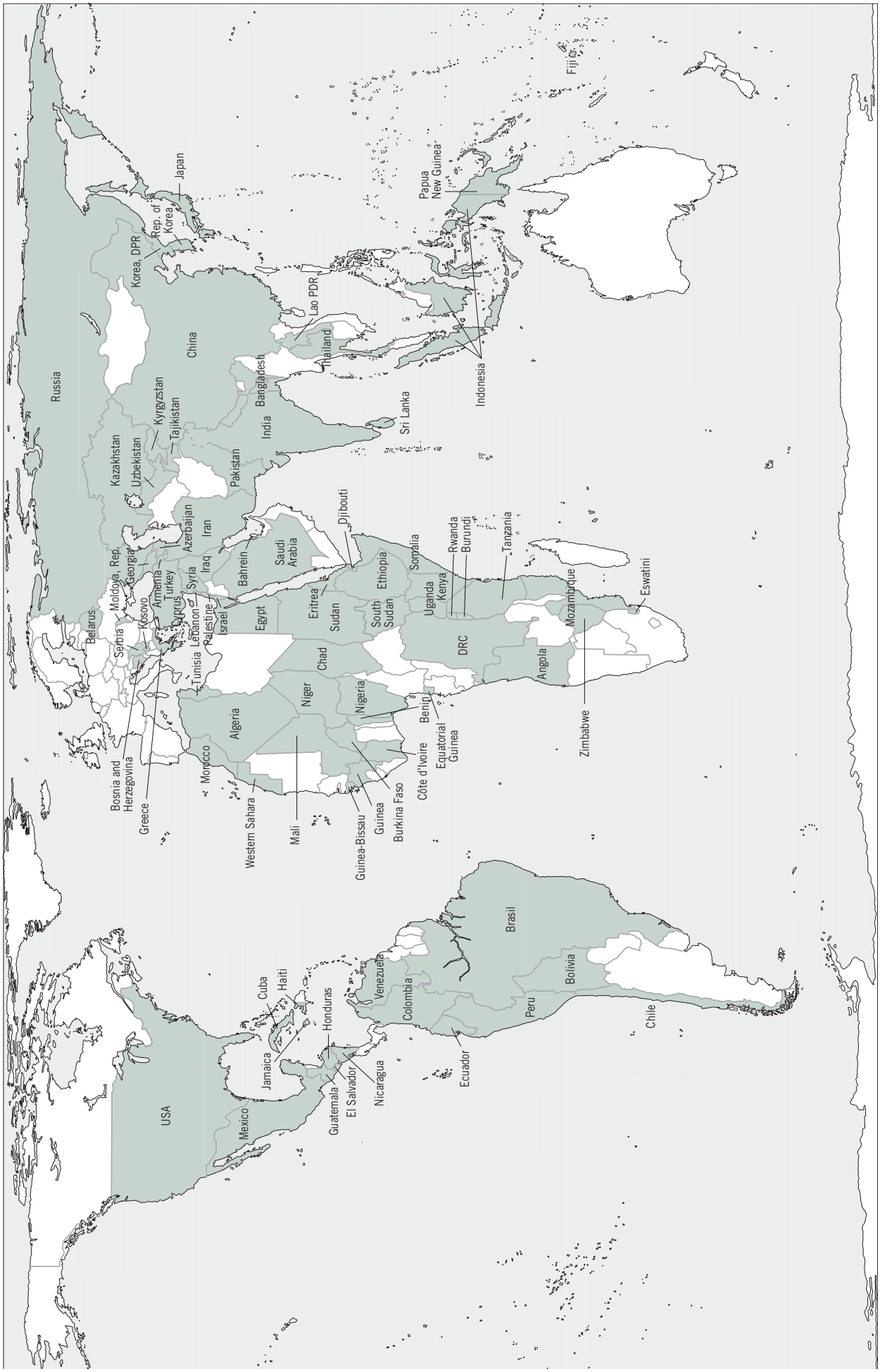
Over 80% of the population in Yemen had problems meeting their basic needs, including food, drinking water and access to health services

98. For further information, see the summary on Yemen in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace talks in focus 2022: report on trends and scenarios*, Icaria: Barcelona, 2023.

from Ukraine and Russia). According to the OCHA, 17 million people faced food insecurity at the end of the year and over 80% of the population had problems meeting their basic needs, including food, drinking water and access to health services.

Despite the official end of the truce, large-scale clashes between the parties had not resumed by late 2022 and various aspects of the agreement continued to be fulfilled. However, there were increasing acts of violence on different fronts, such as Maarib, Ta'iz, Al-Jawf, Lahj and Shabwa. Uncertainty persisted due to the possibilities of a new escalation, amid reports on the preparation of the parties for new hostilities and signs of greater confrontation in other areas, such as the economic war, which took shape in Houthi attacks on oil infrastructure under government control. Although the negotiations sponsored by the UN remained largely deadlocked in the last quarter, the Omani-facilitated talks between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia remained active until the year's end. The Houthis prefer Riyadh as their interlocutor, while Riyadh would like to find a solution to a conflict that is costing it dearly. After the truce agreement, Yemeni President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi resigned. The outgoing president transferred his powers to a Presidential Council with eight members, representatives of different forces that make up the anti-Houthi coalition, selected primarily by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The UN mission in the country, UNMHA, which specifically monitors the ceasefire in the port of Al Hudaydah following the 2018 Stockholm Agreement, remained operational in 2022.

Map 2.1. **Socio-political crises**



2. Socio-political crises

- During 2022, there were 108 socio-political crises reported around the world. The crises were mainly concentrated in Africa (36) and Asia and the Pacific (33), while the rest took place in the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11).
- The political crisis in Burkina Faso worsened during the year, with the country suffering two coups d'état.
- The national dialogue in Chad concluded with the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council, which ratified the break with the Constitution caused in April 2021 by Mahamat Déby and his military junta.
- The relationship between the DRC and Rwanda seriously deteriorated as a result of sporadic clashes between both countries' security forces and the DRC's accusations of Rwandan support for the group M23.
- At the end of the year, a transitional framework agreement was reached in Sudan in which the military promised to relinquish much of its political power, though tension remained over the formation of a unified army.
- The Haitian government requested the immediate deployment of an international force that could halt the violence carried out by many armed groups and reduce the humanitarian consequences.
- In Ecuador, violence and homicides related to drug trafficking increased dramatically among widespread protests and an attempt to remove the president.
- The dismissal and arrest of President Castillo, accused of trying to carry out a self-coup, prompted some of the largest protests in recent years in Peru.
- Border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan rose, with incidents during the year and a military escalation that caused hundreds of deaths.
- Political tension in Sri Lanka resulting from the economic crisis escalated to the point of causing the fall of the president and prime minister.
- International concern worsened over the drastic rise in the number of missiles launched by North Korea and the resumption of its nuclear programme.
- The situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan around the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh was fragile and a military offensive launched by Azerbaijan claimed the lives of more than 280 people and wounded around 500.
- Demonstrations in Iran were considered one of the greatest challenges to the regime since 1979 and the authorities' crackdown had caused the death of around 500 people by the end of the year.

The present chapter analyses the socio-political crises that occurred in 2022. 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 2022. 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 2022.

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

Table 2.1. **Summary of socio-political crises in 2022**

Conflict[1] -beginning-	Type[2]	Main parties	Intensity[3] / Trend[4]
AFRICA			
Algeria[5]	Internal	Government, military power, political and social opposition, Hirak movement, armed groups AQIM (former GSPC), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS)	2
	Government, System		=
Benin	Internationalised internal	Government, regional armed actors	2
	Government		↑
Burkina Faso	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, army sectors	3
	Government		↑
Central Africa (LRA)	International	LRA, Sudanese Armed Forces, South Sudan, DRC, CAR and Uganda, community militias and armed groups from the countries in the region	1
	Resources		↓
Chad	Internal	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (including the coalition Wakit Tama, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (52 groups, including the main ones: FACT, CCMSR, UFDD, UFR), community militias, private militias	3
	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity		↑
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed actors	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↓
Djibouti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed group FRUD-Armé	2
	Government		↑
Equatorial Guinea	Internal	Government, political opposition in exile	1
	Government		=
Eritrea	Internationalised internal	Government, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFDM, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Eritrea – Ethiopia	International	Eritrea, Ethiopia	1
	Territory		=
Eswatini	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Ethiopia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups	3
	Government		↑
Ethiopia – Egypt – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan	2
	Resources		=
Ethiopia – Sudan	International	Ethiopia, Sudan, community militias	2
	Resources		↓
Guinea	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, trade unions	2
	Government		↓

1. This column includes the states in which socio-political crises are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one socio-political crisis in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
2. This report classifies and analyses socio-political crises using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). Regarding the second type, the 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 2022 with 2021, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2022 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 tension includes the activities of jihadist groups (particularly AQIM), which in previous editions were analyzed separately.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
AFRICA			
Guinea-Bissau	Internationalised internal	Transitional government, Armed Forces, political opposition, international drug trafficking networks	2
	Government		↑
Kenya	Internationalised internal	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties, civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups sympathetic to al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS	3
	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government		↑
Mali	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ECOWAS	3
	Government		=
Morocco – Western Sahara	International[6]	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	2
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓
Mozambique	Internal	Government, RENAMO	1
	Government, System		=
Niger	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, civil society organisations, Christian and Muslim communities, ranchers and farmers, community militias, criminal groups, IMN	3
	Identity, Resources, Government		↑
Nigeria (Biafra)	Internationalised internal	Government, separatist organisations MASSOB, IPOB (which has an armed wing, the ESN)	3
	Identity, Self-government		=
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, armed groups, MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias of the Ijaw, Itsereki, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	1
	Identity, Resources		=
DRC	Internal	Government led by the Union Sacrée coalition (led by Félix Tshisekedi and made up of different political actors, including dissidents from former President Joseph Kabila's Front Commun pour le Congo coalition), political opposition (including Front Commun pour le Congo and Lamuka) and social opposition	2
	Government		=
DRC – Rwanda	International	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, Rwandan armed group FDLR, pro-Rwandan Congolese armed group M23 (formerly CNDP)	3
	Identity, Government, Resources		↑
Rwanda	Internationalised internal	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the ruling party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other countries in Africa and the West	1
	Government, Identity		=
Rwanda - Burundi	International	Government of Rwanda, government of Burundi, armed groups	1
	Government		↓
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, factions of the armed group Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)	1
	Self-government		↓
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State	3
	Territory		↑
Sudan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↓
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Government of Sudan, government of South Sudan, community militias	1
	Resources, Identity		↑
Tanzania	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓

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			
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the Oqba Ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS	2
	Government, System		↑
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
AMERICA			
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Brazil	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	2
	Government		↑
Chile	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Colombia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Cuba	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, System		↓
Ecuador	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government, Resources		↑
El Salvador	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised bands (drug trafficking, gangs)	2
	Government		↓
Guatemala	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		=
Haiti	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	3
	Government		↑
Honduras	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		=
Jamaica	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups	1
	Government		↑
Mexico	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups, armed opposition groups	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		=
Nicaragua	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Peru	Internal	Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (peasant and indigenous organisations)	3
	Government, Resources		↑
USA	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, citizen militias	1
	Government		↑
Venezuela	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↓

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
ASIA			
Bangladesh	Internal	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal, armed groups (Ansar-al-Islam, JMB)	2
	Government		↑
China (Hong Kong)	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		↓
China (Tibet)	Internationalised internal	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government in exile, political and social opposition in Tibet	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China (Xinjiang)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China – Japan	International	China, Japan, USA	2
	Territory, Resources		↑
China – Taiwan	International	China, Taiwan, USA	2
	Territory, Resources, System		↑
China – USA	International	China, USA	1
	System, Government, Territory		↑
Fiji	Internal	Government, political opposition	1
	Government		↑
India	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	System, Government		=
India (Assam)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(IKS), ADF, RNLF, KPLT, NSLA, UPLA and KPLT	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Manipur)	Internal	Government, armed groups (PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA)	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Nagaland)	Internal	Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF	1
	Identity, Self-government		=
India – China	International	India, China	3
	Territory		↑
India – Pakistan	International	India, Pakistan	3
	Identity, Territory		↓
Indonesia (Sulawesi)	Internal	Government, armed group MIT	1
	System, Identity		↓
Indonesia (West Papua)	Internal	Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition, Papuan indigenous groups, Freeport mining company	3
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Japan - Russia (Kuril Islands)	International	Japan, Russia	1
	Territory, Resources		↑
Korea, DPR	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	System, Government		↑
Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea[7]	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	3
	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
ASIA			
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	International	DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea	3
	System		↑
Kazakhstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups	3
	System, Government		↑
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		=
Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan[8]	International	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	3
	Territory, resources		↑
Lao PDR	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin	1
	System, Identity		=
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Papua New Guinea	Internal	Government, community militias, government of Bougainville	3
	Identity, Resources, Territory, Self-governmen		↑
South China Sea	International	China, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam	2
	Territory, Resources		↑
Sri Lanka	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	2
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		=
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)	Internal	Government, social opposition of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)	2
	Identity		↑
Thailand	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Uzbekistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	1
	Government, System, Territory		=
Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan)	Internal	Government, social opposition in the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan	2
	Self-government		↑
EUROPE			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Azerbaijan, Armenia, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Turkey	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Belarus	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, EU, Poland, USA, Russia	2
	Government		↑
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Internationalised internal	Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, High Representative of the international community	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Georgia (South Ossetia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Moldova	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition, Russia	2
	Government		↑

8. In previous years, this socio-political crisis was analysed in the summary on Kyrgyzstan in this chapter.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity / Trend
EUROPE			
Moldova, Rep. of (Transdniestria)	Internationalised internal	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Russia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition actors	2
	Government		↑
Russia (North Caucasus)	Internal	Russian federal government, governments of the republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, armed opposition groups (Caucasus Emirate and ISIS)	1
	System, Identity, Government		=
Serbia – Kosovo	International[9]	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community of Kosovo, UN mission (UNMIK), NATO mission (KFOR), EU mission (EULEX)	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Turkey	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, organisation of Fetullah Gülen	2
	Government, System		↑
Turkey – Greece, Cyprus	International	Turkey, Greece, Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Egypt, France, United Arab Emirates, Government of National Accord of Libya	2
	Territory, Resources, Self-government, Identity		↑
MIDDLE EAST			
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Identity		=
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups Jundallah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Iran – USA, Israel[10]	International	Iran, USA, Israel	3
	System, Government		=
Iraq (Kurdistan)	Internationalised internal	Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran, PKK	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory		=
Israel – Syria – Lebanon	International	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia), Iran	3
	System, Resources, Territory		=
Lebanon	Internationalised internal	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed group ISIS and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham	2
	Government, System		=
Palestine	Internal	ANP, Fatah, armed group Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing, the Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades, Salafist groups	1
	Government		=
Saudi Arabia	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including AQAP and branches of ISIS (Hijaz Province, Najd Province)	1
	Government, Identity		=

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

9. 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.
10. This international socio-political crisis refers mainly to the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program.

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.

2.2. Socio-political crises: 2022 trend analysis

This section examines the general trends observed in areas experiencing socio-political crises throughout 2022, at both the global and regional levels.

2.2.1. Global trends

One hundred and eight socio-political crises were identified in 2022, 10 more than in 2021, in line with the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises that has been reported in recent years (25 more since 2018). Africa and Asia were the regions with the highest number of socio-political crises (36 and 33, respectively), followed by the Americas (16), Europe (12) and the Middle East (11). Regarding the variation compared to the previous year, 15 new crises were identified and another five were no longer classified as socio-political crises, most of them in Africa: The Gambia, Ethiopia (Oromia), which transitioned to an armed conflict, the DRC-Uganda, Rwanda-Uganda and Spain (Catalonia). The socio-political crises that were added to the list, for whatever reason, were mainly concentrated in Asia and the Americas: Brazil; China – USA; Korea, DPR; Ecuador; USA; Fiji; Jamaica; Japan – Russia (Kuril Islands); Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan; Moldova; Papua New Guinea; Russia; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) and Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan).

One of the most outstanding aspects in analysing the socio-political crises in 2022 is that although no significant changes were observed in 32% of them and the tension fell in 18% of them compared to 2021, **half the cases identified in 2022 got worse compared to the previous year**. This was reflected in part by a **substantial rise in the number of high-intensity crises, from 19 in 2021 to 28 in 2022**: Burkina Faso; Chad; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC-Rwanda; Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland); Sudan; Ecuador; Haiti; Mexico; Peru; Venezuela; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; India-China; India-Pakistan; Indonesia (West Papua); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Papua New Guinea; Sri Lanka; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh); Iran-USA, Israel; Iran; and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. In addition to the 28 high-intensity cases, which accounted for over a quarter of the total, 42% of the 108 socio-political crises were of low intensity (50% in 2021) and 32% were of medium intensity (31% in 2021). Therefore, **not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year**. This growing intensity was especially concentrated in Europe (where 92% of the cases escalated) and in Asia (where 56% did).

Not only did the number of crises clearly increase in 2022, but their average intensity also grew compared to the previous year

The main **causal factors** of the crises analysed included opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological **system** of a **government**, at 71%; demands of self-determination and **self-government** and **identity-based aspirations**, at 38%; and control of **resources** or **territory** at 31%. These figures are roughly continuous with respect to those of the previous year, though crises associated with control of territory or resources increased from 21% to 31%. In a disaggregated analysis of factors, opposition to internal or international **government**

Box 2.1. **High intensity socio-political crises in 2022**

AFRICA (10)	ASIA (9)	MIDDLE EAST (3)
Burkina Faso	North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea	Iran-USA, Israel
Chad	North Korea-South Korea	Iran
Ethiopia	India-China	Israel-Syria-Lebanon
Kenya	India-Pakistan	**AMERICA (5)**
Mali	Indonesia (West Papua)	Ecuador
Nigeria	kazakhstan	Haiti
Nigerian (Biafra)	Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan	Mexico
DRC-Rwanda	Papua New Guinea	Peru
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Sri Lanka	Venezuela
Sudan		**EUROPE (1)**
		Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabagh)

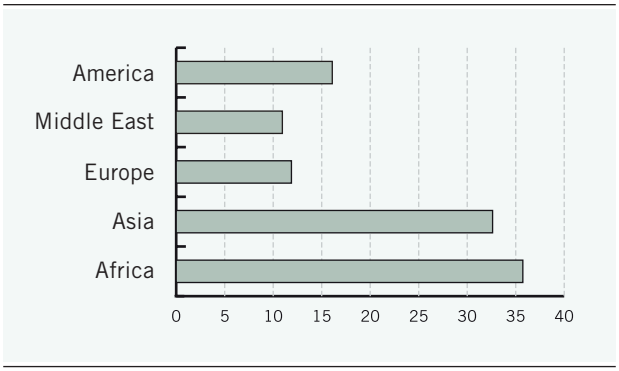
policies was the most common cause, found in 64% of the 108 socio-political crises, which was exactly the same percentage as the previous year. The second most prevalent factor was **identity-based aspirations (36%),** which was especially important in regions such as Europe (67%) and the Middle East (46%). Next, at very similar percentages, came **demands for self-determination and self-government (24%), control of resources (23%), opposition to the political, social or ideological system** of the state as a whole (22%) and control of **territory** (19%). The different factors stoking socio-political tension also oscillated widely between regions. For example, opposition to the government was behind 100% of the crises in the Americas, but only 39% of the cases in Asia. Opposition to the system or to the state as a whole fuelled 45% of the crises in Asia, but only 6% of those located in the Americas. Demands for self-determination and/or self-government were associated with 58% of the crises in Europe, but only 13% and 14% of the crises in the Americas and Africa, respectively; while identity-based aspirations were behind 67% of the crises in Europe and 25% of the crises in Africa and the Americas.

In line with the trend observed in 2021 and in previous years, approximately half the crises worldwide were **internal in nature (52%),** though with pronounced geographical variability (100% of the crises in the Americas and 17% in Europe). Approximately one fifth of the crises (21%) were **international**, but some were among the most intense in the world, such as DRC-Rwanda; India-China; India-Pakistan; North Korea-USA, Japan, South Korea; North Korea-South Korea; Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh), Iran-USA, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon. Finally, more than a quarter (27%) of the crises were internationalised internal ones: those in which one of the main actors is foreign, and/or when the crisis spills over into neighbouring countries. Once again, important variations were observed between regions (58% of the crises in Asia were internationalised internal, whereas Latin America did not report any).

One hundred and eight socio-political crises were identified in 2022: 36 in Africa, 33 in Asia and the Pacific, 16 in the Americas, 12 in Europe and 11 in the Middle East

A more detailed geographical analysis shows that some of the subregions with the highest number of crises were, in this order: Central Africa and the Great Lakes (12), East Asia and West Africa (11 each); South Asia (8); South America; Central Asia; Horn of Africa; and the Gulf (7 each); Russia and the Caucasus (5); and Central America; Mashreq; Southeastern Europe and Southeast Asia (4 each). The countries with the most domestic crises or whose governments were major players in a greater number of foreign disputes were, in this order: Russia (9); China (8); USA (7); India and Iran (6); Ethiopia, Sudan and Tajikistan (5); Turkey and Uzbekistan (4); and Ethiopia, Nigeria, the DRC, Rwanda, Indonesia, Japan and North Korea (3).

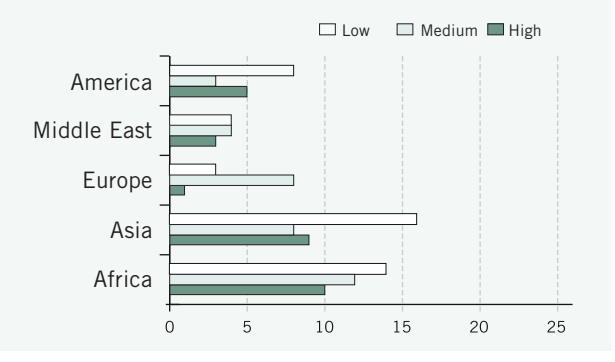
Graph 2.1. **Regional distribution of the number of socio-political crises in 2022**



2.2.2. Regional trends

As in recent years, **Africa** was the region with the highest number of socio-political crises (36), although its percentage of the total number (33%) fell significantly compared to the previous year (41%), both due to the identification of fewer crises there (since those in The Gambia, Ethiopia (Oromia), DRC-Uganda and Rwanda-Uganda ceased to be considered as such) and to the rise in cases reported in the Americas and Asia. By subregions, Central Africa and the Great Lakes was the part of Africa (and the world) with the highest number of crises (12): Central Africa (LRA); Chad; Equatorial Guinea; DRC; DRC-Rwanda; Kenya; Rwanda; Rwanda-Burundi; Sudan; Sudan-South Sudan; Tanzania; and Uganda. This was followed by West Africa (11): Benin; Burkina Faso; Ivory Coast; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); Nigeria (Niger Delta); and Senegal (Casamance). Next came the Horn of Africa (7): Djibouti; Eritrea; Eritrea-Ethiopia; Ethiopia; Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan; Ethiopia-Sudan; and Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland). Tied for fourth (with 3 each) were South Africa (Eswatini, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) and North Africa-Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco-Western Sahara and Tunisia). Finally, several

Graph 2.2. **Intensity of the socio-political crises by region**



countries were involved in various socio-political crises, such as Ethiopia (5), Sudan and Rwanda (4) and the DRC, Nigeria and Uganda (3).

Although Africa was the region with the highest number of high-intensity crises (10 out of 28), its share of all crises in 2022 (36%) also clearly fell compared to 2021 (53%). As a whole, 39% of the crises were of low intensity, 33% were of medium intensity and 28% were of high intensity. Specifically, there were 10 of these high-intensity crises: Burkina Faso; Chad; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Nigeria; Nigeria (Biafra); DRC-Rwanda; Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland); and Sudan. Regarding their development, 36% of the crises in Africa got worse, 39% did not undergo any fundamental changes and the remaining 25% got better. In 2021, the number of crises that escalated in Africa had been clearly higher (50%), as well as the percentage of the total crises that escalated (54% in 2021 and 24% in 2022). Some previously studied crises were no longer considered as such in 2022 (The Gambia, DRC-Uganda, Rwanda-Uganda) and others had been of a high intensity in 2021, but showed lower levels of violence in 2022 compared to 2021: Guinea and Morocco-Western Sahara.

Although Africa was the region with the highest number of high-intensity crises, its share of all crises in 2022 (36%) also clearly fell compared to 2021 (53%)

Conversely, three socio-political crises that escalated significantly in 2022 were now considered to be of maximum intensity: Burkina Faso, DRC-Rwanda and Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), while the crisis in Ethiopia (Oromia) worsened notably and was reclassified as an armed conflict. Amidst violence and political instability in Burkina Faso, two coups d'état took place, in January and in September. The tension between the DRC and Rwanda got much worse as a result of occasional clashes between the security forces of both countries in the border area and the DRC's accusations that Rwanda was militarily supporting the offensive of the March 23 Movement (M23) armed group in North Kivu. Regarding the dispute between the self-proclaimed republic of Somaliland and the administration of Puntland (which is part of the federal state of Somalia), there was an escalation of fighting in the town of Las Anod in December between activists from Puntland and the security forces of Somaliland, which have occupied Las Anod since 2007. Las Anod is geographically located within the borders of Somaliland, though most of the clans in the region are associated with those in Puntland. The fighting caused the death of around 20 people, according to various sources. In early 2023, Somaliland withdrew its forces from the city to prevent violence from escalating.

The Americas was the region with the greatest proportion of high-intensity crises

The greatest causal factors in the region were, in this order, opposition to the government (69%); control of resources (28%), identity-related issues (25%); demands for self-government and self-determination and control of resources (tied at 14% each); and opposition to the system (11%). These percentages are somewhat consistent with those of the previous year, except for identity-related issues (which fell from 30% to 25%), opposition to the government (which decreased from 74% to 69%) and control of resources (which rose from 8% to 14%). Compared to globally aggregated data, some causes were clearly below average, such as demands for self-determination (14% vs. 24%), identity-related disputes (25% vs. 36%) and opposition to the system (11 vs. 22%). On the other hand, 50% of the crises were internal (60% in 2021), 28% were internationalised internal (17% in 2021) and 22% were international (23% in 2021). In all cases, these percentages were very similar to the world average.

The **Americas** reported 16 socio-political crises (15% of the total), four more than in 2021: Jamaica, USA, Brazil and Ecuador. Most of the 16 crises took place in South America (7), followed by Central America (4), the Caribbean (3) and North America (2). Overall, the average intensity of the crises in the region grew compared to the previous year. This is because even though the proportion of maximum-intensity crises was similar to that of the previous year (one third in 2021 and 31% in 2022), the lower-intensity crises fell (from 58% in 2021 to 50% in 2022) and the medium-intensity crises rose (from 8 to 19%). In comparative terms, the Americas was the region with the highest proportion of high-intensity crises (almost one third): Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. While Mexico, Haiti and Venezuela had already been considered high-intensity scenarios in 2021 and in previous years, the dynamics of conflict increased significantly in Ecuador and Peru in 2022. In Ecuador, this was due to the dramatic rise in homicides and violence related to drug trafficking, as well as the major protests that took place in the second half of the year. In Peru, it owed to the huge protests that took place in December after the impeachment and arrest of President Pedro Castillo, who was accused of trying to carry out a self-coup. Though the massive demonstrations that took place in Colombia in 2021 warranted reclassifying the crisis as one of maximum intensity last year, the protests and demonstrations faded very significantly in 2022.

The 16 identified causes were linked to opposition to the government's domestic or international policies, as in 2021. Additional factors such as control of resources and identity-related issues were associated with three cases each, while dynamics linked to self-government were behind two other cases and opposition to the system

was a factor in only one case (Cuba). None of the cases in the Americas were related to disputes over control of territory. All the crises in the region were internal, which contrasts with the aggregated data at the international level, according to which approximately half the crises worldwide were of an internal nature.

In **Asia and the Pacific**, there were 33 socio-political crises, 31% of the total worldwide. Compared to 2021, there were nine additional cases: Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan; Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan); Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan); China-USA; Korea, DPR; Japan-Russia (Kuril Islands); Papua New Guinea; Fiji and Sri Lanka. By subregion, 11 of the crises were in East Asia: China (Xinjiang), China (Tibet), China (Hong Kong), China-Japan, China-Taiwan, Korea, DPR-US, Japan, Rep. of Korea and the South China Sea. Eight were in South Asia; Bangladesh, India, India (Assam), India (Manipur), India (Nagaland), India-China, India-Pakistan and Pakistan. Seven were in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Four were in Southeast Asia: Indonesia (Sulawesi), Indonesia (West Papua), Laos and Thailand. Finally, two were in the Pacific: Papua New Guinea and Fiji. As in previous years, some countries were involved in various socio-political crises, such as China (eight), India (six), Tajikistan (five), Uzbekistan (four) and Indonesia, Japan and South Korea (three). Almost half the crises (49%) were of low intensity, 24% were of medium intensity and the remaining 27% were of high intensity. However, the average intensity of the crises in the region increased significantly compared to 2021, since the maximum intensity crises increased from 8% to 27%, while those of low intensity dropped from 63% to 49%. Consistent with these data, 58% of the crises identified in Asia and the Pacific escalated in 2022 compared to the previous year, while only 18% of them increased in intensity. In fact, over a third of all the socio-political crises in the world that escalated in 2022 took place in Asia. Crises that were considered to be of maximum intensity especially escalated in 2022. Kazakhstan was the scene of a social and political crisis in January, with citizen protests and severe violent crackdowns on them, claiming around 200 lives, making it the deadliest in the country's recent history. The border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan worsened during the year, with armed incidents and a military escalation in September that caused the death of a hundred people and the evacuation of tens of thousands. On the Korean peninsula, the dramatic increase in missile launches by South Korea compared to previous years substantially heightened international concern over Pyongyang's weapons programme and greatly deteriorated relations with Seoul, especially after the election of the new South Korean president. In Sri Lanka, massive protests in Colombo and other cities led to the resignation of the prime minister and later the president, who fled the country. In Pakistan, the dismissal of the prime minister through a vote of no confidence led to intense social protests. In Papua New Guinea, many episodes of community violence and other violence linked to the July elections killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

In Asia and the Pacific, 58% of the identified crises escalated in 2022 compared to the previous year, while only 18% lessened in intensity

Regarding the root causes, the most important factors in the region were opposition to the state (42%); opposition to the government and identity issues (39% each factor); control of territory (36%); and demands for self-governance and control of resources (27% each). This distribution of factors is similar to that of 2021, but there was a slight decrease in the importance of opposition to the state (from 50% to 42%) and a noticeable increase in the prevalence of control of territory (from 29% to 36%). Compared to other regions, opposition to the government in Asia was much less important than the world average (39% vs. 69%) or that of some other regions, such as the Americas (100%) and Africa (69%). However, the prevalence of control of territory (36% vs. 19%) was by far the highest in the world. Similarly, 14 crises were linked to opposition to the state or the system, with a prevalence that was practically double the world average, 42% vs. 22%: China (Xinjiang); China (Tibet); China (Hong Kong); China-USA; Korea, DPR-Rep. of Korea; Korea, DPR; India; Indonesia (Sulawesi); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Laos; Pakistan; Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Slightly over one fifth (21%) of the socio-political crises were internationalised internal, significantly less than the previous year, when they accounted for a third. Moreover, while internal crises were 38% of the total crises in Asia and the Pacific in 2021, that percentage rose to almost half (49%) in 2022. The remaining 30% of the crises were international, with Asia being the region with the highest percentage of them. Most of these were in the area between the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea: the dispute between China and Japan (mainly over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands); North Korea's tension with its southern neighbour and various other countries over its weapons programme; strain between China and Taiwan; the dispute between China and the US, which has one of its main theatres in East Asia; the historic dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands; and the crisis in the South China Sea involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. India was involved in two international crises with bordering countries with whom it maintains a strong historical rivalry (Pakistan and China), while the remaining international crisis was between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Twelve crises were reported in **Europe**, or 11% of the total. Compared to the previous year, two new socio-political crises were identified (Russia and Moldova, whose political dynamics were decisively influenced by

the Russian invasion of Ukraine), while another ceased to be so: Spain (Catalonia). The subregion with the highest number of active cases (5) was Russia and the Caucasus, followed by Southeastern Europe (4) and Eastern Europe (3). In addition to the two crises taking place on its soil, Russia and Russia (North Caucasus), the Russian federation was clearly the country most involved in disputes both in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova and Moldova (Transdniestria) and in the Caucasus (Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia (South Ossetia) and Georgia (Abkhazia)). Turkey was an actor in three of the crises in the region: Turkey; Turkey-Greece-Cyprus; and, to a lesser extent, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Eleven of the 12 crises identified in Europe worsened in 2022

Undoubtedly, the most outstanding finding from the analysis of the socio-political crises in this region is that they all worsened in 2022 except one, Russia (North Caucasus), which did not report significant changes compared to the previous year. Therefore, Europe was the region in which there was a higher percentage of cases that worsened in 2022 (92%). The deterioration was linked both to fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to other local and regional dynamics. Although 55% of the crises were of low intensity in 2021, only 25% were in 2022. Medium-intensity crises rose from 36 to 67%. As in 2021, there was only one high-intensity crisis: Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Opposition to the government and identity-related disputes were the causes of 67% of the cases each, followed by demands for self-government and self-determination (58%), opposition to the system and control of territory (17%) and, finally, control of resources (8%). Opposition to the government's domestic or international policies increased compared to the previous year (from 55% to 67%), while demands for self-government decreased in prevalence in the region (from 73% to 58%). Nevertheless, Europe continues to be the region of the world where this cause is the most important by far (the world average is 24%). Similarly, identity-related issues were more important in Europe (67%) than in any other region of the world. In any case, these elements are part of complex contexts of tension inserted in broader and internationalised dynamics in which other factors such as geostrategic disputes and the interests of external actors also have weight, as is the case of Russia in relation to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria and Turkey's influence over the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Fifty-eight per cent of the crises were internationalised internal, 25% were international and 17% were internal, percentages very similar to those of the previous year. The most significant part of this issue is the great disparity between the percentage of internal socio-political crises globally (an average of 52%) and in Europe (17%), with only three cases: Russia, Russia (North Caucasus) and Turkey. Likewise, internationalised internal crises were more than twice as prevalent in Europe (58%) than they were internationally (27%).

Sixty-four per cent of the crises in the Middle East were related to opposition to the government and 46% to identity-based issues

Eleven socio-political crises were identified in the **Middle East**, the same number as last year, which accounts for 10% of the total. Seven of the 11 crises identified were concentrated in the Persian Gulf and the remaining four were in the Mashreq. As happened in other regions, the average tension in the region increased compared to 2021, since medium-intensity crises went from 27 to 36% and those of high intensity from 18% to 27%. In addition to the crises that were already of high intensity in 2021 (Iran-USA, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon), the case of Iran was added in 2022, where the anti-government protests that began in September, in which about 500 people had died by the end of the year, were considered one of the greatest challenges to the regime since 1979. As for the evolution of conflict dynamics, 73% of the crises did not undergo significant changes compared to the previous year, but there were three crises (27%) related to Iran that escalated compared to 2021: Iran, Iran (northwest) and Iran (Sistan Balochistan).

The causes of the crises were very similar to those of the previous year: 64% were related to opposition to the government; 46% to identity-related issues; 27% to demands of self-determination and self-government, as well as to the opposition to the system; and 18% to control of resources and territory. The most prevalent factor in relation to other regions or to the global average was identity-related aspirations (46% in the Middle East and 35% worldwide). As in 2021, 46% of the crises were internationalised internal, 36% internal and 18% international, both of which (Iran-US, Israel and Israel-Syria-Lebanon) were of high intensity.

2.3. Socio-political crises: annual evolution

2.3.1. Africa

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Chad	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Resources, Territory, Identity Internal
Main parties:	Transitional Military Council, political and social opposition (including the Wakit Tama coalition, which includes the party Les Transformateurs), Chadian armed groups (including FACT, CCMSR, UFR), the Nigerian armed group Boko Haram, community militias and private militias

Summary:
Often classified as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, Chad has faced a complex atmosphere of instability and violence for much of the period following independence in 1960. The country's ethnic diversity has cynically been exploited by a tradition of factionalism. French colonialism also exacerbated the animosity between the predominantly Muslim north and the more Christian and animist south, a politically exploited division at the heart of the conflict. Successive governments since 1966 have been confronted by insurgents seeking to gain power. Libya and France have historically been present in Chadian internal affairs, supporting insurgents and governments, respectively. Authoritarian President Hissène Habré (in power since 1982) was deposed by a coup in 1990 by another northerner, Idriss Déby, who has ruled ever since in a climate of repression and violence. Déby amended the Constitution in 2005, which allowed him to become one of the longest-serving leaders in power (1990-2021) but sowed the seed of an insurgency made up of people disaffected with the regime. The opposition boycotted the amendment. Other sources of tension include the antagonism between Arab tribes and black populations in the border area between Sudan and Chad, linked to local grievances, competition for resources and the expansion of the war in the neighbouring Sudanese region of Darfur since 2003. Finally, recent military interventions have been carried out in the north against Libyan-based groups, including the Front for Change and Harmony in Chad (FACT), illegal mining and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The instability worsened with the death of President Idriss Déby in April 2021 and the subsequent coup d'état by a military council that installed his son Mahamat Idriss Déby as the new president. Mahamat Idriss Déby suspended the Constitution and replaced it with a transition charter. He also promised free elections in 18 months after a national dialogue was held.

Chad continued to be immersed in a serious atmosphere of instability and violence.[11] The 18-month transition period adopted in April 2021 by the military junta that seized power through a coup, suspended the Constitution and installed Mahamat Idriss Déby, son of Idriss Déby, as president after his death, has only consolidated Déby's power. During this period between April 2021 and the end of 2022, the military junta has used violence to crack down on dissent and peaceful protests calling for the return of a civilian government. **The Doha peace process and the National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) concluded in October 2022 with the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Military Council (CMT) under the image of a new government, described as one of national unity, and with President Mahamat Déby remaining in power, which has perpetuated the break with the Constitution that began in April 2021.** The CMT's mandate was prolonged starting in October 2022 for a new 24-month period, which will be followed by elections in which Mahamat Déby will be able to run. In October, the Déby regime's continued grip on power triggered rejection of the political and social opposition and the subsequent crackdown by the security forces, causing dozens of fatalities in 2022, which demonstrated the government's authoritarian drift and the desire to silence the political and social opposition with all means at its disposal. The international community's response to the extension of the CMT's mandate laid bare its failure to prevent the authoritarian and repressive drift of the Chadian regime and sent a dangerous message to other countries in the region.

The Committee for the Organisation of the National Inclusive Dialogue (CODNI) was established in June 2021 to prepare for the national dialogue, which was to start in December 2021. However, it was delayed due to disagreements over the members of the CODNI, the inclusiveness of the national dialogue, the interference of the CMT, the participation of the different insurgent groups, the agenda of the subjects for discussion and other issues. Its delay was justified by the desire to make it easier for the insurgent groups to get involved, for which a prior peace agreement between them and the CMT was sought. Formal negotiations began in March 2022 in Doha (Qatar) under Qatari mediation, and after various rounds of negotiations, a peace agreement was reached on 7 August between dozens of insurgent groups in the country and the government. This agreement was the prior step and condition to participate in the National Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue (DNIS) that the government had been promoting with different civil society groups, which was held between 20 August and 8 October 2022.[12]

Meetings between informal representatives of the CMT and insurgent groups in Togo, Egypt and France, held in 2021, continued with Qatar's offer to facilitate meetings in Doha with the insurgent groups, which

11. For further details on this subject, see Josep Maria Royo, Claves y retos de la transición en Chad (2) esperanzas frustradas con el proceso de paz y el diálogo nacional, Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau* No. 23, December 2022; Josep Maria Royo, Claves y retos de la transición en Chad (1) Cambio climático, inestabilidad y conflicto, Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau* No. 19, November 2022.
12. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

the Chadian political-military opposition praised as a step forward in the process. Previously, the CMT had approved one of the insurgents' main demands, the granting of amnesty as a condition for participating in the national dialogue. In November 2021, Mahamat Déby pardoned around 300 imprisoned or exiled insurgent leaders and political opponents.[13] This gave the CMT an image of openness. As such, the CMT had carried out a policy to win oppositional support by co-opting members of the political and social opposition, including historical opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo (appointed vice chair of the CODNI and prime minister once the DNIS had ended). After various delays, meetings finally began on 13 March 2022 between the representatives of more than 40 insurgent groups and the CMT in Doha, mediated by Qatari Special Envoy Mutlaq bin Majed Al Qahtani.[14] Among these dozens of armed actors, only four represented a real military threat to the Mahamat Déby regime:[15] the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) and the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR).

The objective of the negotiating process (described as a pre-dialogue in the DNIS) was to get these armed groups to participate in the DNIS. Finally, after five months of negotiations, 34 of the 52 political-military groups, including the UFDD and the UFR, signed an agreement in Doha on 7 August in exchange for the release of prisoners, amnesty and an end to the hostilities between the government and these armed factions, as well as the participation in the DNIS. Sources for the number of armed groups participating in the Doha process vary, since others cite 47, five of which did not accept the agreement, which is why the United Nations' figures are taken as a reference. The signing of the agreement was attended by regional and international actors, such as the AU and the UN. The mistrust between the parties, the suspensions and the constant deadlock, among other issues, delayed the process. Eighteen armed groups, including the FACT, rejected the agreement,[16] which was called the Doha Peace Agreement and the Participation of the Politico-Military Movements in the Chadian National, Inclusive and Sovereign Dialogue, and formed a new opposition coalition: the Cadre permanent de concertation et de réflexion (CPCR).[17] The CPCR said that it rejected the agreement due to grievances about the participation quotas in the national dialogue, the failure to release prisoners of war and the transitional authorities' ineligibility to run in the post-transition elections, according to the UN Secretary-General's report in December.[18] The FACT said that it feared that the groups participating in the DNIS would not be treated in a similar way and demanded security guarantees, the formation of a new organising committee for the DNIS, the release of the group's prisoners and a commitment from Mahamat Déby to not run in any future presidential elections. Under the agreement, the CMT and hundreds of representatives of the political-military opposition could participate in the DNIS, and the representatives of the rebel groups would have guarantees of access and armed protection. In May 2021, the AU had agreed to support the transition on the conditions that the authorities hold a presidential election within 18 months, that the transition should be completed by October 2022 and that members of the CMT be prohibited from running for election, demanding that the CMT amend the transition charter to include these clauses. However, the CMT did not amend the transition charter as promised, noting that any changes to it should be discussed during the DNIS.

