

Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios



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Foreword

Dr. Norbert Ropers
Director of Peace Resource Collaborative (Thailand)
and Senior Advisor at the Berghof Foundation (Germany)

Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a new publication of the School for a Culture of Peace that focuses on peace processes. It draws on the accumulated knowledge of this center on peace negotiations that goes back to its establishment in 1999. This new publication is a response to need for knowledge on peace negotiations.

2017 had been a year of crisis and escalating conflict. The number of victims of political violence and protracted conflicts, of refugees, destroyed cities and livelihoods, of shattered communities and families is continuously high. In this situation it is more important than ever to focus the attention on efforts to contain and end violence, to engage in and sustain peace dialogues and negotiations and to support sustainable processes of conflict transformation.

It means nothing less than to pay more attention to the science, art and practice of peace instead of devoting most energy on the science, art and practice of war and

violence. *Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios* has become an important symbol for this shift and its authors have filled a gap in the academic research on peace processes. What has made the publication particularly useful are the combination of qualitative and quantitative research, the separate analysis of regional trends and the specific contexts and dynamics of selected cases.

The development of a comprehensive and effective knowledge base for peace processes is still work in progress. The contributions of the new *Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios* by the School for a Culture of Peace are important components to develop this knowledge base. I would like to congratulate the team for the persistent work on the nuanced analyses of the various peace talks and the efforts to identify patterns, promising strategies and tools to improve the understanding of the complex dynamics of peacemaking and conflict transformation.

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than ever to focus
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Executive summary

Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2017. The examination of the development and dynamics of negotiations worldwide allows to provide a comprehensive overview of peace processes, identify trends and comparatively analyse the various scenarios. *Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios* also analyses the evolution of peace processes from a gender perspective. One of the main objectives of this report is to provide information and analysis to those who participate in peaceful conflict resolution at different levels, including parties to disputes, mediators, civil society activists and others. The yearbook also aims to grant visibility to different formulas of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reversing dynamics of violence and channelling conflicts through political means in many contexts. Thus, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

Methodologically, the report draws mainly on the qualitative analysis of studies and information from many sources (the United Nations, international organisations, research centres, media outlets, NGOs and others), as well as on experience gained during field research. The report also cross-cuttingly incorporates a gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes.

The report is divided into six chapters. The first presents a summary and map of the 43 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2017 and provides an overview of the main global trends. The next five chapters delve into the peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each of them addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each case in those regions.

Peace processes and negotiations in 2017

AFRICA (20)	ASIA (8)	EUROPE (7)
Burundi CAR DRC Ethiopia (Ogaden) Gambia Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali (north) Morocco – Western Sahara Mozambique Nigeria (Niger Delta) Rep. of the Congo Senegal (Casamance) Somalia South Sudan Sudan Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) Sudan – South Sudan Togo	Afghanistan India (Assam) India (Nagaland) Myanmar Philippines (MILF) Philippines (MNLF) Philippines (NDF) Thailand (south)	Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Cyprus Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) Moldova (Transdniestria) Serbia – Kosovo Spain (Basque Country) Ukraine
	AMERICA (3)	MIDDLE EAST (5)
	Colombia (FARC-EP) Colombia (ELN) Venezuela	Iran (nuclear programme) Israel-Palestine Palestine Syria Yemen

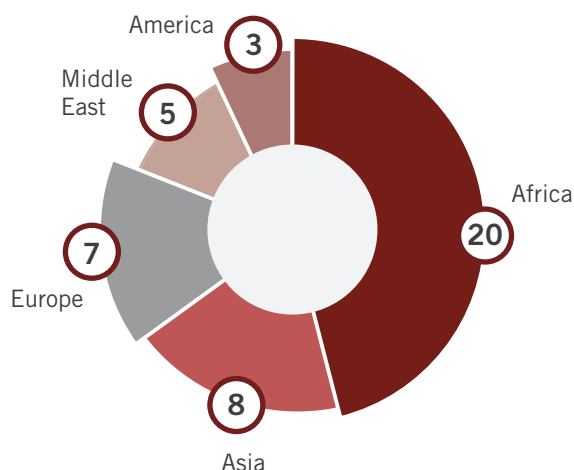
Negotiations in 2017: global overview and main trends

During 2017, a total of 43 peace processes and negotiations were identified worldwide: 20 in Africa (46% of the total), eight in Asia (19%), seven in Europe (16%), five in the Middle East (12%) and three in the Americas (7%).

In almost all the cases analysed, the governments of the respective countries were one of the parties to the negotiations. In most cases, armed groups (individually or

in coalitions or umbrella organisations) also participated in the negotiations, whilst in some contexts one of the parties to the negotiations was a representative of entities seeking secession, a new political or administrative status or independent statehood with full international recognition. Some of these entities had unilaterally declared independence and even had some territorial control and limited recognition.

Regional distribution of peace negotiations



A third party was involved in the vast majority of the peace and negotiation processes (35 of the 43, equivalent to 81%). There was a third party in most of the internal processes, either in negotiations (28) or national dialogues (one), and in all six interstate negotiations: Morocco–Western Sahara, Sudan–South Sudan, Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Serbia–Kosovo, Israel–Palestine and Iran (nuclear programme). A smaller proportion of the negotiations studied in 2017 (six cases, representing 14%) were conducted directly between the parties or there was no evidence of third-party mediation or facilitation efforts.

Notable was the role played in negotiations by third-party intergovernmental organisations, and particularly the United Nations, which was involved in almost half of the cases analysed in 2017 (20 of the 43 cases, equivalent to 46%) through the work of the UN Secretary-General's special envoys, mandates for facilitation, good offices, the supervision of ceasefire agreements in some UN missions and UN participation in platforms or support groups for a peaceful solution to various conflicts, such as the Middle East Quartet for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement, the International Support Group for the CAR and the IGAD Plus in South Sudan.

In addition to the UN, regional organisations played a prominent third-party role around the world, especially in Africa and Europe. African regional intergovernmental organisations were involved as third parties in 13 of the 20 negotiating processes identified in Africa (65% of the cases), including the African Union (involved in 10 cases), the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. Regional organisations also played an important mediating and facilitating role in Europe (in six of the seven cases, or 86%), particularly the EU and the OSCE. In the Americas, the regional

organisation UNASUR became involved in the peace process in Venezuela, whilst Asia was the part of the world where intergovernmental organisations participated the least in mediating and facilitating dialogue.

In addition to intergovernmental organisations, some states also conducted mediation and facilitation work, like Norway, for example, which was active in Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia (FARC-EP and ELN) and the Philippines (NDF); Sweden, which was involved in Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Colombia (ELN); and Malaysia, which participated in Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines (MILF) and Thailand (south); to mention a few cases. Finally, religious actors were also involved as third parties in some dialogue and negotiating processes, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Philippines (MNLF), the Community of Sant'Egidio in Senegal (Casamance) and Mozambique and the Vatican in Venezuela.

Considering the uniqueness of each process and taking into account that the details of the issues under discussion are not always made public, some recurring themes in the negotiating agendas included the disarmament of armed groups, the surrender of arsenals and/or the reintegration of combatants, the situation of captives (release, prisoner exchange, etc.), the political and administrative status of certain disputed territories, claims of identity recognition, issues related to national and/or political reconciliation, the adoption of humanitarian measures, efforts to achieve truces, ceasefire agreements and cessations of hostilities and the inclusiveness of the negotiating processes.

No comprehensive, broad-spectrum agreement like the one achieved by the Colombian government and the FARC-EP in 2016 was reached in any of the cases analysed in 2017. Still, some important agreements were reached in various contexts.

Finally, most of the peace processes in 2017 lacked a gender perspective and significant female participation. This finding is in full agreement with the assessment found in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on implementing the gender, peace and security agenda, which warned of the great gap that still exists between the commitments made and their implementation in different areas, as well as a decline in female participation in peace processes. According to the available data, women held senior positions in 11 delegations of the nine processes tracked, compared to 12 delegations in eight processes in 2015 and 17 delegations in 2014. On a positive note, in Colombia a Special Instance was appointed to help to implement the final agreement with a gender perspective. Networks of female mediators were also active. Some of these have started operating in recent years, like Nordic Women Mediators, whilst others were established in 2017, such as the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network and the Commonwealth Women Mediators Network.

Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2017

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (6)	Negotiations with third parties (28)	National dialogues without third parties (0)	National dialogues with third parties (1)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (0)	Negotiations with third parties (6)
AFRICA							
Burundi		x					
CAR		x					
DRC		x					
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		x					
Gambia		x					
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	x						
Libya		x					
Mali (north)		x					
Morocco – Western Sahara							x
Mozambique		x					
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	x						
Rep. of the Congo	x						
Senegal (Casamance)		x					
Somalia		x					
South Sudan		x					
Sudan				x			
Sudan (Darfur)		x					
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)		x					
Sudan – South Sudan							x
Togo		x					
AMERICA							
Colombia (FARC-EP)		x					
Colombia (ELN)		x					
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
Afghanistan ⁱ					x		
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Myanmar	x						
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (MNLF)		x					
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					
EUROPE							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ⁱⁱ		x					
Moldova (Transnistria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo ⁱⁱⁱ							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine ^{iv}		x					

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (6)	Negotiations with third parties (28)	National dialogues without third parties (0)	National dialogues with third parties (1)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (0)	Negotiations with third parties (6)
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ⁱ		x					
Yemen		x					

- i. No official negotiations have begun in Afghanistan, although various exploratory initiatives have been launched.
- ii. The nature of the peace processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia's role in those conflicts and peace processes are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
- iii. The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo is considered interstate because even though its international legal status is still controversial, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding opinion that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
- iv. The nature of the peace process in Ukraine and Russia's role in the conflict and peace process are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
- v. There are two parallel negotiating processes in Syria (Astana and Geneva). Third parties are involved in both processes, though some of them directly project their interests onto the negotiations.

Regional trends

Africa

- In Africa, 12 of the 20 peace processes took place in contexts of armed conflict whilst the remaining eight took place in scenarios of socio-political crisis.
- In most cases (nine), the main parties involved in the negotiations were the governments of the respective countries and insurgent groups.
- Three of the 20 peace processes analysed in Africa had no third parties: the two processes in Nigeria (Niger Delta and Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo.
- The African Union was the sole third party in four of the 17 peace processes and negotiations identified in Africa and it collaborated with the UN or other regional organisations in seven.
- Prisoners were released and exchanged to promote trust between the parties and contribute positively to the process under way in Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), Mozambique, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the Republic of the Congo and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).
- The political and administrative status of certain territories was one of the central elements in peace processes in Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Mali (north), the conflict between Morocco and Western Sahara, Nigeria (Niger Delta), Senegal (Casamance), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).
- There was a positive development in peace negotiations and in reaching agreements in the Gambia, Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mozambique, Republic of the Congo and between Sudan and South Sudan.

America

- In the Americas, peace negotiations began between the government of Colombia and the ELN and a temporary ceasefire was reached, although the process was beset by enormous difficulties.
- The process to disarm, demobilise and transform the FARC into a political party was completed.
- The talks between the government of Venezuela and the opposition made no headway despite international mediation and there was no rapprochement between the parties.
- The process to implement the agreement with the FARC, which is important from a gender perspective, led to the appointment of a Special Instance to help to implement the final agreement with a gender focus.

Asia

- Asia was the area with the highest percentage of cases with direct negotiations without third-party participation.
- Asia was the part of the world where intergovernmental bodies participated the least in dialogue mediation and facilitation efforts.
- One aspect particular to Asia was the significant percentage of cases in which the armed opposition negotiated with the government through "umbrella" organisations that brought together and represented various armed organisations, like in Thailand, Myanmar and India.

Main agreements of 2017

Peace processes	Agreements
CAR	Cessation of hostilities agreement between the government and 13 of the 14 armed groups agreed in Rome on 19 June, promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio. The agreement stipulates that political representation will be granted to the armed groups and their members will be integrated into the armed forces. The groups expressed their commitment to guaranteeing the freedom of movement of people and goods and their willingness to lift all illegal barriers and checkpoints as an immediate result of implementing the ceasefire. The next day, new hostilities broke out between some of the groups that had signed the agreement.
Colombia (ELN)	Bilateral and temporary ceasefire agreed between the government and the ELN in force from 1 October 2017 to 12 January 2018. There were many problems in implementing the agreement and it was violated many times.
DRC	Global and Inclusive Peace Agreement in the DRC (2016) or the Saint Sylvester Agreement, signed on 31 December 2016. This agreement began the transition phase in which President Joseph Kabila would remain in office until a presidential election scheduled for December 2017, although the Electoral Commission issued a new electoral calendar in June 2017.
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Humanitarian agreement between the government of Nigeria and the armed group Boko Haram on 6 May. According to the humanitarian agreement, the insurgent group freed 82 girls kidnapped from the school in Chibok in 2014 in exchange for the release of five of its commanders. This agreement shows the contacts that the government has been trying to promote with the group since 2015 in order to reach humanitarian agreements that could lead to the beginning of a negotiating process.
Mali (north)	Cessation of hostilities agreement (August) and statement of commitments (September) signed after an escalation of violence between the CMA and Platform, two of the organisations that signed the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali in 2015. The statement of commitments includes a definitive cessation of hostilities, a resumption of meetings to schedule the implementation of the 2015 agreement and confidence-building measures for the billeting and DDR process. At the end of 2017, the truce remained in force.
Moldova (Transdnistria)	Vienna Protocol. Set of confidence-building measures signed in Vienna in November that recapitulates various agreements from 2017, such as those focused on reopening the Gura Bicului-Bychok bridge, a strategic piece of communication infrastructure between both areas, guarantees for schools that teach in the Latin alphabet, direct telephone communication and legalisation of mobile phones in Transdnistria and access to arable land in the Dubasari region.
Palestine	Reconciliation agreement signed by Hamas and Fatah in October in order to set up a national unity government. At the end of the year, both parties traded blame for the breaches of the commitments made in the agreement, calling its future into question.
Rep. of the Congo	Kinkala Agreement of 23 December, by which the government and Reverend Ntoumi established a ceasefire agreement and Ntoumi promised to facilitate the disarmament of his combatants and the restoration of state authority in Pool. The government pledged to guarantee the process of disarmament, demobilisation and social and economic reintegration of the former combatants, as well as resettlement of the population displaced by the violence in the region and the freedom of movement. There are plans to create a joint commission to supervise implementation of the agreement.
South Sudan	Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, signed on 21 December. The signatory parties included the Transitional Government of National Unity, the SPLM/A-IO, the SPLM's "former detainees", the National Salvation Front and 10 other opposition movements and parties. Representatives from the IGAD and the AU participated as IGAD guarantors and mediators and international associates participated as witnesses. Starting on 24 December, the date when the agreement became effective, ceasefire violations were reported and verified by both parties. These violations were criticised by the international community, which threatened to impose sanctions.
Syria	Agreement to create four de-escalation zones in Syria (Astana Memorandum) signed in May by Russia, Iran (backers of the Syrian regime) and Turkey (rebel forces ally) as guarantors of the ceasefire in the country. The agreement aimed to achieve a cessation of hostilities between the warring parties, the suspension of aerial operations and the creation of conditions for the access of humanitarian aid and the return of people displaced by the violence. The four zones were not demarcated until September and one was only defined after meetings between Russia, the US and Jordan (Amman Talks). The impact of the agreement was relative and uneven, since violence dropped in some of those areas, but intensified significantly in others. "Reconciliation" agreements (actually ceasefire agreements) signed by the Syrian government and armed opposition groups that involved the forced displacement of thousands of civilians, mainly from areas besieged by the regime.
Ukraine (east)	The largest prisoner exchange agreement to date, facilitated by the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross and implemented in December. The Ukrainian government released 233 people, whilst the authorities in Luhansk and Donetsk freed 16 and 58, respectively. Ukraine formally released 306, though by the end of December it had only really released 233. Some of the remaining 73 had been released previously and around 30 refused to be sent back to areas under rebel control.

- With regard to the negotiating agenda, various processes pivoted on aspects related to self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional issues and recognition of the identity of various national minorities.
- Formal negotiations did not begin in Afghanistan, but some progress was made, like the first meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group in Oman after one and a half years of suspended activity.
- In the Philippines, after several months of ceasefire violations and disagreements between the government and the NDF, Manila ended the

peace negotiations and declared the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines to be terrorist organisations.

- After being postponed several times, in May Myanmar finally held the second session of the 21st Century Panglong peace process, which ended with the approval of 37 points.
- The Philippine government decided to expand membership of the body responsible for drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law to accommodate various MNLF factions and improve harmonisation between the peace agreements with the MNLF and the MILF.

Europe

- The central government was involved as one of the negotiating parties in all the peace processes in Europe, except in the Basque Country, where the state government did not participate in the multilateral talks.
- All the peace processes in Europe were accompanied by third parties through different formats and functions.
- Most peace processes in Europe had rather non-inclusive negotiating formats, without public participation, despite civil society demands for participation.
- Some progress was made on humanitarian issues in various peace processes in 2017, like the largest prisoner exchange agreement in Ukraine to date, even if the processes remained mostly deadlocked on the substantive issues.
- The peace processes in Europe continued to lack a gender perspective. Shortcomings in gender architecture were made clear again in 2017, such as the marginal role of the gender committee in Cyprus.
- The governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan failed to finalise measures on previous commitments to strengthen supervision of the ceasefire and establish investigative mechanisms.
- The armed group ETA disarmed in 2017 through an international verification and public participation process, although challenges remained in the Basque Country related to coexistence, memory, prisoners and other issues.
- Despite some milestones in 2017 and progress made in governance, power sharing and ownership,

- the peace process in Cyprus did not make enough headway to reach the expected agreement and gave way to a period of reflection at the end of the year.

Middle East

- One of the features of the Middle East is the high presence of international and regional actors, either by aligning with one of the warring sides or by facilitating and mediating talks.
- The United Nations played a prominent third-party role in most negotiations in the region.
- Regarding the development of the negotiations, there were many cases of deadlock, agreements that did not entail any significant changes in the dynamics of the conflict and adverse atmospheres for the development of the peace process.
- Implementation of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme was affected by a climate of growing tension after Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.
- In Yemen, the impasse in the negotiations since 2016 continued, despite the implementation of some initiatives to restart the talks.
- The US government's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel seriously compromised the possibilities of reactivating a negotiating process between Palestinians and Israelis.
- Fatah and Hamas announced a new reconciliation agreement aimed at forming a Palestinian unity government, but at the end of the year doubts about its implementation persisted.

Introduction

Peace talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world in 2017. The examination of the evolution and the dynamics of these negotiations at a global level offers a global view of the peace processes, identifying trends and facilitating a comparative analysis among the different scenarios. One of the main aims of this report is to provide information and analysis for those actors who take part in the peaceful resolution of conflicts at different levels, including those parties in dispute, mediators and civil society, among others. The yearbook also seeks to reveal the different formulas of dialogue and negotiation that are aimed at reversing the dynamics of violence and that aim to channel conflicts through political means in numerous contexts. As such, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts that are aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

With regard to **methodology**, this report draws mainly from on qualitative analysis of studies and information from numerous sources –the United Nations, international organizations, research centres, the media, NGOs, and others–, in addition to experience gained in field research. The report also incorporates the gender perspective in the study and analysis of peace processes in a cross-cutting manner.

The analysis is based on a **definition** that understands **peace processes** as comprising all those political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and transforming their root causes by means of peaceful methods, especially through peace

negotiations. **Peace negotiations** are considered as the processes of dialogue between at least two conflicting parties in a conflict, in which the parties address their differences in a concerted framework in order to end the violence and encounter a satisfactory solution to their demands. Other actors not directly involved in the conflict may also participate. Peace negotiations are usually preceded by preliminary or exploratory phases that define the format, place, conditions and guarantees, of the future negotiations, among other elements. Peace negotiations may or may not be facilitated by **third parties**. The third parties intervene in the dispute so as to contribute to the dialogue between the actors involved and to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict. Other actors not directly involved in the dispute may also participate in peace negotiations. Peace negotiations may result in comprehensive or partial **agreements**, agreements related to the procedure or process, and agreements linked to the causes or consequences of the conflict. Elements of the different type of agreements may be combined in the same agreement.

With respect to its **structure**, the publication is organized into six chapters. The first presents a summary of those processes and negotiations that took place in 2017, and offers an overview of the main trends at a global level. The following five chapters detail the analysis of peace processes and negotiations from a geographic perspective. Each addresses the main trends of peace negotiations in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, respectively, and describes the development and dynamics of each of the cases present in the regions.

1. Negotiations in 2017: global overview and main trends

- Most of those negotiations in 2017 took place in Africa (46%), followed by Asia (19%), Europe (16%), the Middle East (12%) and the Americas (7%).
- Governments and armed opposition groups were some of the main interlocutors in the negotiation processes during 2017.
- The analysis of peace processes and negotiations reveals the involvement of third parties in the vast majority of cases, 81% of the total.
- The United Nations, regional organizations and several states played a prominent role as third parties in negotiation processes in 2017.
- The negotiation agenda in the different cases analysed in 2017 included topics such as disarmament and the reintegration of combatants, the political and administrative status of territories in dispute, humanitarian measures and ceasefires, among others.
- During 2017, cessation of hostilities agreements were signed in a dozen contexts, although their level of implementation at the end of the year was unequal.
- UN reports noted a decline in the participation of women in peace processes, despite the fact that they continued to demand greater involvement in these negotiations, as was evident in contexts such as Ukraine, Syria or Yemen.