The national dialogue ratified the break with the Constitution begun in April 2021 by Mahamat Déby and his military junta

The DNIS was scheduled to take place in December 2021 and the date was later pushed back to February 2022, but it was repeatedly postponed pending the successful completion of the Doha pre-dialogue to facilitate the participation of the armed groups. Finally, the signing of the Doha agreement on 7 August allowed the implementation of the DNIS. On 20 August, more than 1,400 representatives of political-military movements, representatives of the transitional government, representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, including women's and youth organisations, traditional leaders, diaspora figures, provincial authorities, security forces and state institutions and unions launched the DNIS in N'Djamena with regional and international actors attending. The DNIS was scheduled to last three weeks and was expected to discuss the implementation of institutional reforms and a new Constitution, which should be submitted to a referendum. The FACT, the Wakit Tama coalition of civil society organisations, the opposition party Les Transformateurs and others boycotted the DNIS. The Episcopal Conference of Chad withdrew from the DNIS because it did not consider the dialogue process real.[19] This announcement stoked

13. France24, Chad gives amnesty to hundreds of rebels and dissidents, meeting opposition demand, 29 November 2021.
14. AFP, Qatar takes up mediation role in Chad talks: officials, rebels, *al-Monitor,* 25 March 2022.
15. Toulemonde, Marie, Chad: Mapping the rebellion that killed Idriss Déby, *The Africa Report,* 29 April 2021.
16. Mills, Andrew, Chad signs peace pact with rebels, but main insurgents stay out, *Reuters,* 8 August 2022.
17. Madjissembaye Ngarndinon,Tchad : les groupes armés non signataires de l'accord de Doha mettent en place un cadre commun de lutte, *Tchad Infos,* 8 August 2022.
18. UN Security-Council, The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, S/2022/896 of 1 December 2022.
19. Atemanke, Jude, Catholic Bishops Withdraw from Chad's National Inclusive Dialogue, Cite Lack of "dialogue", *ACI Africa,* 4 September 2022.

the frustration of various political and social actors who viewed the evolution of the DNIS with concern. They staged various peaceful protests against the DNIS that were harshly put down, as reported by Human Rights Watch and others.

However, on 1 October, the participants in the DNIS approved the recommendations on the path to follow for the transition, including steps to dissolve the CMT and appoint the president of the CMT to lead a 24-month "second transition", to hold a referendum on a modified version of the 1996 Constitution and the form of the state, to double the number of seats in the National Transitional Council and to establish a second chamber of Parliament. In particular, the DNIS recommended that all Chadians who meet the legal requirements be able to run in the next elections (to be held in 2024), including members of the transitional institutions. On 10 October, the president of the CMT, Mahamat Déby, was sworn in as the president of the transition. Days later, he appointed a national unity government headed by former opposition leader and former CODNI Vice Chair Saleh Kebzabo,[20]which included other opposition figures and members of the political-military groups that signed the Doha agreement, such as Tom Erdimi, the leader of the UFR.[21] Various generals close to Déby in the CMT held strategic portfolios.

The 18-month period ended on 20 October, after which CMT President Mahamat Déby was supposed to return power to the civilian authorities. The political and social opposition called for mass protests on 20 October as a consequence of the extension of the mandate of the CMT and its president. The government banned the protests announced for 20 October.[22] The violent crackdown on the protests killed at least 50 people, including at least 10 police officers, and injured around 100, according to the country's new Prime Minister Saleh Kebzabo. A curfew was announced in N'Djamena and three other locations and several political parties were ordered to cease activity. Mahamat Déby accused foreign forces of being behind the protests. The international community condemned the government crackdown and called for respect for human rights and dialogue with the political opposition, but no sanctions were imposed against the Chadian government. According to unconfirmed estimates, more than 100 people may have been killed and hundreds wounded. The violent crackdown on the protests also worsened relations between Qatar and Chad, as Qatar was reluctant to defend the Chadian regime on the international stage.[23] As the main supporter of Mahamat Déby and the main actor in monitoring the implementation of the agreements, Qatar had tried to include the FACT in the agreement, but the events clouded relations between N'Diamena and Doha.

The international community's response to the serious situation in Chad carries a message with serious implications for other countries in the region undergoing processes similar to Chad, such as Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and even Sudan

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which had endorsed the recommendations of the DNIS before the events of 20 October, appointed its president, Congolese national Félix Tshisekedi, to facilitate the Chadian transition and appointed a committee of inquiry. This announcement clashed with the position of the African Union, whose chair, Chadian national Moussa Faki Mahamat, presented a report highly critical of the transitional authorities, in which he demanded that the AU condemn the murder, torture, arrest and arbitrary imprisonment of hundreds of civilians, denounce the "bloody repression", demand "the immediate release of all political prisoners", open an investigation and take action for breaking the promises made, which would include suspending Chad from the bodies of the AU. Moussa Faki noted that such actions were a requirement consistent with the AU's ongoing position in relation to the other four cases of unconstitutional changes of government currently under way in Africa (in Sudan, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso).[24]

However, the AU Peace and Security Council, which met on 11 November to study the situation in the country, did not reach the necessary quorum to suspend Chad from the organisation. A trial was held between late November and early December that did not meet international standards, according to the Chadian Bar Association, and sentenced 262 people to prison in relation to the events of 20 October. In early December, another 139 people were released for not receiving prison sentences or for not having been found guilty at trial. The ECCAS commission of inquiry into the events of 20 October visited the country to begin its work on 14 December and the Chadian Bar Association questioned its independence and called for the participation of other international organisations such as the AU and the UN.

20. Olivier, Mathieu, "Tchad : pourquoi Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno a nommé Saleh Kebzabo Premier ministre", *Jeune Afrique,* 12 October 2022.
21. Olivier, Mathieu, "Nouveau gouvernement au Tchad : Mahamat Saleh Annadif aux Affaires étrangères, Tom Erdimi à l'Enseignement supérieur", *Jeune Afrique*, 14 October 2022.
22. *RFI*, "Le Tchad interdit les manifestations marquant la fin initiale de la transition", 20 October 2022
23. *Africa Intelligence*, Communications between N'Djamena and Doha break down, 10 November 2022.
24. *Le Journal de l'Afrique*, Chad: between Moussa Faki and Mahamat Idriss Déby, has war been declared?, 11 November 2022.

DRC-Rwanda	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Identity, Resources International
Main parties:	Government of the DRC, government of Rwanda, Rwandan armed group FDLR, pro-Rwandan Congolese armed group M23 (formerly CNDP)

Summary:
The tense relations between the DRC and Rwanda date back to the early 1990s, when Zairian Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko supported the Rwandan regime of Juvenal Habyarimana to stop the offensive of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an insurgent group led by Paul Kagame, who after the 1994 genocide succeeded in overthrowing the genocidal regime and seized power in Rwanda. In 1996, a rebellion led by Congolese General Laurent Kabila, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, penetrated the DRC to dismantle the refugee camps fleeing the Rwandan genocide from where members of the former Rwandan government and Rwandan Army were being reorganised, and to start the war against Mobutu Sese Seko, the head of the government of Zaire at the time. This rebellion became the First Congo War (1996-1997), which brought Laurent Kabila to power. Later, in 1998, the neighbouring countries that had promoted Kabila withdrew their trust and organised and promoted a new rebellion to try to overthrow the new Congolese leader, both directly and indirectly through armed groups operating from the same countries, especially Rwanda and Uganda. This second stage of the conflict is known as Africa's World War (1998-2003). The signing of various peace agreements between 2002 and 2003 led to the withdrawal of foreign troops, mainly from Rwanda. They argued that they were in Congolese territory to eliminate insurgent groups there, given the Congolese Armed Forces' lack of will to dismantle them, while they also exercised control and plundered the natural resources of the eastern part of the country, directly or through armed groups supervised by them, especially Rwanda. The continued existence of enemy insurgent groups from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi and of the root causes of the conflict in the DRC at its multiple levels, as well as the failed implementation of the agreements to demobilise these groups, led to the emergence of the M23 in 2012, supported by Rwanda. Despite the signing of a new peace agreement in December 2013, the group reorganised again with Rwandan support in 2021.

During the year, the relationship between the DRC and Rwanda seriously deteriorated as a result of sporadic clashes between the security forces of both countries in the border area and accusations levelled against Rwanda for militarily and logistically supporting the offensive of the armed group March 23 Movement (M23) in North Kivu. The M23's offensive, which it launched in late 2021, may have had Rwanda's support, as the UN said in August, and together with the cross-border bombings and incursions by soldiers from the DRC in Rwanda and from Rwanda in the DRC caused an escalation of tension between the two countries and regional efforts to de-escalate the conflict and to promote contacts leading to peace negotiations between the DRC and the M23 and between the DRC and Rwanda.[25] In August, the UN Group of Experts indicated that it had solid evidence on Rwanda's support for the M23, a group that resumed its activities in November 2021 after practically a decade of inactivity and has conducted a strong offensive, expanding its presence and control of territory in the province of North Kivu since May 2022. Rejected by Rwanda, the report stated that the Rwandan Army had launched military interventions on Congolese soil since November 2021, providing military and logistical support to the M23's actions.

The attempts of the countries of the region to de-escalate the dispute and promote dialogue between the parties were constant, led by Angola under the mandate of the AU. In April, the EAC countries, including the DRC (which joined the organisation in March) approved the deployment of a military mission in eastern DRC starting in August to combat the armed group M23 and to support the government in putting an end to the violence due to the resumption of hostilities by the M23, a decision ratified in June.[26] The deployment became partially effective in November, though with several questions about the members, coordination with MONUSCO, financing and mandate. The DRC vetoed Rwanda's participation in the mission.

Faced with the escalation of the M23 offensive in October, the Congolese government expelled the Rwandan ambassador. On 31 October, thousands of people demonstrated in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, against Rwanda, demanding weapons to fight due to concerns that the armed group could occupy the capital, as it did in 2012, expressing their frustration at international passivity and demanding sanctions from the international community against Rwanda for supporting the M23. Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta later participated in a mini summit on peace and security in the eastern DRC in Luanda on 23 November, calling for an immediate withdrawal of the M23 from the occupied areas in North Kivu and agreeing to a ceasefire that was to come into effect on 25 November, though the M23 did not respect it. The M23 continued to expand its territorial control, committing serious violations of human rights. The actions of the M23 were unanimously condemned by the international community and many countries demanded that Rwanda end its support for the armed group, including the US, France and the EU. The report of the UN Panel of Experts on 16 December found "substantial evidence" that the Rwandan Armed Forces had entered Congolese territory since January 2022, either to reinforce

25. Report of the Secretary-General, Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Region, UN Security Council, 4 October 2022.
26. Sam Mendick and Claude Muhindo, East African military force met with scepticism in DR Congo, *The New Humanitarian,* 25 November 2022.

the M23 rebels or to carry out military operations, although Kigali denied the accusations.

At the end of the year, different actions took place that revealed the volatility of the situation. As the M23 persisted in its offensive, a Congolese SU-25 fighter penetrated Rwandan airspace on 7 November and briefly landed at Rubavu Airport in Western province. Kigali did not respond militarily, but it did accuse Kinshasa of provocation. Rwandan troops later killed a Congolese soldier who had crossed the border into Rubavu district on 19 November. On 28 December, Rwanda said that the DRC had once again violated its airspace by flying a jet fighter over its territory. On 24 January 2023, the Rwandan Armed Forces fired missiles at a Congolese jet fighter for allegedly violating Rwandan airspace yet again, urging Kinshasa to stop its aggression. Kinshasa denied that its plane had violated Rwandan airspace, calling the incident an act of war.

Sudan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Sudan is immersed in a chronic conflict stemming from the concentration of power and resources in the centre of the country. Apart from the conflicts in the marginalised regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the rest of the country also suffers from governance problems stemming from the authoritarian regime of President Omar al-Bashir who came to power in a coup d'état in 1989 and who exercises tight control and repression of dissidents through state security apparatuses. The tense situation in the country was exacerbated by the separation of Southern Sudan in 2011, as it severely affected the economy of the country which was 70% dependent on oil sales, mostly from the south. The Sudanese state's coffers saw their income drastically reduced by the loss of control over the export of oil and, later, by the failure to reach an agreement with South Sudan for its transportation through the pipelines that pass through Sudan. An economic situation with high inflation and the devaluation of the currency contributed to the start of significant protests in the summer of 2012 in several cities in the country that, in early 2019, led to the fall of the al-Bashir regime and the opening of a transitional process.

One year after the military coup of 25 October 2021, which overthrew the transitional government and provoked broad popular protest against the military junta, at the end of the year a framework agreement was reached in which the military promised to give up much of its political power. However, the year began with a new political crisis caused by the resignation of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, leaving the military in full control of the transition and sparking massive protests that were harshly put down. In response to the crisis, on 8 January the UN Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) announced talks between the parties to try to salvage the transition. Meanwhile, separate negotiations had begun with the parties that signed the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement, civil society organisations and political groups, including factions of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) political coalition and the Resistance Committees in the state of Khartoum. However, the country's main pro-democracy alliance, the Forces for Freedom and Change-Central Command (FFC-CC), boycotted the negotiations due to continued police repression. On 10 March, UNITAMS, the African Union and the regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced a joint intra-Sudan peace initiative to mediate between the military junta and the political opposition to resolve the governance crisis in the country. Known as the Trilateral Mechanism, the initiative was launched in mid-May. Alongside the Trilateral Mechanism, US and Saudi diplomats started informal talks between the military junta and the FFC-CC in June, in what became known as the Quad mediation effort (which includes the US, UK, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). These additional talks drew criticism from the Trilateral Mechanism, which complained of "outside interference" and accused the Quad countries of publicly supporting it, while undermining it through the parallel negotiating process.

After months of impasse and tensions between the parties, including between the chief of the Sudanese Army and head of the de facto state, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, on the one hand and the leader of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), General Mohamed "Hemeti" Dagalo, on the other, talks were resumed in September after the Sudanese Bar Association presented a new draft constitution that provided for the restoration of civil authority during a transition period. Finally, after months of negotiations, on 5 December a framework agreement was reached between the military junta and the main civilian political parties and other civilian forces mostly structured under the main civilian opposition block FFC-CC. In the agreement, the military promised to give up much of its political power and create a civilian transitional government with elections in two years. The transition period will begin with the appointment of the prime minister, nominated by civilians, after the conclusion of the second stage of the negotiations scheduled for early 2023. In that stage, five particularly sensitive issues are expected to be addressed: transitional justice, the reform of the security sector (including the integration of former rebel groups and the RSF into a unified army), the Juba Peace Agreement, the dismantlement of the former regime of Omar al-Bashir and the crisis in eastern Sudan.

Although the new framework agreement was an important step towards ending the political crisis in the country, it continued to pose significant challenges as public opinion and the opposition remained divided; the grassroots Resistance Committees refused to sign it and promised to support the protests in the capital;

three armed groups that had signed the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement rejected the new agreement due to language suggesting that part of the peace agreement could be renegotiated; and other rebel groups that had not signed the Juba Peace Agreement, SLM/A-AW, led by Abdulwahid al-Nur (Darfur) and SPLM-N, headed by Abdulaziz al-Hilu (South Kordofan), also refused to sign the new agreement. Meanwhile, tensions grew between the Sudanese Army and the RSF.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopian	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, various armed groups

Summary:
The Ethiopian administration that has governed since 1991 is facing a series of opposition movements that demand advances in the democracy and governability of the country, as well as a greater degree of self-government. The government coalition EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) is controlled by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party, of the Tigrayan minority, that rules the country with growing authoritarianism with the consent of the Amhara elite. There is discontent in the country with the ethnic federal regime implemented by the EPRDF which has not resolved the national issue and has led to the consolidation of a strong political and social opposition. Along with the demands for the democratization of the institutions, there are political-military sectors that believe that ethnic federalism does not meet their nationalist demands and other sectors, from the ruling classes and present throughout the country, that consider ethnic federalism to be a deterrent to the consolidation of the Nation-State. In the 2005 elections this diverse opposition proved to be a challenge for the EPRDF, who was reluctant to accept genuine multi-party competition, and post-election protests were violently repressed. The following elections (2010, 2015) further limited democratic openness by increasing the verticality of the regime and the repression of the political opposition. The 2009 Counter-Terrorism Act helped decimate the opposition. The attempt since 2014 to carry out the Addis Ababa Master Plan, a plan that provided for the territorial expansion of the capital, Addis Ababa, at the expense of several cities in the Oromiya region, and the organization of the development of the city generated significant protests and deadly repression in the Oromiya region, which contributed to increased tension. Social protests contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in early 2018 and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed, who undertook a series of reforms –including dissolving the EPRDF coalition and refounding it in December 2019 into a new national party, the Prosperity Party (PP), which shunned ethnic federalism, making the TPLF not want to join– aimed at easing ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. However, the changes introduced by the government of Abiy Ahmed caused tension in the federation, especially between the federal government controlled by the PP and the TPLF, which culminated in the outbreak of an armed conflict between the Ethiopian security forces and the security forces of the Tigray region. This conflict took on regional dimensions due to the involvement of Eritrea. Meanwhile, there was an escalation of violence by the armed group OLA and an increase in repression by security forces in the Oromia region in 2022.

The country remained mired in a serious situation as a result of the impacts of the war between armed actors in the Tigray region and the federal government and its allies,[27] whose intensity decreased as of December as a result of the peace agreement. However, there was a persistent escalation of violence in the Oromia region,[28] as well as recurring outbreaks of intercommunal violence in different parts of the federation, incursions by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in eastern Ethiopia and growing tension in various regions linked to secessionist movements. Finally, there was a notable improvement in the situation in the al-Fashaga region, on the border with Sudan, as a result of the relaxed relations between Ethiopia and Sudan following months of serious tension.

The political dialogue initiatives announced by the government in early 2022 and welcomed by the international community, which included the release of prominent opponents such as one of the founders of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, Sebhat Nega, the leaders of the Oromo Federalist Congress, Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, and journalist and opposition leader Eskinder Nega, which UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described as a confidence-building measure, had little effect due to the boycott of different separatist political movements in the country, such as the political parties Oromo Federalist Congress, Oromo Liberation Front and Ogaden National Liberation Front. Meanwhile, the intercommunity violence that periodically shakes different regions of the country was aggravated by the conflict in the Oromia region and its spread to other regions, as well as the growing activities of secessionist groups and counterinsurgency actions by security forces, like in Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and other regions. The Gambella Liberation Front, a rebel group from the Gambella region, collaborated with the Oromo Liberation Army armed group in actions against regional security forces. Members of the Oromo community in other regions of the country faced outbreaks of violence and persecution against them, such as in the Southern Nations and Nationalities region (SNNPR), as reported by different local and international human rights organisations. There were also sporadic clashes between the Gumuz People's Democratic Movement and the federal Ethiopian Armed Forces in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. During the year, there

27. See the summary on Ethiopia (Tigray) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
28. See the summary on Ethiopia (Oromia) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

were also sporadic outbreaks of violence and reprisals between groups linked to different religions in different parts of the country.

Another source of tension that has affected Ethiopia in recent years has been the regional dispute linked to the construction of the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam** (GERD). In February, Ethiopia said it had started hydroelectric power production in the GERD and in August, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced that it had completed the third filling of the reservoir, which had begun in 2020.[29] These announcements were rejected by Sudan and Egypt and Egypt issued a statement to the UN Security Council in late July protesting against Ethiopia's unilateral decisions that could trigger an escalation of tension with serious regional consequences. Finally, the Somali armed group al-Shabaab entered Ethiopia's Somali region in July. The authorities announced the death of over 200 of the group's fighters in different operations. According to various analysts, al-Shabaab is trying to expand its range of action outside Somali territory.

Finally, **in relation to the border dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia, a cause of instability and of sporadic clashes between the two countries since the start of the war in Tigray, relations between Khartoum and Addis Ababa** improved as a result of the meeting between the Ethiopian prime minister and Sudan's de-facto president, General al-Burhan on 15 October in the Ethiopian city of Bahir Dar. Both countries had historically disputed the border region of al-Fashaga (an area of Sudan east of the Atbara River and south of the Tekeze River). Ethiopia never signed a treaty with Sudan about the territory because the government argued that the region fell under Ethiopian control when Sudan declared independence in 1956. Ethiopia had abandoned all claims to al-Fashaga in 2008 as long as Sudan allowed Ethiopian farmers and armed and unarmed activists to remain in the area. With the outbreak of the Tigray War, the tension between Sudan and Ethiopia intensified. Since then and during 2022, there have been sporadic clashes between the Ethiopian and Sudanese security forces and militias on their shared border, which caused dozens of fatalities, as well as Sudan's occupation of disputed territories. After this meeting in October, various meetings were held that culminated in the signing of a cooperation and security agreement on 15 December to resolve the border dispute.

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

Summary:
Kenya's politics and economy have been dominated since its independence in 1963 by the KANU party, controlled by the largest community in the country, the Kikuyu, to the detriment of the remaining ethnic groups. Starting in 2002, the client process to succeed the autocratic Daniel Arap Moi (in power for 24 years) was interrupted by the victory of Mwai Kibaki. Since then, different ethno-political conflicts have emerged in the country, which has produced a climate of political violence during the different electoral cycles. The electoral fraud that took place in 2007 sparked an outbreak of violence in which 1,300 people died and some 300,000 were displaced. After this election, a fragile national unity government was formed between Mwai Kibabi and Raila Odinga. A new presidential election in 2013 was won by Uhuru Kenyatta, who was tried by the ICC in connection with the events of 2007, though the court dropped the charges in 2015. In parallel, several areas of the country were affected by inter-community disputes over land ownership, also instigated politically during the electoral period. In addition, Kenya's military intervention in Somalia triggered attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in Kenya, subsequent animosity towards the Somali population in Kenya and tensions between Kenya and Somalia over their different political agendas, posing added challenges to the stability of the country.

Ethiopia remained mired in a serious situation as a result of the impacts of the wars in Tigray and Oromia across the country

The year was marked by a growing climate of tension and polarisation linked to the electoral process held in August, as well as by ongoing attacks by the Somali armed group al-Shabaab in the east and northeast and the rise in intercommunity violence and crime mainly in the north and centre-north, linked to structural disputes over the use and ownership of land aggravated by the extreme drought resulting from the consequences of climate change. According to data collected by ACLED,[30] 440 violent events (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) were reported across the country during 2022, which cost 498 lives. These events were primarily linked to intercommunity violence and attacks by al-Shabaab. If violence connected to protests and riots is added to this figure, there were 1,660 violent events with 698 fatalities, highlighting the instability linked to the electoral process.

29. See "The Nile Basin: cooperation or conflict?" in chapter 5 (Risk Scenarios for 2021) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2021! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding.* Barcelona: Icaria, 2021.
30. ACLED, online. [Viewed on 31 January 2023.]

Clashes and political mobilisation between supporters of President Uhuru Kenyatta, an ally of presidential candidate Raila Odinga, and supporters of fellow presidential candidate Vice President William Ruto were on the rise and reached very worrying levels of violence during the year leading up to the elections in August. Election day was mostly peaceful and electoral observation missions such as that of the EAC confirmed that the process had taken place transparently and freely, though a dozen violent incidents were reported. In the election, William Ruto and his United Democratic Alliance (UDA) party alliance beat Raila Odinga and the Azimio la Umoja coalition, which included outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee party. Raila Odinga did not accept defeat and announced that he would take all legal action available to him and stage protests and demonstrations throughout the country to challenge the results. The Supreme Court upheld Ruto's victory. Despite the criticism and demonstrations, the new President William Ruto managed to consolidate his power and Uhuru Kenyatta, who was appointed special envoy for the Great Lakes, confirming Ruto's continuity in Kenya's foreign policy, announced that he would facilitate the transfer of power. In October, Ruto dismantled an elite police unit, the Special Service Unit, which had been accused of committing extrajudicial killings. Amnesty International welcomed the decision.

Furthermore, the Somali armed group al-Shabaab continued to carry out attacks against security forces and civilians throughout the year, including with improvised explosive devices against military convoys, mainly in the northeastern and eastern counties (Mandera, Wahir, Garissa and Lamu), killing dozens. In August, the armed group reiterated that it would continue to conduct attacks until the Kenyan troops left Somalia.[31] However, some attacks allegedly carried out by al-Shabaab were in response to intercommunal disputes that had been used cynically for political purposes due to the election. This was the case in Lamu, where although the government blamed al-Shabaab for the violence, local sources said that tension between the Kikuyu and Swahili communities vying for the county governorship was aggravating structural tensions in the county around disputes over land ownership and uses.

The extreme drought affecting the Horn of Africa was highlighted in Kenya by the severity of the humanitarian situation and the deterioration in security resulting from competition for scarce resources. The WFP warned in April that three million people suffered from severe food insecurity as a result of the drought. The northern and north-central counties have seen persistent inter-community disputes over access to land, water and pasture, as well as the proximity of the 2022 general election, which political parties traditionally orchestrate for their own benefit. Cattle rustling, attacks by community militias, reprisals and intervention by security forces were constant throughout the year in Marsabit, Isiolo, Baringo, West Pokot, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Samburu, Turkana, Garissa and Wajir counties. The seriousness of the situation led authorities to declare a curfew in May in Marsabit and Isiolo counties, which was extended for several months and expanded in July to parts of Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot counties in an attempt to deal with criminality and intercommunity violence. The Ethiopian insurgent group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) may also have been using Marsabit county as a support base for its operations in Ethiopia, according to International Crisis Group. The OLA reportedly addressed the government of Kenya, demanding neutrality in the conflict between the OLA and the Ethiopian authorities.[32]

The extreme drought affecting the Horn of Africa was highlighted by the seriousness of the humanitarian situation and the deterioration of the security situation resulting from competition for scarce resources

North Africa – Maghreb

Morocco – Western Sahara	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Territory International[33]
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.

31. Mohammed Dhaaysane, Al-Shabab Militants Issue New Threats Against Kenya, *VOA*, 28 August 2022.
32. Finfinne News Network, OLF-OLA sends an open letter to the Kenyan government, 11 May 2022.
33. 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.

After the intensification of tension around Western Sahara in 2021, the violence subsided in 2022. **The ceasefire held on during the year, as it had been in force from 1991 to 2020, and no progress was observed in the search for a negotiated solution to the dispute, despite the diplomatic efforts made by the new UN special envoy for Western Sahara,** Staffan de Mistura.[34] According to the UN Secretary-General's report released last quarter and covering the period from October 2021 to October 2022, the situation in Western Sahara was characterised by low-intensity hostilities between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. Informal counts based on media reports suggest that the violence could have caused the death of around 20 people in 2022. The dynamics of the dispute continued to be affected by regional tensions between Morocco and Algeria and the change of position of the government of Spain in 2022, which openly aligned itself with the Moroccan initiative to address a political solution to the conflict. The United Nations mission, MINURSO, acknowledged that it could not independently verify the number of violent episodes or the locations where the various exchanges of fire took place (the data is often questioned), but indications suggest that most of the incidents along the berm were concentrated in the northern part of the territory, in the vicinity of Mahbas. Various attacks by Moroccan forces using drones east of the berm were reported throughout the year. According to media reports, drone attacks caused the deaths of three Mauritanian civilians and four members of the POLISARIO Front in January. In April, another similar offensive near the Mauritanian border caused the deaths of three more civilians, two Mauritanians and one Algerian. After this latest episode, the Algerian government accused Morocco of carrying out "selective assassinations" and "repeated acts of terrorism" and warned that the possible collateral effects on Algerian soil of what it described as "warmongering" by Morocco would be considered a casus belli. MINURSO documented 18 attacks by Moroccan forces east of the berm since September 2021, one of which reportedly killed the head of a POLISARIO Front high military command in July. The POLISARIO Front claimed that it had killed a dozen Moroccan soldiers in a series of operations in early February. The UN mission said that the lack of access to the areas near the berm posed great challenges to its observation activities and to the possibilities of verifying the facts on the ground.

These events occurred against a background of reactivation of the diplomatic efforts promoted by the UN after several years in which the post of special envoy for Western Sahara was vacant. Diplomat Staffan de Mistura took office at the end of 2021 and throughout 2022 he made two rounds of visits to the region. De Mistura met with representatives of Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania. At the same time, he maintained contacts with various international actors interested in and/or with the capacity to influence the evolution of the dispute. At the end of the year, however, the parties remained in their distant positions. Morocco insisted that its autonomy plan is the only possible starting point for a negotiating process. Rabat reaffirmed its availability to resume contacts in a round table format, with the participation of Algeria and Mauritania, as happened in 2018 and 2019 under the auspices of the previous special envoy, Horst Kohler. This format, however, has been expressly rejected by Algeria, which does not want a framework that purports to present the situation as a regional conflict. The POLISARIO Front reiterated its commitment to the self-determination of the Saharawi people through a referendum and stressed that the political blockade and the indifference of the international community had led to the resumption of hostilities and the abandonment of the ceasefire agreement. In addition, during 2022, Spain joined the countries that have publicly expressed their support for Morocco's approach to address the dispute. In May, in a letter addressed to the King of Morocco, the Spanish president stated that the Moroccan autonomy initiative was "the most serious, credible and realistic basis for resolving the dispute", thus opting for an approach that excludes independence as a way to channel the self-determination aspirations of the Saharawi people. The change in position was harshly criticized by the POLISARIO Front and generated a diplomatic crisis between Madrid and Algiers. On the contrary, the Spanish decision made it possible to unfreeze relations with Morocco, deteriorated after the crisis generated in 2021 by the reception in Spanish territory of the leader of the POLISARIO Front to be treated for COVID-19, a fact that then led to diplomatic reprisals by Rabat.

Human rights violations in Western Sahara continued to be a matter of concern in 2022. **Various NGOs reported the mistreatment and torture of Saharawi activists and filed complaints against Morocco before the United Nations Committee against Torture.** For the seventh year in a row, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was unable to visit to the region, despite many requests and the need to investigate various complaints, such as the disproportionate use of force against demonstrations calling for self-determination, the arbitrary arrest of activists and harassment, threats and violence against human rights defenders, including several women. There was also a warning about a worsening humanitarian situation in the Saharawi refugee camps. A joint report by UNHCR, UNICEF and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) warned of the risks of severe food insecurity and malnutrition as a result of problems in funding aid programmes, the effects of COVID-19 and the global rise in fuel and food prices, including the effects of the war in Ukraine. The UN reported that underfunding had forced the WFP to cut food rations in the Tindouf refugee camps by 80%.

34. See the summary on Morocco-Western Sahara in chapter 2 (Peace negotiations in Africa) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

Tunisia	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, System Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups including the Uqba ibn Nafi Battalion or the Oqba ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS

Summary:
From its independence in 1956 until early 2011, Tunisia was governed by only two presidents. For three decades Habib Bourghiba laid the foundations for the authoritarian regime in the country, which Zine Abidine Ben Ali then continued after a coup d'état in 1987. 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 stood in contrast to its international image of stability. Despite allegations of corruption, electoral fraud and human rights violations, Tunisia was a privileged ally of the West for years. In December 2010, the outbreak of a popular revolt exposed the contradictions of Ben Ali's government, led to its fall in early 2011 and inspired protests against authoritarian governments throughout the Arab world. Since then, Tunisia has been immersed in a bumpy transition that has laid bare the tensions between secular and Islamist groups in the country. At the same time, Tunisia has been the scene of increased activity from armed groups, including branches of AQIM and ISIS.

The authoritarian drift of President Kais Saïed got worse over the course of 2022 as he took a series of actions to strengthen his control over Tunisia and its institutions. These actions sparked demonstrations of discontent and critical reactions from opposition groups throughout the year, despite the government's persecution off dissidents. **In March, Saïed dissolved Parliament for good** (after having suspended it in July of the previous year). Afterwards, the MPs held an online plenary meeting in which they called for the revocation of presidential decrees that have granted almost total authority to the president since 2021. Saïed described the events as a coup and a conspiracy and ordered an investigation against the MPs. The Tunisian president also tightened his control over the judiciary. In February, he had dissolved the High Judicial Council, the body charged with appointing magistrates and overseeing the independence of judges, under accusations of bias and corruption. This council was replaced by a temporary new entity, a part of whose members were appointed directly by the president. Saïed also extended the state of emergency in February until the end of the year, appointed three of the seven members of the new electoral authority in April and dismissed over 50 judges, sparking new protests and strikes in the judiciary. The new Constitution was voted on in this context, following the road map devised by Saïed in 2021. In the opening months of the year, the president had promoted an online consultation on the reforms, which were very limited in scope, then a national dialogue that was boycotted by the main political groups, including the Islamist Ennahda party and the powerful trade union UGTT. The new text, prepared by a panel nominated by the president and made public only three weeks before the vote, was approved on 25 July with 94.6% of the votes and a turnout of 30.5%, though the opposition claimed that real public participation had been even lower. **The new Constitution establishes a presidential system similar to the one that existed in the country before the revolt against the regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011** and reduces the power of Parliament.

Parliamentary elections were scheduled for the end of the year, as had been announced in 2021. Three months before they were held, Saïed reformed the electoral law without any kind of discussion or debate, reducing the number of MPs from 217 to 161 and allowing for individual candidates to compete for votes instead of lists. This was interpreted as an attempt to reduce the power and influence of the political parties. **The legislative elections were held on 17 December with a turnout of just 11.2% after many political forces had called for a boycott**. Throughout the year, periodic protests and demonstrations against the government were staged by civil society activists as part of the "Citizens against the coup" movement, by the Islamist party Ennahda and by various other kinds of parties. In April, the formation of a new conglomerate of opposition forces was announced, the National Salvation Front, which brought together five political parties (including Ennahda) and five civil society organisations.

After the December elections, this alliance stressed the president's lack of legitimacy, repeated its rejection of the new Constitution and demanded an early presidential election and the formation of a new government. During 2022, many local and international NGOs, the UN Human Rights Office and some governments blasted the actions taken by Saïed and voiced their **concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in the North African country**. This included restrictions on free speech and the repression of critics and political opponents, including travel bans, arrests and judicial prosecution, in some cases in military courts. Ennahda leader and former speaker of Parliament Rachid Ghannouchi had to appear in court and was charged with various offences, including money laundering and inciting violence. Critics also denounced the security forces' excessive use of force to prevent and/or break up demonstrations and the president's issue of a decree that establishes crimes related to information and communication and that provides for prison sentences of up to 10 years for people convicted of spreading fake news. The NGO Reporters Without Borders said that the decree threatened freedom of the press and was intended to create a climate of fear.

West Africa

Burkina Faso	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, sectors of the Army

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 Socio-political crises 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 neighboring 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. At the end of 2015, after the elections, the country closed the transitional period and returned the institutions to the citizenship. However, the activities of the armed Islamist militancy in the north of the country have escalated in recent years. The deterioration of the security situation in the country due to the regionalisation of the armed conflict that began in northern Mali in 2012 has helped to amplify the political crisis. In this context, Burkina Faso has been hit by various coups in recent years.

The political crisis in Burkina Faso worsened during the year and the country suffered two coups d'état. The year began with a military coup on 24 January that ousted the government headed by Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. He was deposed by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, the leader of the Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration (MPSR). Damiba, who had been promoted by Kaboré to the commander of Burkina Faso's third military region just a month earlier, announced that he was dissolving the government and the National Assembly, suspending the Constitution and closing the country's borders. As in other neighbouring countries that had suffered coups, such as Mali and Guinea, the unconstitutional change of government prompted mixed reactions inside and outside the country. Domestically, unlike what happened after a coup attempt in the country in 2015 that sparked major protests, this time there were no demonstrations to defend democratic institutions, largely due to the enormous discontent with the economic situation and the deterioration of security. Internationally, however, it was condemned by the AU, ECOWAS, the UN, the US, France and other actors.[35] The AU and ECOWAS suspended Burkina Faso's membership in their bodies, though they did not impose sanctions, and ECOWAS sent a mediation mission to the country. In February, the military junta approved a three-year transitional period before the elections were held and Lieutenant Colonel Damiba was sworn in as president. The threat of sanctions by ECOWAS forced the military junta to shorten the transition timetable to 24 months starting from 1 July, scheduling a constitutional referendum for late 2024 and general elections for February 2025.

Burkina Faso suffered two coups d'état during the year

The deteriorating security situation in the country[36] and the military junta's inability to contain the violence provoked a second coup d'état months later, on 30 September, which defeated the junta led by Damiba. The leader of the coup, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, the head of an artillery unit of the Burkina Faso Armed Forces, justified it due to the worsening security situation in the country. The coup leaders seized control of state television, closed the borders, imposed a night curfew, announced the dissolution of the transitional government and suspended the Constitution, accusing Damiba of failing to de-escalate the violence rising across the country since took power. Different French buildings were attacked by protesters during the coup, including the French embassy and institutional buildings in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, as the protesters accused France of protecting Damiba. On 2 October, Damiba, who had allegedly taken refuge in a French military base, announced that he was officially resigning from office and went into exile in Togo. In response to the new unconstitutional change of government, ECOWAS condemned the coup and called for a return to constitutional order, although again without imposing sanctions against the country. On 5 October, Traoré announced that he would stick to the transition plan established by the previous regime. Later, on 14 and 15 October, the new military junta held a national forum with the representatives of the junta in which Traoré was appointed transitional president and decreed that the country would restore its constitutional order with elections on 2 July 2024. Instability continued in the country until the end of the year and on 1 December the military junta claimed that the Burkinabe Army had blocked a coup attempt.

35. Bajo, Carlos, "Turbulencias en el Sahel: entre los defectos de la democracia y la reivindicación de la soberanía", Actualidad Africana, *El Salto,* 4 February 2022.
36. See the summary on the Western Sahel in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

Mali	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

Summary:
Since its independence from France in 1960, Mali has lived through several periods of instability, including the coup d'état in 1968, a popular and military rebellion in 1991 and the Tuareg insurgency and uprisings since independence, demanding greater political participation and the development of the north of the country. Mali held its first multi-party elections in 1992, although since then several elections have taken place amid opposition criticism concerning the lack of democratic guarantees. The army's influence was apparent in a new attempted coup d'état of 2000, which was foiled. The instability increased once again in 2012 when control of the north was seized by Tuareg and Islamist groups and the government was ousted by a coup d'état. From that moment on, the country's successive governments have faced multiple political, economic and security challenges, with violence persisting in the northern part of the country and spreading to the central region. There was a significant increase in popular protests and demonstrations in 2019, which were followed in 2020 by a coup d'état and the formation of a new transitional government in the country.

The political crisis in the country after the 2020 coup d'état continued during the year and diplomatic relations between the Malian military junta and its traditional allies continued to deteriorate due to discrepancies in the transition period regarding the transfer of power to civilians and the security strategy in the region. The year began with the military junta's announcement that it was postponing the transitional process for five years and scheduling a constitutional referendum for January 2024, legislative elections for November 2025 and a presidential election for December 2026. The announcement was criticised by a coalition of 100 political parties and 60 civil society groups, which called on the interim authorities to respect the September 2020 transition agreement. The West African bloc (ECOWAS) responded by imposing new economic sanctions on the country, froze Mali's assets in the central banks of its member states, stopped financial assistance and announced the closure of the borders between the ECOWAS countries and Mali. The EU also slapped sanctions on the country, in line with decisions made by ECOWAS, while Russia and China blocked the UN Security Council from approving a French-drafted statement endorsing the sanctions. During the year, different demonstrations took place in the capital (Bamako) to protest the French presence and the ECOWAS sanctions and in support of the junta, though there were also protests against the changes in the transition schedule imposed by the military. After various negotiations between the military junta and ECOWAS[37], in June the transitional president, Colonel Assimi Goïta, unilaterally announced a two-year transition period in which a constitutional referendum is expected to be held in March 2023 and a presidential election in February 2024. ECOWAS again questioned the unilateral decision, announcing that it would uphold the talks. In July, at the organisation's summit, the members agreed to lift the economic and financial sanctions against Mali while keeping the individual and diplomatic ones in place and forbade any member of the transitional government from running in the 2024 presidential election. In October, the commission in charge of drafting a new Constitution presented the preliminary draft, which must be submitted to a referendum in March 2023. The text was questioned by a coalition of opposition parties that demanded that the Fundamental Charter be drafted by a democratically elected civilian government.

Another source of political tension in the country was directly related to the **deterioration of the diplomatic relations between the military junta and Mali's former Western allies**, mainly the French government.[38] This deterioration in relations also reflects the Malian government's announcement of a military cooperation agreement with Russia, deploying in the country between 300 and 400 Russian instructors at the beginning of the year. The interim authorities denied any links to the Russian private security company Wagner Group. The most outstanding episodes during the year in the diplomatic crisis included the order to expel the French ambassador from the country; the suspension of military collaboration agreements with France; the termination of the broadcasting permits of the French media outlets RFI and France24; the end of the anti-terrorist Operation Barkhane in the country; the country's withdrawal from Europe's Takuba Task Force; the suspension of the EU missions in Mali (EUCAP and EUTM); tensions with the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA); the withdrawal from Mali of all G5 Sahel bodies, including the joint military force; the ban on French and French-financed NGOs from operating in the country; and the military junta's accusation of having blocked a coup attempt between 11 and 12 May, supposedly orchestrated by a western country.

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

37. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
38. See the summaries on Mali and Western Sahel chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

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

There was a rise in political violence and criminal violence in Nigeria, primarily as a consequence of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in February 2023 and the persistent increase in violence in 2022 by criminal groups in the northwestern part of the country, while the conflict in that region and in the Lake Chad basin maintained levels of violence similar to those of 2021.[39] Added to this was the ongoing intercommunity violence between ranchers and farmers in the central belt of the country, as well as the continuous fighting and insurgent activity in the state of Biafra.[40] The 2023 elections mark 24 years of uninterrupted democracy, the longest period since independence, though they will take place amid a general atmosphere of insecurity and violence committed by multiple actors across the country. Around 20 of the 36 federal states in the country were seriously affected by this violence in 2022. Research centres like International Crisis Group and ACLED indicated that there were more than 10,000 fatalities linked to the criminal and insurgent violence across the country in 2022. Massive vote buying would deeply compromise the integrity of the election and undermine confidence in the result, the International Crisis Group stated in December.[41]

In their efforts to disrupt government actions, such as elections, which they view a Western imposition, the armed Islamist groups BH, Ansaru and ISWAP established enclaves in various parts of the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger, where they increasingly carried out armed actions in 2022.[42] In the northwest, there were also over a hundred criminal gang groups engaged in kidnapping, looting and arson to undermine the Nigerian government. In previous years, the federal government had carried out initiatives that failed, such as ground and air military operations against the bases of these criminal groups, telecommunications blackouts and restrictions on access to fuel and food supplies, as well as limitations on the movement of livestock and moves to slash hours or close markets as ways to put pressure on criminal groups. Faced with the failure of actions taken in previous years in Zamfara, one of the states most affected by the violence, the authorities tried to promote peace agreements, pardons and other incentives, such as an agreement with the powerful warlord Bello Turji, formerly a rancher, though the results were mixed. This violence increased during the year, following the trend of previous years, and was exacerbated as the upcoming elections grew nearer due to the cynical use of criminal and political violence by the contending actors. Furthermore, according to various analysts, the possibility of criminal and Islamist groups coordinating to disrupt or at least hinder the elections remains high, and both groups already work together when doing so is of mutual interest.[43]

As violence and insecurity escalated in Nigeria, various pro-government non-state armed actors emerged that could be used politically in the context of the upcoming elections

Various pro-government non-state armed actors emerged under the pretext of addressing insecurity, claiming that they wanted to maintain law and order. Some, such as Amotekun in the southwest, Ebubeagu in the southeast and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the northeast were backed by the government and its governors.[44] According to various analysts, these groups were poorly trained and could be used politically in the context of the upcoming elections. At the end of the year, complaints arose about abuse by these militias and pro-government paramilitary groups, such as acts of intimidation. The use of paramilitary groups and self-defence militias funded or organised by governors and local politicians has been a historical constant in Nigeria.

In the four northwestern states of the country (Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger), acts of violence caused 4,480 deaths, according to ACLED (though the figure would rise to 4,655 if Sokoto were included). However, this death toll must be relativised given the difficulties in distinguishing the actions of these groups of criminal gangs from other dynamics of violence due to the many different actors, including criminal groups, security forces, armed jihadist actors, groups linked to ranching communities and civilian self-defence militias.