During 2017, a total of 43 peace processes and negotiations were identified on a worldwide level. The analysis of the different contexts reveals a wide variety of realities and dynamics, a result of the diverse nature of the armed conflicts¹ and socio-political crises² that the negotiations are linked to. Without losing sight of the need to consider the specific characteristics of each case, it is possible to draw several conclusions and offer reflections on the general panorama of peace processes and negotiations, as well as to identify some trends. Several conclusions are presented below regarding the geographical distribution of the negotiations, those actors involved in the negotiation processes, the third parties who participated, the main and recurrent issues in the negotiation agendas, the general development of the processes, inclusiveness and the gender dimension in these peace negotiations.

Table 1.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Africa		
Burundi	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the Na-tional Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED)	Yoweri Museveni and Benjamin Mkapa (East African Community, EAC); Jamal Benomar, replaced by Michel Kafando (UN)
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Government, ONLF military polit-ical movement	Mediation of Kenya, facilitation of UAE and Sweden
Gambia	President Adama Barrow, former-president Yahya Jammeh	ECOWAS, AU, UN
Libya	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)	UN, Arab League, AU, EU (Quartet); Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, UAE, Netherlands, Italy, France

1. The School of the Culture of Peace (Escola de Cultura de Pau, ECP) defines armed conflict 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 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 aims to achieve objectives that are different than those of common delinquency and are normally linked to a) demands for self-determination and self-government or identity issues; b) 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; or c) control over the resources or the territory.
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.

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Africa		
Mali (north)	Government, Coordinator of Azawad Movements (CMA) – MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA–	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Mauritania, Niger
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and River of Gold (POLISARIO)	UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of the Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)
Mozambique	Government, the RENAMO opposition group	National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Government, Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), NIGER Delta Consultative Assembly, (NIDCA), Pan Niger Delta Peoples' Congress (PNDPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)	--
CAR	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AI), with the support of the ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, OCU, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Humanitarian Dialogue
DRC	Government, Alliance for the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition grouped in the Rassemblement coalition (Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the Dynamic Opposition and the G7, among others), Union for the Congolese Nation and other political parties	Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO), Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue on the DRC led by the AU, EU, UN, USA, ICGLR, International Organization of La Francophonie
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction)	--
Rep. of the Congo	Government, Ninja militias and the National Council of the Republicans (CNR) of Frédéric Bintsamou (Pastor Ntouni)	--
Senegal (Casamance)	Government of Senegal, the armed group, The Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) and its different factions	The Community of Sant Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau
Somalia	Transitional Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political movement-military Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans	UN, IGAD, Turkey
Sudan	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur)	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany
Sudan (Darfur)	Government, Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movement, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions	Sudan (Darfur)
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	Government, SPLM-N	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Uganda
South Sudan	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition, SPLM7, SSDM-Cobra Faction	"IGAD Plus": IGAD, integrating Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, UK and Norway), EU, UN
Sudan - South Sudan	Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU
Togo	Government, political and social opposition	Ghana, ECOWAS, AU, UN
America		
Colombia (FARC-EP)	Government and FARC-EP	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Norway), accompanying countries (Venezuela, Chile), UN
Colombia (ELN)	Government and ELN	Guarantor countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Norway, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy), Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (UN, Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)
Venezuela	Government, opposition (MUD)	UNASUR, Vatican

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Asia		
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgents, Haqqani Network, USA	Quadrilateral Group (Pakistan, USA, China, Afghanistan), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UN
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD	--
India (Nagaland)	Government, NSCN-IM	--
Myanmar	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF; armed groups not part of the: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, NMSP, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA	--
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF	Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team
Philippines (MNLF)	Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)	Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
Philippines (NDF)	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of different communist organisations, among them the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway
Thailand (south)	Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups)	Malaysia
Europe		
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabaj)	Armenia, Azerbaijan	Minsk Group of the OSCE (co-chaired by Russia, France and USA, the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey)
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	UN, EU, Guarantor Powers (Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ³	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ⁴
Moldova (Transnistria)	Moldova, the self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia , USA and EU
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN
Spain (Basque Country)	ETA, political and social actors in the Basque Country	International Contact Group (ICG), Social Forum to Promote the Peace Process and the Permanent Social Forum
Ukraine (east)	Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia ⁵	OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁶); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁷)
Middle East		
Iran (nuclear programme)	Iran, G5+1 (USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU	UN
Israel-Palestine	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA)	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia
Palestine	Hamas, Fatah	Qatar, Egypt
Syria	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Jordan
Yemen	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis, forces of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh	UN, Kuwait, Oman, EU

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

3. Russia's status in the peace process in Georgia is open to interpretation. Georgia considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
4. Ibid.
5. Russia's status in the peace process in Ukraine is open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia as a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

With regard to the **geographical distribution of the processes and negotiations around the world**, it should be noted that most of the 43 cases analysed in 2017 were concentrated in Africa, which hosted 20 negotiation processes, which accounts for 46% of the total number. The rest of the negotiations were distributed among Asia, with a total of eight (19%); Europe, with seven processes (16%), the Middle East, with five (12%), and the Americas, with three cases (7%).⁸ It should be noted that the high percentage of negotiations in Africa correlates with the fact that the continent is the scenario of the largest number of armed conflicts and socio-political crises at a global level.⁹

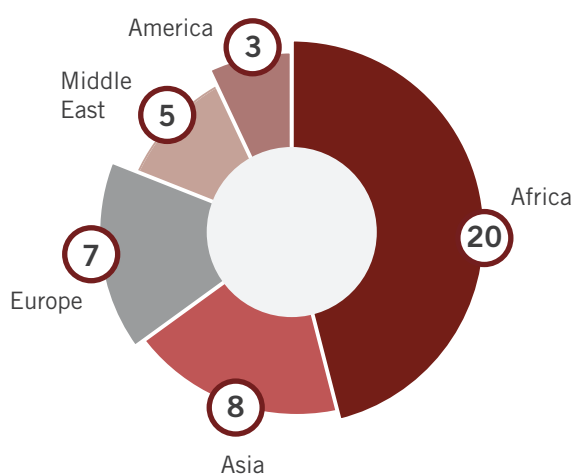
In terms of those **actors involved in the negotiation processes**, it should be noted that in almost all cases the governments of the respective countries formed part of the negotiations. A notable exception was the case of Spain and the process in the Basque Country, where the various dialogue initiatives and contacts were conducted by various actors –political parties, municipal authorities, regional governments, trade unions, the civil society and international representatives– and by the armed group ETA, without participation of the Spanish Government, although in the past negotiations had involved successive state governments. Within the framework of the negotiations analysed in 2017, the governments interacted with actors of numerous kinds. In a significant number of cases, the proceedings involved armed opposition groups. This was the case with negotiations in contexts such as that of Ethiopia (Ogaden) –between the Ethiopian Government and the military political movement the ONLF–, in Mozambique –between the government and the military political group RENAMO–, in Senegal –between the government

Most of the negotiations in 2017 took place in Africa (46%), followed by Asia (19%), Europe (16%), the Middle East (12%) and the Americas (7%)

and the armed MFDC group and its different factions–, in Colombia –between the government and the FARC guerrillas and with the armed ELN group–, or Afghanistan –between the Afghan Government and the Taliban insurgency and the Haqqani network. In some cases, the armed groups participating in the negotiations joined together in “umbrella” coalitions or organizations, as in the negotiations in Mali –with the Coordination of Azawad Movements (groups in favour of a federalist/secessionist formula) and Platform (groups related to the government), as in Thailand with the coalition of armed groups Mara Patani, or in India (Nagaland) –the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG)–, or in Myanmar, with the UNFC, an umbrella organization that in 2017 split into two platforms of different armed groups. Other cases saw a wider diversity of participants in the negotiations, which included both political and armed actors, as in the case of Syria, Yemen or Mali. In other scenarios, the government interlocutors were merely political actors, as in Venezuela, where the opposition was represented by the MUD coalition.

In other cases, the main interlocutors in the negotiation processes were the governments of different states. These cases include, for example, the dialogue surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme –with a process of international dialogue involving the US, the UK, France, China, Russia, Germany and the EU–, but also contexts where interstate disputes of a border nature, or on the status of certain territories are at stake, as in the case of Sudan and South Sudan or in the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh. In other negotiation processes that were analysed during 2017, representatives of those entities seeking secession, a new political or administrative status, or who aspired to become states with full international recognition participated. These entities (some of which proclaimed themselves as states; they possessed territorial control, but with limited international recognition, and/or were supported by a regional or international power) wielded unequal participation in the negotiations, as in several cases they were a consulted party, however they had little margin of influence in the process, while in others they acted as a full participant. Europe hosted several illustrative cases of this type. Thus, for example, representatives of Nagorno Karabakh –supported, but not recognized by Armenia– participated as a consulted party in the bilateral process between Armenia and Azerbaijan under OSCE mediation. The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which was recognized only by Turkey, was a negotiating party in the framework of negotiations sponsored by the UN between the political representatives of the two communities on the island. Transnistria, which has Russian support

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations



8. See graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations.

9. See Annex 1 (Summary of armed conflicts in 2017) and Annex 2 (Summary of socio-political crises in 2017). For more information on the scenario of armed conflicts and tensions at a global level, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

but which lacks international recognition, also continued as a negotiating party in the peace process with the Government of Moldova, in negotiations mediated by the OSCE. Kosovo, meanwhile, was a paradigmatic case since it is widely recognised as a state by more than a hundred countries, and is a negotiating party in the bilateral dialogue with Serbia.

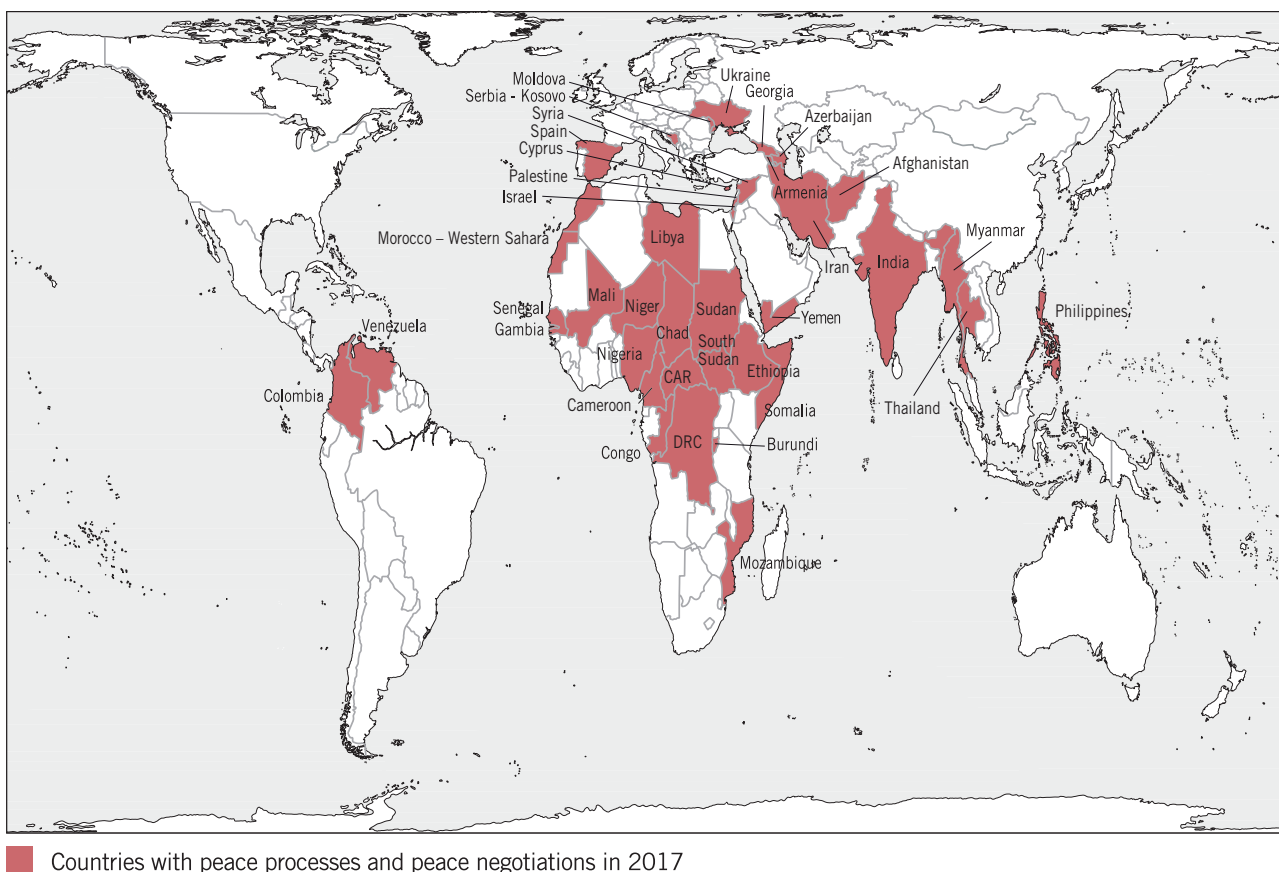
Beyond the European continent, other similar cases that have been dragging on for decades, such as Morocco and Western Sahara are worth mentioning. The SADR has not been internationally recognized in any significant manner, however the Western Sahara is still considered by the UN as a territory pending decolonization, and whose alleged ownership by Morocco is not recognized by international law or by any resolution of the United Nations. Another context to be mentioned in this respect is that of Israel and Palestine, as after decades the Palestinian State is still pending configuration, despite its admission to the UN in 2012 as an “observer state” and its recognition by numerous states. The dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict also have an impact on the unique characteristics of the negotiations in Palestine, where the parties in the negotiations are the Hamas and Fatah organisations, which continued to maintain

In a large majority of cases (81%), negotiations between actors in conflict included the mediation and/or facilitation of a third party

their divisions in 2017, although they did attempt to formalize a unified government after a new reconciliation agreement was signed in mid-2017.

In terms of those **third parties involved in peace and negotiation processes**, it must be taken into account that, although in many cases it is possible to identify the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompanying tasks, these tasks are often carried out in a discreet and non-public manner. With respect to the negotiation scenario in 2017, the analysis of the different cases leads us to conclude that the vast majority of them –35 out of the 43 negotiation processes (81%) involved third party participation.¹⁰ The presence of a third party was found in most of the internal processes –either in the manner of negotiations (28) or in national dialogues (one)–, and in all interstate negotiations (six) –Morocco-Western Sahara, Sudan-South Sudan, Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh), Serbia-Kosovo, Israel-Palestine and Iran (the nuclear programme)–, playing diverse roles. In the latter case the negotiations to reach an agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme in 2015 were direct among the signatories of the pact, however this process was later validated by the UN, which has continued to monitor its implementation. A smaller percentage of the

Map 1.1. Peace negotiations in 2017



10. See Table 1.2. Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2017.

Table 1.2. Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2017

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (6)	Negotiations with third parties (28)	National dialogues without third parties (0)	National dialogues with third parties (1)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (0)	Negotiations with third parties (6)
AFRICA							
Burundi		x					
CAR		x					
DRC		x					
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		x					
Gambia		x					
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	x						
Libya		x					
Mali (north)		x					
Morocco – Western Sahara							x
Mozambique		x					
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	x						
Rep. of the Congo	x						
Senegal (Casamance)		x					
Somalia		x					
South Sudan		x					
Sudan				x			
Sudan (Darfur)		x					
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)		x					
Sudan – South Sudan							x
Togo		x					
AMERICA							
Colombia (FARC-EP)		x					
Colombia (ELN)		x					
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
Afghanistan ⁱ					x		
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Myanmar	x						
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (MNLF)		x					
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					
EUROPE							
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)							x
Cyprus		x					
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) ⁱⁱ		x					
Moldova (Transnistria)		x					
Serbia – Kosovo ⁱⁱⁱ							x
Spain (Basque Country)					x		
Ukraine ^{iv}		x					

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (6)	Negotiations with third parties (28)	National dialogues without third parties (0)	National dialogues with third parties (1)	Other formats (2)	Direct negotiations without third parties (0)	Negotiations with third parties (6)
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ⁱ		x					
Yemen		x					

- i. No official negotiations have begun in Afghanistan, although various exploratory initiatives have been launched.
- ii. The nature of the peace processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russia's role in those conflicts and peace processes are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
- iii. The peace process between Serbia and Kosovo is considered interstate because even though its international legal status is still controversial, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries. In 2010, the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding opinion that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
- iv. The nature of the peace process in Ukraine and Russia's role in the conflict and peace process are open to interpretation. Ukraine considers Russia a party to the conflict and a negotiating party, whereas Russia considers itself a third party.
- v. There are two parallel negotiating processes in Syria (Astana and Geneva). Third parties are involved in both processes, though some of them directly project their interests onto the negotiations.

negotiations analysed in 2017 –six cases (14%)– were conducted directly between the parties or there was no evidence of the involvement of a third party in mediation or facilitation tasks. Half of these contexts took place in Africa –Nigeria (Delta Niger), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo– and the rest took place in Asia –in India, in the context of the conflicts in Assam and Nagaland, and in Myanmar–. It should be noted, in all events, that facilitating actors perform non-public work for good offices in different contexts.

Among those third parties involved in negotiations, the role played by intergovernmental organizations is worth noting, especially that of the **United Nations**, which is involved in almost half of those cases analysed in the 2017 –in 20 of the 43 cases (46%)– through different figures and formats, and which was present in all regions.¹¹ In some contexts, the work of the UN was channelled through special envoys of its Secretary General, as in the cases of Burundi, South Sudan, Syria or Yemen, or of special representatives, such as those working in Libya, Mali, the Western Sahara or the DRC. The UN also participated as a third party in several of its missions, whose mandates include activities related to facilitation, good offices or the supervision of ceasefire agreements. Among them, MINUSMA in Mali, MONUSCO in the DRC, UNAMA in Afghanistan, UNFICYP and the Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus. The UN was also involved with its participation in platforms or support groups for a peaceful solution to various conflicts, such as the Middle East Quartet for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the supporting Quartet of the political agreement for Libya, the Group of International Support for the RCA or the IGAD Plus in South Sudan.

In addition to the UN, the third party role played by **regional organisations** worldwide is also worth noting,

especially in Africa and Europe. In the African continent, of the twenty negotiation processes identified, in 13 (65%) of the cases, the participation of African regional intergovernmental organisations as third party actors was confirmed. Among them, mainly the African Union (AU) –which was involved in 10 cases–, the Community of West African States (the CEDEAO in French) –which was present in three negotiation processes–, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) –which also took part in three processes–, as well as the Community of East African States (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference for the Great Lakes (ICGLR). Europe was also characterized as an area where regional organizations played an important role in mediation and facilitation –in six of the seven cases (in 86%)–, especially through the EU and the OSCE. Both were involved in four of the seven contexts (57%). With respect to the EU, it should be mentioned that its activities as a third party were not limited to the European continent and that it was involved via several figures and formats in negotiation processes in Africa (Mali, Libya, DRC, the CAR, Mozambique) and the Middle East (Israel-Palestine), among other regions. In America, the regional organisation of UNASUR was involved in the Venezuelan process. Asia, however was the region in which intergovernmental organizations participated the least in the tasks of mediation and the facilitation of dialogue.

Beyond the participation of international and regional organisations, international involvement in many of these processes was determined via the use of **specific mechanisms**, which brought together various external actors as third parties in the negotiation processes. As such, in Colombia both the peace processes between the Government and the FARC-EP and between the Government and the ELN have relied on a group of

11. See Table 1.3. Intergovernmental organisations in peace processes in 2017

Table 1.3. Intergovernmental organisations in peace processes in 2017

ONU (20)
UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Burundi
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the CAR
UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the DRC
Special Representative for Western Africa and the Sahel, for the Gambia United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) The UN forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, Arab League and EU
UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mali United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)
The UN participates in "IGAD Plus" in South Sudan. "IGAD Plus" is formed by the IGAD, which includes Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; the AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway), the EU and the UN UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for South Sudan UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
AU/UN Joint Special Representative United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
Special Representative for Western Africa and the Sahel, for Togo United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara
UN Verification Mission in Colombia
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Mission of Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus
UN Special Representative in the Geneva International Discussions on Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)
International Atomic Energy Agency The UN Secretary-General regularly reports on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which validated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) on Iran's nuclear programme
The UN participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the EU to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Special Envoy for the Peace Process in the Middle East
UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria
UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen
IGAD (3)
IGAD in Somalia
"IGAD Plus" in South Sudan, formed by the IGAD, which includes Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; the AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway), the EU and the UN
IGAD in Sudan – South Sudan
ICGRL (2)
ICGRL in CAR
ICGRL in DRC

EU (12)
The EU participates in the International Support Group for the CAR
EU delegation in the DRC EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region
The EU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, UN and Arab League
EU in Mali
EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Mozambique
EU in the Philippines (MILF)
EU in Cyprus
EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia, in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) EU Observation Mission in Georgia (EUMM)
EU in Moldova (Transnistria)
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission, in Serbia-Kosovo EU Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo)
The EU participates in the Quartet for the Middle East along with the United States, Russia and the UN to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy EU Special Envoy for the Middle East
The EU delegation promoted a secret meeting of tribal leaders from different parts of Yemen in Belgium
AU (10)
The AU leads the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR (the AU with the support of the ECCAS, CIRGL, Angola, Gabon, Rep. of the Congo and Chad)
The AU leads the Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC
The AU in Gambia
The AU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the Arab League, UN and EU
AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel / the AU participates in the Mediation Team, which supports implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali
The AU participates in "IGAD Plus" in South Sudan. "IGAD Plus" is formed by the IGAD, which includes Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; the AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway), the EU and the UN
AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in Sudan
United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Sudan-South Sudan
The AU in Togo
OSCE (4)
Minsk Group, in Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, in Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process OSCE Mission in Moldova
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group OSCE Special Observation Mission in Ukraine (SMM) OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk
Arab League (1)
The Arab League forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, UN and EU

Other missions (6)
EAC in Burundi
ECCAS in CAR
OIC in CAR
OIF in DRC
SADC in DRC
OIC in the Philippines (MNLF)

ECOWAS (3)
ECOWAS in the Gambia
ECOWAS in Mali
ECOWAS in Togo

“guarantor countries” (it comprised Ecuador, Brazil and Norway, in the former process, and Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Norway and Venezuela, in the latter), as well as on a group of “accompanying countries” (it comprised Cuba, Chile and Venezuela, in the case of the dialogue with the FARC-EP, and Germany, Italy, Holland, Sweden and Switzerland in the case of the peace process with the ELN). In the case of the Philippines (MILF), the negotiations have involved three international structures to support the process: the International Monitoring Team, –in which countries such as Malaysia, Libya, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Norway and the EU participate–, plus the Third Party Monitoring Team –which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agreements– and finally the International Contact Group –a dialogue support structure comprising four countries (Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four international NGOs (Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources). In Afghanistan, meanwhile, the main support framework for negotiations involved the Quadrilateral Contact Group, this group comprises China, Pakistan, the USA and Afghanistan. Other ad-hoc formats were, for example, the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine) and the format of Normandy in Ukraine (Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France), or the Quartet for the Middle East, which consisted of the USA and Russia, together with the UN and the EU, among others.