39. See the summary on Lake Chad (Boko Haram) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
40. See the summary on Nigeria (Biafra) in this chapter.
41. International Crisis Group, Countdown Begins to Nigeria's Crucial 2023 Elections, 23 December 2022.
42. See the summary on the armed conflict in the Lake Chad region in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
43. Idayat Hassan, The insecurity ahead of Nigeria's 2023 elections is unprecedented, *African Arguments,* 21 December 2022.
44. Op. cit.

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

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

Clashes between Nigerian security forces and insurgents continued in southeastern Nigeria, in addition to military operations that killed dozens. The armed wing of the IPOB independence movement, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), continued to carry out armed actions throughout the year. According to the ACLED research centre, there were 703 violent events in 2022 (battles, violence against civilians and improvised explosive devices) that claimed the lives of 985 people in the 10 states that make up the Biafra region (Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Cross River, though most of the deaths linked to the conflict occurred in the first five, where the Ibo community forms the majority). This figure included the violence linked to the armed conflict in Biafra between the government and armed pro-independence groups, as well as the many attacks in that state committed by criminal groups and intercommunity clashes over land use and ownership and access to water, which killed hundreds.

The atmosphere of instability and the recurrence of military operations that killed dozens during the year, as well as attacks against police stations and military detachments, were a serious obstacle to the development of the presidential and parliamentary elections in February 2023, since the ESN was behind the attacks against staff and infrastructure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Notably, on 13 October, the Abuja Court of Appeal dropped all charges against IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. Kanu had sued the public prosecutor and President Buhari over his arrest in March. The court found that procedural irregularities had taken place and ruled that his arrest and extradition were illegal. Kanu had been arrested in June 2021 in Kenya and extradited to Nigeria on charges of sedition, incitement to ethnic hatred and treason. Since then, protests and demonstrations demanding his release intensified, in addition to different complaints of human rights violations by the Nigerian Security Forces (NSF). Nevertheless, the government appealed the ruling on 19 October and Kanu remained in police custody.

2.3.2. America

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

El Salvador	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↓
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
After the end of the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992), which claimed around 75,000 lives, the situation in El Salvador has been characterised by high levels of poverty and inequality, the proliferation of gangs of youths and other organised crime structures and high homicide rates that have made the country one of the most violent in the region and the world. A truce with the gangs was achieved during the government of Mauricio Funes (2009-2014), which led to a significant drop in the homicide rate, but the inauguration of Sánchez Cerén in 2015 was followed by a tightening of security policies and a substantial rise in levels of violence, resulting in a crisis of defencelessness and the forced displacement of thousands of people.

The Salvadoran government reported the lowest number of homicides in the country's recent history, but some civil society organisations questioned the veracity of such figures while also complaining that the imposition of the state of emergency since late March had led to many human rights violations, including the arrest of over 61,000 people. In late December, the government said that 495 homicides were reported in 2022 and that the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants was 7.8. According to official statistics, the homicide rate was 106.3 in 2015. Since then, it has gradually fallen until reaching a record low in 2022, well under the rate of 18.1 in 2021. The Salvadoran government claims that the implementation of its plan to fight the gangs

(called "Territorial Control") has helped to substantially bring down the homicide rate after Nayib Bukele came to power in mid-2019, since it dropped from 53 in 2018 to 38 in 2019. At the end of the year, the government stated that its application of the fifth stage of the "Territorial Control Plan" had not only drastically driven down the number of homicides, but had also greatly weakened the main gangs in the country by the end of 2022, especially Mara Salvatrucha or MS13, to include the seizure of thousands of weapons and the arrest of around 900 gang leaders. However, various civil society organisations and the media questioned the homicide rate published by the government and the reasons behind the drop in crime rates in the country. According to them, the Bukele government has shown little transparency regarding official crime data in El Salvador and has changed the definition of homicide for its own benefit, excluding alleged gang members and suspects of crimes killed in clashes with the security forces or in prison from the official count. During the year, there were also significant discrepancies between the State Prosecutor's Office and the Institute of Legal Medicine regarding the statistics of corpses found in mass graves and the government denied access to such data to the media. Along the same lines, the government militarised the Institute of Legal Medicine in June. As a result, during the second half of the year the institute's data on homicides in the country were murky, despite traditionally being one of the most reliable sources on the matter. Some organisations and analysts in the country said that the nationwide drop in crime was not mainly due to the effectiveness of government operations against the gangs, but rather to clandestine negotiations between the government and certain organised crime leaders to achieve better prison conditions and the release or non-extradition of certain gang leaders to the US. In this regard, several media outlets continued to publish regularly about the alleged links and contacts between government officials and the country's main gangs during the year. For example, media outlets reported that some organised crime groups had been burying corpses in mass graves with the government's knowledge. Finally, **some civil society organisations reported a dramatic rise in the number of disappeared persons** and warned that the number of disappearances in El Salvador since 2019 was higher than the number of homicides. For example, Central American University's University Observatory of Human Rights said that according to police data, there had been 4,060 disappearances between January 2020 and June 2022, of which only 1,309 were still under investigation. Along the same lines, organisations that are members of the Working Group for Disappearances declared that 577 people had disappeared in the first five months of the year alone. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also deplored this increase in the number of disappearances and urged the government to take action to prevent them.

Over 61,000 people were detained in El Salvador after a state of emergency was imposed in late March

The issue that sparked the greatest number of protests in the country and international complaints was the imposition of the state of emergency in late March and its monthly extension throughout the year after 87 homicides were reported on two consecutive days. In late December, **the government acknowledged that over 61,300 people had been arrested since then** and that around 3,300 had been released, as there was no proof that they had been involved in any crime. In August, the Institute of Legal Medicine declared that 73 people had died in police custody since late March, while Central American University's Observatory of Human Rights said that it had received complaints of 306 cases of torture in the same period. In early October, the Ombudsman's Office declared that it had received nearly 4,800 complaints for human violations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Committee against Torture reported many cases of arbitrary detention. Despite the criticism and complaints against the state of emergency, it was renewed monthly throughout the year. In September, Nayib Bukele announced that he would run for re-election in 2024, making him the first president to do so since the restoration of democracy. Until now, the Salvadoran Constitution had prohibited two consecutive presidential terms, but in 2021 the Constitutional Court, which had been appointed by the ruling party, ruled that Bukele could run for re-election. This decision sparked some protests during the year, though they were not massive, as well as criticism from some civil society organisations that believe that Bukele is leading the country towards authoritarianism.

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

Summary:
The current crisis affecting the country, with mass protests and numerous episodes of violence recorded in 2019, is linked to the accusations of corruption, electoral fraud and negligence in the action of the Government of President Jovenel Moïse. However, the situation of institutional paralysis, economic fragility and socio-political crisis began to worsen after the forced departure from the country of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, who avoided an armed conflict with the rebel group that had taken over much of the country. Since then, the deployment of a Multinational Interim Force and later of a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH, replaced by MINUJUSTH in 2017 and by BINUH in 2019) and the greater involvement and coordination of the international community in normalising the situation in the country have led to progress in certain areas of its governance, but have

not succeeded in achieving political, social and economic stability, nor have they reduced the high levels of corruption, poverty, social exclusion and crime rates, or completely eliminated the control held by armed gangs in certain urban areas of the country.

The political crisis and institutional impasse gripping Haiti, the unprecedented rise in violence, the growing geographical control of parts of the capital by many different armed groups and a cholera outbreak that affected more than 20,000 people in two months caused a serious humanitarian crisis and led to a discussion at the United Nations about possible military intervention. In December, the United Nations noted that several of the estimated 200 armed gangs operating in the country controlled 60% of the capital, where one third of Haiti's population lives. The United Nations warned that this had exacerbated the economic and humanitarian emergency, estimating that 90% of the population lived on less than seven dollars per day, that half the population suffered from food insecurity and that around 20,000 people faced the risk of starvation or famine. According to the United Nations, around 155,000 people had been forced to leave their homes in 2022 due to violence and insecurity, which also caused the massive closure of schools (at the end of the year, only approximately half were operating) and disrupted health services. In late 2022, it was estimated that the cholera outbreak that was detected in early October had affected over 20,000 people and caused the death of 376. More than 800,000 cases and 9,000 deaths from cholera were reported between 2010 and 2019. Faced with this situation, in mid-November the United Nations made an emergency appeal for 145 million dollars.

The Haitian government requested the immediate deployment of an international force that could end the violence carried out by the armed groups and mitigate its humanitarian consequences

Both the United Nations and the Haitian government stated that the activity of the many armed groups in the country had reached unprecedented levels during 2022, substantially driving up the number of homicides, kidnappings and cases of sexual violence. For example, the United Nations warned that over 1,200 kidnappings had been reported, over double the number in 2021 (which in turn had experienced a noticeable rise compared to previous years). The government did not publish official data, but at the end of the year, the organisation Colectivo Défenser Plus indicated that there had been 2,769 intentional homicides in the capital alone. In early July, the United Nations declared that there had been 934 murders and 680 kidnappings connected with armed gang violence in the first six months of the year. Along the same lines, according to the International Crisis Group, clashes between armed groups in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area between May and July had caused the deaths of almost 500 people, most of them civilians. While there had been many anti-government demonstrations due to the high rates of insecurity in the first half of the year, they became more massive and widespread starting in late August. In mid-September, shortly after the government announced a significant drop in fuel subsidies, there were many demonstrations in most of the cities of the country that caused the massive closure of shops, some embassies and the border by the Dominican Republic, which early in the year began to build a border wall to stop the flow of undocumented people. There were also many clashes between the police and protesters, in which at least 10 people lost their lives in the first days of the protests alone. The situation became even more complex on 17 September when the main armed group operating in the capital, the G9, forcibly seized the Varreux oil terminal, which contains 70% of the country's oil reserves, and announced its intention to block its supply until Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned. The blockade of the terminal lasted almost two months and caused fuel shortages throughout the country, triggering new protests and riots, paralysing a large part of the country and significantly disrupting the operation of hospitals and the distribution of drinking water, which in turn exacerbated the population's already fragile humanitarian situation and accelerated the spread of cholera.

Faced with this situation, in early October the government requested the immediate deployment of an international specialised armed force that could end the violence conducted by the armed groups and mitigate its humanitarian consequences. Shortly thereafter, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres asked the Security Council to temporarily deploy a rapid action force**, which would withdraw from the country once the government had regained control of its basic infrastructure, followed by the deployment of a mission to support the Haitian National Police in their fight against the armed groups. In mid-October, the UN Security Council passed a resolution that imposed sanctions, movement restrictions and a weapons embargo on the leaders and collaborators of certain armed groups. It also began discussions on a draft resolution submitted by the US and Mexico that proposed the deployment of an international mission, but not under the umbrella and mandate of the United Nations. By the end of the year, it had not been approved. In November and December, the US and Canada imposed additional sanctions on some political leaders and the prime minister of Canada even declared publicly that his country would be willing to lead an international mission. However, many political parties in Haiti were reluctant or opposed to such a proposal, with some considering it unacceptable from the point of view of national sovereignty and others because they thought that it could bolster the legitimacy of Ariel Henry's government. Many of the politicians

and civil society organisations in Haiti consider Henry's government illegal because they believe that his term should have ended on 7 February 2022, the same day that the term of former President Jovenel Moïse would have ended. Moïse was assassinated in July 2021. In fact, the country's main opposition platform, the Montana Accord, proposed a political transition in the country. Given the government's refusal to negotiate, at the beginning of the year the Montana Accord elected an alternative president and prime minister. However, Henry maintained that the only solution to the institutional impasse in the country was via new elections, which should originally have been held in October 2019, but there was no proposed date for them at the end of 2022, either due to the lack of agreement on the composition of the electoral body or to the violence and insecurity in the country.

Mexico	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
Since 2006, when Felipe Calderón started the so-called "war on drug-trafficking", the level of violence and human rights' violations throughout the country increased substantially making the country one of the ones with most murders in the world. Since then, the number of organized crime structures with ties to drug trafficking have multiplied. In some parts of the country, these structures are disputing the State's monopoly on violence. According to some estimates, by the end of 2017, the "war against drug-trafficking" had caused more than 150,000 deaths and more than 30,000 disappearances. Also, Mexico has insurgency movements in States such as Guerrero and Oaxaca –including the EPR, the ERPI or the FAR-LP. In Chiapas, after a short-lived armed uprising of the EZLN in 1994, conflict is still present in Zapatista communities.

The number of homicides fell slightly in 2022, but many forced disappearances continued to be reported and some international organisations considered Mexico the country with the most murdered journalists and land and environmental activists. According to data from the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection, in 2022 there were 30,968 intentional murders, a 7.1% drop compared to the previous year (33,350 homicides). According to the government, it is the third consecutive year in which the number of homicides had fallen (34,718 were reported in 2019 and 34,563 in 2020). During the term of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, there have already been over 140,000 homicides and since 2006, when Felipe Calderón started the "war against drug trafficking", there have been more than 340,000. Nearly half the homicides in the country are concentrated in six states: Guanajuato, Baja California, Michoacán, Estado de México, Chihuahua and Jalisco. According to a statement made by the president in the middle of the year, 75% of the homicides reported in the country are attributable to clashes between rival drug cartels. According to government statistics, there were 3,450 murders of women in 2022, of which 858 were classified as femicides and 2,592 as intentional homicides. Estado de México was the state with the highest number of femicides (131), followed by Nuevo León (85), Ciudad de México (70), Veracruz (63) and Chiapas (42). Meanwhile, according to a report by Reporters without Borders, Mexico was the country with the most murdered journalists in the world for the fourth year in a row. Eleven murders were reported in 2022 and 80 over the last 10 years. According to the human rights organisation Article 19, 17 communication professionals were murdered in 2022, 12 of them directly for exercising their profession, making it the deadliest year for journalists since records have been kept. Article 19 also denounced the deterioration of press freedom in the country and the high levels of impunity for this type of crime. Mexico also continued to be the country with the highest number of murders of land and environmental activists for the third consecutive year. According to a Global Witness report published in September, but with data from 2021, 54 people were murdered that year, many more than in 2020 (30). This figure is much higher than in the rest of the countries with the highest numbers of murdered environmental activists, such as Colombia (33), Brazil (26), the Philippines (19) and India (14). Half the victims in Mexico were indigenous and two thirds of the cases were linked to conflicts over land and mining. Indeed, two states with significant mining activity, Oaxaca and Sonora, accounted for approximately two thirds of the murders. The Global Witness report also noted that 19 environmental activists disappeared in 2021. As such, Mexico was also one of the countries with the highest number of forced disappearances in the world. According to the Ministry of the Interior's National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons, 109,516 people were missing at the end of 2022. Jalisco was the state with the highest number of cases (15,038), followed by Estado de México (11,868), Veracruz (7,438), Nuevo León (6,250) and Sinaloa (5,664). In 2022, around 9,500 disappearances were reported, which comes out to about 26 every day. This figure is somewhat lower than that of 2021 (10,400, about 28 per day), but under the government of López Obrador, 38,186 cases have already been reported, a figure that is already higher than that of the administrations of Peña Nieto (36,064) and Felipe Calderón (17,095), with two years left until the end of López Obrador's term. Given this finding, his government argues that the main explanation for the exponential increase in cases after he took office (from 419 cases in 2018 to 9,772 in 2019) is due to issues of definition and methodology and the current administration's political desire to find missing persons.

Since the registration of disappeared persons began in 1969, more than 269,000 people have disappeared in Mexico, although 98% of these disappearances have taken place since 2006, when Felipe Calderón began the "war against drug trafficking". In the same period, over 8,200 bodies have been found in mass graves, but they are not counted as homicides, because they cannot be identified (it is estimated that there are more than 52,000 unidentified bodies).

In 2022, the main acts of violence were attributed to clashes between drug cartels. López Obrador stated that the states with the highest homicide rates were those in which several different criminal groups fought to control territory, while states in which a single cartel exercised predominant control had clearly lower levels of violence. According to a report issued by the US Congressional Research Service, much of the violence in the country is due to the activity of 12 large organisations devoted mainly to drug trafficking, seven of them older (the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, the Tijuana Cartel, the Juárez Cartel (the Carrillo Fuentes Organisation), the Beltrán Leyva Cartel, the Gulf Cartel and La Familia Michoacana) and five more recently created (such as the Jalisco Nuevo Generación Cartel, created in 2011) or of a smaller territorial scope (such as Los Rojos, a Beltrán Leyva splinter group, Los Caballeros Templarios and Los Viagras). According to another report from the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE), there are at least 150 organised crime gangs in Mexico, most of them allied or funded by the two most important: the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel (CJNG). According to the report, the former has a significant presence in 14 of the country's 32 states, while the latter exercises control in 23 states. According to the US congressional report, the Sinaloa Cartel controls Durango and Sinaloa and is immersed in a fierce struggle with the Juárez Cartel in Chihuahua, while the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel dominates Baja California Sur, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima and Querétaro and fights with other organisations in Baja California, Sonora, Zacatecas, Michoacán, Estado de México, Morelos, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Quintana Roo and Tabasco. Moreover, according to the US congressional report, Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel are ferocious rivals in San Luis Potosí, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and Coahuila. After the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel, the criminal organisation with the third-largest territorial extent is the Gulf Cartel, active in the eastern parts of the country. Both reports state that the number of illegal armed groups operating in the country has soared since 2006. Along the same lines, the International Crisis Group research centre reports that 543 armed groups have been documented between mid-2009 and the end of 2020, the vast majority of them strictly criminal in nature and in some cases politically motivated. According to this report, 107 were splinter groups that broke off from larger or older groups and 212 had some kind of (often fragile) alliance with the largest criminal organisations. According to the UNHCR, the number of people internally displaced by violence between rival armed groups has risen dramatically in recent years. According to data from the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH), there were 28,867 new displacements due to violence in 2021, a third more than in 2020 (9,714) and 2019 (8,664). The states most affected were Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas and Jalisco.

Finally, **several national and international organisations rejected what they consider to be the growing militarisation of public security by the government of López Obrador** during the year. At the end of the year, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate and at least 20 of the 32 state congresses passed a constitutional amendment so the Mexican Armed Forces can take responsibility for public security until 2028 instead of 2024. Along the same lines, there were several protests against the government's intention to integrate the National Guard into the Ministry of Defence. López Obrador had created the National Guard to combat organised crime in 2019. However, by the end of the year, this integration had not happened because a federal judge ordered its provisional suspension on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

South America

Ecuador	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, organised crime groups

Summary:
In recent years, Ecuador has experienced one of the sharpest rises in violence in all of Latin America. In 2022, the government reported that the homicide rate had multiplied by almost five since 2017 and that over 80% of the murders in the country are linked to drug trafficking. Although Ecuador has historically been a transit point for illicit drugs, some analysts indicate that the country is steadily playing a more prominent role in the international drug supply chain, especially for cocaine, including more participation in the storage, processing, production and international distribution of narcotics, mainly through Pacific routes (a significant percentage of the homicides takes place in the coastal city of Guayaquil) and the Amazon, thanks to its border with Brazil. The situation has led to a substantial increase in clashes for the control of strategic places and routes between local organised crime groups (such as Los Lobos, Los Choneros and Los Lagartos), Mexican cartels (especially the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel), dissident factions of the FARC (such as the Oliver Sinisterra Front and the Urías Rondón column) and international criminal organisations.

In addition to wide-ranging protests and an attempted ouster of the president, Ecuador reported the highest homicide rate in its recent history in 2022, twice as high as the previous year. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of homicides had already increased by 180%. According to official government data, there were 4,539 violent deaths and a homicide rate of 25.5 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022. This rate has multiplied by five since 2017, when it was 5.8, and has almost doubled since 2021, when it was 13.7. Approximately one third of the homicides in the country were concentrated in Zone 8 of the province of Guayas, which includes Durán, Samborondón and Guayaquil, the second most populous city in Ecuador and one of the most economically active. The second largest focus of violence was the province of Esmeraldas, located near the border with Colombia. In the city of Esmeraldas, the homicide rate was 77 per 100,000 inhabitants, while in Guayaquil it was 46.6. At the end of the year, the government declared that there had been 273 femicides, the highest number in the country's history. According to the Latin American Association for Alternative Development (ALDEA), 1,317 women and girls were reportedly killed due to sexist violence between January 2014 and 15 November 2022.

In Ecuador, the homicide rate has multiplied by five since 2017, largely due to the increase in activity linked to drug trafficking

The government declared that 83% of the violent deaths reported in the country are related to control of the distribution and export of drugs, especially cocaine, and warned that organised crime was becoming a state within the state. According to the research centre International Crisis Group (ICG), Ecuador has historically been a major transit point for illicit drugs, but the rise in coca and cocaine production in Colombia and some changes in the global dynamics of drug trafficking have given rise to the growing participation of organised crime in the production, processing, storage and transport of narcotic drugs. According to the ICG, Mexican cartels and Colombian criminal groups have recently outsourced more of certain parts of the supply chain to Ecuadorian groups. According to official sources, over one third of the approximately 32,000 inmates in the country, which quadrupled between 2009 and 2021, belong to an organised crime network. In July, Human Rights Watch reported that drug trafficking controls a large part of the country's prison system and that many inmates, including those in pretrial detention, are forced to work or collaborate with organised crime groups for their safety. There has recently been a substantial increase in riots and clashes in the country's prisons. Although the number of inmates who died in such episodes of violence (around 100) fell in 2022 compared to the previous year, more than 450 inmates have died and several hundred others have been injured since 2022. In November, various armed gangs launched 18 simultaneous attacks in the cities of Guayaquil and Esmeraldas shortly after the government ordered the transfer of around 1,000 inmates from a prison in Guayaquil to other detention centres controlled by rival gangs. The ICG noted that half the 145 bomb attacks that had been reported across the country until mid-August had occurred in Guayaquil. On 14 August, five people died and another 17 were injured when an improvised explosive device was detonated in Guayaquil in an attack that the government blamed on organised crime groups and that the Minister of the Interior described as a declaration of war against the state. President Guillermo Lasso imposed a state of emergency for the sixth time since he took office in May 2021.

In addition to the spike in violence and the activity linked to drug trafficking, **there were protests in various parts of the country in June during which at least seven people were killed and around 650 (including more than 200 police officers and about 100 soldiers) were injured**. These protests, also known as the National Strike, were called and led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) to protest the high price of fuel and other products, the instability of the public health system, high levels of unemployment, high levels of insecurity and the activity of oil and mining companies in certain parts of the country. Given the magnitude of the protests, which caused many roadblocks and shortages in a large part of the country, the government decreed a state of emergency in the areas most affected by them and a curfew in the capital. During the 14 days in which the protests were most intense, and under the protection of the state of emergency, the Ecuadorian Armed Forces carried out almost 3,000 military operations in various parts of the country. In this context, on 25 and 26 June, the opposition presented a motion to dismiss Lasso in the National Assembly, but only got 80 of the 92 votes needed for it to be approved. In late June, the government and the CONAIE reached an agreement mediated by the Episcopal Conference whereby the government pledged to lower the price of fuel, restrict mining activity in certain protected areas, repeal a decree that promoted oil extraction activity in the Amazon, increase subsidies for the most vulnerable families and raise the budget for public health and intercultural education.

Peru	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, armed opposition (Militarised Communist Party of Peru), political and social opposition (peasant 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, renamed Militarized Communist Party of Peru, 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.

The dismissal and arrest of President Pedro Castillo, accused of wanting to carry out a self-coup, led to intense protests in December in which 28 people died and more than 650 were injured. The crisis was triggered in early December when Congress tried to impeach Castillo or remove him from office, the third such action he faced since he came to power in June 2021. On 7 December, the date when Castillo was expected to exercise his right to defend himself in the impeachment process, he delivered a televised address announcing his intention to dissolve Congress and replace it with an "exceptional emergency government". He also said that he would intervene in the judiciary and the Supreme Court and call for the election of a new Congress with constitutional powers. After his address, which was considered an attempt to conduct a coup d'état by a significant part of the country's politicians and public opinion, Congress removed Castillo from office by a wide majority for "moral unfitness".

The removal and arrest of President Pedro Castillo on charges of trying to conduct a self-coup led to some of the most important protests in recent years in Peru

Much of Castillo's government resigned and rejected his plans and both the Peruvian Armed Forces and the Police issued a statement to express their opposition to any attempt to subvert the constitutional order. Castillo was later arrested on charges of rebellion and conspiracy when he was on his way to request political asylum from the Mexican embassy, which did grant it to his wife. Vice President Dina Boluarte was appointed president of the country. Immediately thereafter, demonstrations began in various parts of the country to protest Castillo's removal from power and against Dina Boluarte and to demand the shutdown of Congress and the convening of a constituent assembly, in line with the demands that the former president expressed from prison. In mid-December, the Supreme Court extended Castillo's preventive detention period to 18 months. During the protests, which mainly took place between 7 and 25 December, 28 people died and more than 650 were injured (approximately half of them police officers). Many motorways in the country were blocked (including the Pan-American Highway). The Arequipa international airport was shut down and the Cusco international airport was forced to cancel its flights. Protests were reported across the country, but they were especially intense in Cajamarca, Arequipa, Huancayo, Cusco, Puno and Ayacucho, where almost half the deaths took place. The protests became less intense around Christmas, but a second wave resumed at the beginning of the year. Several human rights organisations criticised the security forces' disproportionate use of force in containing the protests. For example, Amnesty International reported many human rights violations by the military and police forces, from the excessive use of force to torture.

Faced with these blockades and high-intensity riots, the new government announced a process of dialogue and national accord to overcome the crisis and Congress approved a plan presented by Boluarte to move the elections forward from 2026 to April 2024, ending the presidential and congressional terms early. The protests subsided in intensity coinciding with the Christmas season, but at the start of the year a second wave of protests resumed, blocking dozens of roads and resulting in the death of 18 people. Some countries and international organisations condemned the violence during the protests. Several countries justified Castillo's removal from power, but **the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico issued a joint statement expressing concern over his ouster and detention, complained that he had suffered harassment and urged the new Peruvian authorities not to overturn the people's will**.

The ambassadors of these countries were summoned for consultations by the new Peruvian government and the Mexican ambassador was declared a persona non grata and urged to leave the country after welcoming Castillo's wife to the embassy. The crisis of late 2022 is part of a complex political, social and economic situation in recent years, as illustrated by the fact that Boluarte was the sixth head of state since 2018. Between late March and mid-April, an estimated eight people died and many more were injured during protests called by haulers against the hike in fuel prices and the actions of the Castillo government.

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

Summary:
The current political and social crisis gripping the country goes back to the rise to power of Hugo Chávez in 1998 and his promotion of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, but it became more acute during the political transition that led to Chávez's death in March 2013 and his replacement by Vice President Nicolás Maduro, which was considered unconstitutional by the opposition. The tensions rose markedly after the presidential election of April 2013, which Maduro won by a narrow margin (50.6% of the votes), with the opposition denouncing numerous irregularities and demanding a recount and verification of the votes with the support of several governments and the OAS. Amidst a growing economic crisis and recurrent and sometimes massive demonstrations, the political crisis in Venezuela worsened after the opposition comfortably won the legislative elections in December 2015, winning its first election victory in two decades. This victory caused a certain degree of institutional paralysis between the National Assembly on the one hand and the government and many of the judicial authorities on the other.

Tensions between the government and the opposition eased considerably and international pressure on the government of Nicolás Maduro eased significantly, but many social demonstrations, a high number of homicides and, according to international organisations, significant human rights violations continued to be reported. According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory (OVV), there were 2,328 homicides in 2022, a 25% drop compared to 2021. However, it also mentioned that if the 5,799 cases of "death during investigation" (cases that have not been investigated or prosecuted) and the 1,240 cases of death during police intervention are counted, the total number of violent deaths in the country rises to 9,367, with a homicide rate of 35.3 per 100,000 inhabitants. According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory, such a figure would surely make Venezuela the country with the second highest homicide rate in Latin America, behind Honduras. The OVV also declared that 1,370 complaints of disappearances have been reported, so the real number of homicides in the country could be even higher. In 2021, 9,437 violent deaths were reported, so the increase in 2022 was imperceptible. Caracas was the region with the highest homicide rate (89), followed by the states of La Guaira (62), Miranda (54) and Bolívar (50). The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict (OVCS) pointed out that 3,892 protests were reported in the country between January and June, 15% more than in the same period in 2021. Seventy-three per cent of the protests were related to economic, social, cultural and environmental issues, especially labour rights, while the remaining 27% were related to civil and political rights and issues such as the persecution, criminalisation and detention of human rights defenders, opponents, humanitarian workers and members of civil society. Despite the rise in protests compared to the previous year, the number of demonstrations was much lower than in previous years (in 2017, for example, there were almost 10,000 protests). The OVCS also indicated that crackdowns were documented in 52 protests in 14 states, but none resulted in fatalities and that the state security forces and armed civilian bodies exhibited less repressive behaviour compared to previous years.

Nevertheless, various international bodies criticised the human rights situation in Venezuela in 2022. **In November, the public prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, formally requested authorisation from the Pre-Trial Chamber to continue with the investigation opened in November 2021 on the alleged commission of crimes against humanity in Venezuela since April 2017**. In April, the government asked for the investigation to be postponed, arguing that it was advancing in various investigations and trials on the matter, but at the end of the year, Karim Khan described the progress as insufficient. The International Criminal Court (ICC) had opened a preliminary investigation in 2018 into the conduct of the regime's security forces during their crackdown on anti-government protests in 2017, in which an estimated 100 people died. The government strongly opposed the ICC's observations, but it authorised the opening of an ICC office in Caracas in March. Previously, in September, the third report of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela was released. Created in 2019 to assess alleged human rights violations committed since 2014, the mission's report said that serious crimes and violations of human rights continue to be committed against dissidents in Venezuela without any further investigation or punishment. According to the report, violations against humanity such as torture, sexual violence and arbitrary detention have been committed in Venezuela since 2014 as part of a plan devised and directed at the highest levels to repress the opposition. The mission's report points to both specific people (including Nicolás Maduro) and certain state structures, such as the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) and the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN). A few days after the report was issued, the United Nations Human Rights Council extended the mission's mandate for another two years and did not renew Venezuela's membership in the council, in a decision that several media outlets interpreted as an important wake-up call to the Venezuelan government. Along the same lines, in April the human rights organisation Foro Penal declared that there are 240 detainees in the country that it considers political prisoners, in addition to 9,414 people that it deems are subject to unfair criminal proceedings for political reasons. Moreover, the opposition reported

harassment against some of its leaders several times during the year, including Guaidó himself, during a tour of the country in June.

In addition to the human rights situation, both the opposition and civil society organisations denounced the insecure economic and humanitarian situation in the country. **As of December 2022, there were more than seven million Venezuelan migrants or refugees worldwide and, according to the IOM, 7.7 million people in the country needed humanitarian aid**. In March, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation in Venezuela, the Venezuelan Education Action Human Rights Programme (PROVEA), published a report detailing the serious violations of the human right to food in Venezuela and stating that 94% of the population lived in poverty and that the GDP has contracted by more than 80% in the last six years. The FIDH also reported that at least 30% of minors suffer from some form of malnutrition (half of them acute or severe malnutrition), that the distribution of drinking water has been cut back by 60% since 1998 and that the production of electricity has fallen by 74%, leading to 174,000 blackouts in the country in 2021.

The opposition did several things to improve its cohesion and internal coordination and establish a system of primaries throughout the country to select the candidate to run in the presidential election scheduled for 2024. However, in December the National Assembly, which was elected in 2015 and is considered the only legitimate body in the country according to the opposition, but was outlawed by the government, decreed the end of the interim government and the presidency of Juan Guaidó based on the understanding that he is no longer an instrument of actual change. Guaidó criticised the move, arguing that it strengthens Maduro's government, but previously there had already been some indicators that international support for Guaidó had waned. In January 2022, for example, the National Assembly had extended Guaidó's interim presidency for one year but reduced the bureaucratic structure that supported him. In October, 19 Latin American countries voted against the Guaidó government's representation of Venezuela in the OAS, but the motion did not pass because the support of two thirds of the member states was required.

2.3.3. Asia and the Pacific

Central Asia

Kazakhstan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System, Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition, local and regional armed groups

Summary:
Since gaining its independence from the USSR in 1991, Kazakhstan has experienced significant economic growth alongside largely stable political and social developments. However, the country's 30-year rule by President Nursultan Nazarbayev was also marked by democratic failings and authoritarian policies, leaving little room for the political and social opposition. After he stepped down in 2019, Nazarbayev continued to hold positions of leadership, including as Leader of the Nation and chairman of the ruling Nur Otan party. Lines of conflict include the tension between the authorities and opposition groups over governance and access to political power as well as between the authorities and sectoral groups over socioeconomic matters amid economic inequality and poor working conditions in the oil industry and other sectors. Throughout Central Asia, local and regional Islamist-inspired armed actors have staged violent incidents at various times, including in Kazakhstan, while governments in the region have also used the alleged risk of Islamist violence to justify repressive practices.

Kazakhstan was the scene of a social and political crisis in January, with public protests subject to severely violent crackdowns that claimed around 200 lives, making it the bloodiest episode in the country's recent history. The demonstrations began on 2 January in the western oil town of Zhanaozen (the scene of a repressive crackdown on striking workers in 2011) to protest the government's withdrawal of the limit on the price of liquified gas and the resulting price hike. The protests spread to large areas of the country and encompassed many different dimensions of economic and social discontent and political malpractice, with demonstrators gathering spontaneously against corruption, social inequality and low wages, while also calling for the democratisation of power and making other demands. One rallying motto was "Old man, get out!" ("Shal, ket!", already in use by feminist activists since 2014) against the power still held by former President Nazarbayev and his circle and against authoritarianism and vertical power, including under the government of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The situation turned violent in some cities, like Almaty. Some analysts said that the security forces seemingly withdrew on the night of 5 January in Almaty, accompanied by looting, vandalism[45] and possible collusion between criminal groups and the regime or Nazarbayev's circle in creating chaos,[46] as well as

45. International Crisis Group, "Behind the Unrest in Kazakhstan", *ICG*, 14 January 2022.
46. Marat, Erica and Assel Tutumlu, "Kazakhstan's Protests Aren't a Color Revolution", *Foreign Policy*, 11 January 2022.

disaffection, frustration and anger[47] in protests that were mostly popular, spontaneous and diverse in nature. On the whole, the protests were suppressed by the security forces. According to HRW, there was a disproportionate use of force against the demonstrators, as well as other human rights violations by the authorities, such as arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and the mistreatment and torture of detainees. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared a state of emergency, cut off access to the Internet, ordered the security forces to shoot without warning and blamed the protests on "terrorists" and "foreign figures", despite their popular nature. On 5 January, Tokayev asked the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), a Russian-led military alliance of various former Soviet bloc countries, to intervene. In what was its first intervention in its three decades of existence, the CSTO sent mainly Russian troops and deployed them at strategic elements of infrastructure until they were gradually withdrawn between 13 and 19 January.

The protests and crackdown left at least 238 people dead. Most of those who died were protesters and the remaining 19 were members of the security forces. Nearly 10,000 people were arrested, including activists and journalists, and hundreds of detained people reported mistreatment or torture. Some analysts said that the different layers of the crisis could also contain disputes between elites. After the crackdown, Tokayev removed Nazarbayev and his allies from positions of power on security matters, including the removal of the former president from the leadership of the National Security Council. The government resigned and a new government took office, in which 11 of the 20 ministers returned. In March, Tokayev announced plans to set limits on presidential powers. A referendum in June approved constitutional amendments that, in the words of the president, changed the form of government from a "super-presidential" one to a "presidential republic with a strong parliament". Some analysts called attention to civil society's lack of participation in preparing the amendments and to how few limits were introduced to presidential powers. Tokayev was re-elected in a snap presidential election in November. The OSCE monitoring mission noted the lack of competition and the need for reforms to ensure real pluralism. One year after what was called "Bloody January" (*Qandy Qantar*), some analysts highlighted the lack of any independent investigation into the events or of any effective changes in the country aimed at guaranteeing civil and political rights and freedoms and social justice, while others stressed a greater degree of openness to participation, even if control was maintained.[48]

Kyrgyzstan - Tajikistan	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory, Resources International
Main parties:	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Summary:
Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are engaged in a conflict over the demarcation of a part of their common border, of which around half remained undelimited since both countries won their independence following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The dispute encompasses the lack of border demarcation, intercommunity tensions over access to and the use of water and grazing areas, which sometimes escalate to intercommunity violence, and hostilities between border forces. The epicentre of the tension is the Ferghana Valley (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), which has several territorial enclaves, access to which has been affected due to increased strain. Both countries have carried out negotiations regarding the delimitation of the border at various stages, though without reaching lasting effective agreements. In 2021, the tension increased significantly, with violent incidents that resulted in 50 people dead, another 200 injured and several tens of thousands evacuated. In 2022 there was a new escalation, with a hundred deaths and the use of heavy weapons, interpreted by some analysts as a military offensive by Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan. The rise in militarisation in both countries adds more risks to the scenario of interstate tension.

Border tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan increased, with incidents during the year and a military escalation in September that killed around a hundred people, making for a greater leap in militarisation than in previous years. In January, Tajik and Kyrgyz border guards clashed between the Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Sughd (Tajikistan) regions, causing the death of two Tajikistan civilians, injuring around 20 people from both countries, including civilians and security forces, and evacuating around 1,000. A ceasefire agreement was reached later that month. New incidents occurred in the months that followed and in September the tension increased. Shooting between border forces of both countries on 14 September triggered a military escalation days later. Both governments accused each other of using heavy weapons, including tanks, drones and multiple rocket launchers. Unlike previous crises, attacks by Tajikistan were reported against areas further away from the disputed border, such as parts of the Batken and Leilek districts in the Batken region, including shelling the regional capital Batken and its airport. The media reported mortar fire in the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan as well. Some analysts described the violence as a military offensive operation by Tajikistan against Kyrgyzstan, distinguishing it from previous series of incidents between border guards from both

47. Rowley, Thomas and Zhanar Sekerbayeva, "What really happened in Kazakhstan? A feminist perspective", *Open Democracy*, 19 January 2022.
48. See, among others, Mazorenko, Dmitriy and Paolo Sorbello, "Too little has changed in Kazakhstan in the year since 'Bloody January'", *Open Democracy*, 5 January 2023; HRW, "Kazakhstan. Events of 2022", in *World Report 2023*, HRW, 2023; Abishev, Gaziz, "Has Kazakhstan Become More Democratic Following Recent Elections?", *Carnegie*, 12 April 2023.

countries.[49] Around one hundred people lost their lives, including at least 37 civilians, of which four were children. Around one hundred additional people were injured.

Kyrgyzstan estimated that 136,000 civilians evacuated the country. HRW reported that the civilian population of at least 12 towns in both countries was affected and echoed Kyrgyzstan's allegations of Tajikistan's intentional arson and looting of many homes in the town of Ak-Sai (Kyrgyzstan) and fires and damage to more than 300 civil structures and facilities, including markets and schools.[50] HRW also repeated Tajikistan's allegations of fires set on houses on its soil and injured civilians, though there were no reports of evacuations within Tajikistan. There were several ceasefire agreements, including one reached by both presidents during a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit on 16 September, though both sides accused each other of breaching it. Around 18 September, the Kyrgyz authorities reported that the situation at the border was stabilising, though it remained tense. On 25 September, both countries agreed to a protocol by which they agreed to withdraw each of the four border posts and to carry out border patrols on agreed routes.

Despite the de-escalation after the September crisis, the situation remained tense in the months that followed. In mid-October, both governments accused each other of deploying military forces in assault positions around disputed border areas, as well as airspace violations with drones and trench digging. Tajikistan also denounced violations of the ceasefire and harassment against the Tajik population in the Voruj enclave, which is surrounded by Kyrgyz territory, while Kyrgyzstan accused Tajikistan of training mercenaries, stockpiling weapons and ammunition and laying mines in disputed border areas. Both countries denied these accusations.

East Asia

Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	System International
Main parties:	DPR Korea, 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.

In line with the notable rise in international tension over North Korea's weapons programme, strain between Pyongyang and Seoul increased considerably in 2022. In January, Pyongyang fired six missiles (almost as many as in all of 2021) and declared that it could resume launching intercontinental ballistic missiles, suspended since 2017. In April, South Korea launched two ballistic missiles from submarines off the eastern coast of the Korean peninsula, the first such test since September 2021, and the defence minister said they could accurately hit any target in North Korea. Both Kim Jong-un and his sister, one of the top officials responsible for North Korea's policy towards its southern neighbour, have said they are willing to use nuclear weapons if North Korea is attacked. Despite the rhetoric used by both governments in the first few months of 2022, which is part of the deteriorating relations between the two countries in recent years, Yoon Suk-yeol's victory in the South Korean presidential election in March was an important turning point in the dispute between the two countries and a clear step back from the foreign policy pursued by Moon Jae-in, who often led an approach towards North Korea during his term that gave rise to several agreements and the détente of recent years.

Shortly after Yoon Suk-yeol's inauguration in May, South Korea and the United States fired two missiles in response to Pyongyang's launch of its longest-range intercontinental ballistic missile (Hwasong-17), coinciding with a trip to the region by US President Joe Biden. A few days later, in early June, South Korea and the US launched eight missiles on the east coast just hours after North Korea had launched eight short-range ballistic missiles off the same coast. In addition, a few days later, Seoul began joint military exercises with the US and Yoon Suk-yeol asked the United Nations Security Council for a coordinated response to what he called North Korea's provocations. Several media outlets explained that the new South Korean administration was trying to establish a policy of reacting and responding proportionally to any armed action by North Korea. Along these lines, during the official presentation of its

49. Sharshenova, Aijan, "More than a 'Border Skirmish' Between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan", *The Diplomat*, 19 September 2022.
50. Sultanalieva, Syinat, "Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Border Clashes Prove Deadly for Civilians", *HRW*, 21 September 2022.

foreign policy towards its northern neighbour, Yoon Suk-yeol said that the denuclearisation of North Korea was a requirement for bringing more peace and prosperity to the region. He also announced his intention to strengthen South Korea's military capabilities, reserving the possibility of even carrying out preventive attacks in the face of the threats and risks posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic programme. In line with Seoul's strategic rapprochement with Washington and its intention to strengthen its deterrent military capabilities, South Korea participated in the US-led Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercises from 29 June to 4 August. In late August, South Korea and the US carried out the largest joint military exercises in years. Likewise, the US and South Korea carried out new joint military exercises (in some of which Japan also participated) at the end of September, coinciding with the visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to Seoul and the inter-Korean border.

One of the moments of greatest tension on the Korean peninsula occurred in late October, when both countries exchanged warning shots at the Northern Limit Line (NLL), the de facto yet disputed maritime border. According to several sources, a North Korean ship crossed the NLL, which Pyongyang does not even recognise, and South Korea fired several kilometres into South Korean waters to guarantee the return of the North Korean ship. The North Korean ship allegedly responded by firing 10 shells at the western coast of the Korean peninsula, near Baengyeong Island. Shortly thereafter, for two days in a row in early November, Pyongyang fired over 20 missiles, one of which landed south of the NLL, a few kilometres from the South Korean city of Sokcho, and around 100 artillery shells near the maritime border. A few days later, it launched several short-range missiles, as well as its longer-range intercontinental ballistic missile (Hwasong-17). Tensions rose again in December after North Korea managed to get five of its drones into South Korean airspace (one of them even reached the northern tip of Seoul), which could not be shot down by planes and helicopters firing many projectiles at them. A few days earlier, the North Korean government released high-altitude photos of Seoul and Incheon and declared that it had successfully launched a special rocket as part of the development of a military reconnaissance satellite, one of the country's weapon development priorities announced by Kim Jong-un for the next few years. Finally, in his New Year's Eve speech, Kim Jong-un called South Korea an enemy and ordered an exponential increase in its nuclear capabilities by 2023. The next day, the South Korean president publicly called for Seoul and Washington to intensify their collaboration on nuclear weapons, including planning, information sharing, exercises and training.