It must be noted that in several contexts –especially in the scenarios of internationalized internal conflicts–, the role of some states as a “third party” participant is questioned by some of the actors in the negotiations and/or by external observers, either because of their role in the conflict, due to the state’s openly favourable position towards one of the sides in conflict and due to them pushing of their own agendas in the negotiations. The mediating role of the USA in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was questioned in this light due to the latter’s favourable position towards Israel –a criticism that was widely held in 2017, especially after several measures adopted by the Trump government– or that of Russia in Ukraine: Ukraine continued considering Moscow as an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia presented itself as a third party. Something similar is occurring in Syria with the role played by Russia and Iran, who are allies of the regime of Bashar al-Assad, and

by Turkey, a supporter of some Syrian opposition groups. These countries acted as self-appointed guarantors and supervisors of the ceasefire in Syria as part of the Astana process. In the case of the Quadrilateral Contact Group, Afghanistan also continued to question the role adopted by Pakistan.

With regard to third parties, the actions of some states involved in mediation and facilitation tasks in conflicts is also noteworthy, as for example in the case of Norway –which is present in contexts such as Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia (FARC-EP and ELN) and the Philippines (NDF)–, Sweden –which is involved in cases such as Ethiopia (Ogaden) and Colombia (ELN)–, and Malaysia –which is active in Southeast Asia in the contexts of the Philippines (MILF) and Thailand (south)–, to mention a few examples. Finally, the role of religious actors as third parties in some dialogue and negotiations procedures is worthwhile noting. This was the case, for example, of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OCI) in the Philippines (MNLF), the Community of Sant Egidio in African contexts, including in Senegal (Casamance) and Mozambique, and the role of the Vatican in Venezuela.

The analysis of the different negotiations –whether they are in an exploratory phase, in an initial period of discussion or in the phase of implementing agreements– facilitates the identification of **several recurrent themes in negotiation agendas**, beyond the specific characteristics of each process, while also taking into account that the details of the issues under discussion do not always transcend the public scenario. One relevant issues related to questions on the **disarmament of armed groups, the delivery of arsenals and the reintegration of combatants**. This is an issue that was on the agenda in Mozambique, Mali, the CAR, the Republic of the Congo, Sudan (Darfur), Colombia (FARC-EP) –in the implementation phase, after the signing of the 2016 agreement–, and in the Philippines (MILF), Ukraine and Spain (Basque Country). In the latter case, it should be noted that the armed group ETA announced its unilateral disarmament in 2017, as part of a process involving civil society and international monitoring. Another noteworthy issue on the negotiation agendas related to the **situation of prisoners**, in some cases in the form of demands for their release or in the form of a prisoner exchange processes, as illustrated by the cases of the Philippines (NDF), Ukraine, Spain

The United Nations, regional organisations and several states had a significant role as third parties in the 2017 negotiation processes

(Basque Country) and Palestine. In the case of Ukraine the largest exchange of prisoners since the beginning of the armed conflict took place in 2017 as part of a procedure facilitated by the ICRC.

Another recurring theme in the agendas, which is closely linked to the nature of the conflicts that have resulted in the negotiation processes, was the **political and administrative status of certain disputed territories**. These issues were especially significant in negotiation processes in Europe such as in Ukraine, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia, as well as in Asia, where the **aspirations of self-determination and autonomy** were combined with claims to identity recognition in cases like that of the Moro people in the Philippines, the Patani people in Southern Thailand, ethnic minorities in Myanmar or the Naga people in the Indian state of Nagaland, to mention a few contexts. In addition, issues related to **national and/or political reconciliation** were especially significant in peace processes and negotiations, such as in the cases of Mali, the CAR, Sudan, Sudan (Darfur) or Palestine. In this latter context, for example, the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah aimed at forming a unity government and overcoming the division between the Palestinian factions that has led to the establishment of two parallel administrations in Gaza and the on West Bank. The **adoption of humanitarian measures** was another outstanding issue in several contexts. In cases like the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the Nigerian government reached an agreement on the release of 82 children who had been kidnapped in 2014 by the insurgent group in exchange for the release of a group of commanders of the organization. This strategy aimed to establish humanitarian agreements that would then permit negotiations to take place with Boko Haram. In other contexts, such as Yemen, the issue of how to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the country –the worst in the world– was one of the main issues of the UN special envoy in its meetings with different actors in the conflict.

Another recurring theme, especially with respect to those scenarios of conflict heavily affected by violence, was **the pursuit of truces, ceasefire agreements and the cessation of hostilities**. This was a major issue throughout 2017 in cases such as Colombia (ELN) –where the government and the guerrillas signed a bilateral and temporary ceasefire agreement in October–, in Mali – where in October an agreement to cease hostilities between two of the main armed actors of the country involved in the peace process was also achieved–, in the CAR –where an agreement on the cessation of hostilities

was signed between the government and a dozen armed groups in Rome in June after mediation was conducted by the Community of Sant Egidio–, in South

Sudan –where an agreement was signed in December that was immediately threatened by a further escalation in hostilities– and in Syria –where an agreement was reached to create four de-escalation zones in which a cessation of hostilities was intended, however in practice the result of the agreement was unequal, since some areas saw a descent in violence and others, the opposite. Both the cessation of hostilities agreements and other major issues on the negotiating agendas were reflected in **a dozen important agreements reached in a variety of contexts in 2017, however their level of implementation at the end of the year was uneven.**¹²

With respect to the **evolution of peace processes and negotiations**, it is generally possible to identify a wide range of dynamics: the proper development of contacts, which results in the achievement of important agreements, the establishment of negotiations where previously there were none, or the reactivation of dialogue after years of paralysis, intense exploratory efforts that arouse expectations, negotiations that make no progress on essential points, but which keep a channel of dialogue open, situations of severe gridlock and an absence of contacts, despite the efforts of third parties to facilitate negotiations, obstacles and difficulties already in the implementation phase of agreements, and contexts in which violence and violations of ceasefire and non-hostility agreements have a profound impact on the prospects of peace processes, among other variables.

The analysis of cases for 2017 shows that negotiations during the year experienced highly different dynamics. In general terms, it should be noted that in 2017 no comprehensive or broad-spectrum agreement was reached in any of the cases analysed, unlike 2016, a year that was marked by the attainment of an agreement between the Colombian Government and the guerrillas of the FARC-EP after more than five decades of armed conflict and more than four years of negotiation. However some positive developments were identified in 2017. For example, the peace process in the Indian state of Nagaland made significant advances –including a round of negotiations in Nagaland territory for the first time in 20 years– although a final agreement was not reached, as had been anticipated at different times of the year. Following a similar trend, in Myanmar the negotiation process faced serious difficulties, although several direct meetings did take place between the

The negotiations agenda in the different cases analysed in 2017 included issues such as the disarmament and reintegration of combatants, the political and administrative status of disputed territories, humanitarian measures and ceasefires, among others

In several cases in 2017 the negotiation processes remained open, although no progress was made on major issues or only partial achievements were achieved

12. See Table 1.4. Main agreements of 2017.

Table 1.4. Main agreements of 2017

Peace processes	Agreements
CAR	Cessation of hostilities agreement between the government and 13 of the 14 armed groups agreed in Rome on 19 June, promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio. The agreement stipulates that political representation will be granted to the armed groups and their members will be integrated into the armed forces. The groups expressed their commitment to guaranteeing the freedom of movement of people and goods and their willingness to lift all illegal barriers and checkpoints as an immediate result of implementing the ceasefire. The next day, new hostilities broke out between some of the groups that had signed the agreement.
Colombia (ELN)	Bilateral and temporary ceasefire agreed between the government and the ELN in force from 1 October 2017 to 12 January 2018. There were many problems in implementing the agreement and it was violated many times.
DRC	Global and Inclusive Peace Agreement in the DRC (2016) or the Saint Sylvester Agreement, signed on 31 December 2016. This agreement began the transition phase in which President Joseph Kabila would remain in office until a presidential election scheduled for December 2017, although the Electoral Commission issued a new electoral calendar in June 2017.
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Humanitarian agreement between the government of Nigeria and the armed group Boko Haram on 6 May. According to the humanitarian agreement, the insurgent group freed 82 girls kidnapped from the school in Chibok in 2014 in exchange for the release of five of its commanders. This agreement shows the contacts that the government has been trying to promote with the group since 2015 in order to reach humanitarian agreements that could lead to the beginning of a negotiating process.
Mali (north)	Cessation of hostilities agreement (August) and statement of commitments (September) signed after an escalation of violence between the CMA and Platform, two of the organisations that signed the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali in 2015. The statement of commitments includes a definitive cessation of hostilities, a resumption of meetings to schedule the implementation of the 2015 agreement and confidence-building measures for the billeting and DDR process. At the end of 2017, the truce remained in force.
Moldova (Transdnistria)	Vienna Protocol. Set of confidence-building measures signed in Vienna in November that recapitulates various agreements from 2017, such as those focused on reopening the Gura Bicului-Bychok bridge, a strategic piece of communication infrastructure between both areas, guarantees for schools that teach in the Latin alphabet, direct telephone communication and legalisation of mobile phones in Transdnistria and access to arable land in the Dubasari region.
Palestine	Reconciliation agreement signed by Hamas and Fatah in October in order to set up a national unity government. At the end of the year, both parties traded blame for the breaches of the commitments made in the agreement, calling its future into question.
Rep. of the Congo	Kinkala Agreement of 23 December, by which the government and Reverend Ntoumi established a ceasefire agreement and Ntoumi promised to facilitate the disarmament of his combatants and the restoration of state authority in Pool. The government pledged to guarantee the process of disarmament, demobilisation and social and economic reintegration of the former combatants, as well as resettlement of the population displaced by the violence in the region and the freedom of movement. There are plans to create a joint commission to supervise implementation of the agreement.
South Sudan	Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, signed on 21 December. The signatory parties included the Transitional Government of National Unity, the SPLM/A-IO, the SPLM's "former detainees", the National Salvation Front and 10 other opposition movements and parties. Representatives from the IGAD and the AU participated as IGAD guarantors and mediators and international associates participated as witnesses. Starting on 24 December, the date when the agreement became effective, ceasefire violations were reported and verified by both parties. These violations were criticised by the international community, which threatened to impose sanctions.
Syria	Agreement to create four de-escalation zones in Syria (Astana Memorandum) signed in May by Russia, Iran (backers of the Syrian regime) and Turkey (rebel forces ally) as guarantors of the ceasefire in the country. The agreement aimed to achieve a cessation of hostilities between the warring parties, the suspension of aerial operations and the creation of conditions for the access of humanitarian aid and the return of people displaced by the violence. The four zones were not demarcated until September and one was only defined after meetings between Russia, the US and Jordan (Amman Talks). The impact of the agreement was relative and uneven, since violence dropped in some of those areas, but intensified significantly in others. "Reconciliation" agreements (actually ceasefire agreements) signed by the Syrian government and armed opposition groups that involved the forced displacement of thousands of civilians, mainly from areas besieged by the regime.
Ukraine (east)	The largest prisoner exchange agreement to date, facilitated by the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross and implemented in December. The Ukrainian government released 233 people, whilst the authorities in Luhansk and Donetsk freed 16 and 58, respectively. Ukraine formally released 306, though by the end of December it had only really released 233. Some of the remaining 73 had been released previously and around 30 refused to be sent back to areas under rebel control.

government and the armed groups involved in the national ceasefire agreement. Furthermore in one round of negotiations, an agreement was reached on around thirty points of the substantive agenda. In the case of Mozambique, a series of positive steps were also taken after three years of negotiations, including the extension of a truce agreement and various face-to-face contacts between the parties. Another case to be noted is that of Cyprus, as during 2017 the parties in conflict were close to reaching a global agreement on resolving the dispute on the island—several historic milestones were reached in the negotiations, such as the proposals by the parties for maps marking the administrative borders. Nonetheless the process was held back by serious

differences between the parties during the second half of the year.

Throughout 2017 contacts and exploratory efforts for the establishment of negotiations were identified. One of these was in Afghanistan, where the Afghan Government and the Taliban insurgents were unable to enter into official negotiations, however significant progress was made in the Kabul Process for Cooperation and Security and the work of the Quadrilateral Group for Coordination was resumed. This group comprised China, Pakistan, the USA and Afghanistan, and had been inactive since 2016. The case of the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) followed similar lines, where, according to information

brought to light in 2017, in recent years the Nigerian Government has been in contact with this militia group with the aim of opening up negotiations in order to end the conflict. During 2017 these contacts facilitated a specific agreement that led to the release of 82 of the 270 girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014 in exchange for the release of several of the group's leaders. The Government of Nigeria was optimistic that agreements of this type would facilitate further approaches to the group and the possible establishment of negotiations. In the case of the Philippines and the MNLF several exploratory meetings between the government and a faction of the group led by Nur Misuari also took place in 2017, including high level meetings, however no formal meeting within the framework of the Tripartite Review Process of the 1996 peace agreement was held.

The analysis of negotiations in 2017 reveals persistent challenges in terms of inclusiveness and incorporation with respect to the gender dimension in peace processes

In several other cases analysed in 2017, the dialogue and negotiation processes remained open, however no progress was made with respect to the major issues, or only partial progress was made. In the case of the Philippines and the MILF, some progress was identified in the processing of the Bangsamoro Fundamental Law, which was a fundamental element in the peace process, however no progress was made in other issues related to disarmament and issues involving the demobilization of MILF fighters. In Ukraine, meanwhile, although significant progress was made in the humanitarian field, no progress was made on substantive issues.

In another series of contexts, problems and difficulties were identified in the implementation phase of the agreements. This was the case in Mali, where the implementation of the provisions of the 2015 peace agreement was affected by disagreements between the parties, due to the impact of actions by armed actors who were excluded from the agreement (who acted as spoilers or saboteurs) and due to an escalation of violence between two of the armed coalitions that signed the pact. It was not until the second half of the year that the situation was reversed after a new agreement to cease hostilities was made. In the case of Libya difficulties in the implementation of the Skhirat agreement reached in 2015 also became evident and at the end of 2017, the UN's efforts to free up the political process were questioned by several key actors in the conflict. Another emblematic case was that of the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP, which revealed differences in terms of the degree of implementation of the agreement. Even so, progress was made regarding the disarmament and demobilization of the FARC and the creation of the Truth Commission. The agreement on Iran's nuclear programme also encountered problems during the year, due to the escalating tensions between the Islamic republic and the United States after Donald Trump came to power.

In the various scenarios analysed in 2017, it became evident that profound differences between those parties involved –among other factors– influenced a persistent gridlock in terms of negotiations, as in the Morocco-Western Sahara or Israel-Palestine cases. A similar trend was observed in Venezuela, where attempts at rapprochement between the parties and the renewal of dialogue –a process that had begun in 2016– came to nothing, despite several meetings that were held at the end of the year. Throughout 2017 in many conflict scenarios, the level of violence and escalations in confrontation were clearly seen to affect negotiation prospects. This was the case in Yemen, where negotiations remained stagnant in the midst of a climate of intense hostilities and despite the efforts of third parties. The same was true of Syria. Despite the existence of two parallel channels of negotiation, one backed by the UN and another (mainly) by Russia, and despite several agreements being reached on the creation of de-escalation zones in the country, no progress was observed in terms of reducing significant levels of violence and the suffering of the population.

One structural and cross-sector topic in the peace and negotiation processes related to their level of **inclusivity**. This analysis of the different contexts in 2017 offers indications about the difficulties and challenges facing the inclusion of multiple actors in negotiation processes, especially civil society, in addition to several specific initiatives that attempt to involve these sectors in the initiatives of formalized dialogue. With respect to the latter, in the Southern Philippines negotiation process, several measures were adopted to encourage a broader participation of civil society; while in the process on the Indian state of Nagaland, the main government negotiator held meetings with tribal representatives, student organizations, women's groups and representatives of civil society. In Europe most of the negotiating formats were characterized by a bringing together of the opposing parties almost exclusively, and without providing space for any form of societal influence. An exception to this scenario was in the case of the Basque Country, where the process involved broad-based actors, including political parties, regional governments, trade unions and organisations from civil society. In the case of Syria, meanwhile, the special envoy from the UN held several meetings with representatives of Syrian civil society that focused on their demands for a greater role in the negotiations. Some civil society organizations in Syria, such as the Families for Freedom movement, affirmed the need to prioritize the negotiations agenda with respect to issues such as the whereabouts of those who had been detained and who had disappeared during the conflict.

Table 1.5. Women mediators networks in 2017

African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise Africa) (2017)
Nordic Women Mediators Network (NWMN) (2015). It includes various national networks: - NWM-Norway - Swedish Mediation Network for Women
Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (2017)
Commonwealth Women Mediators Network (2017)

The analysis of the numerous negotiations that took place in 2017 also illustrates, in general terms, those challenges that relate to the **gender dimension** in formalized dialogue and negotiation processes, despite the existence of an international framework that has been primarily defined on the basis of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations (2000), which emphasises the crucial importance of including women in peace processes and negotiations, as well as in all activities aimed at the resolution and transformation of conflicts. **Most of the peace processes in 2017 lacked a gender perspective and a significant participation of women.** During 2017, for example, more details were revealed about the lack of political willingness when it came to integrating the gender perspective in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot delegations, as well as the limitations on the gender architecture within this process. In various contexts, such as Ukraine, Yemen or Syria, women's organizations demanded a greater presence and role in the negotiations. In the case of Syria, the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, an innovative format that involves dialogue with the UN special envoy by a group of Syrian women of different political signs, continued, although its activity was conducted in a general framework of blockade in the negotiations. In the case of Yemen, in a similar manner, the women's platform, the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafaq) also communicated the importance of addressing issues such as the economic and public health impacts of the armed conflict to the UN special envoy.

In an overall scenario of obstacles and difficulties, significant initiatives and measures however also stand out, such as the appointment of the Special Instance in Colombia –which seeks to aid the implementation of a final agreement with a gender perspective. On the other hand it is worth noting the work undertaken by networks of women mediators, some of which have been active in recent years –such as the network of Nordic women mediator– while others were set up in 2017, such as the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, and the Women's Mediation Network for the Commonwealth Countries.¹³

It is worth noting that this 2017 scenario on the inclusion of the gender perspective in peace

Table 1.6. Active peace processes in 2017 in countries with armed conflicts and/or socio-political crises and high or very high levels of gender discrimination

	High levels of discrimination	Very high levels of discrimination
Peace processes in countries with armed conflicts	Afghanistan CAR Ethiopia ⁱ Myanmar	Mali Nigeria ⁱⁱ Somalia Sudan ⁱⁱⁱ Syria Yemen ^{iv}
Peace processes in countries with socio-political crises	Armenia ^v Azerbaijan ^{vi} India ^{vii}	DRC ^{ix} Nigeria ^x Sudan ^x

Source: Table created from the levels of gender discrimination found in the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) and Escola de Cultura de Pau's definitions and classifications of armed conflicts and socio-political crises (Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria 2018). SIGI classifies discrimination according to five levels: very high, high, medium, low and very low.