Korea, DPR - USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea[51]	
Intensity:	3
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 Koreannregime 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.

Alongside the rise in political and military tension between North and South Korea, international concerns heightened substantially over the North Korean weapons programme in 2023, especially among the US, South Korea and Japan. Over the course of the year, North Korea launched about 95 missiles, several of them intercontinental, clearly many more than the eight launched in 2021 and the four in 2020. In addition to the dramatic increase in the frequency of such launches, several analysts also expressed concern about the type of weapons that Pyongyang tested during the year, including cruise and ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons and long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (such as the Hwasong-17, with a range of about 15,000 kilometres). The US and South Korean governments, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and some research centres pointed out that North Korea was reactivating the country's main nuclear test facility in Punggye-ri, which had supposedly been closed in 2018 as part of the diplomatic process with the US, and warned at various times of the year that North Korea could carry out a new nuclear test, which would be the seventh in its history and the first since 2017 (a test that, according to some analysts, was of a hydrogen bomb, much more powerful than those of previous tests). In fact, in a confidential report leaked in August, the United Nations claimed that North Korea had made preparations for a nuclear test during the first six months of 2022. Along the same lines, in early September North Korea enacted a new law specifying the conditions for the deployment and use of its nuclear

51. This international socio-political crisis relates mainly to the dispute over the North Korean nuclear programme.

arsenal and stipulating that Pyongyang will not attack non-nuclear states unless they ally with nuclear states. The law also said that the use of nuclear weapons could help to prevent the expansion or prolongation of a war or in response to an attack against the country. Even though North Korea's apparent military escalation led countries such as the US to impose new sanctions, the UN Security Council failed to approve any condemnatory resolution or new sanctions against Pyongyang due to the veto by China and Russia.

At the start of the year, North Korea accused the US of sending strategic nuclear weapons to the region, said it was willing to resume its arms activities that had been suspended since 2017, such as the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in January alone launched almost as many missiles as it had in all of 2021 (including hypersonic weapons), which prompted the US to impose sanctions. In March and April, Washington imposed new sanctions on Pyongyang for new weapons tests (with satellites and intercontinental ballistic missiles). Throughout the year, and especially after the inauguration of new South Korean President Yoon Seok-yeol, the US said it was willing to strengthen its strategic alliance with South Korea and Japan and to increase their deterrent capabilities in the region to deal with Pyongyang's military escalation. Although the US publicly dismissed Yoon Seok-yeol's demand to conduct joint military exercises with nuclear weapons, some of the largest joint military exercises in recent years between the US and South Korea (which eventually included Japan) were conducted during the year. Several times throughout the year, the US and South Korea launched missiles in response to previous missile launches by North Korea. One of the ballistic missile tests that caused the greatest concern in Washington and other countries was the launch in November (and previously and unsuccessfully, in March) of the Hwasong-17 missile. With a range of about 15,000 kilometres, the Hwasong-17 could strike US territory. However, some analysts had doubts about whether these intercontinental ballistic missiles could accurately deliver nuclear warheads to their target. The US expressed concern about Kim Jong-un's speech at the end of the year, in which he called for the exponential growth of North Korea's nuclear arsenal by 2023. Previously, in 2021, after the collapse of the dialogue between former President Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un and the end of the political rapprochement between North and South Korea, Kim Jong-un had announced a five-year plan to modernise the North Korean Army and arsenal and to develop new weaponry.

North Korea launched around 95 missiles throughout the year, several of them intercontinental, clearly many more than the eight launched in 2021 and the four in 2020

South Asia

India - China	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Territory International
Main parties:	India, China

Summary:
The border shared by China and India has been disputed since the 1950s, after the partition of India and Pakistan and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This border has never been formally delimited by an agreement between the two countries and there are several areas whose demarcation is a source of conflict. In the western part of the border, the dispute revolves around the uninhabited Aksai Chin area, whose territory is claimed by India, which considers it part of the Ladakh region (part of Jammu and Kashmir) and is administered by China as part of the Xinjiang region. China's announcement of the construction of a highway linking Xinjiang with Tibet through the Aksai Chin region increased tension with India, which was exacerbated after the Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India in 1959. In the years that followed, there were troop movements by both countries in the area. In 1962, a war began that ended with India's military defeat, but the issue of demarcation was left unresolved and continued to shape relations between both powers and with other countries in the region, especially Pakistan. In 1988, both governments agreed to resolve the dispute peacefully. However, since then no progress has been made in the negotiations and the military tension in the disputed areas has persisted.

Tensions escalated between India and China due to territorial disputes over the border demarcation separating the two countries known as the Current Line of Control, including the first direct clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in two years. Accusations were made throughout the year and, though there were several meetings to try to resolve the conflict between both governments, no progress was made. In these two years there had been almost 20 meetings between military commanders aimed at resolving tensions on the ground, though they have failed to achieve any significant results. The construction of infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the border continued, which increased the risk of incidents and escalating tension. However, there were some highly interesting diplomatic rapprochements in 2022. In March, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi travelled to Delhi for the highest-ranking visit since June 2020 and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held their first face-to-face meeting in November since the 2020 clashes. This was a courtesy meeting that did not reveal any other meeting between the two leaders and took place during the G20 summit in Indonesia. However, despite these and other rapprochement attempts, there

were finally violent clashes between soldiers from both countries in December that injured 30 Indians and an undetermined number of Chinese, though firearms were not used. Both countries accused each other of having crossed the border illegally. The fighting took place in the Tawang sector of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, an area that China considers part of Tibet and a strategic location for both parties, which increased the severity of the clash. These were the first direct clashes in two years, since the fighting in June 2020 in Galwan Valley, although in January 2021 there had also been a clash in Sikkim. The Indian government later indicated that diplomatic contacts had taken place between both parties after the clashes and that a meeting had been held between the local commanders of both armies, but tensions between both countries remained very high. The clashes occurred even though an agreement had been reached in September to de-escalate the tension, with parties committing to a partial and gradual withdrawal to the Gogra-Hot Springs area in eastern Ladakh to create a buffer zone. However, 50,000 soldiers from each of the countries remained in the area. The September agreement came after India filed complaints in August about Chinese warplanes in the vicinity of the Current Line of Control, violating the boundaries of the containment zone.

The tension between India and China over territorial disputes over the border demarcation between the two countries worsened, with the first major clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in two years

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, 1999) 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 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. **Despite the persisting tension between India and Pakistan, with many diplomatic agreements and mutual accusations between the two countries, the violence improved considerably as a result of the renewal of the ceasefire agreement between them in 2021.** Only one violent incident was reported in 2022 along the Current Line of Control, the de facto border between India and Pakistan. In September, India accused Pakistan of firing in the Arnia sector, Jammu district, to which India reportedly responded militarily. There were no casualties or injuries and a meeting was later held between security officials from both sides, after which it was agreed to continue respecting the ceasefire agreement. In March, there had been an incident in which a missile was accidentally fired from India, landing in Pakistan without causing any casualties. The government apologised for what happened, reiterating the accidental nature of the event. Although there was no escalation, doubts were expressed about the mechanisms to prevent this type of incident. Thus, the trend of lowering tension on the border continued since the diplomatic rapprochement in 2021, without clashes or violations of the ceasefire agreement in force on the Current Line of Control. Some analysts said that the tension on the Current Line of Control may have led India to concentrate its military efforts in the area. After new Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's inauguration, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated him and called for a constructive relationship, to which Sharif responded by urging the resolution of the Kashmir conflict. However, mutual accusations of terrorism and support for different insurgent forces operating in each of the two countries persisted, so they made no diplomatic headway on resolving the various pending conflicts. Indian Home Minister Amit Ahah said that he had no intention of holding talks with Pakistan, but rather aimed to make Pakistan address the people of Jammu and Kashmir, repeating accusations that its government supported terrorist organisations. Thus, in December, Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that there was clear evidence that India had cooperated in the attack that took place in June 2021 in Lahore. In turn, his Indian counterpart accused Pakistan of having given shelter to Osama bin Laden.

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

Summary:
In 1999 the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was brought down by a military coup orchestrated by General

Pervez Musharraf, that avoided conviction by exiling himself in Saudi Arabia. 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 perpetuation of Musharraf in power, the fact that he simultaneously held the positions of Head of State and Head of the Armed Forces, attacks agains the judiciary, the impopularity of the alliance with de USA in a period of anti-americanism expansion, economic and environmental crisis, or the growing strength of terrorist groups in other areas of the country (beyond tribal areas), leading to growing insecurity are some of the elements which explain the fragile political situation. In 2008, Musharraf resigned as president after legislative elections and large parts of the Parliament against him. PPP's Asif Ali Zardari was voted to replace in office. In spite of the the return of democracy, and some historical milestones such as the first transfer of power from a Government (PPP) that ended is five years term to the next elected government (Nawaz's Muslim League), Pakistan continued to be an unstable country. In 2018, the PTI party, led by Imran Khan, won the general elections.

Pakistan went through a serious crisis during the year, which was added to the armed conflict in the country. The political, economic and environmental aspects of the crisis were especially acute. The political crisis worsened starting in March, when nine opposition parties led by the PPP, PML-N and U-e-I pushed for a vote of no confidence that led to the dismissal of Prime Minister Imran Khan in April. Khan had accused the parties behind the motion of acting on the dictates of a "foreign conspiracy". Prior to the vote of no confidence in early April, the speaker of the National Assembly had dissolved Parliament and appointed Khan as interim prime minister to try to prevent the vote from taking place. However, the Supreme Court declared the attempt illegal and urged the vote to be held, which took place without Khan present. Following the vote, which Khan lost, Parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif of the PML-N as prime minister. In the days that followed, Khan's supporters staged protests in several cities and clashed with police. At least 30 police officers were injured in these clashes on 25 May and many protests were repeated in the following weeks. In August, Khan was charged with terrorism, but a judge ordered a stay of his arrest and the charges were later dropped. The crisis escalated again in November when there was an assassination attempt on Khan in the province of Punjab. During a march attended by the former president along with hundreds of his supporters, Khan was shot and wounded in the leg. The attack took place after Khan had been disqualified from public office by the electoral commission. Khan accused the government, including the prime minister himself, of being behind the attack. Subsequently, protests by Khan's supporters intensified in various parts of the country. Alongside the political crisis, the country was plunged into a grave economic crisis that intensified social tensions. In August, there were also serious floods that caused the death of at least 1,700 people and significantly affected different parts of the country. More than 75% of the land in the province of Balochistan was affected by the catastrophe, attributed to the impact of climate change on the Asian country. Over 30 million people were affected by the floods and nearly eight million people had to be forcibly displaced as a result of one of the worst disasters in the country. The UN Secretary-General called for massive international support for Pakistan, saying that the affected country bore far less responsibility than others for the climate change that had led to the floods.

Sri Lanka	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, 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 political crisis in the country escalated seriously during the year, with mass protests in Colombo and other cities and a change in government. Persistent accusations of widespread government corruption and mismanagement, the worsening economic crisis, mainly due to inflation (25% in food products and 18% overall), the shortage in the supply of basic products and fuel and the risk of famine in the country triggered mass protests in March demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapakse and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse (the president's brother) step down after everyone else in their cabinet had resigned. At least one person died in the anti-government demonstrations and three others died while queuing in front of petrol stations. The opposition tried to force a vote of no confidence due to the president and the prime minister's initial refusal to resign. Finally, in early May, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was

forced to resign after weeks of intense protests in which at least eight people died due to violence and repression and hundreds were injured. The police forces were ordered to fire without warning to contain the protests and a national curfew was imposed. At least 40 homes of Rajapaksa supporters were set on fire and there was an attempted raid on the official Rajapaksa home. There were also violent attacks against an area where people demanding the resignation of the president and prime minister had camped. After Rajapaksa's resignation, Raniil Wickremesinghe was appointed prime minister. He had previously held the office for several terms and was tasked with leading a national unity government. The impact of COVID and the disappearance of tourism in the country had prodded the government to use foreign reserves to service its debt and pay for its imports. This led to practical bankruptcy, causing enormous fuel shortages and a lack of power supply. The government asked the IMF for help to deal with the economic crisis, considered the most serious in the country in the last 70 years. After Wickremesinghe took office, the government approved the complete restriction of access to fuel, except for essential services, given the impossibility of importing it due to the debt of the state oil company. The economic crisis gripping the country has stopped it from servicing its debt and resulted in shortages of medicines, food, fuel and other essential goods alongside an enormously serious health crisis. In July, there was a new escalation of tension after protestors assaulted the presidential residence. This forced the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapakse, who fled the country, and led to Wickremesinghe's appointment as interim president. He declared a state of emergency after his office was also occupied by protesters. In the days that followed, the crackdown on the protests intensified. Finally, on 15 July, Wickremesinghe was inaugurated and won the parliamentary vote for his final appointment in the following days. Social protests and violent crackdowns by security forces continued in the following months amid the economic collapse and humanitarian crisis.

South-east Asia

Indonesia (West Papua)	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Resources Internal
Main parties:	Government, OPM armed group, political and social opposition, Papuan indigenous 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.

In line with the rise in violence that has been observed in the region since the armed group OPM declared war on the Indonesian government in January 2018, there were many clashes between the OPM and the state security forces and attacks against civilians. There was also a significant rise in protests over the government's decision to create three new provinces in West Papua. According to a report issued by the IPAC research centre, the frequency and lethality of the fighting and the territorial scope and humanitarian consequences of the conflict have risen notably since 2018. According to United Nations data made public in early March 2022, between 60,000 and 100,000 people have been forced to leave their homes due to the rise in violence since 2018. According to the research centre ACLED, while 13 OPM attacks were reported against state security forces in 2017, they doubled in 2018 and reached 137 in 2021. Along the same lines, the data compiled by IPAC show that since 2018, the frequency of violence rose from an average of 11 incidents per year between 2010 and 2017 to an average of 52 incidents per year between 2018 and 2021. Since 2018, there have been 183 clashes between government troops and combatants and 74 episodes of violence against civilians. According to IPAC, 66% of the 320 deaths caused by the armed conflict between 2010 and 2021 were reported between 2018 and 2021. In that period, 52 members of the security forces, 34 combatants and 125 civilians lost their lives (a substantial increase compared to the 53 civilians who had died between 2010 and 2017). According to an ACLED report published in October 2022, since 2018 the geographical scope of the conflict has increased significantly beyond the OPM's traditional strongholds (the Black Triangle, which includes the regencies of Puncak Jaya, Lanny Jaya and Mimika). Recently, the regencies of Intan Jaya, Puncak and Yahukimo have also been affected by violence. According to the Indonesian government, in recent years the OPM has had a much larger and more sophisticated arsenal than the rudimentary weapons it had used in previous decades, acquired due to the increasing attacks on military or police posts or the purchase of equipment from regions affected by violence such as Ambon (Indonesia), Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) and Mindanao (Philippines). Jakarta accuses the group

of obtaining large amounts of money from extortion and illegal mining activities in several of the regions where it operates. According to the IPAC report, the OPM's greater capacity for war has resulted in a change in its tactics and military modus operandi, increasing the intensity and duration of clashes with the Indonesian Armed Forces to ensure territorial control over certain regions.

According to the Human Rights Monitor, the armed conflict caused the death of 68 people between January and late November 2022, slightly more than the previous year. Compared to 2021, the main difference in the dynamics of violence was the clear increase in OPM attacks against the civilian population. Thirty-nine of the 43 civilians who died in the armed conflict in 2022 did so as a result of OPM attacks. Notable were the deaths of eight workers repairing a telecommunications tower in the Puncak district in early March, an attack on a truck in the town of Nogolai (Nduga regency) in mid-July in which 10 civilians were killed and two others were injured and an attack on a road construction site between the districts of Bintuni Bay and Maybrat that killed four civilians (and led to the disappearance of another), for which the OPM claimed responsibility. In most of these types of attacks, the OPM declared that the victims were spies or state informants. In recent years, the OPM has repeatedly called on non-Papuans to leave conflict-affected regions because their safety cannot be guaranteed. In early March, the UN special rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples, extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions and internally displaced persons issued a statement expressing their alarm and condemnation of the human rights violations committed in the last three years by the state security forces, including torture, forced disappearance, extrajudicial execution and the denial of adequate food and health services to internally displaced persons. The United Nations also pointed out that since 2018 they had written to the government over 10 times to voice their concern, urgently request humanitarian access to the region and begin investigations into the abuses committed against the indigenous population. In the middle of the year, the OPM also called on the United Nations to intervene in Papua on the grounds that the government, which it calls colonial, is committing crimes against humanity against the local population. The government categorically denied these accusations and criticised the United Nations for expressing biased and not very rigorous opinions. Jakarta also declared that since the end of 2021, the Indonesian Armed Forces have been implementing a new security approach that not only addresses counterinsurgency operations, but also others related to development, education, health and building infrastructure. This new approach, which the government says could lead to the withdrawal of some non-organic troops from Papua, was met with scepticism and criticism from various human rights organisations, but Jakarta noted that since its implementation in 2022, the number of civilians and OPM combatants killed in the conflict have fallen significantly compared to the previous year. In late December, Indonesian President Joko Widodo supported reducing the number of troops in Papua, though he did not give any details about it and stressed the government's intention to remain firm in its fight against the OPM. In March, Amnesty International also criticised the rise in violence and human rights violations and called for the revocation of the permit to build a new gold mine in Wabu Block (Intan Jaya regency) on the grounds that it could exacerbate the conflict in the region. Along the same lines, the OPM demanded a halt to the project and the closure of the Grasberg mine, operated by the US multinational company Freeport McMoRan.

Furthermore, **there were many protests in Papua and other parts of Indonesia against Jakarta's decision to revise and prolong the 2011 Special Autonomy Law and to create three new provinces in Papua New Guinea (Central Papua, South Papua and Central Papua Highlands) in 2022**. The government claimed that the new administrative division of the region was aimed at improving governance and economic development in smaller provinces, but according to the OPM and some civil society groups in Papua, it was only intended to strengthen the government's political and military control over the region and weaken the Papuan secessionist movement. In 2003, shortly after passing the Special Autonomy Law, Jakarta's decision to divide the region (then called Irian Jaya) into two provinces also sparked protests.

The Pacific

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

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

In 2022, many episodes of community violence and others linked to the elections in July caused the death of hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands. In late September, **the United Nations resident coordinator in the country estimated that election-related violence had affected around 265,000 people and displaced around 90,000 people to the Highlands region**, especially the provinces of Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela. The resident coordinator also said that around 25,000 minors were no longer attending school and that approximately 560,000 people had no (or very limited) access to basic health services due to the destruction of infrastructure, the disruption of supplies and the flight of healthcare staff. In late July, OCHA said that according to unofficial estimates, more than 300 people had been killed in the Highlands region since May, about half of them in Enga province, while warning that this figure could rise in the following weeks. In the provinces of Enga (especially in Porgara) and Hela (especially in Magarima), hundreds of houses were destroyed and many public buildings were burned down by sectarian violence that broke out in the middle of the year. Some media outlets said that the episodes of violence specifically attributable to the national elections that took place between 4 and 22 July, including the election campaign and the counting process (which lasted until early August), caused the death of about 50 people. However, the United Nations said that much of the community, tribal and clan violence that occurred in the Highlands region could have to do with reasons that are not strictly election-related, such as land disputes, but they may also have been exacerbated or accelerated due to the instability and tension associated with the elections. In the town of Porgera, for example, where much of the community violence took place, tensions date back to the closure of the gold mine in 2020, which provided approximately 10% of the country's exports, but violence only broke out when the Indonesian Army guarded the removal of ballot boxes in late July. According to local authorities, more than 20 clans in the region were involved in various kinds of clashes. During the spiral of violence, the Indonesian government documented around 70 cases of women or girls who had been raped or kidnapped. In addition, although there are no official records in this regard, the United Nations noted in April that an average of 388 cases of violence related to accusations of witchcraft occur each year in the Highlands region. For example, in the province of Enga in late July, nine women branded as witches were kidnapped and tortured, four of whom died, with three others left in critical condition. Although the country already has a law on witchcraft, at the beginning of the year a new law began to be processed to prevent and mitigate the phenomenon.

Moreover, community clashes in late October between the Kulumata and Kuboma peoples on the island of Kiriwina (eastern province of Milne Bay) caused by the death of 32 people and the disappearance of another 15. In mid-December, the police declared that 20 people had been killed in community clashes in the Koroba region of Hela province. In both cases, the government deployed additional police officers and sent mediation teams to try to de-escalate the tension and violence.

2.3.4. Europe

Eastern Europe

Moldova	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Government Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, political opposition, Russia

Summary:
Moldova proclaimed itself an independent republic in 1991 during the dissolution of the USSR. Historically, its current territory to the left of the Dniester River was part of the mediaeval principality of Moldavia, which also included parts of present-day Romania and Ukraine. It went through stages when it was under the control of different powers, including the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, Romania and the USSR. During World War II and after the non-aggression pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia established the Moldovan SSR in 1940 (which would become one of the fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics that were part of the USSR) uniting part of the historical region of Bessarabia and Transdniestria, a territorial strip east of the Dniester River that was formerly part of an autonomous region of the Ukrainian SSR. Today a country of 2.6 million inhabitants with an absolute poverty rate of 24.5% (2021), Moldova is beset by tension in different intersecting areas. For instance, it has an unresolved conflict over the status of Transdniestria, an area with a Russian-speaking majority that has been de facto independent since 1992, supported by Russia and internationally recognised as part of Moldova. The country has also been affected by instability and political division, including in relation to its outlook on foreign policy, and serious corruption problems. It has maintained neutrality with respect to NATO, though it also has a cooperative relationship with the military alliance. Tension between Russia and Moldova has increased at different periods, including in the energy sphere, as Moldova has traditionally been dependent on Russian gas. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 increased tension and uncertainty in neighbouring Moldova due to the risks of the conflict spreading.

The tension in Moldova increased, influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, while the security, political, social and economic situation deteriorated and Russia exerted pressure on the country in different areas, such as energy. In terms of security, the Russian invasion of Ukraine raised alarms in the country. **Already in February the Parliament of Moldova approved the introduction of the state of emergency, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and it was prolonged several times – the last one in November for another sixty days.** Fears increased over risks of the war spreading. In April, Russian General and Deputy Commander of the Central Military District Rustam Minnekayev declared that Russia aimed to seize control of eastern and southern Ukraine in the

second phase of the war, including the city of Odessa, and reaching as far as Transdniestria. Furthermore, at the end of the month and in May, the self-proclaimed authorities of Transdniestria reported several explosions and incidents in the territory under their control, though fortunately there were no casualties.[52] However, the risk of the war spilling over remained low, due to Ukraine's continued control of Odessa and other factors. The authorities of Moldova and Transdniestria maintained contact during the year, ruled out any expansion of the conflict and promoted a negotiated solution. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine kept Moldova mired in uncertainty. In November, a journalistic investigation indicated that the Russian security services had received orders in June to prepare scenarios for a "second front" in Transdniestria and Moldova; and in December the Moldovan intelligence chief also said that there was a risk that Russia could try to advance militarily towards Moldova and establish a corridor with the Transdniestria region in 2023, although the Moldovan intelligence agency later clarified that he had been referring to different scenarios that Russia could try. Physical proximity to Ukraine involved various security incidents. In October, the Moldovan authorities reported that three cruise missiles fired by Russia from the Black Sea and aimed at Ukraine passed through Moldovan airspace. On several occasions, they also said that Russian missiles had landed on Moldovan soil.

Political tensions also rose in the final months of the year because opposition demonstrations, which had begun in the summer, became more widespread in September and continued in subsequent months. They took place mainly in the capital, Chisinau, and were organised by the party Shor, which has ties to Russia. The protesters demanded an end to the sanctions imposed on Russia and the resignation of Moldovan President Maia Sandu and of her government, which has a pro-EU inclination. Analysts viewed the protests as an attempt by Russia to destabilise the country through the Kremlin's ties to pro-Russian opposition parties.

Another source of tension was energy, an area in which Moldova was dependent on Russian gas (Gazprom) supplied through a transit pipeline through Ukraine, as well as electricity from Transdniestria and, to a lesser extent, from Ukraine. **Russia reduced its gas supplies to Moldova and Transdniestria in October and December. In November, it threatened to cut off all Russian gas supplies to Moldova if it did not pay Transdniestria's accumulated gas debt, which ultimately did not happen. The Moldovan authorities considered this an attempt to destabilise the country.** The cuts in gas also had negative economic impacts on Transdniestria, which declared a state of economic emergency in October. Blackouts also occurred in Moldova in November due to Russia's bombardment of the Ukrainian electrical grid. Furthermore, the power supply from Transdniestria to Moldova was reduced in October and totally interrupted in November, influenced by the lighter flow of Russian gas, on which the Cuciurgan power plant in Transdniestria depends for the production and supply of electricity to the region and Moldova. In December, Chisinau and Tiraspol reached a provisional agreement whereby all imported Russian gas will go to Transdniestria and Transdniestria will supply electricity to Moldova at an agreed price well below what is paid for alternative electricity coming from Romania. Meanwhile, Moldova took steps towards energy diversification during the year, including the synchronisation of its electricity grid with the European continental grid and the purchase of gas from the European market. Overall, the Moldovan population faced a complex socioeconomic situation during the year due to rising prices, including for food, non-food products and services, with impacts on the population in a country considered one of the poorest in Europe. International actors like the EU committed humanitarian aid, as well as financial support for energy diversification. The EU also granted Moldova EU candidate country status in June, along with Ukraine. Diplomatic contacts between international actors and the Moldovan government also intensified.

Moldova was also a country of transit and a destination for the Ukrainian refugee population, with 726,705 entries into the country between the start of the invasion (24 February 2022) and mid-December, according to UNHCR data. As of 23 December, there were 99,524 refugees from Ukraine in the country (59% were women, 48% were children and 21% were seniors). In a visit to Moldova in May, the UN Secretary-General described the country as Ukraine's most fragile neighbour.

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria, Russia

Summary:
Transdniestria is a 4,000 km2 enclave with half a million inhabitants that are mostly Russian-speaking. Legally under Moldovan sovereignty, but with de facto independence, since the 1990s it has been the stage for an unresolved dispute regarding its status. The conflict surfaced during the final stages of the breakup of the USSR, when fears increased in Transdniestria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdniestria rejected Moldovan sovereignty and declared itself independent. This sparked an escalation in the number of incidents, which eventually became an armed conflict in 1992. A ceasefire agreement that same year brought the war to an end and gave way to a peace process under international mediation. One of the

52. See the summary on Moldova (Transdniestria) in this chapter.

main issues is the status of the territory. Moldova defends its territorial integrity, but is willing to accept a special status for the entity, while Transdniestria has fluctuated between proposals for a confederalist model that would give the area broad powers and demands full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in Transdniestria. The issue of Transdniestria is one of the lines of tension in a broader scenario of fragility in Moldova, a former Soviet republic and one of the poorest countries in Europe, which is affected by political division running along a pro-EU and pro-Russia fault line and by a history of corruption problems. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 increased uncertainty in the Transdniestria region and across Moldova, which borders Ukraine.

Tension rose around the conflict between Moldova and Transdniestria, influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the risks that the conflict might spill over, though both the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities restated their commitment to dialogue to resolve the conflict over the status of the disputed region. Russia's military advances in southern Ukraine at the start of the invasion generated uncertainty about the risks of the invasion and war expanding to Transdniestria, a region bordering Ukraine where Russia maintains a military presence. One part of this Russian military presence is under the umbrella of the trilateral peacekeeping force made up of forces from Moldova, Transdniestria and Russia and the other part is a contingent of Russian forces inherited from a military unit of the Soviet Army. The second contingent remains in Moldova without the consent of its government, which has asked it to leave. Moldova declared a state of emergency in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. Kiev closed its border crossings with Transdniestria. In April, Russian General and Deputy Commander of the Central Military District Rustam Minnekayev declared that Russia aimed to seize control of eastern and southern Ukraine in the second phase of the war, including the city of Odessa, and reaching as far as Transdniestria.

In late April, the self-proclaimed authorities of Transdniestria reported several explosions and incidents in the territory under their control. These incidents did not cause any casualties and included a rocket launcher attack on the empty headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior in the capital, Tiraspol; an alleged attack against the local air base; explosions against two radio antennas in Maiac and incidents in Cobasna (a town that maintains a Soviet ammunition depot) that allegedly involved drone flights and shooting. The Transdniestrian authorities blamed Ukraine for the incidents, raised the situation to "red alert", imposed restrictions on the movement of people and increased the number of checkpoints. Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita described the security incidents as provocative actions in Transdniestria aimed at destabilising the region. Moldovan President Maia Sandu blamed the incidents on pro-war factions, without specifying details, but ruled out any immediate risks of the conflict in Ukraine spreading to Moldova, at least to territory under government control. Ukraine's Ministry of Defence blamed the actions on Russia's security service. In May, Tiraspol reported new attacks against a military police station and an oil depot. Despite the rise in tension, the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities stayed in contact and made statements ruling out the spread of armed violence and the option of war and promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict. Various meetings took place during the year between senior political representatives of Moldova and Transdniestria, involving Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration Oleg Serebrian and Transdniestrian chief negotiator Vitaly Ignatiev, as well as representatives of the 5+2 negotiating format. No significant agreements were reached in the process, but it was possible to maintain a fluid dialogue in a year of great uncertainty due to the war in Ukraine. Taken together, the maintenance of control of the Odessa region in Ukraine by Ukrainian forces reduced the risks of the military expansion of the conflict in the neighbouring country to the Transdniestria region. Analysts also pointed to other factors that reduced risk, such as Transdniestria's highly integrated trade with Moldova and Europe and others. Nevertheless, the tension and uncertainty continued until the end of the year. In November, a journalistic investigation indicated that the Russian security services had received orders in June to prepare scenarios for a "second front" in Transdniestria and Moldova; and in December the Moldovan intelligence chief also said that there was a risk that Russia could try to advance militarily towards Moldova and establish a corridor with the Transdniestria region in 2023, although the Moldovan intelligence agency later clarified that he had been referring to different scenarios that Russia could try.

Another line of tension was the energy issue in a context of Moldova's dependence on Russian gas and electricity coming mostly from Transdniestria and to a lesser extent from Ukraine. Russia reduced its gas supplies to Moldova and Transdniestria in October and December. In November, it threatened to cut off all Russian gas supplies to Moldova if it did not pay Transdniestria's accumulated gas debt, which ultimately did not happen. The Moldovan authorities considered this an attempt to destabilise the country. The cuts in gas also had negative economic impacts on Transdniestria, which declared a state of economic emergency in October. Blackouts also occurred in Moldova in November due to Russia's bombardment of the Ukrainian electrical grid. Furthermore, the power supply from Transdniestria to Moldova was reduced in October and totally interrupted in November, influenced by the lighter flow of Russian gas, on which the Cuciurgan power plant in Transdniestria depends for the production and supply of electricity to the region and Moldova. In December, Chisinau and Tiraspol reached a provisional agreement whereby all imported Russian gas will go to

Transdniestria and Transdniestria will supply electricity to Moldova at an agreed price well below what is paid for alternative electricity coming from Romania. Overall, the conflict between Moldova and Transdniestria was reflected by tension across Moldova in 2022, with the state of emergency decreed in February still in force at the end of the year.[53]

Russia and the Caucasus

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

Summary:
The conflict 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 involved sporadic violations of the ceasefire. Since the 1994 ceasefire there have been several escalations of violence, such as the one in 2016 which led to several hundred fatalities. The war resumed in September 2020. Around 6,800 military personnel from both countries were killed or missing, several hundred civilians were killed and around 91,000 Armenians and 84,000 Azerbaijanis were displaced. In November of that year, the parties reached an agreement that put an end to the war and represented a complete change of the status quo (Azerbaijani control of the districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and part of Nagorno-Karabakh and the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces), but left Nagorno-Karabakh's political status unresolved.

The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh made for a fragile situation, with a new escalation of violence caused by Azerbaijan's air strikes against Armenian targets along and south of the border that claimed over 280 lives and wounded around 500. Although there were diplomatic contacts and some success in the first half of the year with the establishment of the border demarcation commissions between both countries and the commitment to move towards a peace agreement, the situation remained tense in practice. During the year Azerbaijan affirmed its sovereignty over the region as well as the status of citizens Azerbaijan for the Armenian population in the region and ruled out addressing the situation of the Armenian population in the region with any international actor nor with Armenia. In addition, there were security incidents both in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the interstate border during the year, as well as Azerbaijani military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia. Baku carried out military operations and attacks that resulted in the takeover of some areas of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, such as in March, August and September. The Azerbaijani Army's air offensive in September against parts of Armenia on the central and southern border resulted in the deadliest interstate escalation since the 2020 war, with 207 Armenian soldiers and 80 other Azerbaijanis killed, several civilian fatalities, dozens of civilians wounded and over 2,700 Armenian civilians displaced, among other impacts. Armenia and Azerbaijan announced a ceasefire on 14 September following an earlier failed truce promoted by Russia and international calls for a ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations. Pashinyan had expressed his willingness to reach an agreement with Azerbaijan if Baku recognised Armenia's territorial integrity, including 50 km^2 of Armenia taken by Baku in 2021 and 2022, adding that Armenia in turn would recognise the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. After his announcement, a few thousand people (according to some media outlets) protested against Pashinyan in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, as well as in the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert, and in Gyumri, against what they perceived as concessions. The military escalation and truce in September were followed by new diplomatic moves and international calls for dialogue. The sides agreed in October to deploy an EU civil observation mission on the Armenian side of the international border and also committed to mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty, based on the United Nations Charter and the 1991 Alma-Ata Protocol. The mission was deployed on 20 October and ended in December. On 30 October, thousands of people (40,000 according to local authorities) demonstrated in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, rejecting the possibility of the region coming under Azerbaijani control. On that same day, the Nagorno-Karabakh Parliament, which organised the protest, issued a declaration in defence of the region's sovereignty and its right to self-determination and against any document or proposal that might question it.

The issue of the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, was a source of tension and a topic of discussion during the year. In August, Baku announced that it had completed its section of the new route that will replace the Lachin corridor according to the 2020 ceasefire agreement and accused Yerevan

53. See the summary on Moldova in this chapter.

of delaying its section. In addition to the incidents in August and the evacuation of the population from towns around the corridor, **at the end of the year tensions rose due to the blockade of the corridor in December by Azerbaijani protesters opposed to mining activity in the region**. **The blockade hindered access to basic goods and generated the risk of a humanitarian emergency**. International actors such as the US, the EU and the UN Secretary-General called for it to reopen. By the year's end, the corridor remained blocked.

South-east Europe

Serbia – Kosovo	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	↑
Type:	Self-government, Identity, Government International[54]
Main parties:	Serbia, Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community of Kosovo, UN mission (UNMIK), NATO mission (KFOR), EU mission (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.

Tensions rose between Serbia and Kosovo over disputed issues such as the recognition of vehicle license plates, which led to security incidents, border closures and the placement of troops on high alert by Serbia. One of the main challenges facing the process during the year was the dispute around reciprocity measures on vehicle registrations and identity cards. The 2021 provisional agreement on license plates expired in April 2022. Both issues were addressed during the year in the EU-facilitated negotiating process.[55] In late June, the Kosovar government announced that it would require Kosovar license plates starting on 30 September, as well as temporary identity documents issued by Pristina to people with Serbian identification to enter Kosovo starting in August. The announcement received harsh criticism from Serbia and Kosovar Serb representatives and was followed by barricades and violent incidents that lasted several days. Armed individuals participated in the protests, indicated with alarm in the UN Secretary-General's report. The Kosovar government blamed the Serbian government for the blockades and protests. Amidst international calls, Pristina postponed the implementation of the identification documents to 1 September. In late August, the parties reached an agreement on the freedom of movement of people.[56] However, the dispute over the license plate issue dragged on. After Kosovo postponed implementation of the new license plate system until late October and following new incidents of violence, Kosovo issued a series of deadlines with a warning period for motorists until 21 November 2022 and the full entry into force of the new system in April 2023.

Despite the November agreement, tensions simmered in northern Kosovo. Several hundred people including Kosovo Serb politicians, mayors, civil servants and MPs resigned from their positions in the Kosovo Serb municipalities of northern Kosovo and from the Kosovo Parliament in November, complaining of non-compliance with EU-facilitated agreements between Serbia and Kosovo. The mass resignation followed the suspension of a regional director of the North Kosovo Police Service who had called for disobeying the Kosovar government over the new license plate system. Following the mass resignation, the Kosovar government planned to hold early municipal elections in northern Kosovo in December, though they were rejected by the main Kosovo Serb party, Srpska Lista. There were a few violent incidents against polling facilities and barricades were erected to protest the arrest of a Kosovar Serb policeman for alleged links to one of the attacks. The Kosovar government finally announced that the elections would be postponed until April 2023. However, the tension continued until the end of the year, with the expansion of the barricades to six towns in northern Kosovo. Serbia asked NATO for authorisation to deploy 1,000 Serbian troops in Kosovo, though the military organisation declined to provide it, and ordered the Serbian Army to prepare for the "highest level of combat readiness". Kosovo closed three border crossings due to roadblocks caused by the barricades. New diplomatic meetings took place. In late December, Serbia announced that it was dismantling the barricades and deactivating the order for the Serbian Army to remain on maximum alert. The policeman whose arrest by Kosovo triggered some of the protests was placed under house arrest. Kosovo also stated that there were no lists of Kosovo Serb citizens to

54. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered "international" since although its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognized as a State by more than a hundred of countries.
55. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
56. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

be arrested or prosecuted for the protests and for setting up the barricades. The elimination of these lists, if they existed, had been one of the Kosovo Serbs' demands. During 2022 the tension also involved other issues, such as Kosovo's refusal to facilitate voting within Kosovo for the Kosovo Serb population with dual nationality in the Serbian constitutional referendum in mid-January and in the April general elections. Therefore, it abandoned its previous policy of allowing the OSCE to facilitate voting on its territory. At the same time, amid increased tension across Europe due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, international actors urged Kosovo and Serbia to move forward with the normalisation of relations through a Franco-German proposal. In turn, Kosovo formally applied for membership in the EU in December.

2.3.5. Middle East

Mashreq

Egypt	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government Internal
Main parties:	Government, political and social opposition

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, political repression and increasing control by military sectors.

In 2022, the **Egyptian government continued to receive criticism and complaints from human rights organisations for its persistent campaign of repression and silencing of dissidents and for violating various human rights**. The authorities took some actions that some critical observers considered symbolic or cosmetic and interpreted as attempts to appease international disputes, especially on the eve of the annual global conference on climate change (COP27) at the Egyptian seaside resort of Sharm El Sheikh in November.[57] Thus, for example, hundreds of prisoners were released over the course of the year, but many of them were re-arrested and there were many new arrests. **Amnesty International indicated that before COP27, the authorities released 897 people detained for political reasons, but arrested nearly three times as many others**, including hundreds of activists that called for demonstrations during the international event. Thousands of people perceived to be opponents or critics of the government remained in detention at the end of the year (according to some estimates, around 60,000, including over 20 journalists arbitrarily arrested and accused of spreading "fake news", misusing social media or terrorism. People linked to the Islamist opposition and other dissidents, such as former presidential candidate Abdelmoniem Aboulfotoh, were convicted on similar charges in proceedings denounced for their irregularities and political motivation. The authorities also detained, persecuted and harassed many human rights activists. In January, the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANRHI), one of the leading human rights organisations in the country, announced that it was closing after 18 years of operation due to threats, attacks and arrests by the National Security Agency and the imminent deadline (in April) to register as an NGO under a draconian law on associations approved by the government in 2019. Meanwhile, **people under police custody continued to die in suspicious circumstances and without proper investigations despite indications of torture and/or lack of care**. Security forces were also accused of subjecting hundreds of detainees to enforced disappearances, some for months, while allegations of torture and cruel treatment persisted in prisons, police stations and National Security Agency facilities. In a joint report released in April, the NGOs Egyptian Front for Human Rights and Freedom Initiative denounced security forces' and prison workers' systematic use of sexual violence to torture women, men and transgender people. International human rights NGOs also condemned the death sentences and executions of people after unfair trials.

The **government of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi**, who launched a national human rights strategy in September 2021 and declared that 2022 would be "the year of civil society", **called for a national dialogue in April with parts of the political opposition. Though various preparatory actions were reported during the year, the initiative had not been formally launched by the end of 2022**. The secretariat responsible for its promotion agreed to open the dialogue to all the political and social forces of the country, except for members of the Muslim Brotherhood,

57. For further information, see Pamela Urrutia, Emergencia climática y conflictos: retos para la paz en la región MENA, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau,* No. 22, December 2022.

and excluded possible amendments to the Constitution as a result of the talks. The work of this national dialogue will be structured around three areas (political, economic and social) and will result in non-binding recommendations, which will be sent to President al-Sisi so that he can decide which will be adopted. Parts of the political opposition, civil society and external observers expressed scepticism that this initiative could signify the beginning of genuine reforms or address the human rights crisis in the country.[58] Until late 2022, the opposition Civil Democratic Movement, a coalition that brings together around a dozen secular parties willing to participate, made its involvement conditional on the release of over 1,000 people. One of the main concerns of public opinion was the economic situation, given the serious impact of the war in Ukraine on the country. Despite complaints about the human rights situation in Egypt, France, Italy and the United States continued to sell arms to the North African country. In January, Washington announced the sale of arms for 2.5 billion dollars. However, at the same time, the decision to withhold 130 million of the 300 million dollars in military aid to Egypt approved in 2021, conditional upon progress in human rights, was upheld through 2022. In October, the US Congress raised this figure by 75 million dollars. In November, the European Parliament approved a resolution condemning the human rights situation, calling for a thorough review of the EU's relations with the country. European legislators also called on the UN Human Rights Council to investigate the situation in the country.

Israel – Syria, Lebanon	
Intensity:	3
Trend:	=
Type:	System, Resources, Territory International
Main parties:	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia), Iran

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 decades-long tension between Israel, Syria and Lebanon, which has been influenced by the armed conflict in Syria in recent years, continued to drive periodic acts of violence that left a death toll that is difficult to determine. As in previous years, **various Israeli attacks on Syrian soil were reported throughout 2022, targeting Syrian government bases and forces linked to Iran and Hezbollah**. These attacks took place at various points in Syria, including the Damascus and Aleppo airports, and left at least 25 soldiers dead, in addition to one civilian, and injured many different people. Israeli media outlets justified some of these attacks by claiming that they were intended to prevent the transfer of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah. The leader of Hezbollah said in February that his organisation was producing drones and that with the help of Iran it would soon be able to transform them into precision-guided rockets. That same month, Israel reported that it had shot down a Hezbollah drone that had entered its airspace. Regular UN reports on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, which ended the armed conflict in 2006, repeated Israel's continuous violation of Lebanese airspace in hundreds of episodes over the course of the year. **At the end of the year, an attack on a convoy belonging to the UN mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) killed one soldier and wounded three others in Al-Aaqbya**, in the southern part of the country. In its reports, the UN found that no progress had been made on a permanent ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel throughout 2022.