- i. The peace process in Ethiopia refers to the Ethiopia (Ogaden) conflict.
- ii. Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger were involved in a single armed conflict called the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram), the subject of initiatives of dialogue between the government of Nigeria and Boko Haram factions.
- iii. There are active peace negotiations related to the armed conflicts in Sudan (Darfur) and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).
- iv. The active peace process in Yemen refers to the Yemen (Houthi) armed conflict and not Yemen (AQAP).
- v. Armenia and Azerbaijan are involved in a single international socio-political crisis related to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, for which there is an active peace process.
- vi. Ibid.
- vii. The active peace processes in India refer to the India (Assam) and India (Nagaland) socio-political crises.
- viii. There are two socio-political crises facing Nigeria, but there are only initiatives of dialogue for the Nigeria (Niger Delta) crisis.
- ix. The peace process in the DRC refers to the initiatives of political dialogue between the government and various opposition actors from across the country to seek a solution to the internal crisis there.
- x. The peace process in Sudan refers to the national dialogue process between the government and opposition actors.

processes, coincides with the diagnosis in the annual report of the United Nations Secretary General on the implementation of the gender, peace and security agenda, in compliance with resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015). This evaluation report highlights the vast distance that still exists between the commitments acquired and their implementation in different areas. A regression in the participation of women was identified, especially with regard to the peace processes. According to the available data, of the nine processes tracked, women occupied senior categories in 11 delegations, compared to eight processes and 12 delegations in 2015 and 17 delegations in 2014. The demand for specialized advice in matters of gender equality in peace processes also decreased, and was present in only four of the seven mediation processes led or co-led by the UN. This is 57% of all the processes when compared to the previous years, in which applications were registered in 89% of the processes in 2015, 67% in 2014 and 88% in 2013. The number of

13. See Table 1.5. Women mediators networks in 2017

peace agreements that included gender issues in their drafting also dropped, from 70% in 2015 to 50% in 2016. It is worth noting that the United Nations Global Study on the evaluation of 15 years of agenda implementation had already established that the scope of women's participation and leadership was one of the areas in which the greatest challenges persisted.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the annual study by the UN Secretary General also identified a setback with respect to the general participation of civil society as a whole, as although in 2014 and 2015 consultations were held on 100% of those processes in which the United Nations intervened, in 2016 consultations were carried out in only 86% of the processes.

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Over the course of 2017, 20 peace negotiations and processes were identified on the African continent, constituting almost half (46%) of the 43 peace processes taking place in the world in 2017.
- Twelve of the 20 peace processes occurred in contexts of armed conflict, while the other eight processes took place in scenarios of socio-political crisis.
- In many cases (nine), the only protagonists of negotiations were the governments and insurgent groups of the respective countries.
- Of the 20 analysed processes, there were three negotiation scenarios on the African continent that didn't involve third parties: the two processes taking place in Nigeria (Niger Delta and Boko Haram) and the one in the Republic of the Congo.
- Of the 17 cases of peace negotiations and processes identified on the African continent in which third parties were involved, the AU was present on its own (in four cases), in conjunction with the UN (in seven cases) or together with regional organisations.
- The release or exchange of prisoners in order to build trust between the parties and contribute positively to the ongoing process was a factor present in several African scenarios, such as Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), Mozambique, Nigeria (Boko Haram), Republic of the Congo and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).
- The political and administrative status of certain territories was one of the key elements in several processes, such as Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), the dispute between Morocco and Western Sahara, Nigeria (Niger Delta), Senegal (Casamance), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).
- It's worth highlighting the positive progress made in peace negotiations and in reaching agreements in Gambia, Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mozambique, Republic of the Congo, and between Sudan and South Sudan.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in Africa during 2017. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the negotiation processes in the region are presented. Secondly, the evolution of each different context during the year is analysed, including references to the gender perspective in some cases.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Burundi	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the Conseil National pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi et la Restauration d'un Etat de Droit (CNARED)	Yoweri Museveni and Benjamin Mkapa (East African Community, EAC); Jamal Benomar, replaced by Michel Kafando (UN)
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Government, ONLF military political movement	Mediation of Kenya, facilitation of UAE and Sweden
Gambia	President Adama Barrow, former president Yahya Jammeh	ECOWAS, AU, UN
Libya	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)	UN, Arab League, AU, EU (Quartet); Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, UAE, Netherlands, Italy, France
Mali (north)	Government, Coordinator of Azawad Movements (CMA) – MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA–	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Mauritania, Niger
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and River of Gold (POLISARIO)	UN, Algeria and Mauritania, Group of Friends of the Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)
Mozambique	Government, the RENAMO opposition group	National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	Government, Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), NIGER Delta Consultative Assembly, (NIDCA), Pan Niger Delta Peoples' Congress (PNDPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)	--

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
CAR	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU, with the support of the ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, OCU, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Humanitarian Dialogue
DRC	Government, Alliance for the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition grouped in the Rassemblement coalition (Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the Dynamic Opposition and the G7, among others), Union for the Congolese Nation and other political parties	Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO), Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue on the DRC led by the AU, EU, UN, USA, ICGLR, International Organization of La Francophonie
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction)	--
Rep. of the Congo	Government, Ninja militias and the National Council of the Republicans (CNR) of Frédéric Bintsamou (Pastor Ntoumi)	--
Senegal (Casamance)	Government of Senegal, the armed group, the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) and its different factions	The Community of Sant Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau
Somalia	Transitional Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political movement-military Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans	UN, IGAD, Turkey
Sudan	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur)	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany
Sudan (Darfur)	Government, Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions	Sudan (Darfur)
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	Government, SPLM-N	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Uganda
South Sudan	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition, SPLM7, SSDM-Cobra Faction	"IGAD Plus": IGAD, integrating Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, UK and Norway), EU, UN
Sudan - South Sudan	Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU
Togo	Government, political and social opposition	Ghana, ECOWAS, AU, UN

The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.

-- Do not exist or there is no public proof of the existence of third parties.

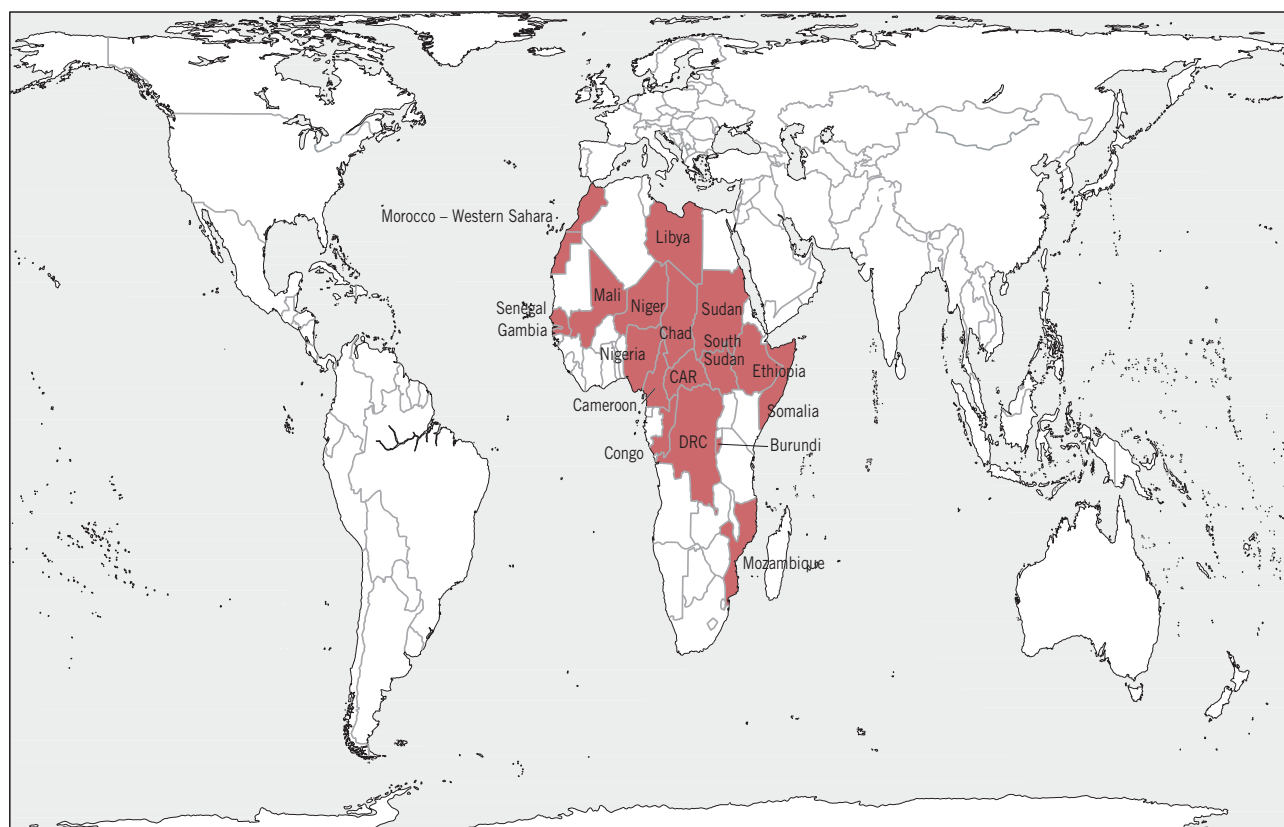
2.1 Negotiations in 2017: regional trends

Over the course of 2017, **20 peace negotiations and processes were identified on the African continent**, constituting almost half (46%) of the 43 peace processes taking place in the world in 2017. **Twelve of the 20 peace processes occurred in contexts of armed conflict**, while the other eight processes took place in scenarios of socio-political crisis. The analysis of the different contexts reveals certain trends concerning peace negotiations and process on the African continent.

As regards the **actors involved in negotiations**, the analysis of the scenarios shows that **in many cases (nine), the only protagonists of negotiations were the governments and insurgent groups of the respective countries**. This was the case of contexts such as that of Ogaden (between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF), Mozambique (between the government led by

the Mozambique Liberation Front or FRELIMO and the Mozambican National Resistance or RENAMO, a political-military movement), the Central African Republic (between the government and the members of the former Séleka coalition and anti-Balaka militias), Nigeria (humanitarian contacts between the government and factions of Boko Haram), the Democratic Republic of Congo (between the government and the political-military movement of Pastor Ntoumi), the Senegalese region of Casamance (between the government and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance and its factions), the Sudanese region of Darfur (between the government and the Darfurian insurgency), the Sudanese regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile (between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N insurgency) and South Sudan (between the government and the armed group SPLA-IO). In other scenarios, **greater diversity**

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa 2017



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2017

was observed, with other political and armed actors involved in talks with governmental authorities. This was true of contexts such as Mali (north), where the negotiation process has involved the national authorities and several political and armed actors from the Azawad region (north); Libya (several political-military actors competing for central power); Nigeria (Niger Delta), where the government has held talks with the civil society platform PANDEF and with some armed actors from the Niger Delta region; Somalia (Transitional Federal Government with the federal states and with other political-military actors of the country); and the peace process in Sudan, between the government and the Sudan Call opposition coalition, which groups together the political opposition and the various insurgent actors of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur. In another group of cases (four - Burundi, Gambia, Central African Republic and Togo), the protagonists of the negotiation processes were the countries' respective governments with sectors of the political and social opposition.

Reflecting the diverse dynamics of conflict, the analysed peace negotiations and processes also include other cases where the protagonists are the governments of different states, in the context of disputes over border

demarcation and over the status of certain territories, such as in the case of Sudan and South Sudan. In other contexts, the parties involved in negotiations are mainly governments and entities that pursue secession or a new political and administrative status, or that aspire to be states with full international recognition. These cases include that of Morocco-Western Sahara.¹

In a large number of cases, the only protagonists of negotiations were the governments and insurgent groups of the respective countries

As regards the third parties involved in peace negotiations and processes, it's worth pointing out that although there are many cases in which the actors carrying out mediation and facilitation tasks make their involvement publicly known, in other contexts these tasks are carried out discretely and privately. Of the 20 analysed peace processes, there are three negotiation scenarios on the African continent in which no third parties are involved. This is the case of the two negotiation processes that the Nigerian government is carrying out, on the one hand in the conflict of the Niger Delta with the various political-military actors and, on the other hand, in the conflict in the north of the country and the regions bordering on Cameroon, Niger and Chad with the Boko Haram jihadist insurgency, along with the contacts that the Congolese government of Denis Sassou-Nguesso has had with the envoys of Pastor Ntoumi. Out of the remaining 17 cases

1. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) has not been internationally recognised but at the same time the Western Sahara is still considered by the UN as a territory pending decolonisation. Morocco's claim on the territory is not recognised by international law or by any UN resolution.

it's important to highlight the **support role played by the UN in the negotiation processes of 10 cases**. In some cases the UN has been involved as a third party through special envoys (for example, the conflicts in Burundi, between Morocco and Western Sahara or in Libya), as part of platforms or groups of actors who aim to act as facilitators of dialogue (such as in the case of the CAR, where it forms part of the International Support Group and strengthens the political dialogue carried by the government, and in partnership with the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation) or through missions and the special representatives of the UN Secretary-General on the ground, such as in the CAR, the DRC, Mali and Sudan (Darfur).

Another important third-party role is the one played by the AU in Africa within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)², whether on its own or in partnership with other regional and international organisations, such as the UN.

Of the 17 cases of peace negotiations and processes identified on the African continent in which third parties are involved, in 11 cases the AU was present on its own (in four cases), in conjunction with the UN (in seven cases) or together with regional organisations involved in facilitating contacts between the actors in conflict. These include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in three cases (Gambia, Mali and Togo); the East African Community (EAC), in the case of Burundi; the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC, according to its French initials), in the case of CAR; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in three cases (Somalia, South Sudan and the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan); and, last of all, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (CIRGL, according to its French initials) and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF, according to its French initials), in the DRC. It should also be pointed out that the EU also fulfilled functions as a third party on the African continent, including in the cases of Libya, Mali (north), Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC and Sudan-South Sudan. Last of all, we should also underline the good offices carried out by religious organisations in five contexts: the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Community of Sant'Egidio (Vatican) in the CAR; the national Catholic Church and the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique; the Community of Sant'Egidio in the Senegalese region of Casamance; the Congolese National Episcopal Conference (CENCO) in the DRC; and the Islamic High Council in Mali.

In most of the cases of peace negotiations and processes on the African continent analysed in 2017, **states also participated as mediators or facilitators of the contacts and dialogue between the disputing parties. These states**

are often regional powers or states with a reputation on the continent for peacebuilding and the promotion of peace. Among these countries, it's worth highlighting, for example, the role played by Algeria in scenarios such as the conflict between Morocco and Western Sahara, in Libya, in Mali (north) or in South Sudan; the one played by Ghana in the crisis between the government and political opposition in Togo; the one played by Kenya, which has historically promoted contacts between the ONLF armed group and the Ethiopian government; the one played by Uganda, which exercises regional leadership in the facilitation of good offices in the processes of Burundi, the DRC and between Sudan and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and Blue Nile; the one played by South Africa in the processes of Mozambique and South Sudan; and the one played by Tanzania in the conflicts of neighbouring Burundi and Mozambique. In five of the 17 cases the former colonial powers also carried out or have carried out good offices tasks: France in Mali (north); Italy in Libya; Spain and France in the dispute between Morocco and Western Sahara; and the UK in Sudan and in South Sudan.

As far as the analysis of the items on the negotiation agenda are concerned, there are some recurring issues that arise in the various processes. For example, issues related to the **disarmament of armed groups, the surrender of specific weapon arsenals**

and/or the reintegration of fighters, which over the course of 2017 were present in contexts such as Mozambique, Mali (north), the CAR, the DRC and South Sudan. Another issue present in dialogue processes or in the demands of some of the actors involved in negotiation processes is related to **demands for the release of prisoners, or measures for the release or exchange of prisoners as steps for building trust between parties and contributing positively to the ongoing process**. This issue was on the agenda in several contexts during 2017, including Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), Mozambique, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile).

The **political and administrative status of certain territories** was one of the key elements in several processes on the African continent, such as Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), the dispute between Morocco and Western Sahara, Nigeria (Niger Delta), Senegal (Casamance), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile). Issues related to **border demarcations** were also present in cases such as Sudan-South Sudan, among others. Other elements on the agenda in 2017 included issues related to inclusiveness, political and economic reforms, electoral timetables, formation of transitional or national unity governments, or reparation mechanisms for victims of conflict.

The **declaration of truces and ceasefires, respect for ceasefire commitments and negotiations for the**

2. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was approved in 2002 and includes the AU Commission, the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which is the decision-making organ of the AU, and the African Standby Force (ASF).

establishment of the long-term cessation of hostilities were also recurring key issues in several African contexts over the course of 2017. In some cases positive steps were taken, such as in **Mali (north)**, where the Platform and groups forming part of the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA) reached an agreement on 20 September that included a cessation of hostilities, which remained in force at the end of the year. In **Mozambique**, the establishment by the political-military opposition movement RENAMO of a unilateral truce ended up leading to a permanent truce that contributed to strengthening the peace process. Another highlight was the signing of a ceasefire agreement in the **Republic of the Congo** between the government and the representatives of Pastor Ntoumi on 23 December, which was respected by the parties. However, in the **CAR**, the agreement signed in Rome on 19 June for the cessation of hostilities between the government and 13 of the 14 armed groups in the country was systematically violated, highlighting the lack of trust between the parties, although some partial cessations of hostilities were agreed between groups. As regards the dispute between **Morocco and Western Sahara**, an outbreak of tension occurred at the end of 2016 due to Moroccan activity in an area considered to be of restricted access to the parties. This action was interpreted by the POLISARIO Front as a violation of the 1991 ceasefire, which according to the UN Security Council raised doubts about the maintenance of the ceasefire and led to the temporary deployment of troops by both parties. In the **Sudanese regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile**, the Sudanese government postponed on three separate occasions the unilateral ceasefire established in January until 31 December. This partly contributed to the joint declaration of a ceasefire in May by the JEM and the SLM-MM in Darfur, although both in Darfur itself and in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions the government and the armed actors violated their own ceasefire commitments. Last of all, mention must be made of the situation in **South Sudan**, where the systematic violation of the 2015 ceasefire led to the total collapse in September 2016 of the 2015 agreement between the government and the SPLA-IO and to the violation of various unilateral initiatives for the cessation of hostilities. The IGAD made considerable efforts to breathe new life into the process and managed to get a new ceasefire agreement agreed on 21 December 2017. However, it was systematically violated by the parties soon after it came into force on 24 December.

In respect of the **progress of peace negotiations and processes in 2017**, the analysis of the different cases reveals a diversity of dynamics. On the positive side, by the end of the year the **good progress made in negotiations, the reactivation of processes and the achievement of agreements** in some contexts raised

The release or exchange of prisoners in order to build trust between parties was a factor present in several African scenarios, such as Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), Mozambique, Nigeria (Boko Haram), the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)

expectations about the general progress of their respective peace processes. One such case was **Gambia**, where the crisis triggered by former president Yahya Jammeh's refusal to accept his defeat in the presidential election of 1 December 2016, was calmed thanks to regional diplomatic efforts, mostly by ECOWAS. President Adama Barrow, winner of the election, who had fled to Senegal for security reasons, was persuaded to return and Jammeh was forced to accept his defeat. In **Ethiopia (Ogaden)**, the reactivation of the process at the end of 2017 in the UAE was followed up with a meeting in Sweden in early 2018 and a second round of talks in February 2018 coordinated by Kenyan officials.

Furthermore, the release of prisoners by the Ethiopian government was interpreted as a measure to strengthen the process. In **Mozambique**, the RENAMO unilateral truce of early 2017 was extended, creating a favourable climate for holding the first direct meeting between President Nysui and the rebel leader Dhlakama in August, which contributed to strengthening the process and the necessary constitutional changes. In the **Republic of the Congo**, the release of prisoners involved in the political movement of the rebel leader Pastor Ntoumi was interpreted as a trust-building measure in order to facilitate contacts which led to an agreement at the end of December. Finally, in the dispute between **Sudan and South Sudan**, despite the fragility of the relations between the two countries, the mutual threats and the volatility of the regional situation, by the end of the year relations were on the path to normalisation and a demilitarised border zone was set up.

In other cases, although **dialogue between parties remained open and various rounds of negotiations were held during the year, with agreements reached in some cases, no significant progress was made in relation to a final peace agreement or in terms of implementing recently signed agreements**. One such case was **Nigeria (Niger Delta)**, where the complete lack of progress in dialogue between the various coalitions of civil society, such as the PANDEF or the NIDCA, and the Nigerian government in order to implement the previously reached peace agreements, led the armed actors of the Niger Delta to threaten to reactivate their violent activity. In the **CAR**, despite the signing of an agreement for the cessation of hostilities on 19 June in Rome, the mutual lack of trust concerning the disarmament process led to a reactivation of clashes in parallel with the continuation of talks with armed groups. It's also worth highlighting the case of **Malí (north)**, where there were tensions and divisions between the parties that signed the Algeria agreement in 2015 and where hostilities continued. However, in September the two armed opposition coalitions (the CMA and the Platform) reached an agreement to work towards the implementation of the Algeria agreement. In the case of **South Sudan**, the

agreement reached in 2015 between the sectors loyal to the president, Salva Kiir, and those loyal to the former vice-president, Riek Machar, collapsed in September 2016 due to the persistence of violence. Nevertheless, in the second half of 2017, several initiatives and contacts were promoted by the IGAD in order to set up the so-called High-level Revitalization Forum (HLRF). In December it managed to bring the parties together in Addis Abeba, which led to the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the country's 14 political-military actors. Last of all, in **Libya**, there continued to be difficulties in implementing the Skhirat agreement signed at the end of 2015, to the point where one of the parties in the conflict, General Khalifa Hifter, declared the expiry of the agreement and the illegitimacy of the political entities set up on the basis of the agreement, despite multiple efforts to get the process back on track in a context marked by institutional fragmentation and persistent violence.

Another noteworthy factor in several contexts of negotiation is the existence of **spoilers or saboteurs**, actors who are not involved in the peace process but who through their actions threaten to complicate efforts to resolve the conflict through dialogue. Furthermore, the **fragmentation or internal divisions of actors involved in dialogue** call into question the credibility of armed actors in negotiation initiatives. In the case of **Mali (north)**, jihadist armed actors who were not involved in the 2015 peace negotiations continued their armed actions in the country. In the **Lake Chad Basin region (Boko Haram)**, the splits within Boko Haram began when the ISIS organisation made Abu Musab al-Barnawi the leader of the group in August 2016, while another faction remained under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. The Shekau faction refused all offers to negotiate while the al-Barnawi faction seemed more open to establishing contacts with the Nigerian government, according to several sources. In the case of the **CAR**, the lack of trust between the parties and the proliferation of actors led some armed groups to boycott the implementation of the various peace agreements and the start of a disarmament process. In the case of the **DRC**, the death of the historical leader of the UDPS opposition party, Étienne Tshisekedi, who had led and united a fragmented political and social opposition, led to a power struggle and divisions in the opposition. This situation was exploited by the presidential majority in order to delay the implementation of the December 2016 agreement. In the case of **Sudan (Darfur)**, the fragmentation of the insurgency and the proliferation of actors and agendas did not contribute to reactivating talks aimed at reaching an agreement on the cessation of hostilities. The government pushed for the signing of agreements with minor actors who joined the national dialogue process. However, according to UN Secretary-

The political and administrative status of certain territories was one of the key elements in several processes on the African continent, such as Ethiopia (Ogaden), Mali (north), Morocco-Western Sahara, Nigeria (Niger Delta), Senegal (Casamance), Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)

General Antonio Guterres, a series of preconditions and ultimatums prevented progress from being made in the process with the main armed actors (JEM, SLM-MM and SLM-AW). Finally, in the case of **Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)**, the internal splits of the SPLM-N affected the peace process throughout the year, since its vice-president, Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu, resigned over disagreements with its leader Malik Agar regarding the negotiating position of the group, which was against raising the issue of the self-determination of the Nuba Mountains, the position defended by al-Hilu. In June, the political wing of the SPLM-N decided to remove Agar as leader and appointed al-Hilu as new leader and commander general. It also removed the general secretary and lead negotiator Yasir Arman. These tensions led to delays in negotiations. The Sudanese government declared that it would not negotiate with Agar's faction due to its lack of capacity to implement potential agreements.

2.2. Case study analysis

Southern Africa

Mozambique	
Negotiating actors	Government, the RENAMO opposition group
Third parties	National mediation team, Botswana, Tanzania, South Africa, United Kingdom, EU, Community of Sant Egidio (Vatican), Catholic Church
Relevant agreements	Rome peace agreement (1992)

Summary:

The coup d'état against the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974 and the guerrilla warfare carried out by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) Marxist-Leninist insurgency took Mozambique to Independence in 1975. Since then, the country has been affected by a civil war between the FRELIMO Government and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) armed group, supported by the white minorities that governed in the former Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) and South Africa during the apartheid, in the context of the Cold War. In 1992 the parties reached a peace agreement that was considered an example of reconciliation. This was mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio and ended a 16-year long war that caused one million fatalities and five million displaced persons, and gave way to a period of political stability and economic development, albeit high levels of inequality. In parallel, growing accusations of fraud and irregularities in the electoral processes that followed, some of which were confirmed by international observers, have gone hand-in-hand with a growing authoritarianism and repression of the opposition, and FRELIMO taking over the State (and the communication media and economy). In 2013, RENAMO conditioned its continuation in political life to a series of changes, mainly the reform of the national

electoral commission and an equitable distribution of the country's wealth. It threatened to remove its signature from the 1992 peace agreement, and indeed this did happen, throwing the country back into armed fighting in 2013 and the subsequent launch of a new agreed peace negotiation process in August 2014.

After three years of negotiations, several positive steps were taken in the peace process in Mozambique in 2017 for the parties to reach an agreement that could meet the demands made by RENAMO in 2013. First, in late 2016, President Filipe Nyusi and RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama held telephone conversations that contributed to rapprochement, leading RENAMO to declare a unilateral truce until the beginning of 2017 so that the Mozambican population could welcome the New Year in a peaceful atmosphere. Dhlakama extended this truce during the year, enabling progress to be made in the peace negotiations. Second, in July the government withdrew troops from eight positions near RENAMO's stronghold in the Gorongosa Mountains, as demanded by RENAMO in June in order to continue the negotiations, which helped to create a climate of greater trust between both parties. Third, direct meetings were held between the parties during the year. In August 2017, Filipe Nyusi and Afonso Dhlakama held their first direct meeting since 2015. The meeting took place in RENAMO's historical stronghold in the mountainous Gorongosa district. After the meeting, RENAMO noted that the decentralisation plan had to be submitted to Parliament in December, before the 2018 local elections were held. Fourth, FRELIMO and RENAMO discussed issues that are part of the core of the problem, such as the demand to increase the decentralisation of power in the country, the procedure for appointing provincial governors and other matters.

In early February 2018, Nyusi announced that he would implement the constitutional amendments that would allow the political parties that win the provincial parliamentary elections to select the regional governor prior to subsequent approval by the president. Nyusi and Dhlakama also met in Namadjiwa in mid-February 2018 to discuss the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of RENAMO members and their incorporation into the state security forces. The process continued to receive international support following Dhlakama's request for international mediation in 2016, which President Nyusi accepted. The Catholic Church, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the EU and South African President Jacob Zuma became mediators. The EU appointed Mario Raffaelli and Father Angelo Romano of the Community of Santi'Egidio as its representatives. Raffaelli was also appointed coordinator of the international mediation team. One of the main issues that could hinder implementation of a peace agreement is the role that the most recalcitrant sectors of FRELIMO may play in approving the constitutional

Tensions between the Mozambican government and RENAMO fell significantly during the year due to the positive development of the peace negotiations

amendments, since the decentralisation plan means that RENAMO might end up with more provincial governors and district administrators, implying a direct loss of power for FRELIMO.

West Africa

Mali (north)	
Negotiating actors	Government, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) –MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA
Third parties	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Mauritania, Niger
Relevant agreements	Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2015)

Summary:

The armed conflict affecting Mali since early 2012 resulted in an institutional crisis –which materialized in a military coup– and Tuareg and jihadist groups progressively taking control of the northern part of the country. Since the conflict started, several international actors, including ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, have promoted initiatives leading to re-establishing the constitutional order and recovering Mali's territorial integrity. In parallel with the militarist approaches to face the crisis, exploratory contacts were held with some armed groups (MNLA and Ansar Dine) to find a negotiated way out of the crisis. Despite the announcement of a commitment to the cessation of hostilities from these insurgent groups, at the start of 2013 an offensive by Ansar Dine precipitated an international military intervention led by France. In May 2014 a new negotiation process was started, led by Algeria, where the Mali Government negotiated on both sides with the two coalitions created by the armed groups: the Coordination of Azawad Movements (groups favourable to a federalist/secessionist formula), and the Platform (groups supporting the Government). In July 2015 the signing of a peace agreement was made possible between the Government, the CMA and the Platform, in Algiers. The jihadist groups were left aside in the negotiation table, which kept alive the hostilities from these groups in the new context of implementing the clauses present in the peace agreement.

Following the trend observed during the previous year, and with a backdrop of persistent violence among several armed actors, in 2017 difficulties in implementing the peace agreement signed in 2015 continued. **The problems to implement the agreement were generally caused by the impact of violent actions from actors that had been excluded from the 2015 agreement, with an escalation of hostilities among the groups that signed the agreement, and also by the failure to adopt some of the measures set out in the agreement.** During the first six months of the year the peace process was affected by an attack in January by the armed group al-Mourabitoun –which hadn't taken part in the agreement– on a joint military camp of military forces and armed groups, killing sixty people. At this camp 600 members of the Malian Armed

Forces, members of the CMA (groups supportive of a federalist/secessionist formula) and from the Platform (pro-unity and pro-government groups) were preparing joint patrols as established in the peace agreement. Although there was fear that the agreement might collapse following the attack, the parties reiterated their commitment to the agreement. After this episode, in February, came a high-level meeting of the Supervisory Committee of the agreement, convened by Algeria –the main mediating country– with the participation of representatives from the Malian Government, the Platform and the CMA (the latter had boycotted the committee’s meetings since December 2016 on the basis that it lacked inclusivity when taking decisions on the implementation of the agreement), as well as other international mediating actors, including the Governments of Mauritania, Niger, France, the AU and the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This meeting served to advance in the definition of a timeframe to implement key aspects, such as appointing interim authorities, launching joint patrols, the holding of consultations for the Conference of National Understanding (Conférence d’Entente Nationale) and the appointment of an independent observer.

Preparations for the Conference of National Understanding caused fresh clashes among several actors. For instance, the CMA and the Platform mentioned the need to advance in the establishment of the interim authorities and the cantonment and DDR process before the conference took place, whereas the opposition groups questioned the fact that the agenda only focused on matters that were relevant to the north of the country and civil society sectors demanded a greater presence of women and youths. Finally, the conference took place in Bamako from 27 March to 2 April with more than one thousand participants, 32% women. Opposition parties remained on the side of the initiative and the CMA agreed to join after an agreement was reached with the Government. The outcome of this conference was a series of recommendations including the need to tackle issues such as the lack of inclusiveness in the political process, issues on governance and security and matters relating to Mali’s cultural diversity. The president of Mali rejected one of the recommendations that emerged from the meeting, relative to the establishment of negotiations with armed groups that had been excluded from the peace agreement, which included jihadist organizations like Ansar Dine and the Macina Liberation Front. During a visit to Bamako, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France and Germany also expressed opposition to negotiating with “terrorists”. The recommendations from the conference were aiming to enrich the Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation, as part of the 2015 agreement (a document containing some

60 pages that was presented as an outcome of the Conference of National Understanding). In May, a commission was created in charge of drafting this charter, with 53 members, only 6 of them women. This reduced number of women was in contrast to the greater presence of women in the conference. The text of the charter was delivered to President Keita on 20 June, but was rejected by some sectors, such as the CMA, which questioned the fact that Azawad was not recognized as a political entity.

In Parallel, towards the middle of the year –coinciding with the end of the interim period as foreseen in the 2015 agreement– the parties reached a consensus on a revised road map for the implementation of the agreement and for the establishment of a coordination mechanism in Kidal (north). Nevertheless, these developments never materialized and were affected by a surge in violence between different armed actors that had adhered to the agreement, mainly between the GATIA organization –a part of the pro-national unity Platform– and sectors of the secessionist CMA alliance in the regions of Kidal and Ménaka. The increase in hostilities came in a context marked by the delays in appointing the interim authorities, the lack of progress in deploying civil servants to the north and centre of the country and the insecurity and problems to set up the DDR process, as set out in the peace agreement. Violence did not drop until the adoption of ceasefire agreements, in August and September, after the mission of good offices promoted by the Government of Mali and supported by international actors involved in the peace process. The mission of good offices was created at the end of June and was led by the leader of the High Council of Islam, Mahmoud Dicko, who held meetings with sectors close to both the CMA and the Platform. After weeks of confrontation, at

The implementation of the 2015 agreement was affected by the escalation of hostilities between the armed groups that signed the agreement, towards the middle of the year

the end of August the parties agreed to sign a cessation of hostilities agreement, initially for fifteen days, which was renewed in September for another month. In this context, in **mid-September contacts were held between the CMA and the Platform, leading to the signing of a document containing commitments. The agreement included three central issues: the definitive cessation of hostilities; resuming dialogue to agree on a timeframe for the full implementation of the 2015 agreement; and trust-building measures for the cantonment and DDR process.** At a later stage, reconciliation conversations were held from 5 to 11 October in Anéfis, in Kidal region, between the signatories of the agreement to discuss the release of detainees, the identification of disappeared persons, investigating the alleged crimes committed since 2017 by the organizations that signed the agreement by traditional judges, and other matters. These conversations were facilitated by the UN special representative in the country, in coordination with the governments of Mali and Algeria, and led to the

creation of reconciliation committees to disseminate the content of the agreement reached in Anéfis.

By the end of 2017 the truce was still in place. Nevertheless, different dynamics of tension were still at play. For instance, a coalition of factions from the armed groups excluded from the agreement (CME) demanded to participate in the supervision mechanisms in December, and threatened to block their establishment if their demands were not met. Some of the parties signing the agreement also denounced that Mali's Government had adopted some measures unilaterally, such as promoting a law on territorial communities in October, defining the framework for the decentralization process in the country. Towards the end of the year, meanwhile, public focus was on the holding of regional elections, scheduled for the month of December; however, they were delayed by Mali's Council of Ministers until April 2018. This came after the armed groups that had signed the agreement threatened to boycott the elections unless progress was made first in implementing the key aspects of the 2015 agreement and unless the decentralization law was reviewed. It is important to note that another issue affecting the political climate in 2017 was the process for a constitutional reform, especially with regards to the submission of the proposal on amendments, which aimed at strengthening the figure of the president (including competencies to appoint a quarter of the members of the Senate and to dismiss the prime minister). The constitutional reform had a strong mark on the country's agenda since the middle of the year. The platform *"An tè a banna! Touche pas à ma Constitution"*, encompassing political parties in the opposition and civil society actors, among others, staged a series of demonstrations against the draft text of the constitution submitted by the Government to president Keita. In this scenario, the leader decided to suspend the constitutional referendum in August and agreed to carry out more inclusive consultations.

As for other aspects relative to the implementation of the 2015 agreement, it is worth noting that the report by the UN Secretary-General from the end of December 2017 highlighted that the context of insecurity was not only costing the lives of civilians and military –the MINUSMA was the UN mission with the largest number of casualties in 2017– but was also preventing the deployment of civil servants –including judiciary posts– to the north and centre of the country. In addition, the DDR process was still waiting for the provision of lists of participants from the armed groups –which had not yet drafted the lists of their participants– and the cantonment of forces, amidst disagreements between the Government and the armed groups in relation to the integration quotas of former combatants into the armed forces. **A few relevant steps forward were taken in implementing the agreement, with the establishment of**

the Committee for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation; the deployment of interim authorities in all northern regions of the country and the setting up of joint patrols in Gao.

In addition, it is good to point out that the Supervisory Committee for the Agreement held regular meetings during the year. In the last quarter of 2017, the committee adopted some relevant decisions. On the one hand, it resolved that the Carter Center (USA) would adopt an independent observer role. On the other, it was agreed that representatives of Algeria and the MINUSMA would take part in all of the discussions between Malian actors to act as observers and, if necessary, as mediators or to provide technical assistance. Finally, it is important to note that in June 2017, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2364, renewing the mandate for the MINUSMA until June 2018. In September, the Council also unanimously adopted resolution 2374, imposing sanctions –travel ban and the freezing of funds– on individuals and entities that threaten peace, security and stability in Mali and creating a new committee and panel of experts to examine violations.

Meanwhile, it is worth highlighting that Malian women continued to be marginalized and their inclusion in the process was not prioritized despite the mobilization of several local women's organizations, the actions undertaken by UN Women and the MINUSMA, the international framework defined by resolution 1325 aiming to encourage the inclusion of women and the existence of a National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, covering the period 2015-2017, and which includes among its goals to favour the participation of women in the implementation of the peace agreement. In this regards, as mentioned before, there was a very low participation of women in the drafting committee for the Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation –six women out of the 53 members (11.3%)– despite the fact that women represented 32% of participants in the Conference of National Understanding. Additionally, some analysts pointed out that women were under-represented in the mechanisms for the implementation and supervision of the peace agreement –including the Supervisory Committee for the Agreement, the DDR Committee, the National Council for the Reform of the Security Sector, and the Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation– given that, on average, the presence of women in these spaces was around 3%.³ Taking into account the demands from Malian women activists on the need for women to play a greater role in the implementation and supervision mechanisms, some analysts suggest a more relevant presence on the Supervisory Committee for the Agreement and the establishment of parallel mechanisms to assess the implementation of the agreement taking into account gender indicators.⁴

3. Jenny Lorentzen, *Women's Inclusion in the Peace Process in Mali*, PRIO Blogs, 13 February 2018.

4. Ibid.

Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction)
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Humanitarian agreement between the Government of Nigeria and armed group Boko Haram, May 6, 2017
Summary: The Islamist sect Boko Haram reclaims the creation of an Islamic State in Nigeria, and considers Nigerian public institutions corrupt and decadent. The group –the name of which means “Western education is a sin”– falls under the fundamentalist branch that other groups formed in Nigeria since independence in 1960 and that periodically organize larger or smaller violent episodes. Despite the strong pressure its members are under in different countries in the region by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad since 2016, the armed group remains active and the scope of its attacks has increased, contributing to a worsening of insecurity in the region and with a high impact on civilians. During the conflict, the Nigerian Government has held contacts with the different factions of the armed group to end the conflict and reach humanitarian agreements.	

Amidst the ongoing conflict in the Lake Chad region between the armed group Boko Haram and the different countries in the region, **the Nigerian Government has held contacts during recent years with the armed group to end the conflict; these contacts have not been made public** and the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has repeatedly declared its desire to enter into peace conversations with the armed group. In this regard, **the Government revealed in 2016 that it had been holding contacts with the armed group since July 2015** to release the 270 girls kidnapped in the Chibok school (Borno State, northeast of the country) in April 2014. These contacts started shortly after President Muhammadu Buhari became president in May 2015. These contacts failed, but continued until May 2017, when BH freed 82 of the 270 girls kidnapped in Chibok in exchange for the release from jail of five of its commanders. In parallel, on 10 February 2018 the group freed 13 people that had been kidnapped during 2017 in north-east Nigeria, according to the Government, among which there were 10 women who had been captured during an attack on a police convoy and three teachers from Maiduguri who had been retained during a mission to explore for oil. This humanitarian agreement was facilitated by the organization ICRC, which published a statement affirming it had participated in this action as a neutral intermediary and was not involved in the negotiations.

The Nigerian Government held bilateral contacts with Boko Haram to free hostages

Third parties	Mediation of Kenya, facilitation of UAE and Sweden
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

The regime that has ruled Ethiopia since 1991 maintains a confrontation with a number of ethno-political armed groups that demand greater autonomy or even independence from the central Government. One of them is the ONLF, which was founded in 1984 and operates in the Ogaden region in the southeast of the country. It demands independence for the region inhabited by the Somali community. The ONLF collaborated with the opposition to overthrow Mengistu, which was successful in 1991. In 1994, the legislative body of the Ogaden region, called the Somali Regional State (SRS), passed a resolution calling for a referendum on self-determination that led to its dissolution by the Ethiopian government. The ONLF has been fighting against the Ethiopian regime ever since, asserting that the conflict will only end when it accepts the principle to exercise the right to self-determination, as established under the Ethiopian Constitution, without preconditions or restrictions. Over the years unsuccessful sporadic contacts between the parties have taken place, against a backdrop of continual fighting, which since 2006 has been on the rise. It was not until mid-2012 when the most serious contacts to date got under way, in an attempt to resolve the conflict. Since then, rather sporadic secret meetings have been taking place between the parties under Kenyan mediation.

In late 2017, an unofficial preparatory meeting was held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) between representatives of the Ethiopian government and the Ogaden insurgency. This meeting was intended to lead to a second round of negotiations in early 2018. The first round of negotiations took place in 2012. There had been

attempts to resume them ever since, but those efforts had not borne fruit. In mid-January 2018, Kenya sent a delegation to Sweden led by the MP representing Garissa County (Kenya), former Defence Minister Mohamed Yusuf Haji, to meet with ONLF representatives and facilitate official resumption of the talks, according to local sources. On 22 January, ONLF representatives held a meeting with the Somali Ogadeni communities in the US to hear their recommendations ahead of the talks between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF.

Finally, **the second round of negotiations was held in Nairobi on 11 February 2018.** The governor of Garissa County, Ambassador Ali Bunow Korane, who coordinates the peace talks, said that some progress had been made after almost six years of pressure on the ONLF and the Ethiopian government to return to the negotiating table, reaching a crucial stage in the process. ONLF spokesman Abdulkadir Sheikh Hassan Hirmoge (Adani) announced that the ONLF had participated in the peace talks with the Ethiopian government in Nairobi and that they had “important plans”, though he did not specify any details. Neither the government delegation, led by Colonel Gebre Egziabher Alemseged (Colonel Gabre), the former interim head of the Office of the Facilitator for Somalia Peace and National Reconciliation, nor

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia (Ogaden)	
Negotiating actors	Government, ONLF military political movement

Abdi Mohamoud Omar, the president of the Somali Regional State (SRS), made any statements. The high-level delegation of the ONLF included its political and military wings and consisted of its chief negotiator, Abdirahman Mahdi; the commander of the military wing (ONLA), Sulub Abdi Ahmed; ONLF Committee Chairman Ahmed Yasin Dirane and the group's finance chief, Ibado Hirsi Mahad. These conversations took place amidst continuous clashes between the ONLF and the Liyu Police in the provinces of Degahbur and Nogob.

Days after the meeting, the Ethiopian government released 1,500 prisoners from Jail Ogaden, a prison located in the Ogaden region about 80 km east of the city of Harar and the scene of serious human rights violations according to the armed group and human rights organisations. The insurgent group announced that these prisoners were linked to the ONLF, though it added that there were still many other prisoners in Ethiopian prisons. However, it also repeated through social networks that no agreement had been reached with the government after different reports had circulated. Local sources had indicated that the release of these 1,500 prisoners (among which 100 were allegedly political prisoners) was part of the peace agreement reached.