One of the sources of greatest tension and expectations during the year was related to the demarcation of the maritime border between Lebanon and Israel. In June, the arrival of a boat at the maritime border to prepare the facilities for the extraction of gas for Israel from the Karish field prompted Lebanese President Michel Aaoun to warn that any activity in the disputed areas while the negotiations were ongoing was a provocative and hostile act. Israeli ministers said that their priority was to protect Israel's strategic interests and that their country was ready to defend them. The Hezbollah leader called on all Lebanese political forces to unite in defence of their maritime resources and threatened to attack Israeli gas infrastructure if it started extracting gas before the demarcation agreement was concluded. In July, the Lebanese group launched several drones over Karish that were intercepted by Israel. Two days later, the Lebanese prime minister said that interference by non-state actors in the negotiations was putting Lebanon at unnecessary risk. Nevertheless, Nasrallah insisted on an armed attack if the dispute was not resolved by September, when Israel planned to start its gas exploitation.[59] **Finally, after years of intermittent US mediation, in October Lebanon and Israel reached an agreement to demarcate their maritime border.** Signed after various efforts made by US Special Envoy Amos

58. Khaled Dawoud, "Egyptian 'national dialogue' will kick off amid difficult domestic situation", Middle East Institute, 20 October 2022.
59. International Crisis Group, Time to Resolve the Lebanon-Israel Maritime Border Dispute, Alert, Middle East and North Africa, 18 August 2022.

Hochstein, many described the agreement as historic. Yet some analysts had doubts about its implementation given the political fragility in Lebanon and the rejection of the agreement by Benjamin Netanyahu, who won the November elections and returned to power in Israel at the end of the year.[60] Despite his threats to dismantle the agreement, analysts said that Netanyahu will surely prioritise its economic benefits and not antagonise the United States. After the intensification of tension in preceding months, the agreement was considered a solution that shut down the possibility of an armed conflict in the short term, though observers stressed that it is not a guarantee of long-term stability, nor does it necessarily reduce the prospects for a possible new war between Israel and Hezbollah.[61]

After years of intermittent US mediation, in October Lebanon and Israel reached an agreement to demarcate their maritime border

Lebanon	
Intensity:	2
Trend:	=
Type:	Government, System Internationalised internal
Main parties:	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed groups ISIS and Jabhat al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham

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 remained characterised by **an enduring political impasse and a severe economic crisis with serious consequences for the living conditions of the population** and concern about the security situation. **In May, the country held the first parliamentary elections since the massive popular protests of 2019**. Human rights groups complained of vote buying, incitement to violence and abuse of power by political parties. Several incidents took place during the elections, including clashes between supporters of the Christian-based Lebanese Forces party and the Shia-based Hezbollah-Amal groups. Faced with the disagreements and power struggles between the different factions, political leaders evoked the memory of the civil war. Although independent candidates linked to the 2019 civil protest movement won 13 of the 128 seats, the vote did not significantly change the political landscape, which continued to be characterised by deadlock in the following months. Acting Prime Minister Najib Mikati secured the backing of 54 MPs (the lowest level of support since the civil war ended) and was tasked with forming a new government, but he had failed to do so by the year's end amid persistent disagreements over the allocation of different ministries to the various sectarian communities in the country. In late October, the term of President Michel Aoun also expired. Parliament held 11 unsuccessful sessions to choose his successor between September and December. The political atmosphere had an impact on the possibilities of addressing the deep economic crisis in the country, indicated by the World Bank as one of the most serious in the world since the 19th century. The crisis has caused the local currency to lose more than 95% of its value and by the end of 2022, the devaluation of the Lebanese pound had reached historic levels (47,000 Lebanese pounds per dollar). **The population, 80% of which is living in poverty, has been affected by the swift rise in prices, cutback on subsidies and serious deterioration of services, particularly in the health, education and security sectors, as well as the dearth of supplies like water and electricity.** Food insecurity increased significantly in a context also affected by the repercussions of the war in Ukraine (Lebanon imported 80% of its grain from Ukraine). According to the World Food Programme (WFP), from October 2019 to November 2022, the price of food had increased by 1,800%. The intermittent lack of bread caused incidents throughout the country during the year and there were continuous strikes, demonstrations and roadblocks to protest the deteriorating economic situation. Between August and November, around 20 banks were approached by armed people who demanded access to their deposits. The UN also warned about armed incidents and shootings attributed to "personal disputes" that killed and injured dozens throughout the year. In this context, a dozen networks of female mediators were activated to try to resolve local disputes and prevent community violence throughout the year.[62]

The deterioration of the economic situation especially affected groups in vulnerable situations, including the refugee population that the country hosts (including 1.5 million Syrians). By way of example, it is estimated that nine out of 10 Syrian refugees in Lebanon lived

60. See the summary on Lebanon in this chapter and the summary on Israel-Palestine in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).
61. Ksenia Svetlova, The Israel-Lebanon maritime deal is an example of successful US-led mediation. Can it be copy-pasted to other Middle Eastern arenas?, *Atlantic Council,* 28 October 2022.
62. See chapter 3 (Gender, peace and security).

in conditions of extreme poverty in 2022. Several shipwrecks of boats that had been trying to reach Europe were reported throughout the year, with dozens of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian fatalities (one shipwreck off the coast of Tripoli in April, another near the Turkish coast in August, a third on the Syrian coast in September, in addition to many others). According to the information that it had been able to access, UNHCR verified that movements at sea in this area that involved the displaced and migrant population had increased, from 31 with 1,570 people involved in 2021 to 55 with 4,629 people involved in 2022. Human rights NGOs also warned of forced returns of the Syrian refugee population. In addition, there were still many different challenges to breaking impunity. Groups like Human Rights Watch said that the political establishment continued to obstruct the investigation into the devastating explosion in Beirut in August 2020 that killed over 220 people and injured 7,000 others. It also reported that an investigation into four political assassinations in the last two years was beset by failures and negligence. A budget had still not been allocated to the independent national commission established in 2020 to investigate the whereabouts of more than 17,000 people who had gone missing during the country's civil war (1975-1990). Various security incidents between different factions in Palestinian refugee camps were also reported throughout the year, including shootings that killed at least one person and injured several others.

Lebanon continued to be affected by a persistent political impasse and by a severe economic crisis that had a special impact on groups in vulnerable situations, including the large refugee population that the country hosts

The Gulf

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

Summary:
This tension is framed within a political context that is marked by the decades-long polarisation between the conservative and reformist sectors in the country, and by the key role of religious authorities and armed forces –especially the Republican Guard– in Iran's power politics. Internal tensions rose towards the middle of 2009 when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected in elections that were reported to be fraudulent by the opposition and that fueled the largest popular protests in the country since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The end of Ahmadinejad's two consecutive mandates and the election of the moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani in 2013 seem to have started a new stage in the country, giving rise to expectations regarding a possible decrease in the internal political tension and an eventual change in the relations between Iran and the outer world. However, internal tensions have persisted.

Tensions in Iran escalated during the last four months of the year, when **new popular demonstrations were staged against the authorities as part of a protest movement that has been considered one of the greatest challenges to the theocratic regime since 1979**. What set off the protests was the death of a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Jîna Amini, while she was in police custody in September after being arrested for wearing her hijab (head covering) inappropriately, according to regime standards. Her death, which Tehran claimed was caused by a previous medical condition but was blamed on mistreatment by the security forces, led to mass protests that multiplied throughout the country. Over 1,600 demonstrations had been reported by early December, with high levels of participation by women, who put their rights and freedoms at the heart of their demands.[63] The protesters received crosscutting support and made their grievances and broader demands clear in social, political, economic, gender-related and other spheres. As on previous occasions, particularly the 2019 protests, the regime cracked down harshly to quell the movement through the security forces and Basij militias. **At the end of the year, various body counts indicated that nearly 500 people had died as a result of the crackdown, including around one hundred women**. Approximately 60 members of the security forces had also lost their lives in incidents after the protests began. Thousands of other people may have been injured during the regime's crackdown, which observably used excessive force and gender-based violence, such as shots fired at women that deliberately targeted their faces and genitals. Until late 2022, thousands of people (over 20,000, according to some sources) were detained and some of them were put on trial without due process, according to complaints by human rights NGOs. The penalties included death sentences and the first execution of a participant in the protests took place in early December. Human rights groups warned that the crackdown disproportionately affected minors. It was estimated that by the end of 2022, at least 58 children (46 boys and 12 girls) had been killed in actions by the security forces since September and many more children had reportedly been detained in raids that were even carried out in schools. As of November, cases of poisoning of girls in schools were also reported. The regime also took

63. For further information, see Pamela Urrutia, La revuelta de las mujeres en Irán: ¿un punto de inflexión? Claves desde el análisis de conflictos con perspectiva feminista, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau,* No. 27, March 2023.

action to try to prevent or silence the protests by cutting power and the Internet and by threatening those who told their stories to the media.

The protests were staged in a context of accumulated grievances and rising social discontent due to action taken by the government of Ebrahim Raisi, a member of the hardline conservative wing who came to power in mid-2021. Since before Amini's death, she had been complaining about the intensification of repression against social and student leaders, the reinforcement of the "moral police" and more steps taken to control and monitor women's dress codes. Protests in several provinces in the country in May 2022 due to the economic situation and cuts in subsidies had already caused the death of at least five protesters that month. **After Amini's death, the crackdown on the protests was especially intense in areas inhabited by ethnic and religious minorities** (especially in Kurdish and Balochi areas) where the demonstrations also reflected disaffection with the regime after decades of discriminatory policies limiting their cultural and political rights. The city of Zahedan, in Sistan Balochistan, witnessed the worst day since the protests began, with more than 90 deaths on 30 September after demonstrations in solidarity with the protests in the rest of the country and local demonstrations against the rape of a girl by a senior police officer. According to human rights groups, 60% of the minors who have died since the start of the protests were Kurdish or Baloch. Tehran blamed the internal protests on actions orchestrated from abroad and took several retaliatory actions against Kurdish groups based in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region (KRI) of northern Iraq, particularly against the KDPI and Komala, which in the past have fought against the regime's centralist and assimilationist policies. At least 16 people have died and dozens have been injured in these attacks, according to media reports.

Iran – USA, Israel[64]	
Intensity:	3
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. However, the rise to power of moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani has raised expectations about a turning point in Iran's foreign relations, especially after negotiations began on the Iranian nuclear programme in late 2013 and after a related agreement was signed in mid-2015. In recent years, the withdrawal of the United States from the Iran deal in 2018 and the intensification of its sanctions policy, the progressive distancing of Iran from the commitments made in the deal and a chaotic regional backdrop have worsened tensions and made it difficult to find a way out of this dispute.

The tension around Iran's nuclear programme remained high throughout 2022 against a backdrop of oscillating negotiations and a general impasse in an attempt to restore full compliance with the 2015 agreement (JCPOA). In addition to the exchanges of threats and security incidents, which mainly involved forces from Iran, the US and Israel, the negotiating process was influenced by other events during the year, including the repercussions of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the global stage and the impact of Tehran's crackdown on a new wave of internal protests. The year began with certain expectations, given the resumption of the negotiations of the Vienna process in the final quarter of 2021. The diplomatic process achieved some important progress in finding common ground during the first months of 2022, but the negotiating activity was slowed down and blocked by the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the consequent rise in international tensions. Meetings between the parties that had not withdrawn from the JCPOA and indirect talks between Iran and the US, which withdrew from the agreement in 2018 under the administration of Donald Trump, were reactivated around the middle of the year, with the EU mediating, but did not lead to any agreement. After the start of the popular protests in Iran and the regime's crackdown, further meetings became difficult. According to reports, the main points of disagreement in the negotiations had to do with the sanctions imposed on Iran and particularly with the designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation by the US in 2019. Tehran demands that the IRGC be removed from the US list of terrorist organisations, while Washington sets conditions for its removal. Iran insisted that it will not reduce its uranium reserves until sanctions are lifted, while the White House demanded a reduction as a precondition. The countries could not agree on which sanctions should be withdrawn or on the duration of any new agreement. Tehran wanted guarantees that the deal would last and not be overturned by a new US administration. Iran also

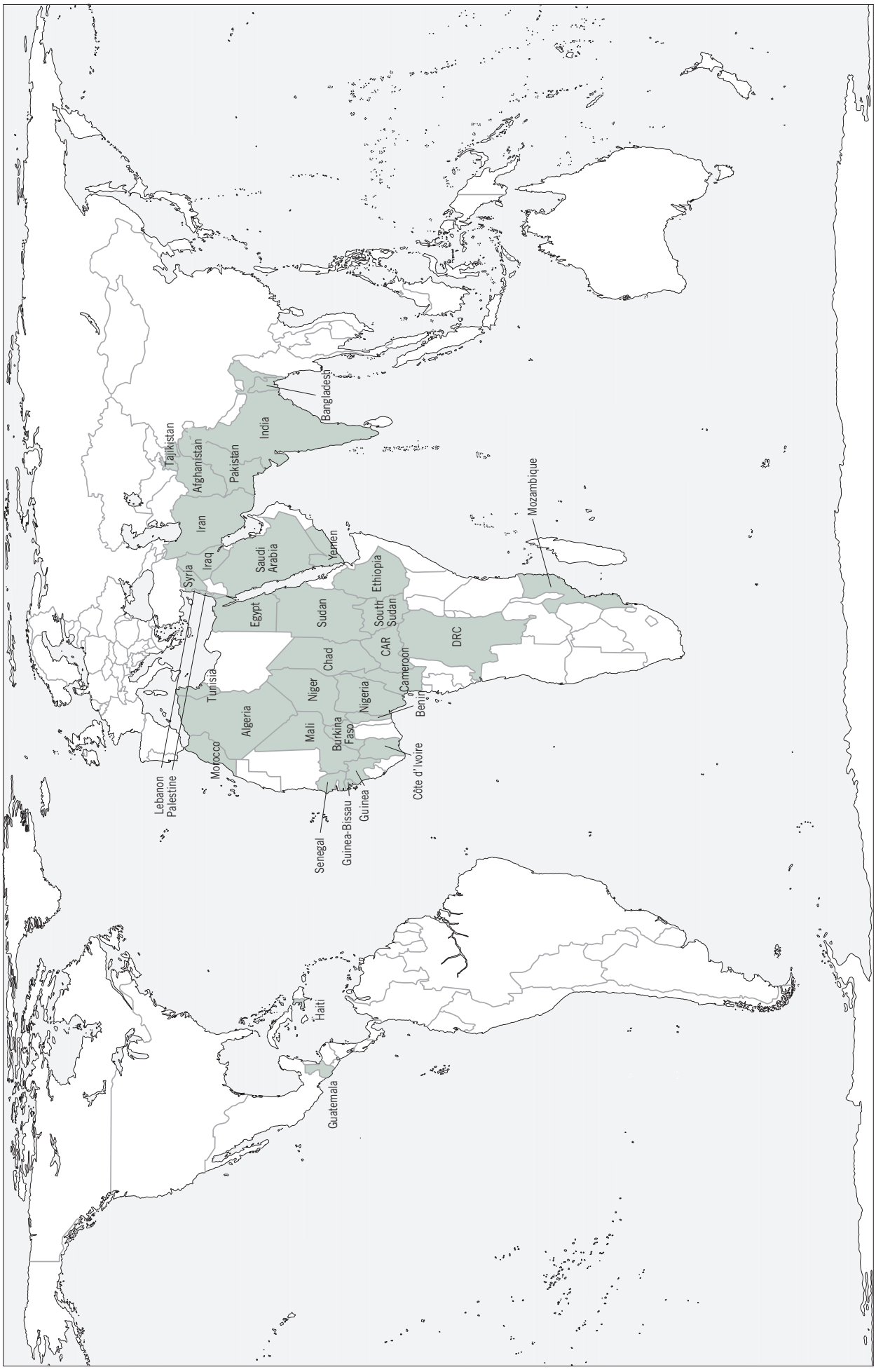
64. This international socio-political crisis affects other countries that have not been mentioned, but which are involved to varying degrees.

wanted to set a deadline for the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) investigation in the country.

In this context, in November the IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution condemning Iran for its lack of cooperation on investigations into past nuclear activities and undeclared sites. In response, the Iranian government stepped up its atomic activities and began enriching uranium to 60%, just below what was needed to produce nuclear weapons and well above the 3.67% limit set in the nuclear deal. Previously, the IAEA had warned that Iran had already accumulated 62.3 kilos of 60% enriched uranium and that its verification and monitoring work had been severely affected by Tehran's decision to dismantle the devices installed for surveillance and supervision of the JCPOA. The UN Secretary-General called on Iran to reverse the steps that had led it away from the implementation of the agreement since mid-2019. Alongside these diplomatic tensions, friction remained evident in a series of incidents during the year. For example, **some exchanges of fire between US and Iranian forces in Iraq and Syria**, especially at the beginning of the year, coincided with the second anniversary of the death of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in a US attack in Baghdad. In August, Washington warned of the consequences of a possible Iranian attack against US citizens after the arrest of an alleged member of the IRGC on charges of plotting to assassinate former National Security Advisor John Bolton. **Iran and the US exchanged warnings and threats during the year and there were also some episodes of tension between ships of both countries** in the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz. Both countries approved new sanctions. **Iran also exchanged threats with Israel, which carried out several attacks against Iranian targets in Syria**.[65] Throughout the year, Tehran announced that it was dismantling an alleged network of spies collaborating with Israel who were planning acts of sabotage at the Fordow nuclear facilities (March) and another supposed group of collaborators with Mossad (July). The deaths in strange circumstances of a general and three other individuals at an Iranian military aerospace facility (June) were also linked to hostilities between Iran and Israel. During the US president's visit to Israel in July, both countries issued a joint statement repeating their commitment not to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. The Israeli government emphasised that the only way to deter Tehran was to maintain a credible military threat to it. At the end of the year, Iran's foreign relations were also affected by Western countries' accusations that Tehran was responsible for the transfer of weapons (specifically, drones) to Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and was in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2331, which was used to support the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) in 2015.

65. See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

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



3. Gender, peace and security

- 23 of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality, while three occurred in countries with a medium-low level of gender equality.
- 24 of the 33 ongoing armed conflicts occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the implementation of legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population.
- The use of sexual violence was documented in places including Ethiopia (Tigray), South Sudan, Ukraine and Haiti.
- In Afghanistan and Iran, women led intense social protests against restrictive, harmful legislation and policies that violated their rights.
- In Ukraine, there were reports of sexual violence by Russian forces against women, men and girls, as well as multiple forms of gender-based violence, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, while women's organisations called for the prevention of re-victimisation.
- The United Nations stated that the majority of the more than 81,000 murders of women and girls that occurred in 2021 were motivated by gender.
- The Women, Peace and Security agenda remained underfunded, and women's organisations highlighted barriers such as lack of flexibility and adaptation to the circumstances of conflict settings and excessive bureaucratisation.

The Gender, Peace and Security chapter analyses the gender impacts of armed conflicts and socio–political crises, as well as the inclusion of the gender perspective into various international and local peacebuilding initiatives by international organisations, especially the United Nations, national governments, as well as different organisations and movements from local and international civil society.[1] In addition, a follow–up is made of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. The gender perspective brings to light the differentiated 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 peacebuilding. The chapter also analyses the consequences of conflicts on lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, intersexual and queer (LGTBIQ+) population and their participation in peacebuilding initiatives. The chapter is structured into three main sections: the first provides an assessment of the global situation with regard to gender inequalities by analysing the Gender Development Index; the second analyses the gender dimension in armed conflicts and socio–political crises; and the final section is devoted to peacebuilding from a gender perspective. At the beginning of the chapter, a map is attached that shows those countries with serious gender inequalities according to the Gender Development Index. The chapter conducts a specific follow–up of the implementation of the agenda on women, peace and security, established after the adoption by the UN Security Council in 2000 of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

3.1. Gender inequalities

To evaluate the gender inequality situation in countries affected by armed conflicts and/or socio-political crises, the data provided by the UNDP's Gender Development Index (GDI) has been used. This index measures disparities in relation to the Human Development Index (HDI)[2] between genders. The value of the Gender Development Index is

1. Gender is the analytical category that highlights that inequalities between men and women are a social construct and not a result of nature, underlining their social and cultural construction in order to distinguish them from biological differences of the sexes. Gender aims to give visibility to the social construction of sexual difference and the sexual division of labour and power. The gender perspective seeks to show that the differences between men and women are a social construct, which is a product of unequal power relations that have historically been established in the patriarchal system. Gender as a category of analysis aims to demonstrate the historical and context–based nature of sexual differences. This approach must be accompanied by an intersectional analysis that relates gender to other factors that structure power in a society, such as social class, race, ethnicity, age, or sexuality, among other aspects that generate inequalities, discrimination and privileges.
2. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life (longevity), being knowledgeable (education) and having a decent standard of living (income per capita). For more information, see the UNDP's *2021/2022 Human Development Report. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*, UNDP, 2022.

Table 3.1. **Countries affected by armed conflict with a medium-low or low level of gender equality**[3]

Low level of equality		
Afghanistan **Cameroon (2)** Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest) Lake Chad Region **CAR** **Chad** Lake Chad Region **DRC (2)** DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) **Egypt** Egypt (Sinai)	**Iraq** **India (2)** India (Jammu and Kashmir) India (CPI-M) **Mali (2)** Mali Western Sahel Region **Niger (2)** Lake Chad Region Western Sahel Region **Nigeria** Lake Chad Region	**Palestine** Israel-Palestine **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan) **South Sudan** **Syria** **Sudan (2)** Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) **Yemen**
Medium-low level of equality		
Burkina Faso Sahel Region	**Ethiopia (2)** Ethiopia (Oromia) Ethiopia (Tigray)	**Mozambique** Mozambique (north)

calculated based on the ratio of HDI values for women and men.[4] The GDI divides countries into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values.

According to the GDI, the gender equality level was medium-low or low in 46 countries, most of which were located in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The analysis that results from cross-referencing the data from this index with the index of countries experiencing armed conflicts reveals that **23 out of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality** – Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region[5], CAR, DRC (east), DRC (east-ADF), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Afghanistan, India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, Pakistan (Balochistan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Syria, Yemen – **or a medium-low level of gender equality** – Ethiopia (Oromia), Ethiopia (Tigray), and Mozambique (north). **There was no data available on Somalia, a country currently experiencing an armed conflict. Regarding the intensity of conflicts**, 12 of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (70% of cases) took place in countries with low or medium-low levels of gender equality (in the case of Somalia, there was no data from the GDI). Furthermore, in eight other countries in which one or more armed conflicts were taking place, the level of discrimination was lower: according to the GDI, the level of equality in Libya, Colombia, Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Israel was high, while Myanmar showed a medium level of equality. Meanwhile, **47 of the 108 socio-political crises that were active in 2022 occurred in countries with a low or medium-low level of gender equality**.

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

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

3. Table compiled from the data gathered by the School for a Culture of Peace on armed conflicts and from the data on countries with low and medium-low levels of gender equality according to the UNDP's Gender Development Index, as indicated in the 2021/2022 Human Development Report. The country is highlighted in bold and the armed conflict(s) active in the country in 2022 are listed below the country. In countries where there is more than one armed conflict, the number of conflicts is indicated in brackets.
4. To establish the different levels of inequality in countries, the classification proposed by UNDP has been used, in which countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1: countries with a high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation below 2.5%); Group 2: countries with a medium-high level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 2.5% and 5%); Group 3: countries with a medium level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 5% and 7.5%); Group 4: countries with a medium-low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation between 7.5% and 10%); and Group 5: countries with a low level of equality in terms of achievements in HDI between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity exceeding 10%).
5. The conflict in the Western Sahel Region has been included as one of the 23 armed conflicts in countries with low levels of gender equality. This conflict involves three countries with low levels of gender equality (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger) and one country with a medium-low level of equality (Burkina Faso).

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

Low level of equality		
Algeria **Bangladesh** **Benin** **CAR (2)** CAR Central Africa (LRA) **Chad** **Côte d'Ivoire** **DRC (3)** DRC DRC – Rwanda Central Africa (LRA) **Egypt (2)** Egypt Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan **Guinea** **Haiti**	**India (6)** India India (Assam) India (Manipur) India (Nagaland) India – China India – Pakistan **Iran (4)** Iran Iran (northeast) Iran (Sistan and Baluchestan) Iran – USA, Israel **Iraq** Iraq (Kurdistan) **Lebanon** Lebanon Israel – Syria –Lebanon **Mali** **Morocco** Morocco – Western Sahara **Niger**	**Nigeria (3)** Nigeria Nigeria (Biafra) Nigeria (Niger Delta) **Palestine** **Pakistan (2)** Pakistan India – Pakistan **Senegal** Senegal (Casamance) **South Sudan (2)** Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) **Sudan (5)** Sudan Sudan – South Sudan Central Africa (LRA) Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan **Syria** Israel – Syria –Lebanon
Medium-low level of equality		
Burkina Faso **Ethiopia (3)** Ethiopia – Egypt –Sudan Ethiopia – Sudan Eritrea – Ethiopia	**Guatemala** **Mozambique** **Saudi Arabia**	**Tajikistan (3)** Tajikistan Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan) Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan

3.2.1. Sexual violence in armed conflicts and crises

As in previous years, during 2022 sexual violence was present in a large number of active armed conflicts. [6] Its use, which in some cases was part of the deliberate war strategies of the armed actors, was documented in different reports, as well as by local and international media.

23 of the 33 armed conflicts that took place in 2022 occurred in countries with a low level of gender equality

In April, the UN Security Council held its yearly open discussion on sexual violence in armed conflict and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue.The debate returned to its in-person format after the previous edition took place in virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The debate focused on the issue of accountability as a preventive tool and involved the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN on Sexual Violence in Conflict, over 70 government representatives, and three civil society representatives: Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Goodwill Ambassador for UNODC; Mariana Karkoutly, co-founder of the Syrian civil society group Huquqyat; and Hilina Berhanu, an Ethiopian civil society representative. Additionally, Sweden spoke on behalf of the United Nations LGBTI Core Group, an informal group established in 2008, composed of member states and co-chaired by Argentina and the Netherlands, with the aim of promoting the rights of LGTBIQ+ persons.

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

Table 3.1. **Armed actors and sexual violence in conflicts**[7]

The UN Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflicts, published in March 2022, included a list of armed actors who are suspected of having committed systematic acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence or of being responsible for them in situations of armed conflict, which are subject to examination by the SecurityCouncil.[8]

	STATE ACTORS	NON-STATE ACTORS
CAR	National armed forces	Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) – former President François Bozizé: Retour, réclamation et rehabilitation – General Bobbo; Anti-balaka Mokom-Maxime Mokom; Anti-balaka Ngaïssona-Dieudonné Ndomate; Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique – Noureddine Adam and Zone Commander Mahamat Salleh; Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique – Mahamat Al-Khatim; Union pour la paix en Centrafrique-Ali Darrassa; Lord's Resistance Army; Ex-Séléka factions; Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain – Abdoulaye Miskine; Révolution et justice
DRC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Congolese National Police	Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain-Janvier; Allied Democratic Forces; Bana Mura militias; Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda; Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri; Lord's Resistance Army; Nduma défense du Congo; Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové faction led by "General" Guidon Shimiray Mwissa and faction led by Commander Gilbert Bwira Shuo and Deputy Commander Fidel Malik Mapenzi; Mai-Mai Kifuafua; Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki; Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale; Mai-Mai Malaika; Mai-Mai Yakutumba; Nyatura; Coopérative pour le développement du Congo; Twa militias; Union des patriotes pour la défense des citoyens; Forces patriotiques populaires-armée du peuple
Iraq		Da'esh
Mali		Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad; Ansar Eddine; Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin; Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, part of Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger
Myanmar	Tatmadaw, including integrated Border Guard	
Nigeria		Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province.
Somalia	Somali National Army; Somali Police Force (and allied militia); Puntland forces	Al-Shabaab
South Sudan	South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces; South Sudan National Police Service	Lord's Resistance Army; Justice and Equality Movement;Sudan People's Liberation/ Army in Opposition – pro-Machar
Sudán	Sudanese Armed Forces; Rapid Support Forces	Justice and Equality Movement; Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid.
Syria	Government forces, including the National Defence Forces, intelligence services and pro-government militias	Da'esh; Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham; Army of Islam; Ahrar al-Sham.

The annual report submitted in 2022 by the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence identified 49 armed groups which were strongly suspected of having committed or having been responsible for rapes or other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict settings on the agenda of the UN Security Council.[9] Most of the actors identified by the United Nations in its annex were non-state armed actors (37), with an additional 12 being government-sponsored armed actors, across a total of 10 settings (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Nigeria). According to the United Nations, 70% of the identified actors in conflict were considered persistent perpetrators, since they had been included in the UN annex for five or more years. Beyond the list of perpetrators of sexual violence, the Secretary-General's report addressed the developments in 18 settings._Twelve of the 18 armed conflicts[10] that were analysed in the UN Secretary-General's report experienced high levels of intensity in 2022 –Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel region, DRC, DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria and Yemen–, topping 1,000 fatalities during the year and producing serious impacts on people and the territory, including conflict-related sexual violence. Six of these also saw an escalation of violence during 2022 compared to the previous year – Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Western Sahel region, DRC

7. This table uses the names of the armed actors as they appear in the Secretary-General's report, so they do not necessarily coincide with the ones used in chapters 1 and 2 of this yearbook.
8. UN Security Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Report of the United Nations Secretary-General*, S/2022/272, 29 March 2022.
9. Ibid.
10. The countries analysed in the Secretary-General's 2022 report are: Afghanistan, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Additionally, post-conflict situations in BiH, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, as well as cases of particular concern in Ethiopia and Nigeria, are examined. In some countries covered in the UN Secretary-General's report, there were multiple armed conflicts according to the definition of the School for a Culture of Peace. The complete list of armed conflicts in the countries included in the Secretary-General's report is as follows: Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Libya, Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - including Nigeria -, Western Sahel Region (including Mali), CAR, DRC (east), DRC (east-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Colombia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

(east), Somalia and Myanmar. Most of the armed actors identified by the Secretary-General as responsible for sexual violence in armed conflict were non-state actors, some of whom had been included on UN terrorist lists.

The United Nations documented the use of sexual violence in **Haiti** by armed groups with the aim of intimidating the population and expanding their control over key areas of the capital city, Port-au-Prince. In fact, by August 2022, these armed groups had gained control over large segments of the city where at least 1.5 million people resided. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) released a joint report[11] indicating that women, girls and boys, and to a lesser extent, men, had been victims of rape, gang rape and other forms of sexual violence as a way of destroying the social fabric of the community. Women who had been abducted for ransom purposes, thereby providing a source of funding for the armed groups operating in the capital, were also subjected to this violence. The report emphasised the impunity surrounding this violence and how the lack of prosecution and punishment, along with access to high-calibre weapons and ammunition smuggled from abroad, enabled the armed groups to commit acts of sexual violence and other human rights violations. Structural deficiencies within the police forces, which were unable to adequately deal with this violence, as well as shortcomings in healthcare and psychosocial support services, further exacerbated the crisis in a context of severe violence and lack of access to essential goods and services.

The use of sexual violence was reported in Haiti, the Ethiopian region of Tigray, South Sudan, and in Ukraine in the context of the Russian invasion

Serious human rights violations, including sexual violence by various armed actors, were reported in the armed conflict in the **Ethiopian region of Tigray**. The human rights organisation Amnesty International called on the African Union to increase pressure on the Ethiopian government to ensure access to justice for thousands of victims. The appeal came after the conflicting parties reached an agreement mediated by former Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo. Despite the agreement, providing access to justice for victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict, especially between 2020 and 2021, including sexual violence against women and girls, remained pending. Human rights organisations also denounced the especially vulnerable situation of Eritrean refugee women who had been displaced to this Ethiopian region in previous years. Furthermore, the International Commission of Experts on Human Rights in Ethiopia[12] presented its report,[13] documenting the use of sexual violence by various armed actors and indicating that the victims attributed the violence to the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Eritrean Defence Forces and Fano (an Amhara militia). The Commission stated that over 1,000 women and girls had been victims of sexual violence, but the report acknowledged that the actual number could be much higher, according to local sources who had provided assistance to the victims. In addition to rape, including in the presence of family members, incidents of abduction and sexual slavery were also reported. The consequences of this violence include the impact of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, psychological trauma and unwanted pregnancies, all occurring in a context where access to sexual and reproductive health services or psychosocial support is extremely challenging.

The Human Rights Commission in **South Sudan**, established by the UN Human Rights Council, reported that armed groups throughout the country were committing widespread sexual violence.[14] This commission was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2016 and has been renewed annually since then. Its mandate is to determine, document and preserve evidence, as well as to clarify responsibilities for grave violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence, with the aim of contributing to ending impunity. Although there are no official figures on the impact of this violence on the country's civilian population, a report by the commission stated that sexual violence was being used as a tactic to displace and terrorise rival communities. The report highlighted that forced marriage and sexual slavery were chronic practices, and that significant challenges and difficulties existed for survivors to access support services. The report also emphasised the issue of impunity surrounding these crimes, pointing out that the sexual violence committed in the context of this armed conflict has been instrumentalised as a form of "reward and entitlement" for men, including young men, who participate in conflicts. The commission stated that this violence has served to build ethnic solidarity, as a form of revenge, and as a way of destroying the social fabric of the community, including through forced displacement, causing severe impacts on the victims. The report noted that the Human Rights Commission has managed to generate a significant archive documenting different forms of sexual violence, such as rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, torture, a variety of sexually degrading cruel and inhuman acts and beatings.

11. United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Sexual violence in Port-au-Prince: A weapon used by gangs to instil fear*, BINUH and OHCHR, October 2022.
12. The Commission is composed of three human rights experts appointed by the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council: Kaari Betty Murungi, Chairperson (Kenya), Steven Ratner (USA) and Radhika Coomaraswamy (Sri Lanka).
13. *Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia*, A/HRC/51/46, General Assembly of the UN, 5 October 2022.
14. Human Rights Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in South Sudan*, A/HRC/49/CRP.4, 21 March 2022.

The commission also lamented the lack of progress in implementing the 2018 peace agreement, thus prolonging the climate of armed conflict in which sexual violence is perpetrated. In this respect, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO WGWPS), a platform of international organisations, highlighted in March the need for efforts to ensure the participation of diverse sectors of civil society in the peace process, including women from various communities, as well as their representation in various government spheres, which is currently below the 35% quota included in the agreement. The NGO WGWPS urged all parties to prioritise accountability through the establishment of a hybrid tribunal alongside the Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission and other transitional justice mechanisms of the peace agreement, and for these to be designed and deployed with substantive participation and leadership of women, a gender focus and adequate resource allocation.

Regarding **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and the armed conflict, sexual violence was reported, with most cases attributed to Russian forces. These incidents were documented by various bodies. Firstly, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine – established by the Human Rights Council through Resolution 49/1 in March 2022, consisting of three experts and in coordination with OHCHR – documented cases of sexual violence and gender-based violence in nine regions of Ukraine, as well as in Russia. The violence affected women, men and girls aged between 4 and 82 years old. The commission concluded that Russian forces had committed sexual violence primarily in two types of situations: during house searches and in situations of confinement. As regards sexual violence during house searches, this type of violence was mainly documented in the Kiev region, as well as in Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Kherson, particularly during the first two months of the war, mainly targeting women. According to the commission, the rapes were carried out at gunpoint, with extreme brutality and acts of torture, and sometimes with threats to murder the victims or their family members if they resisted. In some cases, the perpetrators also executed husbands and male relatives. Furthermore, family members, including minors, were sometimes forced to witness rapes.[15] In respect of the second type of violence, the commission documented numerous cases of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Russian authorities during situations of illegal confinement in the regions of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kiev and Luhansk, as well as in Russia. According to the commission's documentation, this type of sexual violence primarily affected men – both civilians and prisoners of war – and was perpetrated with the aim of extracting information or confessions, coercing cooperation, and punishing, intimidating or humiliating individuals or groups. The commission collected evidence of the use of sexual violence as part of the torture inflicted by Russian forces, employing methods such as rape, electric shocks to the genitals and mutilation, among others. Additionally, the commission documented cases in which Russian forces imposed forced nudity during detention, at checkpoints, and at so-called filtration points (where forced inspections of citizens took place). Prolonged forced nudity can be considered a form of sexual violence, as highlighted by the commission. Overall, the commission concluded that some members of the Russian armed forces have committed war crimes of rape and sexual violence, which may amount to torture.

Local and international organisations documented sexual violence in Ukraine, primarily committed by Russian armed forces against women, men and girls

Meanwhile, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU)[16] documented 133 cases of conflict-related sexual violence between February 2022 and 31 January 2023, mostly occurring in Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia. The majority of these cases (109) were committed by Russian armed forces, Russian police authorities or Russian prison staff.[17] The documented sexual violence by HRMMU affected 85 men, 45 women and 3 girls. This sexual violence mainly occurred in detention settings and residential areas, as well as during the "filtration" processes carried out by Russian armed forces.

Furthermore, as reported by the OHCHR, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine reported that by the end of January 2023, investigations had been initiated regarding 155 cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces. These cases had affected 106 women, 38 men and 11 girls since the beginning of the invasion on 24 February 2022.[18] Of these 155 cases, 65 (42%) were reported in the Kherson region, followed by 52 cases in the Kiev region (34%). The remaining cases were distributed as follows: Donetsk (17 cases), Kharkiv (9), Zaporizhzhia (6), Chernihiv (4), Mykolaiv (1) and Luhansk (1). The OHCHR acknowledged the efforts of the Ukrainian government in integrating a victim-centred approach in its investigations and in providing assistance to survivors. Assistance to victims of gender-based violence, sexual violence and human trafficking was one of the areas covered in the new Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325, adopted in

15. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine*, Human Rights Council, A/HRC/52/62, 15 March 2023.
16. Mission deployed in 2014 in Ukraine, with a focus on documenting violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by all parties to the conflict since the beginning of the invasion.
17. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.
18. Ibid.

December 2022. Additionally, women's organisations in Ukraine have denounced the use of sexual violence by Russian forces as a weapon of war in occupied areas, pointing out that the reported cases may just be the tip of the iceberg. The Ukrainian branch of the NGO La Strada, which works in the field of gender equality promotion and prevention of gender-based violence, reported that during the first month of the invasion and war, their helpline and support services through social platforms received 10,000 calls or messages, mostly from the Kiev region.[19] At the same time, La Strada-Ukraine called for the non-victimisation of Ukrainian women. The Ukrainian Women Lawyers' Association "JurFem" also highlighted the need for media outlets, public officials and activists to report on this issue using gender-inclusive information criteria in order to avoid causing further harm to those who have been subjected to this violence.[30]

International NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), also documented cases of sexual violence.[21] HRW raised concerns about the challenges survivors of sexual violence faced in accessing assistance, including emergency medical care. They highlighted various obstacles to accessing medical, psychosocial, legal and socioeconomic services, such as armed hostilities, occupation, forced displacement, the destruction or absence of medical facilities, and a lack of medical supplies.[22]

Furthermore, sexual violence by Ukrainian forces was also documented, albeit on a smaller scale. Between 24 February 2022 and 31 January 2023, the OHCHR documented 24 cases of sexual violence in areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine, affecting 18 men and six women.[23] All of these incidents took place between March and July 2022, and mostly involved threats of sexual violence by Ukrainian security forces during the early stages of detention. According to the OHCHR, many cases also involved the forced nudity of individuals who were alleged to have violated the law, perpetrated by civilians or members of territorial defence forces.

3.2.2. Response to sexual violence in armed conflicts

Throughout the year there were different initiatives to respond to sexual violence in the context of armed conflicts, as well as to fight against impunity in different judicial bodies. Some of these are described below.

In relation to the **United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel serving under its mandate**, the strategy promoted by UN Secretary-General António Guterres since 2017 continued to focus on four areas of action: prioritising the rights and dignity of victims; ending impunity by strengthening reporting; collaborating with states, civil society and associated actors; and improving communications. In 2022, the strengthening of the position of Special Coordinator was announced in order to improve the United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse. The position was elevated to the level of Under-Secretary-General, with an increased allocation of resources, aimed at improving work in this area. However, reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel persisted. The Secretary-General's report noted that there were 79 allegations in 2022 related to peacekeeping operations and special political missions, compared to 75 reported in 2021.[24] The report indicated that 116 victims had been identified, of whom 90 were adults and 26 were minors. The allegations implicated 115 perpetrators, including 46 men in 61 cases related to child paternity and support. Of particular concern was the fact that two peacekeeping missions accounted for 90% of the allegations, with MONUSCO reporting 48 allegations and MINUSCA reporting 24 of them. The remaining allegations were attributed to the missions UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSMA (Mali), UNFIL (Lebanon), the former MINUSTAH (Haiti) and UNAMA. The report highlighted an increase in the number of allegations involving military and civilian personnel, and a decrease in allegations against police personnel. The Secretary-General's report stated that the fight against impunity remains a priority. However, it did not specify the measures taken against perpetrators of violence, but rather it only referred to training initiatives to improve investigations related to sexual violence and exploitation.

Two peacekeeping missions, MONUSCO and MINUSCA, accounted for 90% of the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse

Regarding **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and reports of sexual violence, as well as of other human rights violations, various organisations responded by documenting and investigating sexual violence. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) initiated the collection of evidence in March 2022 for an investigation into past and ongoing allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Ukraine since 2013. Forty-three countries

19. EUAM, "Alyona Kryvulyak: "La Strada hotline is witnessing a trauma which might destroy a generation", *EUAM*, 13 May 2022.
20. UN Women, "In the words of Larysa Denysenko, Ukrainian legal expert: "Sexual violence is a tactic of intimidation, torture and humiliation", 17 June 2022.
21. HRW. "Ukraine. Events of 2022", World Report 2023. HRW, 2023.
22. Ibid.
23. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.
24. United Nations Secretary-General, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Report of the Secretary-General*, A/77/748 16 February 2023.

called on the ICC to investigate possible war crimes. Although Ukraine is not a party to the Rome Statute, it has for the second time accepted the jurisdiction of the court for the investigation of crimes committed on its territory since 2013. Russia is not a party to the Rome Statute either. Moreover, investigations were conducted by the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Government of Ukraine regarding sexual violence and other human rights violations. The European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation provided support in coordinating with various international investigations initiated by different states. The United Nations' Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), operated by OHCHR, as well as the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine established by the Human Rights Council, documented cases of sexual violence. Local and international NGOs also participated in the response.[25]

Furthermore, the Government of Ukraine developed the Strategy for the Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence with support from the HRMMU and UN Women. Additionally, the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations (through the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict) signed a cooperation framework in May 2022 with the aim of strengthening prevention and the response to conflict-related sexual violence in the context of the invasion.[26] The agreement outlined 16 areas of action and called on the international community and donors to provide financial and technical support to the Government of Ukraine in implementing its updated National Action Plan on Resolution 1325, which includes measures for the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. Meanwhile, in June, the Ukrainian government adopted and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which came into force in November. Its adoption had been a key demand of women's human rights organisations and activists in the country. The Istanbul Convention, which applies in times of peace and war, recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights and aims to protect against all forms of violence, as well as to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. It also aims to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to promote real equality, including the empowerment of women, among other goals. The treaty covers violence in domestic settings as well as other forms of violence, including physical and psychological violence, sexual violence including rape, harassment, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, forced abortions, forced sterilisations and crimes allegedly committed in the name of "honour". The NGO La Strada - Ukraine described the ratification as a historic moment and expressed hope that it would contribute to reducing domestic violence against women in Ukraine, a problem exacerbated by the context of armed conflict.[27] Amnesty International described the ratification of the Istanbul Convention as a historic victory for women's rights in Ukraine.

3.2.3. Other gender violence in contexts of crisis or armed conflict

In addition to sexual violence, armed conflicts and socio-political crisis had other serious gender impacts. Impunity for human rights violations continued to be a recurrent element.

In **Iran**, the protests that began the country in September 2022, following the death of a young Kurdish woman in police custody, were strongly focused on demanding women's rights and freedoms. These mobilisations, which formed part of a broader, long-standing political and social discontent in the country, were characterised by the extraordinary participation and leadership of Iranian women. Their demands, enshrined in the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" – originally a Kurdish slogan – garnered widespread support from both men and women, transcending generational and ethnic differences. The rebellion against the compulsory hijab as a symbol of the state's refusal to recognise women's self-determination fuelled broader discussions on gender, ethnic, social, economic and political issues. In this respect, the protests highlighted the interconnectedness of various grievances, types of discrimination and forms of oppression. It is worth noting that women – many of them young and minors – played a significant role in carrying out highly symbolic actions to challenge the codes and conventions imposed by the regime, such as burning their headscarves, cutting their hair or dancing in the streets. In line with previous incidents, the regime responded to the mobilisations with severe repression, which was carried out by the police forces and pro-government militias. Up until the end of 2022, it was estimated that over 500 people had died in the context of the protests, including 100 women. Thousands of others were injured due to government repression, in which the deliberate use of violence against women

The Iranian government severely suppressed protests by women throughout the country who were demanding greater freedoms and recognition of their rights

25. Horne, Cynthia M. "Accountability for atrocity crimes in Ukraine: Gendering transitional justice", *Women's Studies International Forum* 96 (2023).
26. Government of Ukraine and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Framework on cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the UN on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence*, May 2022.
27. Semeryn, Khrystyna, "Russian Invasion Overshadows Domestic Violence in Ukraine", *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 11 July 2022.

was identified. NGOs and medical personnel reported a higher prevalence of women among those injured in the face and genital area. At the end of the year, reports began to surface of cases of poisoning of girls in schools. These poisonings were attributed to sectors that wanted to punish the minors for their involvement in the protest movement.[28]

Turning to the MENA region, it is also worth highlighting a string of **femicides** that occurred in Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which sparked outrage among activists and feminist groups in the middle of the year. The cases, which occurred within a few days of each other in June, shared a similar pattern. In the first case, which took place in Egypt, a 21-year-old woman was murdered by a man after rejecting his marriage proposal. The incident occurred in broad daylight on the outskirts of the university where the young woman was studying. A few days later, another young female student was shot at a university in Amman, the Jordanian capital, by a man whom she had refused to marry. A third case, which received less media attention than the previous two, involved another young Jordanian woman who was killed in the UAE. Following these gender-based murders, messages of anger and sorrow multiplied on social media, along with demands for justice and safety for women. Activists and organisations called on the authorities to address sexism and misogyny, and to provide substantive responses to the high levels of violence against women in the region. In response to other similar cases of femicides and other forms of sexist violence in the region, feminist organisations staged a transnational protest on 6 July to denounce the patriarchy and control over women's bodies and lives, to demand structural and legal changes, and to urge institutions to fulfil their obligations and guarantee women's right to life and safety.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban government implemented new restrictions on women's rights during the course of the year, including denying access to education for teenage girls and young women

In **Afghanistan**, the Taliban government approved new restrictions on women's rights at various points of the year. These included the imposition of a strict dress code that required women to be fully covered, except for their eyes, in public spaces, and not to leave their homes "unless absolutely necessary" and only if accompanied by a man. Although the government announced that girls would be allowed to resume secondary education, it failed to implement the measure, arguing that security conditions would need to be changed or that uniforms and infrastructure elements would be needed to ensure full segregation. The widespread return of girls to classrooms did not materialise; there was only a partial return in some areas of the country. Meanwhile, in December 2022, the Minister of Education issued an order banning women from accessing all universities in the country, both public and private. The denial of access to education for girls and young women continued to be the main obstacle for any official recognition of the Taliban regime by other governments. Indeed, the regime has not yet received any governmental recognition. These prohibitions came on top of the barring of women from virtually all paid employment and their complete exclusion from the governmental and political sphere. Furthermore, all public demonstrations organised by women to protest against the violations of their fundamental rights, which occurred at different times during the course of the year, were violently put down. These protests occurred in order to demand the reopening of secondary education for girls and to denounce violations of women's rights, such as their exclusion from paid work or political participation, and the imposition of face coverings in public spaces, among other measures.

Russia's invasion of **Ukraine** plunged the latter country into a situation of grave emergency with a gender dimension. As highlighted by UN Women, in addition to conflict-related sexual violence, multiple forms of gender-based violence were reported, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and economic abuse, thus exacerbating situations that existed prior to the war.[29] According to a report by the OHCHR, the number of domestic violence reports filed with the police decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year due to armed hostilities, forced displacement and the occupation.[30] In fact, a report by UN Women and CARE in May 2022 indicated that the interviewed individuals identified an increase in domestic violence. However, the shift in priorities within the context of war had reduced access to protection and support in this area.[31] According to this report, which covered the initial stage of the invasion, women faced difficulties in accessing support services, experienced loss of livelihoods and struggled to meet the basic needs of dependents. The report also highlighted that the war was exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination, including against Romani women and men, and the LGTBIQ+ population. However, the interviewed LGTBIQ+ persons noted that their current priorities were focused on survival in the face of the war, prioritising immediate concerns over other issues.[32] In an analysis conducted in April 2022,

28. For further information. see Pamela Urrutia, "La revuelta de las mujeres en Irán: ¿un punto de inflexión? Claves desde el análisis de conflictos con perspectiva feminista", *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau,* No.27, March 2023.
29. UN Women, *Securing gender equality in Ukraine amidst the war*, 2023.
30. OHCHR, *Report on the human rights situation, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023*, OHCHR, 24 March 2023.
31. CARE and UN Women, *Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine*, 4 May.
32. Ibid.

the NGOWG on Peace and Security highlighted the impacts on older women, who constitute the majority of elderly persons in Ukraine. It also noted the effects on access to healthcare and single-mother families, among other issues.[33] Another impact of the invasion was the forced displacement of people. By the end of 2022, it was estimated that there were 5.9 million internally displaced persons, 7.9 million individuals registered as refugees in Europe, and 4.9 million Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection in Europe or other similar national protection mechanisms. The martial law imposed by Ukraine in February 2022 prohibited Ukrainian males between the ages of 16 and 60 years old from leaving the country, with some exceptions. According to the UNHCR, around 90% of the displaced individuals were women and minors. Organisations in Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary working in the field of sexual and reproductive rights, along with international organisations and networks, denounced the restrictions on access to essential sexual and reproductive health services in these destination and transit countries for displaced Ukrainian women and women from other backgrounds. These restrictions included limited access to emergency contraception and other contraceptive methods, access to abortion, prenatal care, post-exposure prophylaxis, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.[34] Furthermore, the invasion exacerbated pre-existing forms of discrimination against certain population groups, such as Roma people, intersecting with gender discrimination and other dimensions. The Minority Rights Group highlighted forms of discrimination such as the segregation of the Ukrainian Roma population in refugee reception centres in countries such as Moldova, as well as increased difficulties in accessing livelihoods, among other challenges.[35] It also highlighted how issues such as lack of documentation were impacting access to humanitarian assistance and asylum. This NGO also echoed the complaints voiced by the Roma Women Fund "Chiricli" about the barriers faced by Roma women and children in crossing the border to Moldova, Poland and Hungary in search of asylum.

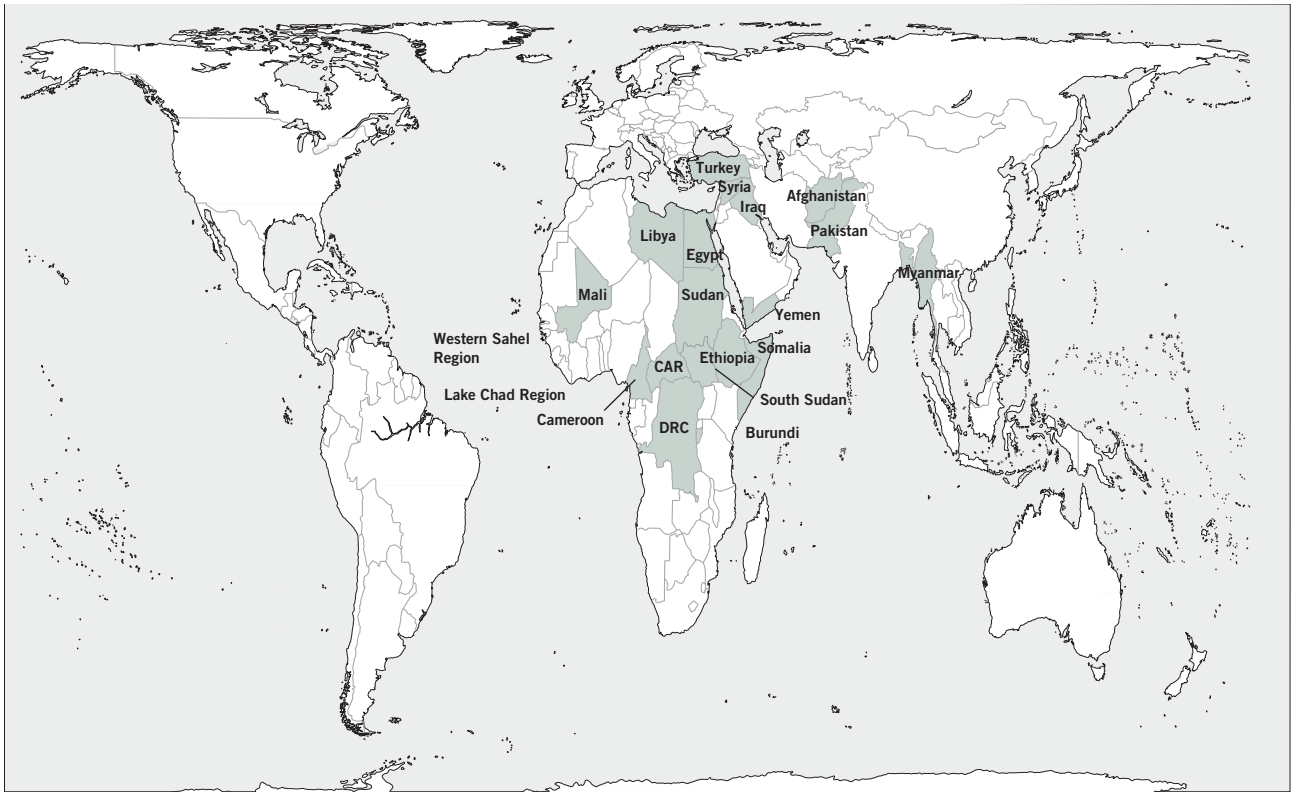
In 2022, 24 of the 33 active armed conflicts occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population, exacerbating the impacts of violence in these contexts. Fifteen of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (88% of cases) occurred in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population, namely the conflicts in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest regions), Ethiopia (Tigray), Ethiopia (Oromia), Mali, Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), Western Sahel Region, DRC (East), DRC (East-ADF), Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Meanwhile, experts from various fields at the United Nations warned that human rights violations and the structural vulnerability faced by the LGTBIQ+ population intensify in processes of forced displacement.[36] The more than 20 expert signatories stated that there were no precise figures on the number of displaced LGTBIQ+ persons, but that the number could increase in the coming years. They called for the tackling of the underlying causes of forced displacement, for public policies and for the implementation of measures to end the violence and discrimination faced by the LGTBIQ+ population. Furthermore, they raised concerns about forms of abuse such as gender-based violence, exclusion from essential services such as safe accommodation, access to food and other basic necessities, as well as from healthcare and psychosocial support, and livelihoods, among others. They called for the establishment of programmes that take into account the specific needs of the LGTBIQ+ population in all phases of displacement; for the improvement of reception conditions, including guarantees of safe accommodation and access to healthcare services; for the guarantee of access to protection, asylum and refugee status determination; for the provision of durable solutions, including resettlement options; and for the generation of data and evidence, with collection, management and reporting following ethical procedures. Moreover, they emphasised that all measures should be aimed at the protection and guarantee of the exercise of fundamental rights, as well as at providing assistance and support in these areas.

Fifteen of the 17 high-intensity armed conflicts in 2022 (88% of cases) occurred in countries where ILGA had documented the enforcement of legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population

In **Uganda**, the LGTBIQ+ population faced criminalisation and hostile rhetoric from public figures during the course of the year, as well as government repression against LGTBIQ+ rights groups and other human rights organisations. On 3 August, the National Bureau for NGOs in Uganda banned Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a prominent LGTBIQ+ rights organisation.[37] In 2021, the bureau had indefinitely suspended 54 civil society groups without due process, restricting the work of human rights groups in the country. At the parliamentary level, progress was also made on the anti-homosexuality bill, which seeks to expand the Sexual

33. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Gender Analysis of the Situation in Ukraine, April 2022.
34. Various authors. "Europe: Call to Action. The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls and marginalized populations affected by the conflict in Ukraine", 17 March 2022.
35. Popenko, Viola, "For displaced Roma, the conflict has exacerbated existing patterns of discrimination – and left them without an income", Minority Rights, 2022.
36. Various authors, "Forcibly displaced LGBT persons face major challenges in search of safe haven", *OHCHR*, 16 May 2022.
37. Oryen Nyeko, "Uganda Bans Prominent LGBTQ Rights Group. End Harassment, Allow Group to Operate", HRW, 12 August 2022.

Map 3.2. **Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population**



Countries in armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population

Table 3.4. **Countries affected by armed conflict with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population**[38]

AFRICA	ASIA	MIDDLE EAST	EUROPE
Burundi Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West) Central African Republic DRC (east) DRC (east-ADF) Ethiopia (Tigray) Etiopía (Oromia) Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali Somalia South Sudan Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) Western Sahel Region	Afghanistan Myanmar Pakistan Pakistan (Balochistan)	Egypt (Sinai) Iraq Syria Yemen	Turkey (southeast)

Source: Prepared internally with data from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alerta 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2022; and Kellyn Botha, *Our identities under arrest: A global overview on the enforcement of laws criminalising consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults and diverse gender expressions*, ILGA World, 2021.

38. This table includes armed conflicts in 2022 in countries with legislation or policies criminalising the LGTBIQ+ population.

Offences Act passed by Parliament in 2021, which penalises any "sexual act between persons of the same gender", as well as anal sex between individuals of any gender, with up to 10 years in prison. It was anticipated that the new bill criminalising homosexuality with even harsher penalties, including the death penalty, would be introduced and approved in parliament in early 2023.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women published a joint report analysing **gender-related killings of women and girls in 2021**.[39] The report indicated that, according to global estimates, 81,100 women and girls were intentionally murdered during the course of 2021, and that most of these murders were motivated by gender. In 2021, 45,000 women were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members. The report highlighted that while men and boys continued to be the primary victims of homicides worldwide, accounting for 81% of these victims, homicidal violence in the private and family sphere disproportionately affected women and girls. The data supporting these claims indicated that 56% of the murders of women were committed in the private sphere, by their partners or family members, while only 11% of the murders of men occurred in this setting. However, the report acknowledged the difficulties in identifying gender-based violence and noted that information on approximately 10% of female homicides was unavailable, thus hindering public policy responses to this extreme form of gender-based violence. Globally, Asia had the highest number of female homicides in 2021, with 17,800 women murdered, followed by Africa in second place, with 17,200 women murdered. In third place were the Americas, with 7,500 women murdered, followed by Europe (2,500) and Oceania (300). It is worth noting that in Europe, there was a reduction in the number of female homicides committed by partners or family members, while an increase was observed in the Americas. Accordingly, between 2010 and 2021, a decrease of 19% was observed in Europe, with variations among subregions, while an increase of 6% was noted in the Americas. There was insufficient data available in order to identify a trend in Asia, Africa and Oceania. Meanwhile, the journal The Lancet published a research study[40] indicating that one in four ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 years (27% globally) had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner. This percentage was 24% among women aged 15 to 19 years and 26% among women aged 19 to 24 years. The study analysed data from 161 countries, representing 90% of the global population of women and girls aged 15 years old or older. Lower-income countries recorded higher prevalence rates of violence. The study highlighted that countries were not on track to meet the SDG of gender equality regarding the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

A group of UN experts warned that human rights violations and the structural vulnerability of the LGTBIQ+ population intensify during forced displacement processes

3.3. Peacebuilding from a gender perspective

In this section some of the most notable initiatives are analysed to incorporate the gender perspective into the various aspects of peacebuilding.

3.3.1. Resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda

A new session of the open discussion on women, peace and security was held in October and the UN Secretary-General presented his annual report on the issue.[41] The main theme of the 2022 session was the situation of human rights defenders and their protection. In his annual report, the Secretary-General highlighted the persecution faced by defenders worldwide, including being murdered for their work in defending human rights and women's rights. The Secretary-General emphasised that during the course of 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had documented 29 cases of murders of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in eight conflict-affected countries, although the real number of murders is actually higher. Human rights defenders experience stigma, persecution and violence. Accordingly, the Secretary-General urged governments to take all possible measures for their protection. As an example of the impact of this persecution, he noted that a significant proportion of women who have appeared before the Security Council in open debates on women, peace and security have been subjected to harassment.

Regarding the active participation of women in peace negotiations taking place in contexts of armed conflict or socio-political crisis, the Secretary-General's report indicated that during the course of 2021, women were involved as negotiators or delegates of the conflicting parties in all peace processes facilitated or mediated by

39. UNODC and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide). Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021. Improving data to improve responses*, UNODC and UN Women, 2021.
40. Lynnmarie Sardinha, Mathieu Maheu-Giroux, Heidi Stöckl, Sarah Rachel Meyer, Claudia García-Moreno, "Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018", *The Lancet*, Volume 399, Issue 10327, p. 803-813, 26 February 2022.
41. UN Secretary-General, *Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2022/740, 5 October 2022.

Table 3.5. **Countries which have National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 and which are participating in peace negotiations and processes**

Cameroon (2017)	Armenia (2019)
CAR (2014)	Azerbaijan (2020)
DRC (2010)	Cyprus (2020)
Mali (2012)	Georgia (2018)
Morocco (2022)	Moldova (2018)
Mozambique (2019)	Serbia (2017)
Senegal (2011)	Kosovo (2014)
South Sudan (2015)	Ukraine (2016)
Sudan (2020)	Palestine (2015)
Korea (2014)	Yemen (2019)
The Philippines (2009)	

*In parentheses, the year that the National Action Plan was approved

the United Nations. However, in a global analysis of all peace processes, women's representation stood at 19%, compared to 23% in 2020. As for peace agreements, the report stated that in 2021, eight of the 25 peace agreements that were signed (32%) included some type of clause or provision referring to gender, women or girls. This represented a 26% increase in the presence of such provisions compared to 2020 but lays bare the fact that most peace agreements still completely fail to address gender equality and women's rights.

In 2022, 21 countries involved in peace negotiations had a National Action Plan in place to promote the participation of women in these processes. Nine of these countries were in Africa (Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, CAR, DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan); two in Asia (South Korea and the Philippines); eight in Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Kosovo, and Ukraine); and two in the Middle East (Palestine and Yemen). Neither of the two countries in the Americas with ongoing negotiations had a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Thus, in 21 of the 39 active negotiations during 2022, at least one of the negotiating government actors had a plan of action that was supposed to guide its activity in terms of inclusion of the gender perspective and women's participation. The 21 negotiations and peace processes took place in Cameroon (Ambazonia/Northwest and Southwest), Mali, Morocco–Western Sahara, Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan, Korea (Republic of Korea - DPRK, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF), Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Cyprus, Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transdniestria), Serbia-Kosovo, Russia-Ukraine, Palestine and Yemen. However, even if they had this tool, most peace negotiations continued to exclude women and did not include the gender perspective into their dynamics, calling into question the effectiveness of action plans as inclusive peacebuilding tools. In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government updated its National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 in December 2022. The existing action plan was the second plan for Ukraine (2016-2020, 2020-2025). The updated plan extends its period of action until 2025.[42]

Regarding the funding for the implementation of the agenda, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund presented the results of a survey conducted with the women's organisations that have benefited from its funding.[43] It is worth noting that despite the recommendations made in 2020 by the UN Secretary-General for at least 15% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to be dedicated to promoting gender equality as a primary objective in countries affected by armed conflicts, including through funding women's organisations, this funding accounted for only 0.4% of total aid in 2021. Furthermore, it has remained stagnant since 2010, as pointed out by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. The survey, which involved representatives from over 160 women's organisations in 23 countries, revealed that 89% of the organisations considered the continuity of their work to be at moderate, high or very high risk. Additionally, over half of the organisations (57%) felt that their continuity was at high or very high risk. The region at the highest risk was the Asia-Pacific region, where women's organisations in countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar were included, with 85% of them considering the risk to their continuity as high or very high. Almost 60% of women's organisations identified access to funding for their institutional functioning or multi-year programmes as one of their main concerns. They also pointed to the lack of flexibility and adaptation to the circumstances of conflict-affected settings and excessive bureaucratisation as major barriers to accessing this funding. Nearly half of the women's organisations in conflict-affected settings

42. Government of Ukraine, *National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security until 2025*, 2022. More information at WILPF, "Ukraine", *National Action Plans: At a Glance*, WILPF.
43. United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), *Civil Society Organization (CSO) Annual Survey on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Humanitarian Action*, 13 October 2022.

had received threats as a result of their work on the women, peace and security agenda, which, combined with financial difficulties, endangered the work of these organisations.

3.3.2. Gender in peace negotiations

Several peace processes were relevant from a gender point of view during the year 2022.[44] Women's organisations demanded greater participation in different negotiations around the world as well as the inclusion of gender agendas. However, in most of the negotiating processes, significant changes were not implemented to include the participation of women in a significant way.

In **Libya**, women continued to demand greater representation in negotiations and decision-making spaces regarding the country's political future, amid increasing threats and hostility towards activists and women working in the public sphere. The United Nations warned about propaganda and hate speech, which has been affecting female officials in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and activists from civil society who are pushing for more substantial participation by women in the political process, and for the implementation of the international agenda on women, peace and security. As part of the international monitoring mechanisms in the negotiating process in Libya, especially in the field of human rights, Libyan women defenders presented their vision on the challenges in this area, and experiences of international reconciliation were analysed, emphasising the lessons on the importance of ensuring the inclusion of women. Generally speaking, despite the various meetings held in 2022, negotiations in the North African country failed to break the political deadlock and deep divisions.

In the case of the dispute over **Western Sahara**, although the negotiation process remained stalled throughout the year, some events in 2022 indicated that greater attention was being paid to women's voices and their participation in efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict. One significant example was the decision of the UN Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, not to visit the occupied Western Sahara by Morocco in July due to the restrictions imposed by Rabat, which in practice prevented meetings with representatives of civil society and women's organisations. The UN Secretary-General's annual report on Western Sahara explicitly stated that De Mistura's trip was called off "in line with the principles of the United Nations and, in particular, the importance given to women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security." During his visit to the Sahrawi refugee camps in September, De Mistura met with civil society groups and women's organisations, who expressed their frustration at the lack of progress towards a political solution and their concerns about the humanitarian situation in the camps.

Turning to **Yemen**, despite their significant role in peace and security activities, Yemeni women continued to be excluded from relevant positions of power and decision-making for a political resolution to the armed conflict. During the course of 2022, Yemeni activists reiterated that the levels of participation were well below the 30% representation quota agreed upon in the Outcome Document of the National Dialogue Conference that concluded in January 2014. There were no women in the committees established after the adoption of the Stockholm Agreement in 2018 (on prisoner exchange, military security and Taiz). In the intra-Yemeni talks sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council, the participation of women had improved in various areas, but they remained excluded from discussions on security and counter-terrorism. The new Presidential Leadership Council, created in April 2022, which aimed to represent the different anti-Houthi factions, was formed without the presence of any women. In the 50-member Consultation and Reconciliation Commission established as an advisory body to the presidential council, the executive team included one woman among its five members. Both in Yemen and **Syria**, where negotiations were stalled in 2022, consultative spaces for women promoted by the United Nations remained active.

In **Colombia**, the Truth Commission presented its final report, entitled "There is Future if There is Truth",[45] which collected the results of the investigation into the impact of the armed conflict between 1986 and 2016. The Truth Commission incorporated an intersectional gender approach as an analytical tool to investigate the consequences of the conflict on women and on the LGTBIQ+ population. The report documented some of the gender impacts, primarily the use of sexual violence. It highlighted that all the actors involved in the conflict committed sexual violence, to varying degrees and with different patterns of victimisation. The perpetrators were predominantly men, and the main victims were women in the three main settings identified in the report: situations of helplessness such as captures or detentions; the scenario of territorial control in communities; and the context of operations and massacres. The lack of mechanisms and guarantees to report violence and the stigma surrounding it were some of the factors that reinforced the impunity of this type of violence. The report collected data from Colombia's Single Registry of Victims, which indicated that at least 32,446 individuals were victims of acts against freedom and sexual integrity, with women and girls accounting for 92% of the victims, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the report stated that most of the reported sexual violence took place between 1997 and 2005. It also highlighted the impact of the conflict on the LGTBIQ+ population.

44. For more exhaustive information on the incorporation of a gender perspective in currently active peace processes, see the yearbook of Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Icaria editorial, 2023.
45. Truth Commission, *Hay Futuro si Hay Verdad (There is Future if There is Truth),* 2022.

3.3.3. Civil society initiatives

Different peacebuilding initiatives led and carried out by women's civil society organisations took place in 2022. This section reviews some of the most relevant ones.

In **Lebanon**, which is affected by a severe political, economic and social crisis, around ten networks of women mediators were established during the course of the year with the support of the UN to address local disputes related to access to fuel, waste management, school violence and community violence. Some of these groups were established in the area of operations of the UN mission in the country, UNIFIL. Furthermore, the United Nations highlighted that, as part of peacebuilding efforts in the country, women from localities such as Tripoli and Beqaa led community dialogue initiatives on the legacy of the civil war and reconciliation. The UN also organised dialogues with women from traditional political parties and parties that emerged following the protests in 2019, and provided support to 450 potential female candidates for elections. However, the political representation of women remained very limited. In the elections held in May, only 118 (16.4%) of the 718 candidates were women, although this number represented an increase compared to the 86 women (13.4%) in the elections held in 2018. Ultimately, only eight women were elected out of a total of 128 parliamentary seats, including four representatives from groups that emerged after the 2019 protests, two from the Lebanese Forces, one from the Free Patriotic Movement, and one from Amal. In September, the Lebanese National Commission for Women also published a report on nationality rights and called for gender equality in this area.

In **Colombia**, women's peace organisations convened the 3rd National Summit of Women and Peace, which was attended by 100 women from across the country. The two previous national summits were convened in the context of peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, as well as dialogues with the ELN, with the aim of influencing the processes to promote women's participation in the negotiations. The National Summit is composed of the Alliance Initiative of Colombian Women for Peace; the National Association of Peasant, Black and Indigenous Women of Colombia (ANMUCIC); the Women's House; Women, Peace and Security - Thinking and Action Collective; the National Conference of Afro-Colombian Organisations; the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom; Women for Peace; and the Peaceful Women's Route. As part of the 3rd National Summit, an evaluation of the implementation process of the peace agreement between the government and the FARC (2016) was conducted, and proposals were presented to promote a new dialogue process with the armed group ELN. The participants in the summit highlighted the lack of implementation of the 2016 agreement and the delay in the process, attributing this situation to the government's lack of political will regarding the advancement of implementation, the insufficient financial resources allocated to implementation, the legal obstacles that have hindered the work of various implementation and verification bodies, and the lack of security guarantees for human rights defenders, peacebuilders and signatories of the agreement. The final manifesto of the summit included various aspects, such as the comprehensive fulfilment of the Final Peace Agreement with the incorporation of a gender perspective, a 50% increase in resources allocated from the General National Budget to ensure compliance with the agreed-upon approach to women's and gender rights, the immediate cessation of violence against signatories of the Final Peace Agreement, and the clear inclusion of women in national public policy as part of the objectives and goals for the fulfilment of the Final Peace Agreement, among other issues.

Women in **Ukraine** mobilised in multiple community spheres in response to the invasion, including in the evacuation of civilians and support for displaced persons, in the collection and distribution of humanitarian aid, in providing support networks for women experiencing domestic violence and war-related sexual violence, in the creation of shelters and safe spaces, in gathering information to locate missing individuals, in documenting human rights violations, and in providing assistance to individuals with specific needs, including health or mobility issues, among many other areas of crisis response. These efforts were carried out through informal and self-organised initiatives, as well as through civil society organisations and in coordination with Ukrainian institutions. The active participation of women occurred within the framework of the massive response by the Ukrainian population as a whole – women, men, LGTBIQ+ persons –to the invasion and the humanitarian crisis. The LGTBIQ+ population also mobilised in providing specific mutual support in response to the invasion and in order to mitigate the risks of exacerbating other forms of pre-existing discrimination, including support in finding safe accommodation. Many women joined the armed forces and territorial defence units (expanding the approximately 32,000 women who were already part of the armed forces prior to the invasion), as well as directly supporting armed actors, highlighting the heterogenous nature of the response to the invasion. In contrast, the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine – initiated shortly after the invasion began and held sporadically, and with many obstacles, until they stalled in around April 2022 – excluded the participation of women, with the exception of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine and Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, Iryna Vereshchuk, who was involved in humanitarian negotiations (humanitarian evacuations, prisoner exchanges, among others). In turn, Ukraine's ombudsperson for human rights, Lyudmila Denisova, also supervised prisoner exchanges until May 2022, when she was dismissed and replaced by Dmytro Lubinets.[46]

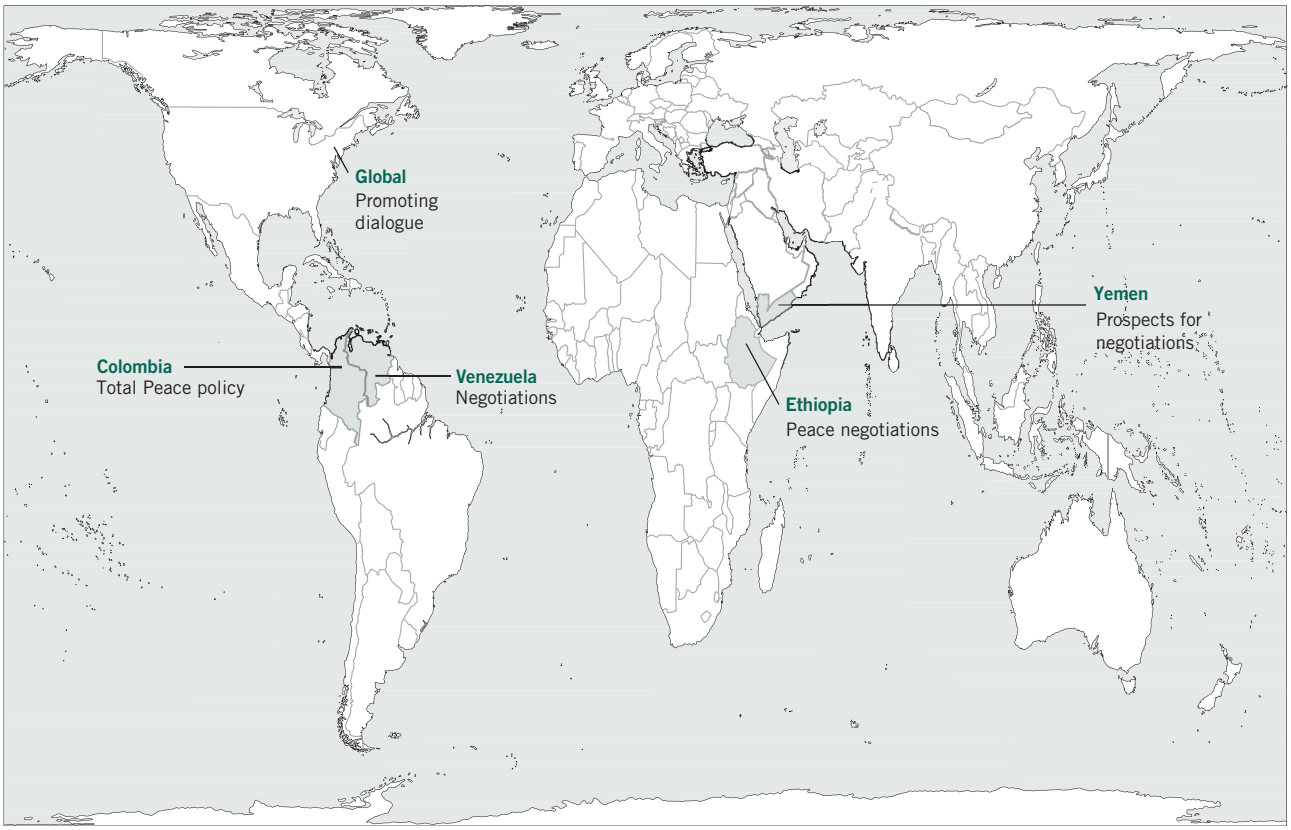
46. See the summary on Ukraine in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria: 2023.

4. Opportunities for peace

After analysing the year 2022 from the perspective of conflicts and peacebuilding,[1] in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace highlights five areas that are opportunities for peace in the future. They are contexts where there is, or has been, an armed conflict or socio-political crisis in the past where a series of factors converge that could lead to a positive transformation. The opportunities for peace identified refer to a window for peace in Ethiopia, following the cessation of hostilities in Tigray and the start of talks on the conflict in Oromia; to the possibilities of transforming the armed conflicts in Colombia as part of the Total Peace proposal of President Gustavo Petro; to the establishment of a national and international context more conducive to resolving the crisis in Venezuela through dialogue between the government and the majority opposition faction; to the falling levels of violence and convergence of local and regional factors that could favour a negotiated approach to the armed conflict in Yemen; and to the importance of committing to conflict prevention and negotiated conflict resolution in international contexts of seriously deteriorating human security, where initiatives such as the UN-backed New Agenda for Peace are becoming more important.

All these opportunities for peace will require the effort and real commitment of the parties involved and, where appropriate, the support of international actors so that the synergies and positive factors already present foster peacebuilding. As such, the analysis by the School for a Culture of Peace aims to provide a realistic vision of these scenarios and themes, identifying the positive aspects that encourage expectations of change while also highlighting the existing difficulties and problems that could hinder their crystallisation as opportunities for peace.

Map 4.1. **Opportunities for peace**



1. The analysis of each context is based on the yearly review of the events that occurred in 2022 and includes some important factors and dynamics of the first four months of 2023.

4.1. Ethiopia, facing a new window of opportunity for peacebuilding

Ethiopia is immersed in a complex range of challenges, profound changes and instability that has gotten worse in recent years. Adding to this instability was the outbreak of the armed conflict in the Tigray region in November 2020 and the serious escalation of violence in the Oromia region during 2022. The permanent cessation of hostilities reached between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigrayan political and military authorities, as well as the start of peace talks in Oromia with the armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), could present a new opportunity for the country to start moving down a new political path, albeit beset with risks and fragility.

The regime that has ruled Ethiopia since 1991 has faced a series of opposition movements calling for progress in the country's democracy and governance, as well as a greater degree of self-rule. The government coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), was controlled by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party of the Tigray minority, which ruled the country between 1991 and 2019 with increasing authoritarianism and the blessing of the Amhara elites. The ethnic federal regime entrenched by the EPRDF has not resolved the national issue, prompting stiff political and social opposition. Some political and military groups argue that ethnic federalism cannot meet their national needs, while parts of the ruling classes and across the country as a whole consider ethnic federalism a brake on the establishment of a nation state and demand the democratisation of institutions.

The agreement reached between the federal government and the political and military authorities of Tigray, as well as the start of peace talks with the armed group Oromo Liberation Army, could present a new opportunity for the country to start moving down a new political path

The massive social demonstrations that began in 2014 and were repressed with extreme violence contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in early 2018 and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed. The latter undertook a series of reforms[2] aimed at mitigating ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. However, the changes introduced by Abiy Ahmed's government caused tension, especially between the PP-controlled federal government and the TPLF, which culminated in the outbreak of the conflict in Tigray that has caused thousands of deaths and serious human rights violations. There was an escalation of violence by the armed group OLA in 2022 and a rise in crackdowns by federal security forces and pro-government paramilitary groups in the Oromia region alongside the peace negotiations between the federal government and the military and political authorities of the Tigray region. These negotiations may have drawn the international community's attention away from the situation in Oromia, according to various analysts.

On 2 November 2022, the government and the political and military authorities of the Tigray region reached a permanent ceasefire agreement in Pretoria (South Africa). It was preceded by the breaking of the humanitarian truce in force between March and August. Various analysts and members of the diaspora cited the humanitarian disaster as the main issue that pushed the Tigrayan authorities to negotiate and accept the agreement, which could be interpreted as a concession made by the TPLF. Details of the agreement demonstrated this, with its effective implementation left in the hands of the federal government. First, Eritrea was not part of the agreement, so it was not forced to accept any of the provisions established by the Ethiopian federal government. Second, the limited scope of the ceasefire supervision mechanism and the exclusion of the UN, US, EU and IGAD from signing the agreement, as they were merely observers of the process, raised doubts about its actual implementation on the ground and demonstrated the success of Ethiopia's strategy to exclude the international community. Third, the agreement established that the Ethiopian federal government should restore authority in the region until new elections were held and the federal government proposed a global policy of national transitional justice without mentioning any international investigation mechanism for crimes committed in the region, as highlighted by HRW and Amnesty International. Added to this were the initial ceasefire violations by the Ethiopian and Eritrean security forces and the Amhara militias against the TPLF since the agreement was signed, which stressed the difficulties in implementing it and the fragility of the situation.

However, the implementation of the agreement has so far been positive. In the following weeks, the Tigrayan political and military leadership agreed and began to effectively disarm its fighters and dissolved the regional government that emerged from the 2020 elections (not recognised by the federal government and which led to the war). The UN World Food Programme (WFP) then began to distribute humanitarian aid. On 12 November, the parties signed the Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Agreement for lasting peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities in Nairobi, which stipulated the delivery of heavy weapons and the demobilisation

2. For instance, Abiy dissolved the EPRDF coalition and refounded it in December 2019 as a new national party that shuns ethnic federalism, the Prosperity Party (PP), which the TPLF did not want to join.

of combatants, the restoration of public services in Tigray, the reactivation of aid and the withdrawal of all armed groups and foreign forces, in reference to Eritrea, which fought alongside the Ethiopian Army. The establishment of the AU monitoring mission was agreed on 22 December, as provided in the agreement, and the mission was launched on 29 December. Eritrea gradually withdrew from most cities in Tigray and by February 2023 its forces had practically left the region and only a few minor units remained in strategic positions in border areas, according to TPLF negotiating leader Getachew Reda,[3] while the political and military authorities of Tigray handed over heavy weaponry in the presence of the AU monitoring mission. In December and January, humanitarian access to the region improved substantially, according to United Nations sources,[4] and communications and commercial flights were restored. On 3 February, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with the leaders of the TPLF for the first time since 2020. The following day, the national security advisor and leading negotiator for the federal government, Redwan Hussein, announced the delivery of 90 million dollars to the central bank of Tigray to increase its cash flow. Days later, the TPLF established a committee to form an interim administration. In early March, Tigray's leaders held a conference to agree on the composition of the interim administration, which was boycotted by three opposition Tigrayan parties that accused the TPLF of monopolising power. On 17 March, the TPLF chose Getachew Reda to chair the Interim Regional Administration (IRA) and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ratified his appointment. Days later, Parliament removed the TPLF from the list of terrorist groups and the government dropped the charges against its political and military leaders, an essential requirement to form the IRA. Getachew Reda appointed the members of the IRA on 5 April.

However, various pending substantive issues reveal the fragility of the agreement, as some analysts point out.[5] First is the the political debate about the national issue, ethnic federalism and tension between the centre and the periphery, which is still pending to resolve this and other sources of instability in the country. Second is the fight against impunity for serious human rights violations committed in the region. In late February, it was leaked that Addis Ababa had been seeking support to end the UN-ordered investigation into the atrocities in Tigray. More than 60 human rights organisations urged the UN Human Rights Council, which will discuss the complaints in March, to reject the request. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited the country in March and noted that all parties were responsible for crimes against humanity. Third, tensions between the Amhara community and the Oromo community led in April to the Ethiopian federal government's announcement that it would disarm and dissolve the paramilitary militias of the Amhara region and integrate them into the Ethiopian Police and the Ethiopian Army. These militias have been found responsible for crimes against humanity. These actions led to an escalation in fighting between the Fano militia and its sympathisers and activists against the Ethiopian Army and the establishment of a curfew in the region. In mid-April, the fighting began to subside. Fourth is the conflict between the armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Ethiopian federal government, with the support of the Amharic Fano paramilitary militia, which escalated seriously during the second half of 2022, causing hundreds of fatalities. After the agreement was signed between the TPLF and the Ethiopian federal government and once its positive implementation had begun, the federal authorities escalated military action against the OLA. Pressure from the local government of the Oromia region as well as the OLA and the federal authorities' shared interest in reaching some kind of truce led to various indirect exploratory meetings in February 2023 between both parties, expressing their interest in a cessation of hostilities. Amid the violence, in March Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said he was committed to exploring a negotiating process with the OLA and peace talks began in Tanzania on 25 April. Peace negotiations began in Zanzibar with the facilitation of Kenya (the OLA had demanded the mediation of a third party)[6] on behalf of the regional authority IGAD and Norway.[7] Though the first round ended without progress in early May, both parties expressed their commitment to a seeking a solution to the conflict.[8]

In short, although there is a broad consensus on the positive implementation of the peace agreement between the TPLF and the Ethiopian federal government, there are many sources of fragility that could reverse the positive progress made thus far. Continuous attention from the social and political opposition, as well as from the Ethiopian federal government and pressure from the international community is essential to continue advancing in the process to implement the peace agreement, as well as the dialogue between the OLA and the Ethiopian federal government and the fight against impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Tigray.

3. Crisis Watch, Ethiopia - February 2023, International Crisis Group, 1 February 2023.
4. Harter, Fred, Tigray aid access improves as peace deal makes headway, The New Humanitarian, 31 January 2023.
5. Davison, William, What now for the Ethiopia-Tigray peace deal?, International Crisis Group, 30 December 2022.
6. OLA Command, Regarding Peace Negotiations, OLF-OLA Press Release, 23 April 2023.
7. Kombe, Charles, Peace Talks Between Ethiopian Government, OLA Continue in Tanzania, VOA, 27 April 2023.
8. Paravicini, Giulia, First round of peace talks between Ethiopia and Oromo rebels ends without deal, Reuters, 3 May 2023.