Former Tanzanian President Mkapa, the EAC facilitator in the peace negotiations between the Burundian government and the opposition, was accused of bias in favour of the regime

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Burundi	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the Conseil National pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi et la Restauration d'un Etat de Droit (CNARED)
Third parties	East African Community (EAC), UN
Relevant agreements	Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (2000), global ceasefire agreement (2006)

Summary:

The mediation efforts started by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere in 1998 and brought to a head by South African President Nelson Mandela took shape with the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in 2000, which laid the foundations for ending the conflict in Burundi that began in 1993. Although this agreement did not fully curb the violence until a few years later (with the signing of the pact between the FNL and the government, in 2006, and the beginning of its implementation in late 2008), it marked the beginning of the political and institutional transition that formally ended in 2005. The approval of a new Constitution formalising the distribution of political and military power between the two main Hutu and Tutsi communities and the elections that led to the formation of a new government laid the future foundations for overcoming the conflict and provided the best chance to put an end to the ethno-political violence that had affected the country

since independence in 1962. However, the authoritarian drift of the government after the 2010 elections, denounced as fraudulent by the opposition, overshadowed the reconciliation process and sparked demonstrations by the political opposition. Different signs of how the situation is deteriorating in the country include institutional deterioration and the shrinking of political space for the opposition, Nkurunziza's controversial candidacy for a third term and his victory in a presidential election also described as fraudulent in April 2015, the subsequent escalation of political violence, the failed coup attempt in May 2015, human rights violations and the emergence of new armed groups. Since then, the EAC has unsuccessfully facilitated political talks between the government and the CNARED coalition, which groups together the political and social opposition, part of which is in exile for being considered responsible for or complicit in the coup d'état of 2015.

Three years after the last political crisis broke out in the country, triggered by the decision of the ruling party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), to support President Pierre Nkurunziza's candidacy for a third term as president, which he won in July 2015, the political situation remained at a total impasse and the atmosphere continued to deteriorate into violence. **Regional efforts to resolve the crisis through inclusive political talks hosted by the East African Community (EAC) failed to make progress.** In 2016, a national dialogue between various parties and the CNDD-FDD was held under the National Commission for Inter-Burundian Dialogue (CNDI), though it yielded no results. Established by the government, the CNDI's legitimacy and inclusiveness was questioned by the UN. In 2016, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, appointed official mediator by the EAC, said that CNARED⁵ was the main opposition coalition in the country, so its involvement in the CNDI was crucial for legitimising the process and its participation would be decisive in any attempt at political negotiation.

Four rounds of the EAC-led talks have been held, headed by President Museveni, as the mediator, and former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, as the facilitator. The first was held in Entebbe (Uganda) in December 2015, the second and the third in Arusha (Tanzania) in May and July 2016 and the last one between 28 November and 8 December 2017, though with delays and with some parties failing to appear. In the meantime, talks were held separately with the government and some members of the political opposition between 2015 and 2017. However, there was no direct dialogue between representatives of the government and of the political and social coalition, CNARED. The fourth round was attended by representatives of the Burundian government but was boycotted by the opposition coalition CNARED and

5. The CNARED is made up of 22 parties and opposition political movements and led by Jean Minani, a two-time former president of the National Assembly and leader of the FRODEBU party.

civil society representatives in exile. The facilitator, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, did not invite the opposition represented by CNARED, which had asked to attend as a unified bloc. After rejecting this request, he selected one of its members to participate in the dialogue without the consent of the other coalition members, so they decided to boycott the meeting, calling it non-inclusive and insufficient with regard to security guarantees. The government said it was committed to the EAC-led dialogue but repeatedly refused to maintain contact with members of CNARED, including those involved in the failed coup of May 2015 and the civil society leaders of the “Halte au troisième mandat” movement, who are opposed to a third presidential term. The government requested that the talks take place inside the country and merge with the CNDI process, though this was rejected by the EAC. Benjamin Mkapa was described by the political and social opposition as biased after different decisions taken as the facilitator, and basically after calling Nkurunziza's third term legitimate in December 2016 and saying that the dialogue would focus on preparing for free and fair elections in 2020. This was rejected by the political opposition and civil society representatives, who called the Tanzanian mediation amateurish, collusive and biased in favour of the Burundian regime.

CNARED demanded that the Tanzanian facilitation team step down and even called on the UN to replace Tanzania in the inter-Burundian dialogue. Given the difficulties in conducting these talks, in 2016 Mkapa asked the countries of the region to pressure the government and the opposition to force a commitment to dialogue without preconditions. However, the neighbouring countries differed in their opinions about the dispute, since Rwanda is clearly hostile to the Burundian government, Tanzania and Uganda are silently complacent and Kenya is indifferent, which makes a shared regional position difficult, according to various analysts. There are also different positions at the international level. On 20 May, the EAC held a summit calling on the EU to withdraw sanctions against Burundi so the EAC could sign an Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU, but the EU announced that it would keep the sanctions in place whilst the crisis persisted. Meanwhile, China agreed to provide 30 million dollars to support the Burundian budget in May.

Given the difficult relationship between the Burundian government and Jamal Benomar, the special envoy of the UN Secretary-General (who also holds the position of special advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, at the level of Under Secretary-General), the UN Secretary-General appointed former acting Burkinabe President Michel Kafando to be the new special envoy of the UN Secretary-General on 5 May. Kafando has over 30 years of extensive experience in international

diplomacy and was president of Burkina Faso in 2014 and 2015. His role includes leading and coordinating political efforts to promote peace in the country and providing assistance to the regional EAC organisation. According to various analysts, Pierre Nkurunziza's swift acceptance of the candidate suggested that he is not perceived as a threat by the government. On 29 June, the authorities announced that they hoped that the appointment of the new envoy could reactivate the process, but warned of possible bias in his approach towards opposition political parties. Kafando is the fourth UN envoy since June 2015, when the crisis began. In late October, President Pierre Nkurunziza signed the draft of the law to amend the Constitution via a referendum that is expected to be held in May 2018, which would allow him to compete in elections until 2034. He officially launched the campaign to hold the referendum on 12 December. The planned amendments aim to abolish the two-term limit and extend the presidential term of office to seven years. In January 2018, 23 civil society organisations launched the “Teshwa Ute” campaign to stop the referendum.

The UN replaced its special envoy, Jamal Benomar, with former Burkinabe President Michel Kafando, the fourth since 2015

Finally, Burundi's withdrawal from the International Criminal Court (ICC), decided a year earlier, became effective on 27 October. The African nation formalised its departure by accusing the court of bias and focused on crimes committed only by Africans. Burundi is the first member state to turn its back on the only permanent body that prosecutes genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The withdrawal deals a serious blow to international justice, but does not affect the court's jurisdiction over a previous investigation into Burundi. Dating to 2015, it includes the death of 430 people in the protests staged after the announcement that President Pierre Nkurunziza, a former rebel leader of the country's majority Hutu community, wanted to run for a third term of office. The United Nations was officially notified of Burundi's withdrawal in 2016. Shortly thereafter, due to the ICC's same alleged lack of impartiality, South Africa and The Gambia also announced their withdrawal, although both countries later changed their decision. The ICC's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, went ahead with her work in Burundi. The investigation also covers the arrest of 3,400 people, the flight of around 230,000 more in search of refuge in neighbouring countries and cases of murder, torture, sexual violence and forced disappearance. In this regard, on 9 November the ICC announced its decision to open an investigation into the possible commission of crimes against humanity in Burundi between April 2015 and October 2017. The ICC stated that it has jurisdiction to try Burundi during the period in which it was still a member of the ICC. The Burundian government rejected the decision, which was also condemned by the presidents of Tanzania and Uganda.

CAR	
Negotiating actors	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias
Third parties	African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU with the support of the ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, Rep. of the Congo and Chad) Sant'Egidio Community, OIC, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Humanitarian Dialogue
Relevant agreements	Republican pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the CAR (2015), Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities (June 2017)

Summary:

Since gaining independence in 1960, the situation in the Central African Republic has been characterized by ongoing political instability, leading to numerous coups d'état and military dictatorships. After the 2005 elections won by François Bozizé, which consolidated the coup d'état perpetrated previously by the latter, several insurgency groups emerged in the north of the country, which historically has been marginalized and is of Muslim majority. In December 2012 these groups forced negotiations to take place. In January 2013, in Libreville, François Bozizé's Government and the coalition of armed groups, called Séléka, agreed to a transition Government, but Séléka decided to break the agreement and took power, overthrowing Bozizé. Nevertheless, self-defence groups ("anti-balaka"), sectors in the Army and supporters of Bozizé rebelled against the Séléka Government, creating a climate of chaos and generalized impunity. In December 2014 a new offensive brought an end to the Séléka Government and a transition Government led by Catherine Samba-Panza was instated. Regional leaders, headed by the Congolese Denis Sassou-Nguesso facilitated dialogue initiatives in parallel to the configuration of a national dialogue process, which was completed in May 2015. Some of the agreements reached were implemented, such as the holding of the elections to end the transition phase, but the disarmament and integration of guerrilla members into the security forces is still pending, and contributing to ongoing insecurity and violence. The Government is trying to negotiate with them with the mediation of the AU, in coordination with the ECCAS and the UN.

Although 2017 saw progress in promoting the authority of the State and dialogue initiatives in the country, the political context remains marked by an upsurge in violence. Criticism against the Government grew strong and several members in the opposition openly questioned the leadership of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, portraying the Government as incapable of ensuring stability (70% of the territory is controlled by the groups), contributing to a reform of the Administration in September. Some political actors and from civil society criticized the MINUSCA for failing to forcefully disarm the armed groups and called for the rearmament of the non-reformed national Armed Forces. The growing divisive rhetoric used by some national actors contributed to a rise of sectarian tensions, especially in the south-east of the country where Muslims in general, and Fulani in particular, fell victim of attacks, according to the UN. The organization stated

that the inflammatory rhetoric, ethnic stigmatization and religious manipulation continued to have negative impacts on national policy and on the communication media, creating an environment where the **risk of inter-ethnic confrontation was continuous and generated distrust in the attempt at strengthening the ongoing peace initiatives.** This international organization had been promoting contacts among the different armed, political and social groups. At the end of 2016 the **African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation** was established with the aim of coordinating all mediation efforts in the country. Led by the AU, it has the support of the countries in the region, through the ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad. Due to persistent violence, in April the US imposed financial sanctions on former leaders of Séléka (Abdoulaye Hissène) and the anti-balaka (Maxime Mokom). The Government and representatives of the 14 armed groups and members of the international community met on 20 and 21 April in Bangui to agree a pilot programme together with the MINUSCA for the re-integration of former combatants, but the Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC) imposed some conditions, among which was the participation in the Government, as it had already demanded on previous occasions. The pilot programme was launched on 30 August, and aimed at re-integrating 560 combatants (40 from each of the 14 armed groups) to civil or military life; of these, 60 joined the AF on 19 September, albeit with difficulties, since the FPRC declared that their participation was conditioned to the release of prisoners.

Throughout the year there were several initiatives to promote the peace process in the country. Besides the parliamentary attempts and initiatives led by the Speaker of Parliament, Abdou Karim Meckassoua, **it is worth noting the signature of an agreement of cessation of hostilities on 19 June in Rome between the Government and 13 of the 14 armed groups active in the country.** The ceasefire was reached after a five-day meeting promoted by the Sant'Egidio Community. The agreement establishes that political representation will be granted to the armed groups and their members will be integrated into the Army. The groups expressed their commitment to ensure the free movement of persons and goods and their desire to lift all barriers and illegal checkpoints as an immediate reaction to the implementation of the ceasefire. In parallel, the Special Criminal Court (SCC) was created; this is a hybrid court composed of national and international judges. It is the first time that the judicial system of the CAR will judge crimes following international law. As part of the discussions, debates were held on the promotion of peace and justice, since the amnesty for the groups could represent an incentive to disarmament, but other mention that instead of ending grievances, the amnesty may lead to the perpetuation of a culture of impunity in the country, just as the conclusions of the 2015

National Forum had warned, which led to the creation of the SCC. In this regard, in January 2018 the court sentenced general Andilo, and anti-balaka leader, to life imprisonment, the first sentence handed since the start of the last phase of the conflict in 2013.

However, fresh confrontations broke out the day following the signature of the cessation of hostilities on 19 June, killing 40 people in the town of Bria, in the centre-east of the country, casting doubt on the process. On 21 June, **in Brussels, the Government and all of the mediating actors, including the EU and the members of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and the Sant'Egidio Community agreed to a single roadmap for a broader mediation process.** International members reaffirmed their support to the efforts made by the Government to achieve an immediate cessation of violence. In light of the crisis of the cessation of hostilities, in mid July the Sant'Egidio Community visited the country to contribute to the establishment of a national committee to boost the ceasefire agreement from 19 June.

In this regards, on 17 July, in Libreville, **representatives from the AU, the ECCAS and the ICGLR, as well as the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Angola, Chad, Gabon, the CAR and the Rep. of the Congo adopted an integrated roadmap (Roadmap for Peace and National Reconciliation) for the African Initiative.** This initiative aims to foster the implementation of said roadmap, bringing together all of the mediation efforts in the country. The roadmap affirms the legitimacy of the country's constitutional system, the relevance of the conclusions from the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, held in 2015, and the need for a firm national ownership of the peace process to promote reconciliation. On 29 August, the **AU Commission appointed Bédializoun Moussa Nébié as its Special Representative for the CAR.** This new roadmap seeks to promote a dialogue between the Government and the armed groups, as well as between the members of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation Advisory and Monitoring Committee so as to reach an agreement for the general disarmament of the country, creating a contributions fund for the implementation of the roadmap established in the agreement reached on 17 July in Libreville. The UN Secretary-General co-chaired a high level meeting on 19 September together with the chair of the AU Commission, in association with the ECCAS, the EU and the WB, to study the political and security situation alongside the 72nd regular session of the UN General Assembly. The participants condemned the attacks on civilians, expressed their support to President Touadéra and to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. It was agreed to convene a meeting of the **International Support Group for the CAR, ISG-CAR**, established in August 2016 to replace the International Contact Group for the CAR, ICG-CAR, within six months, to support post-conflict reconstruction and peace building.

The different national and international actors agreed to unify the mediation initiatives and establish a roadmap in CAR

The Initiative has a facilitation team that held its first meeting in Bangui on 11 and 12 September 2017. This facilitation group is chaired by the AU and is composed of representatives from among the members of the Initiative, and is set to facilitate direct contacts among the parties. **The Government announced that Jean Willybiro-Sako would be the national coordinator of the facilitation group.** The President, in an attempt to meet the demands of the recalcitrant armed groups and also to overcome internal tensions, appointed 16 new ministers to join an extended cabinet with 34 ministerial positions, which included 18 members of the previous government. Among the new members of the cabinet there were four representatives of the armed groups and five Muslims, meaning that the number of Muslim representatives rose to eight.

The creation of 11 new ministries will place greater pressure on the State budget. **These measures, which broadened the Government's political base, may calm the sectarian tensions and create a more favourable environment for the peace process.** With regards to the **gender perspective**, among those appointed by the president in September there were five women in the new Government, compared to four in the previous one, meaning that, in overall terms, the proportion of women in office dropped. This restructuring was accompanied by initiatives aiming to increase the State's authority, by appointing prefects to the 16 prefectures, although none of them from the Muslim community. From the 73 sub-prefects, appointed in September, they were ethnically more diverse and included several members from active former Séléka groups, 21 members from the Armed Forces and six women. By the end of 2017, 14 of the 16 positions for prefectures and most sub-prefects had been covered, with an important support from the MINUSCA. In some cases, some of the main armed factions opposed this deployment, and this called for broad consultations to facilitate acceptance at a local level. In this regards, on 31 January 2018, the FPRC declared it accepted the prefects for Vakaga, Nana Grebizi and Bamingui-Bangoran. According to the Front, it was adopting this decision in response to the calls made by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and before the second round of the Initiative's facilitation group. In November 2017, the UN Security Council approved increasing the military contingent by another 900 soldiers (reaching 13,000) and in December it adopted an exception to the arms embargo so that Russia could supply these arms to the armed forces trained by the EU mission. On 16 February 2018 the **facilitation panel of the Initiative held its third meeting with the country's 14 armed groups in Bangui.**

It is worth mentioning that, in a context of growing violence and the signature of partial cessation of hostilities agreement between the groups, such as the one reached on 9 October between the ex-Séléka factions (FPRC, UPC and MPRC) and the anti-balaka Rassemblement des Républicains in Ouaka and Basse-

Kotto provinces, **conversations among the armed groups continued, within the framework of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation Advisory and Monitoring Committee, although with little progress.**

At several meetings, the national authorities questioned the armed groups about the reigning insecurity, while they engaged in a direct dialogue with them. Despite the participation of the FPRC in the Committee, the group continued to take hold of new territories and establish new military structures, announcing the deployment to Bria and Kaga Bandoro of new “mixed” brigades composed of members of the Central African Patriotic Movements (MPC). It was not yet clear if the inclusion of FPRC members into the Government would help to reduce its destabilizing military activities.

DRC	
Negotiating actors	Government, Alliance for the Presidential Majority, political and social opposition grouped under the coalition Rassemblement (party Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Sociale (UDPS), the Dynamic Opposition and the G7, among others), Union pour la Nation Congolaise and other political parties
Third parties	Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO), Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC (led by the AU, SADC), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EU, UN, OIF and USA
Relevant agreements	Sun City Agreement, Pretoria Agreement and Luanda Agreement (2002); Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition (2002); Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC (2016)

Summary:

The demands for democratization in the nineties led to a succession of rebellions that culminated with the so-called “African first world war” (1998-2003). The signing of several peace agreements from 2002 to 2003 led to the withdrawal of foreign troops and the shaping of a Transitional National Government (TNG) integrating the previous Government, the political opposition and the main insurgent actors, in an agreement to share political power. Since 2003, the TNG was led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents, two of whom from the former insurgence. The TNG drafted a Constitution, voted in 2005. In 2006 legislative and presidential elections were held and Kabila was elected president in a climate of tension and accusations of fraud. In the 2011 elections, which Kabila also won, there were many irregularities, contributing to fuel the instability. Since then the political discussion has focused on ending his second mandate. In today's deep crisis, there is a confluence of broken promises of democratization (Constitutional breaches and the holding of elections on the date agreed), ubiquitous poverty and chronic violence, and the Government's control is growingly dependant on security forces that are largely dysfunctional. President Kabila's attempts to hold on to power beyond the end of the second term (the last permitted by the Constitution) which should have ended on 19 December 2016, is squandering over a decade of progress. The governmental majority hopes to retain power by delaying the presidential elections, while

the opposition wants to force the start of a rapid transition that will end Kabila's mandate and lead to elections. The AU facilitated a political dialogue between the Government and the main opposition platforms and parties, although it was the Episcopal Conference (CENCO), who managed to bring the Government and the main opposition coalition, Rassemblement, to sit at the negotiating table and reach an agreement on 31 December 2016.

Although the Government and the opposition reached an agreement on 31 December 2016 whereby a transition phase would start and where president Joseph Kabila would remain in office until the celebration of presidential elections in December 2017, **the implementation of said agreement was slow, incomplete and not inclusive, contributing to a worsening of the social and economic situation and an increase in repression** from the national security forces, fuelling unrest in the Capital and main cities. **Hence, the country continued to be affected by a serious political and social crisis at a national level as a consequence of the expiry of President Joseph Kabila's mandate in December 2016** and the postponement of the national elections, as well as by the **serious escalation of violence in the Kasai region.**

Several factors contributed to the worsening of the political and social context. First, the death of the historic opposition leader, Étienne Tshisekedi, of the UDPS opposition party, deeply affected the implementation of the peace agreement. A member of Patrice Lumumba's Government and later an eternal opponent to the kleptocratic regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, who was four times Prime Minister in the country, he represented the fight for democracy and the defence of a multi-party system in DRC. **His leadership was recognized by half of the fragmented opposition. His death caused a struggle for leadership and divisions within the UDPS party and the rest of the opposition to lead the new stage, and this was used by the Presidential Majority.** Second, the escalating violence and insecurity in the Kasai region, raising concern over the consequences this may have for the implementation of the agreement and the electoral process. Third, the political and social opposition tried to keep pressure on the Government and Presidential Majority through mobilization and protests to push for the 31 December agreement and call elections before the end of 2018; these protests were followed unequally and were heavily repressed by the security forces. The brute force applied caused dozens of fatalities and hundreds of injured during the year. Although more moderate than in previous years, because of the systematic repression used by the security forces and the fragmented opposition, the Government increased pressure. The UN warned that the democratic space was shrinking and that civil and political rights were being violated, especially the freedom of peaceful assembly, opinion and expression. Some journalists, political opponents and civil society activists continued to be threatened, harassed and subject to violence.

One of the main components of the agreement was the establishment of a transition government up until the future elections were held. It was not until April that Kabila chose Bruno Tshibala as the new Prime Minister. Tshibala was a dissident from the main opposition party in the country, the UDPS, and this was considered a tactical move by the Government to use the division in the opposition. His Government, appointed in May, included several defectors from the opposition who had moved close to the Presidential Majority (PM) and key posts remained within the PM. The nomination of members to the National Council for the Monitoring of the Agreement (CNSA) caused tensions, as did the nomination of its chairperson. It was not until July when the Government finally appointed the CNSA and Joseph Oleghakoy, a historical opponent who was accused of being a defector by some of the opposition, as its chair.

In July the CENI stated it was impossible to organize elections in 2017, as established in the agreement of 31 December 2016 because, even if the voter register was almost completed, with delays in Kasai due to the security situation, there remained many logistical, technical and financial aspects of the process to be resolved that made it impossible to move forward with the process. The CENCO declared that this decision should be the outcome of a dialogue within the framework of the CNSA, and the political opposition condemned the announcement. In August, a group of civil society organizations' workers published its sixth report on the ways of making the agreement of 31 December 2016 effective, highlighting the lack of political will to implement said agreement, the shared responsibility of all signatories with regards to the political crisis, and the dominance exerted by the governmental majority on the political scene, and also the divisions in the opposition and a marginalized civil society. The working group stressed the need to adopt an agreed electoral calendar, compliant with the political agreement, giving priority to the presidential elections. On 18 August, 32 representatives from civil society organizations met in Paris and signed the "Manifesto of the Congolese Citizen", among the signatories were LUCHA, Filimbi and the new Congolais Debut, calling on the Congolese people to take non-violent measures to force Kabila to resign if the elections were not held in December 2017. The leaders of Rassemblement expressed their support to this manifesto.

In October, the CENI declared that, after completing the voter register, it would still need a further 500 days to organize the elections, foreseeing a timeframe that would extend until mid 2019, which immediately

The death of historical opposition leader Étienne Tshisekedi opened a struggle for leadership in the opposition in DRC, which was used by the governmental majority

The new electoral calendar in DRC plans for elections to take place two years after the initial date, in December 2018

caused an international outcry and was qualified as a declaration of war by the opposition leader Félix Tshisekedi. The USA announced that a calendar postponing the elections beyond 2018 would lose international support. Finally, on 5 November the

CENI published the electoral calendar. **This calendar planned for national (legislative and presidential) and provincial elections to take place on 23 December 2018, and for the president to be appointed in January 2019, more than one year after the date originally planned in the agreement of 31 December 2016.**

The political opposition and civil society unanimously rejected this calendar and the announcement led to a call for new strikes and mobilizations with an unequal participation in different towns, to show rejection to the new electoral delay and

President Joseph Kabila remaining in power. These mobilizations were prohibited and systematically dispersed. Many members of the opposition were arrested. The Government justified the delay in the elections due to the security situation and because of logistical and technical difficulties. The Episcopal Conference (CENCO) called for Kabila to make a public statement promising not to be a candidate for re-election. The UN Security Council validated the electoral calendar submitted, as did the AU and the CENCO, insisting there should be no further delays. The USA and the EU imposed sanctions on

senior officials of the security forces and several organizations and countries threatened to stop the flow of resources into the country in the event of new breaches. On 19 December, one year after the end of Kabila's last and final mandate, renewed mobilizations were organized, but were not really followed, and the year ended amidst a climate of

worry and gloom over the negative evolution of the situation and the disproportionate actions of the security forces dispersing the demonstrations called for 31 December, where seven people were killed.

Rep. of the Congo	
Negotiating actors	Government, Ninja militias and the National Council of Republicans (CNR) of Frédéric Bintsamou (Ntoumi pastor)
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Kinkala agreement (December 2017)

Summary:

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the country has lived in a climate of political instability and violence. Denis Sassou-Nguesso governed it since 1979 – through a military coup– until 1992, during a single party regime with a Marxist-Leninist ideology. After the fall of the

communist block and of the Soviet Union, and under pressure from its main ally, France, the country started a transition to democracy, establishing a multi-party system and holding elections in 1992, where Sassou-Nguesso was defeated by Pascal Lissouba. The country has been victim of several armed conflicts (1993-1994, 1997-1999). Its capital, Brazzaville, was destroyed by the war and the many militias fighting to seize power. Among these were the Ninja militias, loyal to Frédéric Bintsamou (Ntoumi pastor) and to the political leader Bernard Kolélas, the Prime-Minister after the peace agreement that put an end to the conflict from 1993-1994; the Cocoyes militias, from the overthrown president Lissouba; and the Cobra militia, loyal to the coup president Nguesso. France's support to Nguesso was a key factor in this war, which ended with the invasion of Angola troops and the return of Nguesso to power, who has remained in power until this day. Sassou Nguesso has repeatedly been criticized for being nepotistic and cutting back democracy and freedoms in the country and his Governments have been ripe with corruption. Reverend Ntoumi's Ninjas remained active in their feud, in Pool region, and confronted Nguesso in 2002 and 2003. Nguesso's attempts to reform the Constitution to remain in power led to important mobilizations against him, under the #Sassoufit motto, created in 2014 for the mobilizations. The Government promoted a constitutional reform in 2015, opening the door to presidential elections in March 2016, which were considered fraudulent and were won by Nguesso, starting a new phase of instability. There have been several contacts to promote a peace process between pastor Ntoumi and the Government.

In recent years, the country has lived immersed in a cycle of instability and political and social mobilization ever since the Government promoted a constitutional reform in October 2015 to lift the two presidential mandate limit, which allowed President Denis Sassou-Nguesso (72 years old) to run for a new mandate in 2016, which he won and managed to extend his 32 years in power. The results of said elections were rejected by his opponents, who called to launch a campaign of civil disobedience. After the elections, violence surged and continued throughout 2017. **The Government strongly repressed the protests, supposedly led by reverend Ntoumi's Ninjas.** These former militias had been led by the once Prime Minister Bernard Kolélas, father of the current presidential candidate Guy Brice Parfait Kolélas, and by the pastor Ntoumi, since the nineties. Parfait Kolélas denied having anything to do with the group. Nevertheless, Ntoumi expressed his support to candidate Guy Brice Parfait Kolélas, who was defeated in the elections. The crisis worsened after September 2016, when violence escalated once again and the actions of the Ninja militias in Pool region continued into 2017. Ntoumi declared that his youths had resumed the armed struggle as a consequence of the fraudulent elections in March and in response to the governmental violence, which had intensified since Nguesso's re-election. Ntoumi called for a dialogue mediated by the international community. In this regard, during 2017 instability persisted in Pool region and the actions by the Ninja militias against the security forces, alongside contacts with the governmental actors and sectors linked to Ntoumi's Ninja militias. On 8 June, the UN stated that 81,000

people had been displaced in Pool region since the beginning of the Ninja militias' actions in mid 2016.

In November, the Government made a gesture of good will and released two people close to reverend Ntoumi, and this was seen as a trust-building measure to facilitate the contacts. Those released were his spokesperson and the secretary-general of the National Council of Republicans (CNR), Jean-Gustave Ntongo, from Ntoumi's political party, who had been imprisoned for several months. **These steps contributed to the Congolese government signing a ceasefire agreement in Kindala, in Pool region, with representatives from reverend Ntoumi's opposition on 23 December.** The Congolese Minister of the Interior, Raymond Zéphyrin Mboulou supervised the signing of the agreement, aiming to put an end to the rebellion initiated against the Government in April 2016, after Sassou-Nguesso was re-elected following the elections. The CNR's secretary-general, Jean-Gustave Ntongo, and Ntoumi's political party, announced the entry into force of the agreement. Based on this agreement, reverend Ntoumi agreed to facilitate the disarmament of his combatants, reinstating the State's authority in Pool, and the Government agreed to guarantee the disarmament process, demobilization and social and economic integration of the former combatants, as well as to compensate the population displaced by violence in the area and ensure their freedom of movement. There are plans to establish a joint commission in charge of monitoring the implementation of the agreement.

The Congolese Government and pastor Ntoumi reached a ceasefire agreement towards the end of 2017

South Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government (SPLM), SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO), SPLM7, SSDM-Cobra Faction
Third parties	"IGAD Plus": IGAD, integrating Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda; AU (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), China, Russia, Egypt, Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), EU, UN
Relevant agreements	Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, December 21, 2017

Summary:

After years of armed conflict between the Central Government of Sudan and the south of the country, led by the SPLM/A guerrilla, South Sudan became an independent State in 2011, after holding the referendum that was planned in the 2005 peace agreement (Comprehensive Peace Agreement –CPA–) facilitated by the mediation of the IGAD. The Peace between Sudan and South Sudan and achieving independence, however, were not enough to end the conflict and violence. South Sudan has remained immersed in a series of internal conflicts promoted by disputes to control the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neopatrimonial practices and corruption in the Government, all of which has impeded stability and the consolidation of peace. As part of the peace negotiations promoted in April 2013, the

President offered an amnesty for six commanders of the rebel groups, but this was not successful initially. At a later date, in December 2013, tensions broke out among the factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to the former Vice-President Riek Machar, the SPLA-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) gave way to a new escalation of violence in several of the country's regions. In January 2014, with the mediation of the IGAD, the Government and the SPLA-IO launched peace conversations in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Diplomatic efforts have come up against many obstacles to achieve effective ceasefire agreements, after signing nine different commitments to the cessation of hostilities and transitory measures between December 2013 and August 2015, which have been systematically violated and have rendered it impossible to lay the foundations for a political solution to the conflict. On 17 August 2015, after strong international pressure and threats of blockades and economic sanctions, the parties signed a peace agreement promoted by the IGAD Plus, although there is still much uncertainty surrounding its implementation.

The disputing parties made little progress in achieving peace in the conflict reigning in South Sudan. There is a persistent and serious humanitarian crisis, systematic human rights' violations (arbitrary arrests, extra-judiciary executions) and a climate of broad instability. According to OCHA, in November 2017 there were 1.86 million internally displaced persons and 2.1 million refugees in neighbouring countries. In 2017, South Sudan became one of the countries where humanitarian action is most dangerous, with the killing of 28 humanitarian workers. During the second half of the year, the political process was re-launched with the celebration of two meetings of a forum to reactivate the peace process fostered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), known as the High Level Revitalization Forum to bolster the peace process, and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. However, mutual distrust and the violation of the agreements and commitments made were constant. **The implementation of the Peace Agreement from August 2015 deteriorated during 2016 and in July that year new confrontations erupted in Juba, with hundreds of fatalities, according to some sources, leading to the collapse of the agreement. In September 2016, Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLA-IO issued a statement in Khartoum declaring the collapse of the Peace Agreement and calling on his followers to resume war against the Government.** Since then, throughout 2017 a climate of violence and insecurity has reigned, despite the repeated calls from the international community and the efforts made by the IGAD to reactivate the peace process. The implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan ("the 2015 Peace Agreement") remained blocked, with no significant progress to ensure a greater inclusiveness

The Government of South Sudan promoted the celebration of the National Dialogue, which left out important sectors of the opposition and was considered non-inclusive

of the Transitional Government of National Unity. Nevertheless, **on 22 May 2017, President Salva Kiir officially launched a process of national dialogue**, in the presence of Ugandan President Museveni, and administered oath to 60 members of the Committee present in Juba. **He also announced a unilateral ceasefire to generate an enabling environment for dialogue** and facilitate humanitarian assistance; he ordered security bodies not to arrest any opposition members wishing to join the dialogue and provided for the review of the situation of political prisoners. On 31 May, President Kiir appointed three women to the governing body of the Steering Committee for National Dialogue, made up of nine members, according to the June report by the UN Secretary-General. Nevertheless, according to figures for June 2017, provided by the coalition of women organizations Women's Monthly Forum on the Peace Process (WMF), in the National Dialogue there were only 18 women, from a total of 110 people, and all the posts of co-chair, secretaries and deputies were occupied by men. The WMF submitted a set of recommendations in 2017 to strengthen the participation of women and gender perspective in the peace process, as an outcome of a study by the WMF on the 2015 peace agreement.⁶

However, **this unilateral cessation of hostilities did not bring an end to the offensive actions by the SPLA (Governmental armed forces loyal to Salva Kiir), constituting a flagrant violation of their own commitment**, as pointed out in the June 2017 report by the UN Secretary-General. The plenary meetings of the Steering Committee for National Dialogue took place from 29 May to 22 June. The Co-Chairs of this initiative declared their intention to hold consultations with the opposition leaders within and outside the country, including Riek Machar. The Plenary established 15 sub-committees in charge of organizing local and thematic consultations. Two special delegations contacted relevant figures of the opposition living outside the country, in Khartoum and Nairobi.

On 28 June, the Co-Chair of the Steering Committee led a special delegation that travelled to South Africa to contact Riek Machar, although they were not able to meet him. Other delegations travelled to Khartoum, Addis Ababa and Nairobi to try and contact prominent figures. From 3 to 28 July, with technical support from the UN and other members, the Steering Committee organized a seminar on the experience acquired by its members in managing the dialogues. On 28 July, the Steering Committee announced the preparations to start consultations at a sub-national level in September. However, several opposition groups rejected the National Dialogue in its current format since it was not an inclusive platform and did not meet the conditions for a genuine dialogue to take place.

6. Women's Monthly Forum on the Peace Process, *South Sudan: Gender Analysis of the Peace Agreement*, January 2016.

The UN Secretary General himself pointed out that the Steering Committee for National Dialogue had done everything it could for the dialogue process to be as broadly representative and participatory as possible, but the opposition leaders continued to be sceptical regarding the credibility and inclusive nature of the process.

In parallel, with the stalemate of the situation, the IGAD took a step forward and held its 31st extraordinary summit on South Sudan on 12 June, in Ethiopia, where it decided to call on the parties to the peace agreement and on groups left outside the agreement to a **High Level Revitalization Forum for the 2015 Agreement** so as to establish a permanent ceasefire and comply with the peace agreement. Since then, the IGAD has been promoting this Forum, in what is considered a final attempt to redress the peace process. In this regard, the IGAD held separate meetings with different actors (Government, opposition, and civil society actors) in October. An IGAD delegation met with the opposition leader and former Vice-President Riek Machar in South Africa, where he is living in exile since 2016, on 4 October. However, it was not until the end of the year that the peace process was boosted. The Government continued to promote the National Dialogue, despite internal and international criticism, and alongside, the Ugandan Yoweri Museveni promoted an initiative to bring together the different factions of the SPLM, to contribute to a broader peace process. In this regard, several SPLM factions were able to sign a reunification agreement in Cairo, in November. However, the SPLM faction led by former Vice-President Riek Machar rejected the reunification agreement, declaring that it would not serve the country's interests. Egypt hosted the reunification meeting from 13 to 16 November. Other meetings took place to promote the reunification in Uganda's capital, Kampala. The agreement, signed at the general headquarters of the Egyptian secret services under the auspices of President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi and the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, brought together the SPLM-FD factions led by Pagan Amum and the one led by Salva Kiir's Government (represented by the Minister of Defence, Kuol Manyang). This agreement aims to boost the reunification agreement reached in Arusha in 2015.

After several consultations and meetings, **the IGAD managed to convince the parties to participate in the High Level Revitalization Forum**. The Government affirmed on 17 December that the Forum should not become a re-negotiation of the 2015 agreement, while the SPLM/A-IO reiterated on the following day that the 2015 Agreement had collapse after the events in Juba in July 2016. Towards the middle of December, the Government replaces several commanders and leaders by persons less compromised by the process,

The IGAD managed to hold a forum to revitalize the peace process in South Sudan that ended with an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, but the parties failed to comply

according to the International Crisis Group. On 18 December, the IGAD Council of Ministers inaugurated the Forum calling on the parties to commit to reaching an agreement for the cessation of hostilities. **From 18 to 21 December, the IGAD convened the first stage**

of the High Level Revitalization Forum for the Agreement for a Solution to the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in August 2015. On 21 December, 14 parties signed an **Agreement for the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access**, with representatives of the stakeholders from South Sudan, the IGAD, and the AU as guarantors, and IGAD mediators and international partners as witnesses. The signatories were the Transitional Government of National Unity,

the SPLM/A-IO, the "former detainees" of the SPLM, the National Salvation Front and 10 other movements and opposition parties. Since 24 December, the day on which the agreement entered into force, breaches to the cessation of hostilities have been reported and verified on both sides. In January, the president of the AU Commission and the UN Secretary-General issued a joint statement condemning the violations of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities and expressing the need to establish punitive measures on the parties. The Troika formed by Norway, the UK and the USA condemned the violations of the agreement and suggested imposing sanctions and an arms embargo on the Government.

Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, coalition comprising the armed groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur)
Third parties	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway), Germany
Relevant agreements	Roadmap Agreement (2016)

Summary:

Different armed conflicts (Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan) remain active in the country, as well as tensions between the government and the opposition. Amidst this climate of political instability, in early 2014 Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir called for a "national dialogue" to address the political and economic problems that could alleviate the poverty, war and political instability gripping the country. The government announced that this dialogue would have four priority objectives: to achieve peace, protect constitutional rights, reinvigorate the economy and revive national identity. The Sudanese government said that the initiative did not exclude any sector and that it was time to carry out reforms after 25 years under the regime. From the start, the initiative enjoyed the involvement of former South African President Thabo Mbeki and the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan (AUHIP) to promote peace negotiations and democratic transformation.

The peace process in Sudan in 2017 was affected by disagreements between the government and the opposition, with the government saying that it had made progress in implementing the National Dialogue, which officially concluded in 2016 and was boycotted by most of the political opposition and main insurgent groups, and the opposition accusing the government of clinging to power. The Sudanese president announced that progress had been made in implementing the National Dialogue in March with the appointment of incumbent First Vice President Bakri Hassan Saleh as prime minister. While did this involve restoring a political office that had been eliminated after the coup d'état in 1989, the appointment of Saleh, a member of the ruling party, disregarded the previous agreement to appoint a representative of the opposition and accumulated offices under him, as he remained the First Vice President. Prime Minister Saleh announced a new government in May consisting of 31 ministers, including only four women. Though described as a national consensus government, it was dominated by the ruling NCP party, and faced the challenge of implementing the recommendations resulting from the National Dialogue and of adopting a new Constitution. The new government was criticised by several opposition parties, which refused to join it, including the Sudan Call alliance. In February, the head of the opposition Umma party, Sadiq al-Mahdi, returned from exile in which he had remained since 2014 and denounced in June the National Dialogue's lost opportunities, accusing the government of failing to fully implement the recommendations issued by the committees of the National Dialogue, joining other critics opposing the direction taken by the process to consolidate the regime's power. At various times of the year, the Sudanese president urged the political opposition to join the reconciliation process.

Meanwhile, the controversial National Dialogue, which the road map signed by the government and insurgent groups in 2016 acknowledged as not inclusive enough, continued without the armed rebels of the country, whilst little progress was made in the so-called two-track process (negotiations in Darfur between the government and the SLM-M and the JEM and in the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile between the government and the SPLM-N), facilitated by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).⁷ The Sudanese government called on the country's insurgents to abandon violence and join the peace process and the National Dialogue without preconditions. The government extended the ceasefire in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile for six months in January, again for four months in July and until 31 December in October. The two-track process was affected by factors such as escalating clashes at different times of the year, divisions within

the SPLM-N and other developments. Meanwhile, the rebels continued to refuse to negotiate on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace of 2011.

Sudan (Darfur)	
Negotiating actors	Government, Movement for Justice and Equity (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movements, SLA-MM and SLA-AW factions
Third parties	AU, UNAMID, Chad, Qatar
Relevant agreements	Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) (2006) Roadmap Agreement (2016)

Summary:

The political, economic and cultural marginalization of the Darfur region relative to Sudan as a whole is at the core of the conflict that, beginning in the 1980s, also includes growing competition for water and pastures due to drought conditions. In addition, the exploitation of religion and existing ethnic differences, as well as interference from neighbouring Chad and Libya, made the situation worse. In the midst of peace talks to resolve the historical dispute between the north and south of the country, various armed groups in Darfur, mainly the JEM and the SLA, revolted in 2003 to demand greater decentralization and regional development. Contacts between the parties were organized by Chad initially, and later by the AU, in an attempt to facilitate humanitarian access and launch peace negotiations that would bring the violence to an end. In 2006 the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), was reached in Abuja, but included only the SLA faction led by Minni Minawi. Meanwhile, the conflict continued, as well as failed attempts at dialogue that were mainly fostered by Qatar as part of the Doha peace process, with different actors gradually joining in.

The process remained deadlocked, with no progress since the road map was signed in 2016 by the government and insurgent groups in Darfur and the neighbouring Two Areas. The government extended the unilateral ceasefire in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile for six months in January for, again for four months in July and until 31 December in October.

Despite the government's assertion that the war in Darfur had already come to an end, violence continued throughout the year, albeit at lower levels than in previous years. In February, the Troika (USA, UK and Norway) called on the signatories of the 2016 road map agreement to implement what was agreed. The road map had been signed by the government in March 2016 and by the main insurgent groups in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile in August 2016. It also urged the armed group SLA-AW, which did not sign the road map in 2016, to implement a ceasefire and to join the peace process facilitated

by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). In this sense, **the main insurgent groups in Darfur continued to refuse to negotiate on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace of 2011 (DDPD) and**

The political opposition in Sudan refused to join the new national consensus government and accused the authorities of ignoring the recommendations of the National Dialogue

7. See the summaries on Sudan (Darfur) and Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in this chapter.

pressed their criticism of the National Dialogue for its lack of inclusiveness and domination of the ruling NCP party. In light of the rising violence in East and North Darfur in May and early June, the Troika and the EU urged the Sudanese government and the armed group SLM-MM to end the fighting. The government, which accused the SLM-MM of launching the attacks by crossing over from Libya and South Sudan, called on the Troika and the EU to step up pressure on the insurgent groups to join the negotiating process.