4.2. "Total Peace", an ambitious peace policy for Colombia

The new government of Colombia, led by President Gustavo Petro, is promoting a public peace-building policy known as "Total Peace", which may present an opportunity to transform the different conflicts affecting the country. Colombia faces many different challenges, given the ongoing political and criminal violence, serious human rights violations and lack of human security, as well as different armed and political actors' opposition to a negotiated solution to the conflicts. This new policy intends to transcend the limits of the peace negotiations that have taken place with different armed opposition groups active in the country in previous decades, trying to involve all the armed actors operating in the country in different processes, whether they have political agendas or are involved in organised crime activities, such as drug trafficking. Gustavo Petro won the June 2022 election on a platform that included a broad commitment to building peace in the country, both by implementing the peace agreement reached in 2016 between the Colombian government and the FARC and in new peace negotiations with the ELN and other armed actors active in the country. During the administration of President Iván Duque and his proposal for "peace with legality", the implementation of the Havana peace agreement suffered due to Bogotá's lack of commitment, with significant delays, a lack of resources and even deliberate obstruction. Thus, Petro's rise to power marks the beginning of a new governmental approach towards the different violent conflicts that have shaken the country for decades and a new impetus for achieving the lasting implementation of the peace agreement with the FARC.

The government of Colombia is promoting a public peacebuilding policy called "Total Peace", which can be an opportunity to transform the different conflicts affecting the country through dialogue

Legislation for "Total Peace" (Law 2272) was enacted in November by extending and amending Law 418 of 1997. This law, which was passed under the government of Ernesto Samper, has allowed Colombian presidents to conduct peace negotiations with armed groups and design security policies. Under the protection of this law, different governments have conducted negotiations and pursued rapprochement with armed groups. The new law establishes that "peace policy will be a priority and cut across state affairs. It will be participatory, broad, inclusive and comprehensive, both in relation to implementing agreements and to negotiating processes, dialogue and the submission to justice".[9] Different facets and processes of peacebuilding are included under this umbrella of "Total Peace", such as the implementation of the peace agreement reached in 2016 between the FARC and the Colombian government; peace negotiations with illegal armed groups involving political talks, particularly the negotiations with the ELN currently under way; negotiations with high-impact armed criminal organisations, including drug traffickers and paramilitaries; and dialogue with the local population in different areas of the country to guide public policy based on the needs of civil society.

Several specific initiatives have been launched since the new government was sworn in, some of them enormously significant for ending armed violence in the country. The first is the dialogue with the ELN, which has taken place in several rounds of negotiations between the government and the armed group.[10] The process has stood out for its high degree of internationalisation and support by different actors. It began in November 2022 in Venezuela with a first round of talks, followed by another two in Mexico and Cuba. Norway, Venezuela, Cuba, Brazil, Chile and Mexico participate in the process as guarantor countries, and Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain as supporting countries. The US has also been invited to send a special envoy to it. Despite some snags and disagreements between the parties, the negotiations are moving forward under the leadership of Otty Patiño as chief negotiator for the Colombian government and Pablo Beltrán for the ELN, to the point that in June 2023 a ceasefire agreement was reached.

Once the talks with the ELN had begun, on 31 December, President Petro announced a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the ELN, the Second Marquetalia, Estado Mayor Central, the AGC and the Conquistador Self-Defence Forces of the Sierra Nevada spanning from 1 January to 30 June 2023, which could be extended depending on the progress made in the negotiations. Two days later, the ELN denied that a bilateral agreement had been reached, but both the Second Marquetalia and Estado Mayor Central responded positively to the ceasefire. After several months of negotiations, the ELN and the government managed to agree to a ceasefire.

In addition to the dialogue with the ELN, the government announced a negotiating process with a group known as Estado Mayor Central, with started out as a FARC dissident group before the 2016 peace agreement was signed and is led by Iván Mordisco. In April, the Colombian government indicated that an Oversight, Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVMV) would be set up for the ceasefire between the national government and Estado Mayor Central. Yet in May, President Petro suspended the ceasefire with this group in several parts of the country as a result

9. Law 2272 of 2022.
10. See the summary on Colombia (ELN) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022: Report on Trends and Scenarios,* Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.

of the murder of four indigenous minors who had been forcibly recruited, thereby demonstrating the fragility and difficulties of the process. Rapprochement with the Second Marquetalia was also announced, though the very nature of this FARC dissident group, which abandoned the 2016 agreement once it was signed, posed additional problems for new talks. Also in March, the ceasefire with the Gulf Clan had ended. Though some rapprochement had been achieved with this paramilitary organisation, its demands for political recognition and the start of a negotiating process equivalent to the one carried out with the ELN was rejected by the government, which was waiting for talks to agree on ways to submit to justice. Overall, Bogotá indicated in May that it was carrying out different types of negotiations with the ELN, the Gulf Clan, Estado Mayor Central, the Second Marquetalia and the Conquistador Self-Defence Forces of the Sierra Nevada (ACSN).

"Total Peace" is an ambitious project, as it seeks to resolve a multifaceted and entrenched conflict led by many different armed actors. The challenges of conducting separate peace processes simultaneously are clear and enormous institutional strength is required for multiple negotiating teams to make headway in processes of enormous complexity at the same time. The "Total Peace" proposal has given rise to great expectations that must be handled skilfully to respond to the frustrations that may arise if the main objectives are not achieved. Other main challenges include the possibility of ending drug trafficking and other highly lucrative illicit businesses through dialogue. Organised criminals' demand for recognition as political actors will also have to be addressed with short-, medium- and long-term strategies embracing the international dimension of drug trafficking and organised crime. Thus, Gustavo Petro's government must be able to weave a web of interdependent processes, but in which the failure of any one does not necessarily imply the failure of the "Total Peace" policy as a whole. Strengthening what should be the main pillars of this policy, the negotiations with the ELN and the implementation of the 2016 agreement should be a priority to underpin a highly ambitious strategy, but it is also one that is full of risks.

4.3. A more conducive domestic, regional and international context for a negotiated resolution to the crisis in Venezuela

In late April 2023, the Colombian government of Gustavo Petro organised an international conference on Venezuela in Bogotá that enjoyed the participation of representatives from 20 countries and the support of the government of Venezuela, the Venezuelan opposition represented by the Unitary Platform and the US government. The objective of the meeting was mainly to agree on the conditions to resume the talks that Caracas and the opposition began in Mexico in August 2021 with the government of Norway facilitating, which were interrupted in November 2022 shortly after an agreement was reached on social investments with Venezuelan funds frozen abroad. Though the conference did not yield any important breakthrough or resume the talks between the government and the opposition, the fact that it was held and the emergence of some international, regional and internal Venezuelan structural factors in recent times offer some windows of opportunity for negotiations between the Maduro government and the opposition.

The international conference on Venezuela was held on 25 April after many previous meetings between Gustavo Petro and Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan opposition and US President Biden, among other actors, and ended with a statement of conclusions, which mainly pivoted around three commitments: the establishment of an electoral schedule to hold free and transparent elections with full guarantees for all Venezuelan actors; the gradual lifting of sanctions against the Venezuelan government as the agreed promises are fulfilled; and the resumption of the talks in Mexico, accompanied by the implementation of the Social Investment Trust Fund in Venezuela. The fund, which should be filled by Venezuelan monetary assets frozen abroad (around 3.2 billion dollars) and managed by the United Nations, was agreed on in November 2022 during the negotiations in Mexico. Even if most analysts thought that the conference would be unable to resume the talks in Mexico in the short term and that its results had not lived up to expectations, Petro promised to maintain contact with the parties and to convene a new meeting (with a format and date to be determined) to specify and follow up on the commitments made. Though neither Maduro nor US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken ultimately attended the conference, despite initial speculation, it received significant international support for its conflict resolution efforts, with representatives of 20 countries attending, many of them in Latin America, as well as the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The fact that Mexico and Norway, which respectively host and facilitate the official negotiations between the two parties, were present at the Bogotá summit, demonstrates strategic complementarity and diplomatic coordination between the formal negotiations and the Colombian initiative.

The conference in Bogotá also reveals a certain depolarisation in Latin America regarding the crisis in Venezuela. The coming to power of some more progressive governments (as in Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Peru and Mexico) has resulted in more conciliatory or pragmatic policies towards the Venezuelan government. The government of Mexico, for example, decided to host the negotiations between Caracas and the Unitary Platform, which formally began in August 2021. Especially significant has been the change in diplomatic relations since Gustavo Petro came to power in August 2022. Petro not only reestablished diplomatic and commercial relations with Caracas (interrupted during Iván Duque's administration), but he met up to five times with Nicolás Maduro in the first stretch of his term to address different issues of mutual concern, such as the negotiations with the ELN and the flow of Venezuelan migrants to Colombia. The organisation of the international conference on Venezuela also illustrates the current Colombian president's desire to play an active role in resolving the political conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Another indicator of a regional context less likely to force alternation in Venezuela through political and economic isolation is the end of the activity of the Lima Group since late 2022, with Bolsonaro leaving power in Brazil. The Lima Group was created in August 2017 by 14 countries with the support of the US, the OAS and the EU primarily to force the end of the Maduro government. It ignored the mandate and legality of the Maduro government and instead recognised Juan Guaidó as president of the country.

Along the same lines, the US government is also showing a more conciliatory position towards the Venezuelan government. Though it is still one of the few countries that still recognises and supports Juan Guaidó, relations between both countries have improved substantially since the end of the Trump administration. Several analysts have said that the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Washington's need to find alternative sources to Moscow for its oil supply contributed decisively to the rapprochement between the two governments. There have been direct meetings between representatives of the US government and Nicolás Maduro since March 2022 and in early October, in what some media outlets considered the most important agreement between the two countries since Biden took office, they agreed to a prisoner exchange in a third country, which included

seven US citizens imprisoned in Venezuela and two nephews of Maduro's wife arrested by the DEA and serving an 18-year sentence in the US. In November, shortly after the signing of the agreement between Caracas and the opposition, Washington announced that it had authorised the oil company Chevron to resume its oil drilling operations in Venezuela to export it to the US. The Venezuelan government announced the signing of several agreements between the national oil company PDVSA and Chevron. Finally, at the end of 2022, Maduro declared that his government was fully prepared to normalise diplomatic relations with the US.

Domestically, there also seems to have been some rapprochement between the government and part of the opposition. In November 2022 in Mexico, the government and the opposition reached an agreement facilitated by Norway in which they both pledged to carry out all national and international efforts aimed at progressively recovering more than 3 billion dollars of frozen state assets abroad to finance social programmes for health, education and food. Even though the agreement has not been fully implemented and the parties have not officially met since then to address issues such as the electoral schedule, conditions and guarantees, the release of detainees or the human rights situation, the mere formal existence of a negotiating process, as well as both parties' willingness to attend the conference in Bogotá, shows their greater pragmatism and confidence in reaching agreements to move the situation forward. The opposition recently seems to have lost enthusiasm for Juan Guaidó's less conciliatory and more polarising rhetoric. Indeed, in December 2022 the National Assembly, elected in 2015 (which the opposition considers the only legitimate body in the country and was outlawed by the government), decreed an end to Guaidó's interim government and presidency based on the view that it is not an instrument of real change. Guaidó criticised the move, arguing that it strengthens the Maduro government, but there had been previous indicators that international support for Guaidó had waned. In January 2022, for example, the National Assembly had extended Guaidó's interim presidency for one year, but it also shrank the bureaucratic structure that supported him. On 19 October, Latin American countries voted against allowing the Guaidó government to represent Venezuela in the OAS. Some parts of the opposition not necessarily represented in the Unitary Platform, such as former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, welcomed the agreement reached by the government and the opposition in November 2022, saying that it tries to coordinate relief for the population's urgent social needs and deal with the humanitarian crisis gripping the country by improving structural aspects such as the separation of powers, democratic rules, the rule of law and the re-institutionalisation of the state.

The government has also made moves that seem to show greater internal liberalisation and a propensity for certain concessions. For example, after several months of negotiations with opposition groups not included in the Unitary Platform, and criticised by it for arguing that its political action legitimises the Venezuelan government, Caracas agreed to allow those groups to appoint two of the five members of the National Electoral Council, the highest authority on electoral matters. Along the same lines, several analysts concluded that the 2021 regional and local elections were fairer, freer and more competitive than any previous elections since 2015. In fact, Caracas invited an EU electoral mission to validate the election and make a series of recommendations on electoral matters at the same time. According to the International Crisis Group research centre, two or three things could bring about rapprochement between the government and the opposition, such as improving the electoral census (which currently excludes millions of citizens), appointing independent local election workers and monitoring the next presidential election. Furthermore, the Provea organisation declared that in 2022, arbitrary detentions had fallen by 83% compared to 2021. The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict also indicated that the number of protests dropped substantially in 2022 and that the security forces and armed civilian bodies had acted less repressively in containing the demonstrations compared to previous years.

The conference in Bogotá revealed a certain depolarisation in Latin America regarding the crisis in Venezuela

Despite all the above, the negotiating processes are facing major challenges. The conference in Bogotá yielded less ambitious results than expected. It did not substantially change Washington's position that it will not relax sanctions until Caracas takes clear and unequivocal steps towards holding free and competitive elections. Likewise, the Venezuelan government still refuses to resume talks with the Unitary Platform on political issues until its frozen assets abroad are released. Some senior government officials have also demanded other conditions for resuming the talks in Mexico, such as lifting sanctions and involving Alex Saab, a Colombian businessman close to Caracas extradited to the US from Cape Verde in October 2021. The opposition and several NGOs think that the human rights situation in the country remains very insecure. In November 2022, for example, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan formally asked the Pre-Trial Chamber for authorisation to continue with the investigation opened in November 2021 into the alleged commission of crimes against humanity in Venezuela since April 2017.

However, both sides still have incentives to resume dialogue and reach a political agreement. After several years of mass demonstrations and the remarkable international recognition of an alternative president, Juan Guaidó, the opposition seems convinced that the only option to achieve a change of government is through elections. Give the Venezuelan government's resilience to international pressure and popular protests, any improvement in electoral conditions seems to inevitably require a deal with the government. From Caracas' point of view, the country's insecure economic situation makes it urgent to relax international sanctions. As of December 2022, there were more than seven million Venezuelan migrants or refugees worldwide and, according to the IOM, 7.7 million people in the country in need of humanitarian aid. According to some analysts, both international sanctions and the lack of foreign investment are hindering the production and sale of Venezuelan crude oil, one of the main assets of the country's economy. A regional and international context more conducive to a negotiated solution to the crisis in Venezuela would undoubtedly maximise the incentives for both parties to negotiate and make it easier to explore options to overcome the institutional deadlock and the political and social tension in the country since Maduro came to power a decade ago.

4.4. Decisive opportunity? Challenges for a sustainable and inclusive peace in Yemen

Yemen is at a critical juncture. After eight years of a high-intensity armed conflict that has claimed many thousands of lives, the country has an unprecedented and decisive opportunity to try to put an end to hostilities. This expectation has been built on the basis of a series of recent local and regional events that point to the shaping of a context apparently more conducive for addressing the conflict through negotiated and political means, including a truce that has significantly reduced the violence and that has generally been upheld, despite not being formally renewed; the establishment of a negotiating channel between Riyadh and the Houthis under the mediation of Oman; the rapprochement and restoration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran with the possibility of repercussions in Yemen, given their role in the conflict there; and the commitment of Yemeni actors to make progress in implementing some agreements. However, a careful analysis of these and other dynamics leads to conclude that there are still important challenges ahead of any prospects for a sustainable and inclusive peace in Yemen.

One unquestionable factor is the drop in levels of direct violence in the country as a result of the truce agreement signed in April 2022 between the main contending parties: the internationally recognised government, deposed in 2014 and supported by Saudi Arabia; and the Houthi forces. After a period of intensified hostilities, this UN-backed ceasefire, the first nationwide ceasefire since 2016, has significantly reduced the number of deaths in the conflict, decreased levels of forced displacement and relatively improved the very serious food insecurity situation affecting the population. Despite the formal collapse of the truce, which was renewed twice, but not the third time, in October 2022, important stipulations have remained in force that are significant for the humanitarian situation in the country. There have also been no large-scale armed operations and the lines of the main battlefronts have remained stable, despite an increase in acts of violence in 2023. The effects of the truce have been held up as tangible proof of the positive possibilities of approaching the conflict through negotiations. Hostilities are at their lowest levels in recent years, but the situation is fragile. The UN special envoy for Yemen has tried to get the parties to formally renew the ceasefire for a longer period and move forward on other issues that have been agenda items in the negotiations sponsored by the UN in recent years. As a result of these efforts, a massive prisoner exchange took place in April 2023, resulting in the release of almost 900 people. This prisoner swap, which implemented part of the 2018 Stockholm Agreement, shows the possibilities of understanding and compromise between the Houthis and the Riyadh-backed Yemeni government, though they have not made headway on other issues of disagreement.

Despite the formal collapse of the truce in October 2022, important aspects of the agreement have remained in force and several factors indicate that the parties may continue to address the conflict through negotiations

Since the last quarter of 2022, the most substantive dialogue has been in the direct negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis mediated by Oman. This channel was begun in October after the ceasefire could not be formally renewed, a failure attributed to the Houthis for including additional demands in the UN-sponsored process. This format suits the interests of the Houthis, who prefer to deal with Riyadh as an interlocutor. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's decision to get involved in this way has been interpreted as further evidence of its interest in withdrawing from a costly armed conflict that has spread beyond what it had envisaged and in which none of its objectives have been achieved: restoring the deposed government; defeating the Houthis, who have tightened their hold on an important part of the country; or keeping away an armed actor with alleged ties with Iran. Indeed, Tehran has strengthened ties with and provided political and military support to the Houthis throughout the conflict.

In this context, the announcement of rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran in March 2023 after years of diplomatic rift (the result of contacts initially facilitated by Iraq and Oman, but which took form under mediation by China) encouraged expectations regarding the possibilities that it could have an impact on various regional conflicts and particularly in Yemen, given the role of both actors over the course of the conflict. According to reports, one of Saudi Arabia's demands to re-establish relations with Iran, broken off since 2016, is that Tehran must stop supporting the Houthis and influencing their positions in the negotiating process. Though this "détente" between Saudi Arabia and Iran has been viewed as gathering momentum for dialogue and an understanding that can accelerate negotiations over Yemen, others have expressed doubt about the process. The rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran has projected and aggravated the Yemeni conflict, but it has not caused it, since the dispute has its roots in internal fractures and involves different political and armed actors. Therefore, this new regional dynamic, while positive, is not by itself sufficient to bring about peace in Yemen. There have also been questions about Iran's effective ability to influence the Houthis or force them to accept a political agreement, as its sway is more limited compared to other groups in

the region and Tehran cannot wield total control over the Houthis' actions and about the risks that regional players may seek to control the negotiations and shape an outcome based on their priorities, bypassing Yemeni players and the UN. This is what has been identified as a danger of "Astanisation", in reference to the Astana negotiating process on Syria promoted by Russia, Turkey and Iran, established alongside the negotiations promoted by the UN.

In this context, the possibility of an agreement being forged only between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis that excludes other Yemeni actors produces particular concern and misgivings. Analysts have pointed out the risks that any deal could be limited to guaranteeing these actors' interests (Saudi border security to facilitate their withdrawal and formalisation of the Houthis' territorial control of a good part of the country) at the expense of the interests and participation of other actors in Yemeni society. The secrecy and dynamics of these negotiations have fuelled various Yemeni actors' fears that they are addressing and resolving substantive issues without the possibility of receiving influence and that this approach may lead to future instability and violence. For example, some actors, such as representatives of separatist groups in southern Yemen, have said that they will not recognise any agreement that compromises issues related to the distribution of resources, administration or security of the country. Yemeni actors have expressed frustration over what they perceive to be Saudi Arabia's attempt to seek a quick solution, the lack of prior consultation with Yemeni government representatives and reports that Riyadh may be willing to accept many of the Houthis' demands.

At least formally, the Omani-facilitated process seems committed to restarting UN-facilitated intra-Yemeni talks. If this takes place, it will pose another challenge of internal conflict among the bloc of actors of the "anti-Houthi" front. The configuration of a collegiate Presidential Leadership Council in April 2022, under the directives of Riyadh and the UAE (another regional actor directly involved in the Yemeni conflict), was presented as a new attempt to overcome these divisions. However, one year after its creation, this Presidential Leadership Council appears as a weak and fragmented interlocutor, hobbled from the beginning by disagreements and political and military competition among its members, dynamics encouraged by Saudi Arabia and the UAE's policies to try to strengthen actors aligned with their interests. Thus, beyond their anti-Houthi stance, the forces represented in the Presidential Leadership Council do not have a shared vision of the political future of Yemen. They lack a common strategy for UN-mediated negotiations and have been excluded from the talks facilitated by Oman.

Added to all this is another fundamental challenge to peace in Yemen: the effective inclusion of civilians who have suffered the most from the conflict and who have been persistently marginalised from formal negotiations, especially women. Women have been excluded despite their public demands to be involved and despite the formal commitments made in the past about representation quotas in decision-making about the future of Yemen. Women's actions have been very important in local peacebuilding and mediation initiatives and their contributions have been and will be decisive in efforts towards building a sustainable peace in Yemen. This peace is understood not only as the end of armed hostilities, but as a process that addresses all the many different causes of the conflict and the violence, considers the demands for accountability for the abuses committed by all parties to the conflict and focuses on the urgent humanitarian needs of the civilian population.

This opportunity for peace in Yemen must therefore be seen as the start of a long-term process. Meanwhile, the contending parties and international actors that can support the negotiations should promote upholding the ceasefire, an environment conducive to dialogue and negotiation, and a truly inclusive process that recognises the contributions of women and civil society. The talks should address the complexity and the different factors of the conflict and not be limited to the interests of regional powers or armed actors. Despite all its imperfections, previous experiences such as the National Dialogue Conference (2013-14) indicate that it is possible to establish formats to address the future of Yemen from a multidimensional perspective that puts understanding and reconciliation efforts front and centre.

4.5. Promoting dialogue in a time of multipolar international order

There is a serious deterioration in the human security of many populations around the world due to conflicts, crises and intertwined processes such as climate change. The complex international scenario of armed conflict is characterised by increasing intensity of violence and a proliferating number of actors. Often prolonged over time, these are mostly internationalised internal conflicts in which foreign geopolitical disputes are projected, with growing dimensions of intercommunal violence and criminal violence. This is happening in a multipolar international context that is experiencing intensified tensions between great powers and a trend towards greater militarisation. However, at the same time, dialogue and diplomacy are still important and necessary for dealing with this context, including to prevent conflict and support mediation. The UN-backed process under way for the development of a New Agenda for Peace offers a framework of opportunity to strengthen international, regional and local efforts in conflict prevention and in promoting dialogue and peacebuilding.

There were ongoing negotiations in 19 of the 33 active armed conflicts in 2022 (58%)

39 peace processes and negotiations were identified in 2022. A large majority were in Africa (15), followed by Asia (10), Europe (six), the Middle East (four) and the Americas (four).[11] Compared to the previous year, a slight increase was identified in the number of peace processes and negotiations analysed worldwide (there had been 37 in 2021). Though not as high as in previous years (40 processes in 2020, 50 in 2019 and 49 in 2018), it was still significant in terms of the number of conflicts in which opposed actors agreed to settle some or all their differences through dialogue, despite the many problems entailed. Some of those 39 processes involved actors in armed conflict, while others dealt with non-armed disputes. There were ongoing negotiations in 19 of the 33 active armed conflicts during 2022 (58%), while 14 did not have any dialogue between the parties. Moreover, 11 of the 17 most intense armed conflicts had dialogue or negotiating processes (65%) in 2022. Even in a year of global setbacks in terms of peace and security like 2022, there were partial achievements such as an agreement to end the hostilities in the Tigray region, in Ethiopia; a nationwide truce in Yemen, which expired in the final months of the year, though some aspects of the agreement were upheld in practice; an agreement between the government of South Sudan and an armed faction to sign the 2018 peace agreement; and a tripartite peace agreement between the central government of India, the state government of Assam and eight Adivasi insurgent groups, among others. In any case, most of the negotiating processes faced serious obstacles and many dragged on over time, like the conflicts they addressed. However, despite the enormous difficulties, the widespread existence of negotiating processes highlights that they are valid and relevant.

On the other hand, an analysis of the active peace processes in 2022 reveals many different actors involved in promoting dialogue. Although the UN continues to be the leading mediator and co-mediator, the scenario is characterised by a growing number of diverse actors, though it still faces challenges of coordination and of the actors projecting their own interests while assuming mediation roles, especially state actors. In 2022, the EU carried out third-party functions in 16 negotiating processes, the AU in 11 processes, the IGAD in five and the OSCE in four. Many states also carried out functions as third parties in negotiating processes.

In an international order marked by dynamics of rivalry between international and regional powers and internationalised internal armed conflicts with layers of geostrategic disputes, the involvement of a greater number or diversity of actors supporting dialogue and mediation may contribute to approaches that eventually could lead to agreements of various kinds, including humanitarian ones. One such agreement, though considered exceptional,[12] is the 2022 deal between Ukraine and Russia to export grain amid the invasion and a serious crisis of rising prices and global food insecurity, reached with the participation of Turkey, two UN agencies and advisory services from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

However, among other challenges, there are risks of support for mediation approaches that disregard even more (or even confront) the framework of mediation support principles developed by the United Nations thus far, with features like inclusive mediation and integration of the gender perspective. Faced with this challenge, it is essential to ensure international support for the many different local actors from different spheres involved in inclusive peacebuilding, their local agendas and priorities, and in protecting human rights activists. For example, in his 2022 annual report on the implementation of the international women, peace and security agenda, which covered the year 2021, the UN Secretary-General highlighted examples of the inclusion of detailed provisions related to gender in local agreements, including a peace action agreement between the Lou Nuer, Dinka Bor and Murle ethnic

11. Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2023.
12. Vatikiotis, Michael, "Humanitarian crises in a multipolar world: How mediation and reforms can get aid moving", *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*, 14 September 2022.

groups in Yonglei state, South Sudan. The UN Secretary-General noted that the provisions appeared to be rooted in community mediation processes that preceded the agreements.[13]

In recent decades, international mechanisms and agendas have expanded that at least formally complement and enhance peacebuilding, conflict prevention and the promotion of negotiated solutions to armed conflicts. The multiplication of preventive warning systems, the efforts of regional and state actors to support dialogue and mediation by adopting institutional infrastructure and practical tools and the importance of promoting dialogue in the women, peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas, among other factors, indicate a high degree of sophistication, acquired learning and interconnection. In practice, however, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and support for dialogue are still underfunded and underused, hand-in-hand with short-sighted and reactive political positions. For example, Muggah and Whitlock identified factors explaining the poor operationalisation of preventive warning systems and cited a lack of political will as the central aspect of the "warning-response gap".[14] More broadly, the lack of political will to focus more on preventing armed violence and on supporting mediation and dialogue as a whole is a chronic obstacle that diminishes enormous potentiality. More efforts are needed, including political leadership that promotes its implementation.

The United Nations-supported process "Our Common Agenda" is an opportunity to promote armed conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Finally, the process promoted by the United Nations around *Our Common Agenda* with which to face current and future challenges and accelerate the implementation of the Millenium Development Goals is an opportunity for a renewed drive for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This international process includes framework documents such as the report *Our Common Agenda,* released by the UN Secretary-General in September 2021, as a road map and in response to the member states' request as part of the UN's 75th anniversary to move towards an agenda to face global challenges and produce recommendations. The UN Secretary-General's report indicates the need for a New Agenda for Peace and identifies six potential areas for developing it: a) by reducing strategic risks, b) by strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new peace and security risks, c) by reshaping our responses to all forms of violence, d) by investing in Investing in prevention and peacebuilding., e) by supporting regional prevention and f) by putting women and girls at the centre of security policy.[15] This entire process, including the development of the "New Agenda for Peace", is expected to be carried out in consultation with and the participation of many different actors, including members of civil society, and will lead to the Summit of the Future and the adoption of the Pact for the Future in 2024, with multilateral commitments for action.

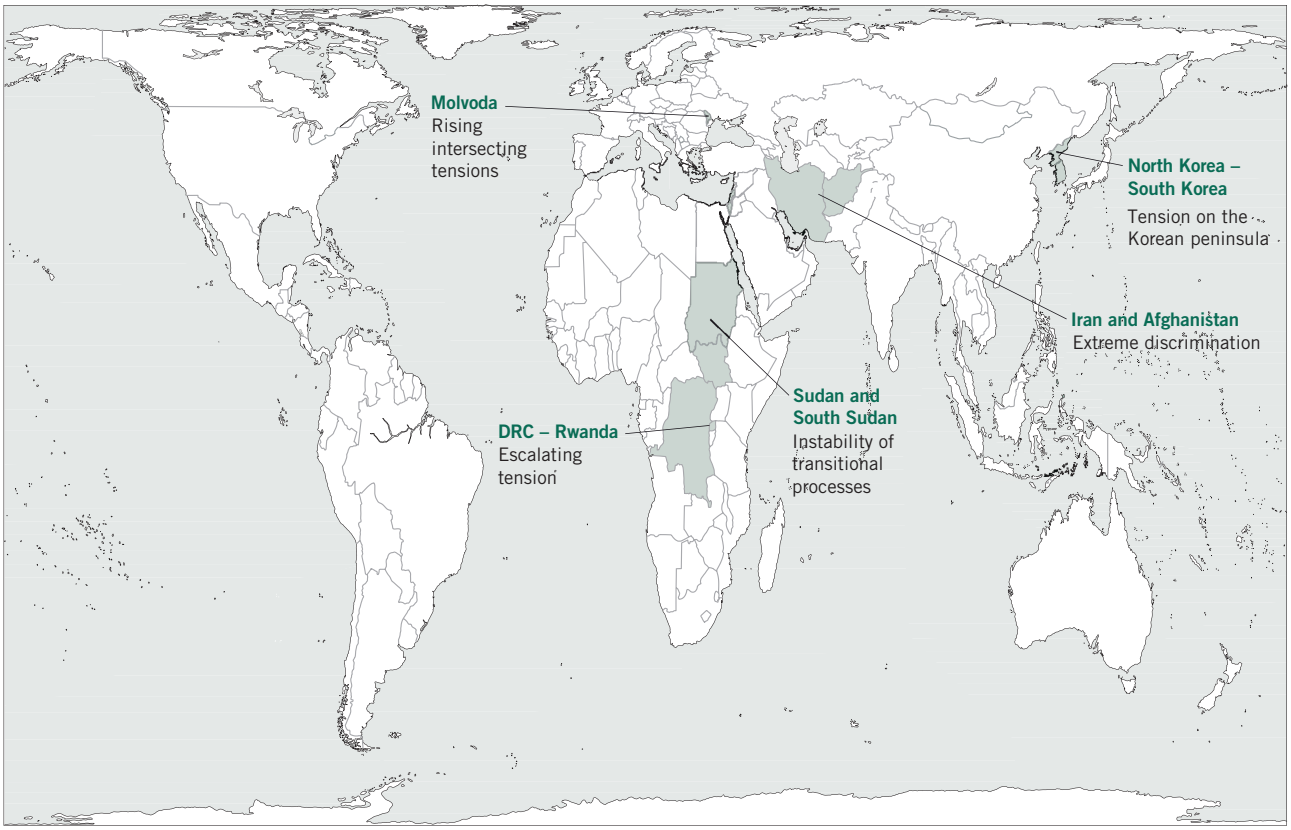
Overall, the landscape of armed conflict and intertwined processes does not invite optimism. At the same time, armed conflict prevention and the promotion of negotiated conflict resolution remain relevant and necessary and have been fields in recent decades (and especially in recent years) of actors' increasing involvement and the expansion of mechanisms, architectures and integration in interconnected agendas. The New Agenda for Peace and the greater geostrategic rivalry and protracted conflicts in the world increase the opportunity and the urgent need to reinvigorate prevention and support for dialogue and mediation, with innovation, human and economic resources, multilateralism, support for local agendas and priorities and the protection of human rights activists.

13. UN Secretary-General, *Women, peace and security*, S/2022/740, 5 October 2022.
14. Muggah, Robert and Mark Whitlock, "Reflections on the Evolution of Conflict Early Warning", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 10(1): 2, pp. 1–16.
15. Un Secretary-General, *Our Shared Agenda - report of the Secretary-General,* United Nations, 2021.

5. Risk scenarios

Drawing on the analysis of the armed conflicts and socio-political crises around the world in 2022,[1] in this chapter the UAB's School for a Culture of Peace identifies five contexts that may worsen and become sources of greater instability and violence in 2023 or even further into the future due to their conditions and dynamics. The risk scenarios refer to the crises in the transitional processes in South Sudan and Sudan, which could expand due to the drift of violence in Sudan; the risk of escalation in the Great Lakes area as a result of the deterioration in relations between Rwanda and the DRC; the rising political and military tension between North Korea on the one hand and South Korea, the US and Japan on the other; the growth of multidimensional tension in Moldova as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine; and the worsening of discriminatory policies against women and the intensification of attempts to control their lives and bodies in Iran and Afghanistan, which has led to describe their situation as one of "gender apartheid".

Map 5.1. **Risk scenarios**



1. The analysis of each context is based on the yearly review of the events that occurred in 2022 and includes some important factors and dynamics of the first four months of 2023.

5.1. Sudan-South Sudan: the deterioration of political transitions threatens regional stability

Since achieving its independence in 1956, Sudan has experienced long periods under the shadow of war and instability. More than 2.5 million people lost their lives in the first (1955-1972) and second (1983-2005) stages of the Sudanese Civil War. Between 2005 and 2010, part of the country enjoyed a certain stability as a result of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the war in the south, though the outbreak of war in Darfur (2003) cut the peace short. During the 2010s, the region was once again marked by profound instability as a result of the effects of the independence of South Sudan (2011), the convulsive transitions in Sudan and South Sudan and the different armed conflicts in Sudan (Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile) and the civil war that began in South Sudan in December 2013. Although positive steps were also observed during this period, such as the signing of separate peace agreements (the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018 and the Juba Peace Agreement on Sudan of 2020) and the formation of transitional governments in both countries, as well as their improved relationship as a result of mutual cooperation agreements around pending border delimitations, among which Abyei stands out, political instability and violence have continued to undermine efforts to build peace, stability and democracy.

The latest episode of violence threatening to affect the already fragile stability of the region took place in mid-April 2023, following the start of intense fighting in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and in other parts of the country pitting the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (chairman of the Transitional Sovereign Council) against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo (deputy chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council). These events threaten to have a boomerang effect not only on neighbouring South Sudan, but on all bordering countries: Chad, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, Egypt and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many of which are already facing complex scenarios of violence of their own.

This is the latest episode of crisis in Sudan since the popular demonstrations in late 2018 that led to the fall of the government of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 after three decades in power. From that moment on, the country has been unable to achieve an effective political transition to overcome the obstacles of the old regime. The military usurped power in April 2019, and even though it agreed to share the transitional government with the civilian coalition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) in August 2019, it carried out a new coup d'état in October 2021, dissolving the transitional government and dismissing Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok. After 2022 was marked by two negotiating processes between the military junta and the political opposition, the Trilateral Mechanism (facilitated by UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD) and the Quad (USA, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), a framework agreement was reached in December in which the military promised to relinquish much of its political power and create a civilian transitional government by April 2023. However, the second stage of the negotiations began in January 2023 and was intended to address different sensitive issues, such as transitional justice; security sector reform, including the incorporation of the RSF into the Sudanese Army; the Juba Peace Agreement; the status of the committee to dismantle Omar al-Bashir's former regime; and the crisis in eastern Sudan, but it ended up returning the transition to its starting point, resulting in an outbreak of fighting between the SAF and the RSF.

While the transitions in both countries falter, their populations face a major humanitarian crisis that may be amplified by the new trend of violence in Sudan

The transitional process in South Sudan is similar in some respects to the Sudanese crisis. After five years of war, the two main actors responsible for prolonging the conflict, the government headed by President Salva Kiir and the SPLA-IO led by the Vice President Riek Machar, signed a peace agreement in 2018 (R-ARCSS) that made it possible to begin a transitional period. This agreement has not put an end to the violence, but rather has been used cynically and continuously by the parties. The last episode occurred in August 2022, when the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) presided over by Kiir, with Machar as vice president, unilaterally extended the transition period for another two years, scheduling the elections for December 2024. However, many analysts sense that this date will likely not even be reached, since a new Constitution must be in force before the transitional regime ends, as provided for in the Revitalised Agreement, which seems far away today. Another key to the Revitalised Agreement is the creation of a unified national army. As in Sudan, the steps to achieve this integration and controversies over the timing, form and command structure threaten to derail the transitional process.

While the transitions in both countries falter, their populations face a major humanitarian crisis that may be

amplified by the new trend of violence in Sudan. By the end of 2022, one third of Sudan's population (more than 15 million people) faced severe food insecurity and 3.7 million people had been internally displaced by violence, while the country was simultaneously hosting more than a million refugees from crises in neighbouring countries. In South Sudan, the scenario is similar. According to data from the World Food Programme (WFP), 6.6 million people (more than half of the country's population) face acute food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. These figures could rise to 7.8 million during the first half of 2023. In addition, 2.3 million people were refugees due to insecurity. The outbreak of violence in Sudan in April could have other catastrophic effects on South Sudan, especially on its economy, since 90% of its income depends on the export of oil through Sudan. According to estimates by the United Nations, it could also cause more than 800,000 people to seek refuge in other countries, expanding the forced displacement crisis in the already highly stressed region. This could also affect the dynamics of violence in the CAR, the DRC, Chad, Libya and Ethiopia (Tigray and Oromia), in addition to the internal conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and in the eastern region of Sudan and in South Sudan, turning the region into a tinderbox.

Joint action by local, national, regional and international actors is required to get the parties back to the negotiating table, put an end to the violence and restore the spirit of the transition

While the possibility of the crisis in Sudan escalating into a protracted war cannot be ignored, an escalation of the conflict is not inevitable. Joint action by local, national, regional and international actors is required to get the parties back to the negotiating table, put an end to the violence and restore the spirit of the transition. If this does not happen, the impact of another war in Sudan will have an unpredictable ripple effect throughout the Central African region and the Horn of Africa.

5.2. Great Lakes: on the brink of a third Congolese war?

The relationship between the DRC and Rwanda seriously deteriorated in 2022 as a result of sporadic clashes between both countries' security forces in the border area and accusations (verified and demonstrated by the United Nations)[2] of Rwandan military and logistical support for the attacks of the March 23 Movement (M23) in North Kivu. The various regional diplomatic initiatives, such as the Luanda process headed by Angola under an AU mandate, as well as offers of mediation from countries like Qatar and the US, have so far failed to reverse the situation. In mid-April 2023, Rwandan President Paul Kagame stoked the flames by blaming the M23 crisis on colonial-era borders,[3] arguing that "a large part of Rwanda was left out, in eastern DRC and southwestern Uganda", giving a new dimension to the conflict. Kagame also defended the M23 rebels, claiming that they are being denied their rights in the DRC, remarking that "the DRC's problem, the regional problem and Rwanda's problem is not the M23". Kinshasa denounced these statements as a new form of provocation by Rwanda and blamed Kagame for all the problems in the eastern part of the country over the last 20 years. The rhetoric of accusations and incidents on the ground have pushed the tension between both countries to the brink of an armed conflict with dangerous regional consequences.

International inaction to stop the 1994 genocide has made Rwanda the West's ally in the region, shielding it from criticism of its authoritarianism and its interference in Congolese affairs

Although the borders created during the colonial era may partially explain the conflict convulsing the region, like so many other consequences of colonialism that are still being felt and that form part of this and other conflicts in Africa, recent events have significantly worsened the strained relations between the DRC and Rwanda.[4] In the early 1990s, Zairian Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko supported the Rwandan regime of Juvenal Habyarimana to stop the offensive of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an insurgency led by Paul Kagame, who overthrew and expelled the regime responsible for the 1994 genocide and seized power in Rwanda. This was followed by the first and second wars in the Congo, which ended with the signing of various peace agreements and the withdrawal of foreign (mainly Rwandan) troops from the country between 2002 and 2003. These foreign troops had justified their presence by their intention to eliminate national insurgent groups in the DRC, given the Congolese Armed Forces' lack of will to do the same, while they exercised control and plundered the natural resources in the eastern part of the country directly or through armed groups supervised by them and especially by Rwanda. The existence of enemy insurgent groups from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, the persistence of the root causes of the conflict in the DRC at multiple levels and the failed implementation of the agreements to demobilise these groups led to the emergence of the Rwandan-backed M23 in 2012. Despite the signing of a new peace agreement in December 2013, the group reorganised again with Rwandan support in 2021.

On 4 April 2012, the armed group M23[5] rebelled against the Congolese government, claiming that it had broken the peace agreement of 23 March 2009. Nkunda, who had been an officer in the armed group Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD)-Goma, a proxy of Rwanda in the Second Congo War (1998-2003), officially remains under house arrest in the Rwandan town of Gisenyi. On 20 November 2012, the M23 entered the streets of Goma, the capital of North Kivu, following the dishonourable withdrawal of Congolese troops from the city before the passive gaze of the UN peacekeepers, leaving the date engraved on the Congolese collective imagination. The M23 then engaged in looting, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence and other war crimes. In 2013, the DRC and Rwanda reached a peace agreement according to which the M23 had to be dismantled. However, the group resumed its activities in late 2021 with Rwanda's support. Since then, it has once again spread panic in the DRC and threatened to plant itself in the heart of the capital.[6]

All these insurgent leaders supported by Rwanda have been part of the Banyamulenge Tutsi community, related to the Tutsi community that lives in Rwanda and was massacred in the 1994 genocide. Among many other factors, the insurgency is supported by fear, the desire to protect its own community, the exploitation of Congolese territory and resources, the absence of other prospects for the future and sustenance following the failed reform of the security sector and its cynical use as a proxy actor by Rwanda on Congolese soil. Another issue to bear in mind is revenge on and persecution

2. UN Security-Council, reports by the Group of Experts, DRC Sanctions Committee [online, viewed on 15 January 2023].
3. IInfosplus RDC, Paul Kagame dévoile la vraie raison du conflit Rwanda – RDC, 16 April 2023.
4. See the summary on the socio-political crisis in DRC-Rwanda in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises).
5. The group is called the March 23 Movement in reference to the day a peace agreement was signed three years earlier, on 23 March 2009, between the Congolese government and the Congrés National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), led by Bosco Ntaganda after he replaced General Laurent Nkunda, who had ceased to be Rwanda's protégé and was arrested on the way to Kigali. For further details about the origins of the M23, see the summary on DRC (east) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, Alert 2010! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, Barcelona: Icaria, 2010; and Alert 2014! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, Barcelona: Icaria, 2014; Sabbe, Brian, Why M23 is not your average rebel group, IPIS Briefing, January 2023.
6. See the summary on the armed conflict in the DRC (east) in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts).

of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Ruanda (FDLR), a political and military movement that has sought to force political change in Rwanda and is the heir to those who committed the 1994 genocide. The elimination of the FDLR is a recurring theme for Rwanda and for these armed groups and splinter groups and serves as a permanent argument for Rwanda to act with total impunity in financing and arming groups that conduct attacks on Congolese soil. The inaction of the international community to stop the 1994 genocide led it to support the new Rwandan regime that emerged after the genocide and to make it its privileged ally in the unstable region. This international political support and Rwanda's commitment to promoting peace and security in Africa, including its active participation in UN and bilateral missions, such as in northern Mozambique, have earned it an aura of respectability and commitment to peacebuilding that has shielded it from criticism related to its authoritarianism, which is characterised by its restriction of political space and freedom of expression and its silencing of political dissent. It has also protected it from criticism about its interference in Congolese internal affairs. Even though the UN has reported on Rwanda's direct and indirect participation in the systematic and systemic plundering of natural resources and of arming and organising rebellions to protect the Banyamulenge community and its interests in North and South Kivu since 2001, as revealed in the last internal UN report leaked in August 2022 and by the Group of Experts in December 2022, bringing it much criticism, it remains unpunished by the UN and other actors in the international community. However, all these factors also show that the conflict is not simply an act of external aggression by Rwanda against the DRC, as the Congolese president has argued many times.

A deeper analysis is essential to understanding the local, regional and international dynamics at the origins of the conflict between the DRC and Rwanda and to promoting attempts to resolve it

A more exhaustive analysis is urgently needed by the key actors that can influence both countries, includes other dimensions from a multi-causal and multi-level perspective and goes beyond reducing the conflict to a mere ethnic one or to the exploitation of resources as a means and an end to finance the war and that can only be resolved by dismantling the armed groups or obtaining ceasefires, in addition to the different DDR processes with the armed actors. It is essential to understand the historical and cultural roots of the peoples of the region, the continued looting and social injustice experienced under colonial and postcolonial oppression, the grievances of the local population against incoming populations, the cynical use of ethnic differences by Mobutu and later by Laurent-Désiré and Joseph Kabila, pressure and competition over land ownership, the legitimate security challenges of neighbouring countries (especially Rwanda vis-à-vis the much larger DRC), the growing Anglophone and Chinese postcolonial presence in the face of gradual Francophone marginality and regional and international dynamics linked not only to the exploitation of natural resources but also to geopolitical dynamics in which Rwanda and other countries in the region play a fundamental role in a globalised world in which great powers such as the US and China compete to expand their areas of influence. This globalised world has ratified implementation of the liberal state model to solve the problems of the DRC, but has not solved them, as demonstrated once again with this umpteenth escalation of violence. Local and international community efforts to resolve the conflict do not address the root causes of the war and the instability plaguing the region due to an analysis not focused on them or on the international actors (primarily the UN, China, the US and the EU) that have a real ability to put pressure on both countries to halt the dangerous escalation of tension.

5.3. Rising military tension on the Korean peninsula

After a brief period in which inter-Korean relations reached their greatest closeness and cooperation in decades and in which North Korea and the US began a process of rapprochement and dialogue regarding the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula (2018-19), the political and military tension on the Korean peninsula has ostensibly escalated in recent years and very clearly since 2022. This escalation has not only included an increase in the usual militaristic rhetoric and mutual accusations, but also a rise in military tension and warfare between North and South Korea on the land and sea borders, an unparalleled increase in the number of missile launches by North Korea, a growing assertiveness by South Korea in responding to Pyongyang's weapons tests, the resumption of North Korea's nuclear programme and its manufacture of new weapons, heightened tension between North Korea and Japan and growing cooperation between the US and South Korea on nuclear matters.

On 26 April 2023, US President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol strengthened their military cooperation on nuclear matters by signing the Washington Declaration in the White House, by which, in essence, South Korea agreed not to develop its own atomic programme and the US pledged to strengthen South Korea's role in decision-making on nuclear planning and deterrence. Specifically, the agreement, which was signed to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the start of the alliance between the two countries, lays out the expansion and deepening of cooperation between both their militaries, the strengthening of joint military exercises and manoeuvres, the creation of a new Nuclear Consultative Group to bolster the "extended deterrence" and the upcoming shipment of a US nuclear ballistic missile submarine to South Korea. During the press conference after the Declaration was signed, Biden said that any nuclear attack by North Korea would trigger a quick and overwhelming response, but he also made clear his refusal to place nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula at the same time.

Such declarations by Biden, as well as the South Korean government's commitment to respect the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, take on special significance since the proportion of South Korean citizens who advocate deploying nuclear weapons or developing its own nuclear programme has increased notably in recent months (in 2022, it exceeded 70%). Along the same lines, in early 2023, President Yoon Suk-yeol said that he was considering developing nuclear weapons for South Korea or asking the US to deploy them on the Korean peninsula and publicly called for Seoul and Washington to intensify their collaboration on nuclear weapons, including planning, information sharing, exercises and training. The US withdrew all its nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula in 1991 and the following year North and South Korea signed a joint declaration that neither party would make, test, stockpile, deploy or use nuclear weapons. However, in the decades since, North Korea has repeatedly violated these commitments to the point of having carried out six nuclear tests (the first in 2006 and the last in 2017, with a hydrogen bomb with a detonation power well above the previous ones), having accumulated dozens of nuclear warheads (between 40 and 50, according to some sources) and having manufactured enough fissile material to build at least several more bombs each year. North Korea has also improved its long-range ballistic missile programme in recent years, as well as its ability to miniaturise nuclear warheads. In addition to its nuclear and ballistic capabilities, Pyongyang has significant conventional forces, with 1.2 million active-duty soldiers and 600,000 reservists.

After a period of détente and dialogue with the US and South Korea in which North Korea promised to freeze its nuclear programme, close some of the country's main facilities and impose a moratorium on new nuclear tests, in recent years the US and South Korean governments, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and some research centres have issued warnings that North Korea is reactivating and accelerating its nuclear programme. Specifically, in 2022 they pointed out that North Korea was reactivating the country's main nuclear test facility in Punggye-ri, which was supposedly closed in 2018 as part of the diplomatic process with the US, and warned at various times of the year of the possibility that North Korea North may conduct a new nuclear test, which would be the first since 2017. In fact, the United Nations claimed in a confidential report leaked in August 2022 that North Korea had made preparations for a nuclear test during the first six months of 2022. In September, North Korea enacted a new law specifying the conditions for deploying and using its nuclear arsenal. The law stipulates that Pyongyang will not attack non-nuclear states, except if they ally with nuclear states, and also that the use of nuclear weapons could prevent the expansion or prolongation of a war or be a response to an attack against the country.

Alongside the resumption of its nuclear weapons programme and the approval of legislation facilitating its deployment and use, North Korea's missile launches and production of new weapons also increased sharply. In fact, in all of 2022, Pyongyang launched around 100 missiles, several of them intercontinental, clearly more than the eight launches in 2021 or the four in 2020. In addition to the dramatic increase

in the frequency of such launches, several analysts also expressed concern about the type of weapons that Pyongyang tested during the year, including cruise and ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons and long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (such as the Hwasong-17, with a range of about 15,000 kilometres). In the first five months of 2023, the trend does not seem to have changed significantly compared to 2022. In mid-February, North Korea launched a Hwaseong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile, which reached almost 6,000 km in altitude before falling into the Sea of Japan (known in Korea as the East Sea), two "tactical nuclear" rockets and four long-range cruise missiles all within a span of a few days. In March, North Korea launched a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile toward the East Sea, as well as several long-range cruise missiles. In mid-April, North Korea declared that it had successfully conducted its first flight test of the Hwasong-18 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, which some analysts say is an important step in Pyongyang's efforts to protect the country's missile security system from a pre-emptive strike. Shortly thereafter, Kim Jong-un said that he intended to launch a military reconnaissance satellite (one of the five military priorities he announced in January 2021), fully in line with the North Korean government's previous claims that it had developed a powerful rocket engine that could launch such a satellite. In late 2022, Pyongyang released high-altitude photos of the cities of Seoul and Incheon and claimed to have successfully launched a space rocket as part of the development of a military reconnaissance satellite.

North Korea's development of new weapons is fully in line with the five-year plan unveiled by Kim Jong-un during the 8th Party Congress in 2021, which provided for solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of being launched both by land and by sea, and with his speech on 31 December 2022 in which he promised to exponentially step up the manufacture of nuclear weapons by 2023. In that end-of-year speech, the North Korean leader also announced that he was developing a new intercontinental ballistic missile system with rapid nuclear counterattack capability in response to threats from the US and South Korea and the growing coordination between them and Japan. Tension between North Korea and Japan has also increased notably in recent times. For example, in October 2022 a North Korean intermediate-range ballistic missile flew over Japan for the first time since 2017. The following month, one of the 26 missiles that Pyongyang fired for two days in a row fell 200 km to the west of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. In response, Washington made its commitment to Japan clear, while Tokyo participated in joint naval exercises with South Korea and the US for the first time since 2017 and declared its willingness to strengthen its defensive and counterattack capabilities. In December 2022, the Japanese government publicly presented its new national security strategy, which views North Korea's nuclear and ballistic programme as a threat. Pyongyang asserted that the "counterattack capability" included in Japan's new national security strategy does not refer to the right to legitimate defence of any sovereign state, but rather to the ability to carry out a pre-emptive attack against third countries, which it believes entails a serious security crisis on the Korean peninsula and in East Asia as a whole. Some analysts said that the launch of missiles that cross the airspace of a third country without prior notice or coordination, as North Korea did in October 2022, not only breaks international law, but could also be interpreted as an attack against Japan in light of its new national security strategy.

In April 2023, the leaders of the US and South Korea signed the Washington Declaration, in which South Korea committed not to develop its own atomic programme and Washington pledged to strengthen South Korea's role in decision-making on nuclear planning and deterrence

Another factor that has contributed to the growing tension in the region has been new South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol's change in policy towards North Korea since he took office in May 2022. As a result of this new strategic direction, the South Korean government has responded to North Korea's launch of missiles with the launch of a proportional number of missiles. Seoul has also promoted the largest military exercises and manoeuvres (normally in alliance with the US) in recent times and has tried to strengthen its relationship with the US regarding the use of nuclear weapons on the peninsula. As a consequence, the military tension between the two Koreas increased significantly in late 2022, with several serious episodes. In late October, North and South Korea exchanged warning shots at the Northern Limit Line (NLL), their disputed de facto maritime border, near Baengyeong Island. Shortly thereafter, on two consecutive days in November, Pyongyang fired more than 20 missiles, one of which landed south of the NLL, a few kilometres from the South Korean city of Sokcho, and around 100 artillery shells near the maritime border. In December, five North Korean drones entered South Korean airspace after South Korean planes and helicopters failed to shoot them down. More recently, in February 2023, South Korea and the US conducted joint bomber drills. A few days later, South Korean, American and Japanese destroyers participated in a missile defence drill off the eastern coast of the peninsula. In mid-March, the US and South Korea began the largest military exercises since 2018.

Some analysts argue that China, which has historically had clear influence over the North Korean regime, will

discourage any nuclear escalation that could destabilise the Korean peninsula, while others maintain that both the acceleration of the North Korean weapons programme and Seoul's greater strategic assertiveness can partly be explained by internal reasons, but it seems clear that the situation on the Korean peninsula is undergoing dynamics that involve risk. Judging by recent statements by representatives of the North Korean government, it does not appear that the political and military escalation on the Korean peninsula will subside in the coming months. In mid-April, Pyongyang responded to a G-7 statement calling on it to dismantle its nuclear capabilities by refusing to negotiate or to give up its nuclear deterrent capability. Along the same lines, in early May, Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un's sister, warned that the Washington Declaration signed by the US and South Korea only deteriorates peace and security on the peninsula, reinforces North Korea's right to self-defence and reaffirms its determination to accelerate and hone its nuclear capabilities.

5.4. Intersecting challenges in Moldova in a time of war in Europe

A country of 2.6 million inhabitants, with an absolute poverty rate of 24.5% (26.3% for women) and sharing a border with Ukraine and Romania, Moldova is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to the spread of the war in Ukraine. A former Soviet republic, neutral towards NATO though split over its foreign policy orientation, with a political history marred by corruption and an unresolved conflict over the status of the region of Transdniestria, Moldova is the scene of rising multidimensional and intersecting tensions influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The deterioration of the situation has been reflected in impacts of the war in Moldova, reports of covert coup plans, risks of greater polarisation with territorial expression, the energy crisis and worsening human security. Upcoming elections in the short and medium term bring more uncertainty (municipal in the last third of 2023, presidential in 2024 and parliamentary in 2025).

Moldova is the scene of rising multidimensional and intersecting tensions influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine

The deteriorating situation in Moldova encompasses various aspects. First, the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine initially generated risks that the war could spread directly to Moldova and worsened the security situation there. The developments of the armed conflict in Ukraine throughout 2022 has kept these risks at bay, with Ukraine maintaining control of Odessa, which dispelled fears that Russian troops could reach Transdniestria. This strip of territory east of the Dnieper River, with a Russian-speaking majority, has been the scene of an unresolved conflict over its status since the 1990-1992 armed conflict and a place where Russia maintains military forces.[7] However, the security situation remained fragile, including security incidents in Transdniestria, described by some analysts as false flag attacks by Moscow,[8] violations of Moldova's airspace by Russian missiles fired from the Black Sea towards Ukraine (Moldova reported at least three in October 2022 and two more in February 2023) and the impacts of Russian missile fragments on Moldovan soil. All this revealed military risks closely linked to a war with uncertain prospects.

Second, there has been the risk of Russian attempts to destabilise Moldova politically and socio-economically. In February 2023, based on intelligence shared by Ukraine, Moldovan President Maria Sandu reported Russian plans for a coup in Moldova by individuals with military experience from Russia, Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro who would infiltrate as civilians and seize government buildings.[9] According to Sandu, the coup attempt expected to have the support of local groups such as the pro-Kremlin opposition Shor party, led by magnate and politician Ilan Shor, sentenced *in absentia* for massive fraud in the banking system in 2014 (in a case in which financial and political actors of other stripes were also found guilty). In the closing months of 2022, fears of the risk of outside interference had increased due to the anti-government protests staged by the Shor party in September, which lasted until 2023, demanding the resignation of the Moldovan government and president.[10] Moldovan journalists published evidence from *The Washington Post* based on a review of documents obtained by Ukraine's intelligence services that Russia had spent tens of millions of dollars of Russian state-owned companies on promoting a network of like-minded Moldovan politicians and reorienting the country to Russia's sphere.[11] In 2023, Moldovan journalists released documents from the Kremlin presidential administration in 2021 showing Russia's plans to bring Moldova into its sphere of influence by 2030[12] (in 2021, the pro-EU PAS party won the parliamentary elections with 53% of the vote, over the pro-Russian Bloc of Communists and Socialists, which received 27%, and the Shor party, which got 5.8%, with 48% turnout). Additional aspects include the unprecedented level of cyberattacks that Moldova has faced since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Third, the risks of multidimensional tension that Moldova was facing were also reflected in Gagauzia, a territorially discontinuous region in the southern part of the country with 134,535 inhabitants (2014 census), inhabited mainly by Gagauz people, who speak a Turkic language and profess the Orthodox religion, and historically dominated by pro-Russian political positions. Gagauzia was the scene of a political conflict in the early 1990s over its status and has had an autonomous regional government since the mid-1990s. In the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and of the deteriorating relations between Russia and Moldova and between Russia and the West, the gulf widened between the Moldovan government and the Gagauzia region. Some analysts said that the result of the Gagauzia gubernatorial election of April 2023 could be used by Russia against

7. There are around 1,500 Russian soldiers in Transdniestria. However, some analysts downplay the military risk that they pose to Moldova and say that most are local citizens with Russian passports and only around 100 are Russian officers. De Waal, Thomas, "Time to Get Serious About Moldova", Carnegie Europe, 11 May 2023.
8. Pociumban, Anastasia, "Moldova's Fragile Security Situation", DGAP Memo, German Council of Foreign Relations, 13 May 2023.
9. Wesolowsky, Tony, "Vulnerable, Volatile Moldova Could Be The Kremlin's Next Target. It Could Also Be Just Another Distraction", *RFE/RL*, 3 March 2022.
10. Calugareanu, Vitalie y Robert Schwartz, "Pro-Russian group pays protesters in Moldova", *DW*, 10 December 2022.
11. Belton, Catherine, "Russia's security service works to subvert Moldova's pro-Western government", *The Washington Post*, 28 October 2022.
12. Necsutu, Madalin, "Moldova Condemns 'Russian Plan' to Regain Control of Country", *Balkan Insight*, 16 March 2023.

Moldova.[13] The election handed victory in the second round in May to the candidate of the pro-Russian Shor party, Evghenia Gutul, which points to challenges in relations between the central government and the region in the short and medium term. In 2014, the authorities of Gagauzia and its population had opposed the central government's decision to sign an association agreement and a free trade agreement with the EU through a non-binding double referendum that Moldova considered illegal. In that referendum, 98% of voters wanted closer ties with the Eurasian Customs Union, led by Russia, instead of with the EU, and supported proclaiming Gagauzia's independence if Moldova were to lose its sovereignty, including scenarios such as a hypothetical union of Moldova and Romania, with which it shares historical and cultural ties.

Fourth, Moldova stands out a place where some dynamics of division and projected layers of external conflict intersect, a situation aggravated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Russia and Moldova and the extreme tension in relations between West and Russia stemming from the invasion of Ukraine. There were identified differences in local perceptions towards Russia and in the approach to take in foreign relations. In June 2022, the European Union granted Moldova EU candidate country status. Surveys from 2022 and 2023 indicated that between 50% and 63% of the population was in favour of joining the EU and a third was opposed. On the other hand, in 2022 Russia stepped up pressure on Moldova in strategic areas and those important to the country's human security, such as energy,[14] though Moldova took steps towards energy diversification.

Fifth, the socio-economic situation in Moldova has deteriorated due to the rise in prices, including food, non-food products and services, with severe impacts on the population of a country considered one of the poorest in Europe. The rise in energy prices affected broad swathes of the population. There is also the challenge of being able to host the Ukrainian refugee population with (726,705 entries in the country between 24 February 2022 and mid-December 2022 and 99,524 refugees from Ukraine at the end of that year, according to UNHCR). On a visit to Moldova in May, the UN Secretary-General described the country as Ukraine's most fragile neighbour.

At the same time, some factors may help to prevent the socio-political and security situation from deteriorating. Having weathered these accumulated challenges in 2022 reveals a certain institutional and social resilience. Other positive signs include Transdniestria and Moldova's expressed desire for a negotiated solution to the conflict and the high level of economic, commercial and family relations between them; an active social fabric, as shown by the anti-corruption demonstrations in recent years; the establishment of an EU civilian mission in 2023 (EUMP Moldova) focused on crisis management, disinformation and cyberattacks; and financial support for the country to face the serious socio-economic crisis, though this is subject to the conditions of the EU and the IMF.

In summary, in the short and medium term, Moldova risks rising or chronically intertwined tensions that require strengthened international support to help to prevent the increase of tension as a result of conflict in Ukraine and to promote democratic cohesion and human security. The intensification of efforts aimed at achieving a negotiated resolution of the war in Ukraine acceptable to Kiev and the future construction of a shared security architecture for Europe could also contribute to a more holistic security situation for Moldova in the medium and long term.

13. Keith Harrington, "Gagauzia's Election Could Help Russia Destabilize Moldova", *Carnegie Europe*, 27 April 2023.
14. See the summary on Moldova in chapter 2 (Socio-political crises) in this report.

5.5. Women's rights under threat: gender apartheid in Iran and Afghanistan

Women's rights in Iran and Afghanistan have recently received special attention. The worsening of discriminatory policies against women and the intensification of attempts to control their lives and bodies in both countries have been in the media spotlight, in part due to protests and demonstrations led by Afghan and Iranian women against misogyny and systematic violations of their rights and freedoms. Initiatives to report extreme, systematic and structural discrimination against women in both countries have even led to a proposal to recognise the situation as a crime of gender apartheid. Many different actors, including organisations, states and civil society groups, have blasted the trend against women in both countries and have expressed their solidarity and alarm at the regimes' repressive response. Despite the loud international reaction, there is a risk that both Tehran and Kabul will persist in their policies and that the situation of women in both countries will drag on or get worse. Added to this is the likelihood that media and political attention paid to women's rights in Iran and Afghanistan will fade over time. It is also possible, especially considering previous experiences, that some actors in the international community take a utilitarian approach to women's rights, promoting or ignoring them based on conjunctural geopolitical and military interests.

The situation of women in Afghanistan has especially deteriorated since mid-2021 following the restoration of the Taliban regime.[15] Their return to power has severely rolled back women's social, economic, political and cultural rights and forcefully excluded them from the public sphere, in line with what happened during the first Taliban regime (1996-2001). The first such actions taken included the dismantling of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in September 2021. The restoration of the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice involved the removal of the institutional structures for promoting women's rights in a government made up entirely of men. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) was also abolished, ending any institutional system for monitoring and guaranteeing the rights of women or human rights in general. Other actions with serious impact include restrictions on the free mobility of women and their presence in public spaces. Severe restrictions on education have also been approved, preventing girls and young women from accessing secondary and university education. In addition, care services for female victims of gender violence have been completely dismantled, specialised courts for women have been dissolved and women judges are prevented from working. The result is the establishment of a complete lack of protection for women and of serious violations of their fundamental rights.

Despite the differences with Afghanistan, such as regarding women's access to education and to the public space, women's rights in Iran have been in the spotlight since September 2022.[16] The death of a young woman after her arrest by the moral police for wearing the veil inappropriately according to the regime's standards triggered massive protests in the country. Considered one of the biggest challenges to the regime since 1979, the protests endorsed the Kurdish women's motto "Woman, Life, Freedom" and exposed the interconnections between different forms of oppression and discrimination in Iran and attempts to control women's bodies in particular. This challenge to the imposition of certain dress codes by the authorities, including the obligatory nature of the hijab, has been interpreted as criticism of one of the clearest and most visible forms of the regime's oppressive and discriminatory policies (non-recognition of the free self-determination of women), but not the only one. Iranian women face multiple forms of gender discrimination, including their marginalisation from spheres of power and decision-making, huge gender gaps in terms of unemployment and wages, a ban on holding certain jobs, the need for male authorisation to work, obtain a passport and travel, limits on access to sexual and reproductive rights and discriminatory provisions on divorce, child custody and even access to sporting events. After the inauguration of President Ebrahim Raisi in June 2021, the moral police stepped up their activities and a series of measures considered especially hostile to women were approved, such as stricter monitoring of women's dress code through digital surveillance systems and social networks.

Despite the displays of resistance from women in both contexts and all the international criticism, both regimes have persisted in their policies and reacted repressively. In Iran, this has entailed the deployment of many different tactics to try to quell the protests, which have included the persecution and death of protesters, including around 100 women by the end of 2022, the intentional use of gender violence, such as the deliberate shooting of women in the face and genitals, mass arrests and other practices. In Afghanistan the protests have been harshly repressed, with arrests and physical mistreatment of the women staging them, who have nevertheless persisted in their actions. The United Nations has reported an excessive use of force in the security forces' crackdown on the women's demonstrations.

15. For further information, see María Villellas, "La situación de las mujeres en Afganistán. Entre la opresión y la resistencia", *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pau*, no. 20, November 2022.
16. For further information, see Pamela Urrutia, La revuelta de las mujeres en Irán: ¿un punto de inflexión? Claves desde el análisis de conflictos con perspectiva feminista, *Apunts ECP de Conflictes i Pa*u, no. 27, March 2023.

A common denominator in both cases has been the special vulnerability of girls. In Iran, the crackdown on demonstrations has affected many minors, some of which were even arrested in raids on schools. According to human rights groups, by the end of 2022, at least 12 girls and 46 boys had been killed in actions by security forces since the protests began. Since early 2023, reports of poisonings of thousands of students have also multiplied in more than 100 schools across the country. Though they have not resulted in death, these poisonings, for which nobody claimed responsibility but which were blamed on extremists, were interpreted as attempts to intimidate girls due to their involvement in the protests and to generate fear in families, seeking to compromise girls' right to education. In Afghanistan, meanwhile, child marriages have multiplied as a result of the serious humanitarian crisis that the country is going through and the rise in poverty. The severe restrictions on education are especially affecting adolescents, who are being deprived of essential education, and girls' schools have been the target of violent attacks. In both countries, the surveillance and repression of women has also been increasingly diverted to the family and the community. In Afghanistan, this has happened by making male relatives responsible for control, as they are the ones who must answer to the authorities if the women in their families break imposed rules. In Iran, it is supported through a system of fines that penalises shops, restaurants and businesses that allow women to enter without a veil.

Initiatives to report extreme, systematic and structural discrimination against women in both countries have even led to a proposal to recognise the situation as a crime of gender apartheid

Faced with this course of events, a coalition led by Afghan and Iranian women has come together around a campaign that seeks to promote the recognition of gender apartheid as a crime in international law.[17] Female human rights activists and experts are demanding that the crime of apartheid, which thus far has only been applied to racial hierarchies, must also be articulated to recognise systematic and structural discrimination based on gender hierarchies. It is therefore a form of apartheid different from the one experienced in South Africa, but with aspects of subjugation and systematic segregation like those observed in Afghanistan and Iran today. In both countries, they stress, the restrictions, prohibitions and legal provisions seek to subject women to men and to the state at the risk of becoming victims of violence, arrest and even death. The promoters of the initiative assure that they do not intend to impose Western values on Muslim societies, but to confront systematic attempts to subjugate women and turn them into second-class citizens that should have no place in any society, regardless of religion. They aim to provoke an international response, so they call on governments to publicise the experiences of women in Iran and Afghanistan, take action to condemn the apartheid system in both countries and help to expand the crime of apartheid to include institutionalised forms of gender discrimination.

Despite initiatives like this, there is still a risk that media coverage of the issue will fade and/or that signalling related to women's rights will be used cynically. The experience in Afghanistan provides illustrative examples of women's rights repeatedly being used for political purposes by international actors operating there. Thus, under the US military occupation of the country in 2001, a duality was established between the oppression caused by the Taliban regime and the supposed "salvation" provided by the US, reducing the role and agency of Afghan women and their own resistance and coping strategies. In later years, the responsibility of the US and other governments for perpetuating an armed conflict that had serious effects on the lives of women was ignored. More recently, some in Iran have also warned of the dangers of the cynical use of the defence of women's rights and double standard policies. For example, in December 2022 Iran was expelled from the UN Commission on the Status of Women in an initiative promoted by the US on the grounds that its involvement undermined the commission's credibility. This decision by Washington, framed as part of its struggle with Iran, contrasts with its policies (or inaction) towards other countries with similar records of violating women's rights, but which are US allies, such as Saudi Arabia. The US is also in a complex position in this area considering the recent setbacks in terms of reproductive rights by decision of the Supreme Court.

The women of Iran and Afghanistan are going through a situation that different organisations, experts and activists have described as "gender apartheid", given how seriously it impacts their lives. This situation also highlights the risk that the crises and conflicts that these countries are undergoing get even worse. It must not be forgotten that women's rights and gender equality are indicators and preconditions for the development of peaceful societies.

17. End Gender Apartheid campaign.

Glossary

11 S: September 11th
3R: Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation
AA: Arakan Army
AAPP: Asociación de Asistencia a los Presos Políticos (Association for Assistance to Political Prisoners)
ABSDF: All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABM: Ansar Beit al-Maqdis
ACLED: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACSS: Africa Center for Strategic Studies
ACT: Ambazonia Coalition Team
ADF: Allied Democratic Forces
ADF: Ambazonia Defence Forces
ADF-NALU: Allied Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
AFF: Afghanistan Freedom Front
AFL: Afghanistan Liberation Movement
AGC: Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (Gaitanistas Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)
AGovC: Ambazonia Governing Council
AKP: Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ALAF: Libyan Arab Armed Forces
ALBA: Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)
ALDEA: Asociación Latinoamericana para el Desarrollo Alternativo (Latin American Association for Alternative Development)
ALP: Arakan Liberation Party
AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia
ANRHI: Arab Network for Human Rights Information
APCLS: Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo)
AQIM: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQPA: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ARS: Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASWJ: Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a
ATMIS: African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AU: African Union
AUBP: African Union Border Program
BDB: Benghazi Defense Brigades
BH: Boko Haram
BIFF: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BINUH: United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
BLA: Baloch Liberation Army
BLF: Baloch Liberation Front
BLT: Baloch Liberation Tigers
BRA: Balochistan Republican Army
BRN: Barisan Revolusi Nasional
BRP: Baloch Republican Party
CAR: Central African Republic
CCMSR: Conseil de Commandement Militaire pour le Salut de la République (Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic)
CENCO: Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Congo (Congolese Episcopal Conference)
CERAC: Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (Conflict Analysis Resource Center)
CHD: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
CIDE: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (Economic Research and Teaching Center)
CJNC: Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (Jalisco New Generation Cartel)
CJTF: Civilian Joint Task Force
CMA: Coordination of Movements of Azawad
CMC: Coalition of Movements for Change
CMDPH: Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights
CMPFPR: Coordinating Committee of Patriotic Resistance Movements
CNDD-FDD: Congrès National pour la Défense de la Démocratie - Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Congress for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy)
CNDP: Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (National Congress for the Defense of the People)
CNF: Chin National Front
CNL: Congrès National pour la Liberté (National Congress for Freedom)
CNRD-Ubwiyunge: Conseil National pour le Renouveau et la Démocratie (National Council for Renewal and Democracy)
CODECO: Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (Cooperative for the development of Congo)
CODNI: Comité Organizador para el Diálogo Nacional Inclusivo (Organizing Committee for the National Inclusive Dialogue)
CONAIE: Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)
COP 27: 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022
CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPC: Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (Coalition of Patriots for Change)
CPCR: Cade permanent de concertation et de réflexion (Permanent framework for consultation and reflection)
CPI-M: Communist Party of India-Maoist
CSFA: Supreme Council of the Fuerzas Armadas
DAG: Dyck Advisory Group
DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFLP: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DGCIM: Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar (General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence)
DKBA: Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DMLEK: Democratic Movement for the Liberation of the Eritrean Kunama
DNIS: Diálogo Nacional Inclusivo y Soberano (Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue)
DPA: Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC: East African Community

ECCAS: Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS: Economic Community Of West African States
EDA: Eritrean Democratic Alliance
EFDM: Eritrean Federal Democratic Movement
EHRC: Ethiopian Human Rights Comission
EIC: Eritrean Islamic Congress
EIPJD: Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development
ELF: Eritrean Liberation Front
ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
ENSF: Eritrean National Salvation Front
EPC: Eritrean People's Congress
EPDF: Eritrean People's Democratic Front
EPL: Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army)
EPR: Ejército Popular Revolucionario (People's Revolutionary Army)
EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERPI: Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente (Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People)
ESN: Eastern Safety Net
ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)
ETIM: East Turkestan Islamic Movement
ETLO: East Turkestan Liberation Organization
EU: European Union
EUCAP NESTOR: European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity-Building in the Horn of Africa
EUCAP SAHEL Mali: European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali
EUCAP SAHEL Niger: European Union Capacity Building Mission in Niger
EUFOR: European Union Force
EULEX: European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUNAVFOR Somalia: European Union Naval Force in Somalia - Operation Atalanta
EUTM Mali: European Union Training Mission in Mali
EUTM Somalia: European Union Training Mission in Somalia
EUTM Mozambique: European Union Training Mission in Mozambique
EZLN: Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army)
FACT: Front for Change and Harmony in Chad
FADM: Mozambique Armed Forces
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAR-LP: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Liberación del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces for the Liberation of the People)
FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FARC-EP: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army)
FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FDLR: Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
FFC: Forces for Freedom and Change
FFC-CC: Forces for Freedom and Change-Central Command
FIS: Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLEC-FAC: Frente de Liberação do Enclave de Cabinda (Cabinda Enclave's Liberation Front)
FLM: Front de Libération du Macina (Macina Liberation Front)
FNL: Forces Nationales de Libération (National Liberation Forces)
FPB: Forces Populaires du Burundi (Popular Forces of Burundi)
FPR: Front Populaire pour le Redressement (Popular Front for Recovery)
FPRC: Front Patriotique pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic)
FRELIMO: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique)

FSA: Free Syrian Army
FRUD-armé: United Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy-Armed
G20: Group of Twenty
G5 SAHEL: Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel
G7: Group of Seven
GATIA: Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Alliés (Imghad Tuareg Self-Defense Group and Allies)
GBAO: Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
GDI: Gender Inequality Index
GERD: Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GFT: Transitional Federal Government
GNA: Government of National Accord
GSIM: Groupe de Soutien à l'Islam et aux Musulmans (Support Group for Islam and Muslims)
GSPC: Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat)
HCUA: High Council for Unity of Azawad
HDI: Human Development Index
HIMARS: High Mobility Artillery Rocket System
HRMMU: United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine
HRW: Human Rights Watch
HTS: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
IBC: Iraq Body Count
ICC: International Criminal Court
ICG: International Crisis Group
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU: Islamic Courts Union
ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IFLO: Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia
IG SAKO: Interim Government - Sako
IG SISIKU: Interim Government - Sisiku
IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IISS: International Institute for Strategic Studies
ILGA: International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

IOM: International Organization for Migration
IMN: Islamic Movement of Nigeria
IMF: International Monetary Fund
INEC: Comisión Electoral Nacional Independiente (Independent National Electoral Commission)
IPAC: Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict
IPI: International Press Institute
IPOB: Indigenous People of Biafra
IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISCAP: Islamic State Central African Province
ISGS: Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIS: Islamic State
ISIS-KP: Islamic State of Khorasan Province
ISMP: Islamic State of Mozambique Province
ISWAP: Islamic State in the West African Province
IWF: Iduwini Volunteers Force
JAS: Jama´atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda´Awati Wal Jihad
JAS-Abubakar Shekau: Jama´atu Ahlus-Sunna facción Abubakar Shekau
JCPOA: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JEM: Justice and Equality Movement
JKLF: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
JMB: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (Mujahideen Assembly)
JNIM: Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Support Group for Islam and Muslims)
KANU: Kenya African National Union
KCP: Kangleipak Communist Party
KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDPI: Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran
KFOR: Kosovo Force
KIA: Kachin Independence Army
KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army
KNA: Kuki Liberation Army
KNDF: Karenni Nationalities Defence Force
KNF: Kuki National Front
KNPP: Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU: Kayin National Union
KNU/KNLA: Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army
KPLT: Karbi People's Liberation Tigers
KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government
KYKL: Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (Organization to Save the Revolutionary Movement in Manipur)
LeJ: Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Army of Jhangvi)
LeT: Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Good)
LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer +
LNA: Libyan National Army
LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M-19: Movimiento 19 de Abril (April 19 Movement)
M23: March 23 Movement
MAA: Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (Arab Movement of Azawad)
MARA Patani: Majlis Amanah Rakyat Patani
MASSOB: Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
MDM: Democratic Movement of Mozambique
MEND: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MFDC: Mouvement de las Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance)
MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MINUJUSTH: United Nations Mission to Support Justice in Haiti
MINUSCA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH: United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MIT: Mujahidin Indonesia Timur
MLC: Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo)
MLCJ: Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice)
MLF: Macina Liberation Front
MLRS: Multiple Launch Rocket System
MNDAA: Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
MNJTF: Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA: Mouvement National pour la Libération de L'Azawad (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad)
MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front
MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MOSOP: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MPC: Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique (Patriotic Movement for Central Africa)
MPSR: Mouvement Patriotique pour la Sauvegarde et la Restauration (Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration)
MRC: Mombasa Republican Council
MS13: Mara Salvatrucha
MSF: Doctors Without Borders
MUYAO: United Movement for Jihad in West Africa
NAS: National Salvation Front
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCP: National Congress Party
NDA: Niger Delta Avengers
NDAA: National Democratic Alliance Army
NDC-R: Nduma Defense of Congo-Renovated
NDF: National Democratic Front
NDFB: National Democratic Front of Boroland
NDFB (IKS): National Democratic Front of Boroland (IK Songbijit)
NDGJM: Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate
NDM-PF: National Democratic Movement-Patriotic Front
NDPVF: Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDV: Niger Delta Vigilante (Niger Delta Patrol)
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NGO WGWPS: NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
NLAW: Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon
NLL: Northern Limit Line
NMSP: New Mon State Party

NNC: Naga National Council NPA: New People's Army
NPA: New People's Army
NRF: National Resistance Front
NSCN (K-K): National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Kole-Kitovi)
NSCN-IM: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muivah
NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang
NSCN-R: National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation
NSLA: National Santhal Liberation Army
NSF: Nigerian Security Forces
NSSSOG: Non-Signatory South Sudan Opposition Groups
NST: Nigeria Security Tracker
NTF-ELCAC: National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict
OAS: Organization of American States
OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDM: Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement
OIC: Organization for Islamic Cooperation
OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPC: Oromo People's Congress
OPM: Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Organization of Free Papua)
OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OTSC: Collective Security Work Organization
OVCS: Observatorio Venezolano de Conflictividad Social (Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict)
OVV: Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia (Venezuelan Violence Observatory)
OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PA: Palestinian Authority
PANDEF: Pan Niger Delta Forum
PCF: Communist Party of the Philippines
PDF: Popular Defence Forces
PDKI: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
PIJ: Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PJAK: Party of Free Life of Kurdistan
PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan **(**Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PLA: People's Liberation Army
POLISARIO Front: Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PNLO: Pa-O National Liberation Organisation
PP: Prosperity Party
PPP: Pakistan People's Party
PREPAK: People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
PREPAK (Pro): People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak – Progressive
PROVEA: Venezuelan Program Education Action on Human Rights
PS: Province of Sinai
PULO: Patani United Liberation Organisation
PYD : Democratic Union Party of Kurds in Syria
R-ARCC: Revitalized Agreement on Conflict Resolution in South Sudan
RCSS: Restoration Council of Shan State
RED-Tabara: Résistance pour un État de Droit au Burundi (Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi)
RENAMO: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
REWL: Red Egbesu Water Lions
RFI: Radio France International
RNLF: Rabha National Liberation Front
RPD Corea: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front
RPF: Revolutionary People's Front
RSADO: Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization
RSF: Rapid Support Forces
RUD-Urunana: Ralliement pour l'unité et la démocratie (RUD)-Urunana (Rally for Unity and Democracy (RUD)-Urunana)
SADC: Southern Africa Development Community
SADR: Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SAMIM: Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique
SCACUF: Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front
SCDF: Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces
SCF: Shiite Coordination Framework
SEBIN: Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional (Bolivarian National Intelligence Service)
SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index
SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLA: Sudan Liberation Army
SLA-AW: Sudan Liberation Army - Abdul Wahid
SLA-MM: Sudan Liberation Army- Minni Minnawi
SLDF: Sabaot Land Defence Forces
SNNRPS: Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State
SOCADEF: Southern Cameroons Defence Forces
SOHR: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition
SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-FD: Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Freed Detainees
SPLM-N: Sudan People's Liberation Army-North
SRF: Sudan Revolutionary Forces
SSA: Shan State Army
SSA-N: Shan State Army – North
SSC: Sool, Saanag and Cayn
SSDM/A: South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army
SSLA: South Sudan Liberation Army
SSOMA: South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance
SSPDF: South Sudan Armed Forces
SSPP: Shan State Progress Party
SSPP/SSA: Shan State Progress Party/ Shan State Army
SSUF: South Sudan United Front
STC: Southern Transitional Council
TAK: Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons)

TEDH: European Court of Human Rights
TNLA: Ta-ang National Liberation Army
TFG: Transitional Federal Government
TPLF: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
TRF: The Resistence Front
TTP: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
UAE: United Arab Emirates
UDA: United Democratic Alliance
UDRM/A: United Democratic Revolutionary Movement/ Army
UFDD: Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development)
UFR: Unión de Fuerzas de Resistencia (Union of Resistance Forces)
ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam
ULFA-I: United Liberation Front of Assam - Independent
UMP: Unidades de Movilización Popular (Popular Mobilization Units)
UN: United Nations
UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMI: United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNAMID: United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA: United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei
UNITAMS: United Nations Integrated Mission for Transition Assistance in Sudan
UNJHRO: United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (DRCongo)
UNLF: United National Liberation Front
UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL: United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOWAS: United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSMIL: United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UPC: Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (Union for Peace in Central Africa)
UPDF: Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPLA: United People's Liberation Army
USA: United States of America
USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWSA: United Wa State Army
VRAE: Valle de los Ríos Apurímac y Ene (Valley between Rivers Apurimac and Ene)
WB: World Bank
WFP: World Food Programme of the United Nations
WILPF: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WTO: World Trade Organization
YPG: People's Protection Unit
YPJ: Women's Protection Units
ZUF: Zeliangrong United Front

Escola de Cultura de Pau

The Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace, hereinafter ECP) is an academic peace research institution located at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The School for a Culture of Peace was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, Track II diplomacy, training and awareness generating activities.

The main fields of action of the Escola de Cultura de Pau are:

- Research. Its main areas of research include armed conflicts and socio-political crises, peace processes, human rights and transitional justice, the gender dimension in conflict and peacebuilding, and peace education.

- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II 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.

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Alert 2023! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding is a yearbook providing an analysis of the state of the world in terms of conflict and peacebuilding from three perspectives: armed conflicts, socio-political crises and gender, peace and security. The analysis of the most important events in 2022 and of the nature, causes, dynamics, actors and consequences of the main armed conflicts and socio-political crises that currently exist in the world makes it possible to provide a comparative regional overview and to identify global trends, as well as risk and early warning elements for the future. Similarly, the report also identifies opportunities for peacebuilding and for reducing, preventing and resolving conflicts. In both cases, one of the main aims of this report is to place data, analyses and the identified warning signs and opportunities for peace in the hands of those actors responsible for making policy decisions or those who participate in peacefully resolving conflicts or in raising political, media and academic awareness of the many situations of political and social violence taking place around the world.

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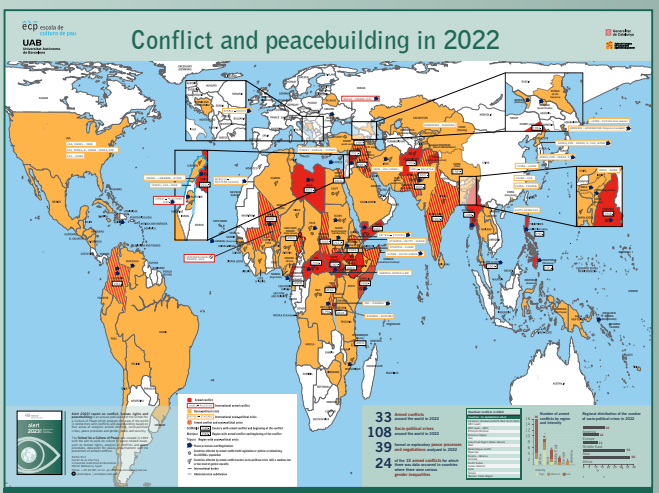

Foldable map on conflict and peacebuilding attached inside

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The *Alert!* report helps us to identify opportunities for peacebuilding for academics and pacifist activists who refuse to believe that *realpolitik* is the only approach to wars. The analyses that the Escola de Cultura de Pau provides to us each year are a good starting point for discovering the knowledge, understanding, concerns and desires of the communities that experience and suffer from these armed conflicts in their own lives.

Jokin Alberdi Bidaguren
Professor at UPV/EHU and researcher at Gernika Gogoratuz and Hegoa, Instituto de Estudios de Desarrollo y Cooperación Internacional

I salute the gigantic work of *Alert!* which highlights armed conflicts around the world. I am challenged by the number of conflicts in progress today and I wonder if there is not, in the 21st century, another way of settling conflicts. Dialogue is no longer in vogue, apparently. However, to save our humanity and our planet constantly shaken by these conflicts, it is time to act in favour of non-violence.

Marcelline Nyiranduwamungu
Secretary-general of the International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace (IWNDP, based in Belgium)

A large part of the political class and the media of the Global North has responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine with a hardening of militaristic and warmongering discourses and with a disregard for pacifism and the culture of peace. In this context, *Alert!* is even more valuable, as it gives us tools to understand and explain that conflicts are not unpredictable natural phenomena, but are the result of causes, actors and dynamics that created violence before the armed confrontation. It does this from a feminist and gender perspective, warning of the risks in each context, but also of the opportunities, so that in addition to understanding the path to follow to end these wars, we learn that building, protecting and caring for peace is a daily exercise for all everyone and one that requires social justice.

Patricia Simón
Feminist writer and journalist specialised in human rights