The JEM and the SLM-MM declared a joint six-month unilateral ceasefire in early May after a meeting in Paris between the leadership of both insurgent groups and the new joint AU-UN special representative for Darfur and head of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Jeremiah Mamabolo. The meeting sought to reinvigorate the peace process. Representatives of the SLM-MM and the JEM also met with government representatives in Berlin in May. **In July, Mamabolo pointed out that the armed conflict in Darfur had been mostly located where the SLA-AW was present in the western Jebel Marra area.** In October, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that efforts to achieve peace through a negotiating process remained beset by difficulties and that despite the parties' proclaimed desire to continue the negotiations, the establishment of preconditions hindered their progress. Guterres called on the government and the insurgent groups to respect their unilateral ceasefires and to resume talks aimed at reaching a ceasefire agreement. Meanwhile, some minor factions joined the National Dialogue over the course of the year. In February, the SLM-PD, led by Al-Sadiq Abdel-Karim, a splinter group of the SLM-AW led by Abdel-Wahid al-Nur, signed the National Dialogue Document after first signing a peace agreement with the government of North Darfur in January. In May, Khartoum announced that a JEM breakaway group that included former JEM Secretary of Organisation and Administration Abu Bakr Hamid and former Humanitarian Secretary Suleiman Jamous had joined the peace process and signed the National Dialogue Document. The JEM complained that the negotiations were not serious, describing the developments as cases of individual surrender. Another SLM-AW splinter faction led by Commander Haroun (aka Kalmang Koi) also joined the peace process in Central Darfur State in June.

In September, the government announced the launch of a new disarmament campaign in Darfur. According to the Sudanese president, only regular forces would have access to weapons by the end of the year. However, the disarmament process encountered difficulties, including serious clashes in North Darfur in November between members of the RSF and fighters loyal to Musa Hilal, a former ally of the Sudanese president, which claimed around a dozen lives. After Hilal's arrest that

same month, the government imposed an ultimatum on the armed groups of Darfur to surrender their weapons.

Regarding the international UNAMID peacekeeping mission, in June the UN Security Council approved cutting back its troops and police by 30% and reconfiguring its operations. Human rights organisations warned of the risks that UNAMID's withdrawal poses for the security of the civilian population given the continuous abuse committed by government forces. As part of its withdrawal, UNAMID reported that it was closing 11 bases of operations in Darfur in October, whilst making plans to deploy the Jebel Marra Task Force, given the greater fragility of the situation in Jebel Marra. UNAMID also worked with local organisations to host various activities to promote the participation of women in reconciliation initiatives in the country throughout the year.⁸ In January 2018, an international coalition called the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security urged the UN Security Council to provide updates and monitor this support in subsequent reports on UNAMID, as well as to provide lessons learned.

Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	
Negotiating actors	Government, SPLM-N
Third parties	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Uganda
Relevant agreements	Roadmap agreement (2016)

Summary:

The secession of South Sudan in July 2011 and the national reconfiguration that it entailed for Sudan aggravated tensions between Khartoum and the border regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, since both regions had supported the SPLA's southern insurgency during the armed conflict in Sudan. Since South Sudan gained its independence, the SPLM-N has continued its armed struggle in both regions, demanding the introduction of democratic reforms and effective decentralisation that would allow the economic development of all regions in the new Sudan, as well as recognition of ethnic and political plurality. Since then, the AUHIP has mediated to seek a peaceful resolution for the parties, which revolves around three main lines in the peace negotiations: the ceasefire model, the type of humanitarian access to both areas (through the front lines or via a cross-border route) and the features and agenda of the National Dialogue.

The peace process remained stalled, with no progress made since the 2016 road map agreement was signed between the Sudanese government and the insurgent groups of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and neighbouring Darfur, despite some gestures of goodwill during the year. The peace process was also affected by internal divisions in the SPLM-N. The negotiating process was paralysed after the road map was signed by the government in March 2016 and the insurgent groups in August 2016, given that it was impossible to reach

8. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, 27 December 2017, S/2017/1113.

an agreement to end hostilities and open humanitarian access to Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile). The government extended its unilateral ceasefire in the Two Areas and in Darfur for six months in January, again for four months in July and until 31 December in October. However, by February the SPLM-N had already accused the government of violating the ceasefire. There were some confidence-building measures, such as the SPLM-N's release of 125 prisoners, mostly soldiers, with the facilitating support of Uganda, South Sudan and the International Committee of the Red Cross in March. A few days later, the government released 259 insurgents captured in recent years, although it did not specify the groups to which they belonged. Of that number, 66 faced death sentences, including 44 arrested in fighting in Omdurman (Khartoum State) and 18 in Donkey Baschim (West Darfur). The government described its release of prisoners as a step towards lasting peace in the country.

The divisions within the SPLM-N affected the peace process during the year. SPLM-N Deputy Chairman Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu resigned in March over disagreements with the group's top leader, Malik Agar, and its negotiating position, which opposed the issue of self-determination for the Nuba Mountains, as al-Hilu advocated. In June, the Nuba Mountains Liberation Council, the political body of the SPLM-N, approved relegating Agar and appointing al-Hilu as the new leader and general commander of the group. It also approved dismissing secretary general and chief negotiator Yasir Arman and preventing Agar and Arman from entering areas under the group's control. The political body justified these moves by citing Agar and Arman's refusal to include the issue of self-determination for the Nuba Mountains in negotiations with the government. Clashes broke out between the factions at various times of the year, such as in May, July and August. The fighting in August claimed several dozen lives. During its general conference in October, the SPLM-N confirmed al-Hilu as its new leader and repeated the demand for self-determination, whilst closing the door to rapprochement with the faction led by Agar. Internal tensions in the SPLM-N led to delays in resuming the peace talks between the government and the armed groups of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, initially scheduled for April under the mediation of the AU's chief negotiator, Thabo Mbeki, as part of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). Mbeki and the SPLM-N agreed to put off the talks until July so the armed group could resolve its internal crisis. Nevertheless, fighting between the factions continued. The mediating team met with both factions in August, but a joint position could not be established. In September, government representatives said that they would not negotiate with Agar's faction because it lacked the ability to implement any possible agreements. However, after al-Hilu took over as leader of the SPLM-N, the group claimed that it had

Internal tensions in the SPLM-N led to delays in resuming the peace talks between the Sudanese government and the insurgents in South Kordofan and Blue Nile

not undergone a split, but just a change of leadership, whilst Agar's faction proposed a joint delegation or coordination between both factions before the process resumed. In November, Khartoum approved the call made by the SPLM-N led by al-Hilu to restart the negotiating process based on the road map. In January 2018, it announced that peace talks with the SPLM-N led by al-Hilu would resume in February.

Sudan – South Sudan

Negotiating actors	Government of Sudan, Government of South Sudan
Third parties	IGAD, African Union Border Programme (AUBP), Egypt, Libya, USA, EU
Relevant agreements	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (2005); Cooperation Agreement (2012)

Summary:

The armed conflict between Sudan and its southern neighbour (South Sudan) lasted for more than 30 years and was marked by a growing complexity, the nature of which covered several dimensions relating to the culture and history of both countries, affected by two civil wars (1963-1972; and 1982-2005). The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 led to a referendum in the south of Sudan to ratify the independence of this region. The consultation happened in January 2011 and following a clear victory of those in favour of independence, in July 2011 South Sudan declared independence and became a new State. However, the separation of the two countries did not bring an end to the disagreements between Khartoum and Juba over the many unresolved issues. Among the main obstacles to stability there is a dispute over the oil-rich enclave of Abyei and the final demarcation of the border between both countries, as well as disagreement with regards to the exploitation of oil resources (with oil fields in South Sudan but pipelines for exportation to Sudan). Both countries accuse one another of supporting insurgency movements in the neighbour country and have contributed to further destabilizing the situation and threaten the peaceful coexistence of these two countries.

The relations between both countries remained fragile, with mutual accusations of threats against state security, although at the end of the year both governments made partial progress towards normalising relations. For example, the Sudanese Intelligence Services (NISS) accused the South Sudanese government of holding meetings with the SPLM-N in April, which is fighting against the Sudanese government in the Two Areas, and therefore of promoting an extension of the war in Sudan. Both presidents met in Khartoum in November to sign various agreements on security and oil. According to the South Sudanese Government, its leader, Salva Kiir, travelled to Sudan sought to normalise relations between both countries. Yet during the visit, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir accused the Sudanese Government of supplying weapons that fuel the internal conflict in South Sudan and of supporting opposition leader and former Vice-

President Riek Machar. Nevertheless, **both leaders agreed not to carry out military or political actions that posed a threat to the neighbouring country and to establish a security zone**, according to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who described the meeting as a step forward for bilateral relations.

With regard to the negotiating process to delimit the border area to be defined between both countries, which affects Abyei, the 14-Mile Area, Joudat Al-Fakhar, Jebel al-Migainais, Kaka and the enclave of Kafia Kingi, the Joint Technical Committee for Border Demarcation (JTCB) issued a detailed report covering the points of agreement and disagreement, according to what was agreed during a new meeting in Addis Ababa in December. Held under the auspices of the African Union Border Program (AUBP), the meeting was attended by the respective Sudanese and South Sudanese co-chairs of the Joint Border Commission (JBC), Abdallah al-Sadiq and Darius Garang. The JBC was expected to approve the report soon. In May and November, the UN Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and extended the support it gives to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). However, **the UN Security Council's resolution in November warned that it was the last time that the mission's support for the JBVMM would be renewed if the parties to the conflict did not commit to specific measures** before 15 March 2018, including full freedom of movement for UNISFA, also within the so-called Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ); the opening of the first phase of border corridors; the holding of at least one meeting to resume discussions on border demarcation and the reactivation of the specific committee on the disputed 14-Mile Area, among other measures, already established in 2015 by the UN Secretary-General in his S/2015/439 report for the full operation of the MCVF.

Concerning the participation of the population in peacebuilding efforts, 80 female representatives of the Misseriya and Ngok-Dinka communities in a town north of Abyei, which have been in conflict in recent years, met in February as part of the “global open days on women, peace and security” aimed at addressing strategies to promote peace in Abyei. This was the first meeting of women from both communities and was attended by the interim head of UNISFA and other members of the mission, as well as leaders of both communities.

Maghreb – North Africa

Libya	
Negotiating actors	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)
Third parties	UN, Arab League, AU, EU (Quartet); Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, UAE, Netherlands, Italy, France

Relevant agreements	Libyan Political Agreement or Skhirat Agreement (2015)
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Summary:

After the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, Libya has experienced a transition process characterized by multiple political, economic, social, institutional and security challenges and by the presence of numerous armed groups. Since 2014, the North African country has been the scene of increasing violence and political instability, which led to the formation of two major poles of power and authority. Given the developments in the country, mediation efforts led by the UN have tried to find a solution to the crisis. Negotiations have confronted several obstacles due to disputes of legitimacy, the diversity of actors involved, multiple interests at stake and the persistent climate of violence in the country, among other factors. In late 2015, the Libyan Political Agreement or the Skhirat Agreement was signed under the auspices of the UN amidst a climate of persistent divisions and scepticism due to the foreseeable problems in implementing it.

In line with events in 2016, the difficulties in implementing the Skhirat agreement, signed in 2015, became evident throughout 2017 and by the end of the year the pact promoted by the UN continued to be questioned, despite many efforts to reach consensus and foster its implementation. Efforts by various regional and international actors to try to facilitate a solution to the Libyan crisis continued during the year, though they did not yield significant progress. Throughout the year, the UN mission in the country (UNSMIL), whose mandate includes mediation and good offices to support implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement and the transition process in the country, maintained contact with various Libyan stakeholders to reactivate the political process and seek ways to overcome the hurdles to making the Skhirat Agreement effective. In this context, a broad consensus emerged that certain aspects of the pact should be modified to facilitate its implementation. In January and February, German national Martin Kobler, the UN special representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL, who would be replaced by Lebanese national Ghassan Salamé in July, met in Tunisia with the president of the House of Representatives (HoR), Agila Saleh, as well as with the head of the High Council of State, Abderrahman Swehli, in order to work on possible amendments to the Skhirat agreement. **The Libyan Political Dialogue acted as a consultative forum to study options to address some of the most controversial issues with representatives from multiple sectors.** The Troika of the Libyan Political Agreement, consisting of the UN, the Arab League and the AU, decided to add the EU in January 2017, making it what would go on to be called the “Quartet”, and reiterated its commitment to the pact in March. The situation was then affected by the persisting violence in the country and by other dynamics, such as obstacles to establishing the authority of the Government of National Accord (GNA) promoted by the UN and led by Faye Sarraj; internal divisions within the Presidential Council (another institution created by the Skhirat Agreement) and the decision of several dozen legislators in the House of Representatives to vote to withdraw from the UN-sponsored dialogue in March, though this bid ultimately failed.

Thus, in April and May the delegations of the HoR and the High Council of State were designated to discuss possible changes to the agreement: a HoR dialogue committee consisting of 24 people, including three women, and a High Council of State committee with 13 members, including one woman. However, these committees had still not formally convened by mid-year. They only met informally in The Hague in May and July, under the auspices of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile, meetings were held between senior Libyan representatives, including a meeting between the HoR spokesperson and the head of the High Council of State in Italy in April and a meeting in Abu Dhabi (UAE) in May between Prime Minister Sarraj and opposition general Khalifa Haftar, who de facto controls the eastern part of the country and has extended his dominance to other areas of Libya. This was the first meeting in a year between the two leaders, following arrangements made by Egypt. During the meeting, Sarraj proposed his own road map for the transition in July, which included a ceasefire across Libya, the gradual merger of both rival parliaments and parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018. The second meeting between Sarraj and Haftar took place in late July in France and resulted in a 10-point statement that picked up some of these ideas, calling for a ceasefire, work on early elections and the spread of control over the territory to stop trafficking and terrorism activities. However, days later Haftar said that it would not be possible to implement everything agreed in Paris.

Diplomatic and political activity concerning the Libyan crisis intensified in September, when new UN envoy Ghassan Salamé unveiled a three-point plan to break the political impasse in the North African country by:

- 1) renegotiating some aspects of the 2015 agreement,
- 2) organising a national conference to re-energise political leaders for what remains of the transition and
- 3) holding elections.

The plan received international support, including from the Quartet, and led to the first meeting of the dialogue committees of the HoR and the High Council of State in Tunisia in September. Each committee appointed delegates, including one woman, to form a joint drafting committee that decided to restructure the Presidential Council and establish a new executive authority. In November, UNSMIL presented both parties with a proposal based on what had been discussed in the talks, but there was no agreement in this area by the end of the year. At the same time, efforts to update the electoral census got under way. Marking the second anniversary of the Skhirat Agreement, the UN Security Council repeated in December that it was still the only viable framework for resolving the Libyan political crisis and warned of “incorrect deadlines” for its validity. Nevertheless, Haftar publicly rejected the Libyan Political Agreement and called all the institutions resulting from it obsolete, including the GNA. In a televised speech broadcast on the second anniversary of the Skhirat Agreement, Haftar declared it dead and the political entities stemming from it illegitimate. In response,

the French Foreign Minister travelled to Libya and met with Sarraj and other members of the GNA in Tripoli and with Haftar in Benghazi in order to kick-start the peace process.

In addition to the aforementioned initiatives, other North African countries, European countries and regional organisations were involved in the Libyan crisis during 2017. Libya's neighbours Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt held various meetings to address the situation there. Egypt organised meetings between military delegations from Misrata and the Libyan National Army, linked to Haftar, and Morocco hosted several meetings of the UN special envoy for implementing the action plan. The AU High Level Committee on Libya also remained active, meeting in Brazzaville in January and September; sending members of the committee to meet with the AU High Representative for Libya, former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, in May; and holding a meeting to coordinate a common approach to the Libyan crisis as part of the AU summit in Addis Ababa. In addition to efforts at these levels, other strata of Libyan society, including women, youth, tribal councils, NGOs and municipal authorities were involved in reconciliation efforts at the local and community levels. UNSMIL reports highlighted the results of bottom-up or grassroots initiatives to facilitate solutions to local conflicts in cities such as Sabha and Tripoli.

In January, a conference dedicated to the Libyan women's agenda for peace was held in Tunis. More than 60 women participated in the conference, which was promoted by UNSMIL and UNDP and agreed on the framework to develop local and nationwide peaceful coexistence campaigns. Seven women from the different regions of Libya were designated as “focal points” of the outreach campaign, to which UNSMIL pledged technical support. Part of UNSMIL's mission is to promote and support Libyan women's political participation through capacity-building activities aimed at reaching 30% representation by 2018. Thus, training activities were developed for women forming part of the HoR; a study on Libyan female leadership was launched in coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Community Development, highlighting the small percentage of women in decision-making positions; and a meeting was held on lessons learned regarding Libyan women's participation in the political dialogue process. As previously mentioned, the delegations of the HoR and the High Council of State charged with addressing the changes to the 2015 Skhirat Agreement included women (three of 24 and one of 13, respectively). The joint committee with members of both delegations, formed after the implementation of the UN plan to break the political impasse in Libya in September, also included women (one per delegation). UNSMIL provided them with technical assistance to encourage women's perspectives to be incorporated into the changes to the Libyan Political Agreement.

Morocco – Western Sahara	
Negotiating actors	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO Front)
Third parties	UN, Algeria and Mauritania (observers), Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)
Relevant agreements	Ceasefire agreement (1991)
Summary: The attempts to mediate and find a negotiated solution to the Western Sahara conflict led to a cease-fire agreement in 1991. Since then, and despite the existence of a formal negotiations framework under the auspices of the UN, the Western Sahara peace process has failed. The successive proposals and the many rounds of negotiations has not lead to an agreement between the parties, all of which maintain their red lines: Morocco insists on its territorial claims and is only willing to accept a status of autonomy, whereas the POLISARIO Front claims there is a need to hold a referendum that includes the option of independence. Negotiations on Western Sahara –recognised as a territory which is yet to be decolonised- have been determined by the large asymmetry between the actors in dispute, the inability of the UN to set up a consultation on the future of this territory, and regional rivalry between Morocco and Algeria –a key support for the POLISARIO front– and by the support given to Rabat by some key international actors, such as the USA or France. This, in real terms, has meant a prevalence of the Moroccan thesis when approaching the conflict.	

The conflict between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front for Western Sahara was characterised by ongoing deadlock in the negotiations and by various dynamics that showed the tension between the parties. One of the most problematic events, originating in late 2016, was related to tension in Guerguerat, in an area near the border with Mauritania, where both sides deployed armed forces. The incident began after Morocco began work to pave a road in the region, which is considered a “buffer zone”, and whose access is therefore restricted to both parties. The POLISARIO Front interpreted the move as a violation of the ceasefire. In early 2017, the dispute was complicated when the Sahrawi group began controlling routes through Guerguerat, blocking the passage of civilian and commercial vehicles with Moroccan insignia or that displayed maps showing Western Sahara as part of Morocco. Rabat protested the situation and demanded the intervention of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). In this context, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who met with representatives of Morocco, Algeria and the POLISARIO Front during the first quarter of 2017, called on both parties to withdraw their forces from the disputed territory and reminded them of the importance of creating a propitious environment for restarting the political negotiations. The UN Security Council admitted that the crisis in Guerguerat had fuelled some deep misgivings about the sustainability of the ceasefire and urged the UN Secretary-General to explore formulas to address the issue. Morocco decided to withdraw its troops in February 2017. The POLISARIO Front announced that it would

reciprocate on 28 April, the same day that MINURSO’s mandate was renewed for another year. According to the leaders of the Sahrawi movement, their decision to pull back their forces sprang from their desire for a negotiated solution to the conflict and was taken in response to appeals from friendly countries. Members of the UN Security Council hailed the move as a way to build trust and goodwill. In any case, the POLISARIO Front stressed that any solution to the crisis necessarily required a process of decolonisation in Western Sahara and set conditions to sustain its withdrawal, including the total departure of Moroccan forces and demonstrable progress in the negotiating process. The situation in Guerguerat remained relatively calm and free of armed actors during 2017 until late December, when a small POLISARIO delegation established a kind of monitoring post. In June, the secretariat of the UN Security Council sent verbal messages to Morocco and the POLISARIO Front proposing to address the issue of the ceasefire, such as by deploying a mission of experts, for example.

Another important event in 2017 was the change of the UN special envoy to the Sahara following the resignation of Christopher Ross. Having held the post since 2009, the US diplomat had faced increasing hostility from the Moroccan authorities, who had stated that they did not intend to hold any further meetings with him. The UN Secretary-General appointed former German President Horst Köhler to succeed Ross. Sahrawi leaders and Rabat both expressed their willingness to cooperate with the new special envoy. Thus, Köhler made his first visit to the region between 15 and 24 October and met with the highest authorities of Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania. In Rabouni, Köhler also met with Sahrawi youth and women. During the final quarter of the year, the special envoy held meetings with the member countries of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (France, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States). Before the end of 2017, Köhler proposed that the parties to the conflict and neighbouring countries hold bilateral meetings for in-depth consultations that were accepted by both sides and began in January 2018.

Also of note was the Moroccan king’s speech to mark the 42nd anniversary of the Green March in November 2017, in which he declared that his country’s commitment to Western Sahara was based on four principles: 1) the rejection of any solution that does not involve Morocco’s full sovereignty over Western Sahara and its bid for autonomy; 2) the participation of all parties that share responsibilities for the conflict in a final solution (Rabat is in favour of involving Algeria more directly); 3) the recognition of the UN Security Council as the only body responsible for supervising the process; and 4) the rejection of “obsolete proposals” that diverted attention from the terms of reference that Morocco believes should govern any agreement. Leaders of the POLISARIO Front said that the king’s speech showed that Morocco was wriggling out of its commitments to the peace process. Another significant event in 2017, which occurred just

after the year began, was the African Union's decision to readmit Morocco, which had not been a member for more than three decades. The AU expressed its hope that reinstating Morocco's membership could facilitate a settlement of the dispute over Western Sahara. Rabat decided to leave the AU in 1984 after it decided to incorporate the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The readmission of Morocco, which was supported by 39 of the 54 countries that make up the AU, was considered a diplomatic defeat for Algeria. The POLISARIO Front claimed that Morocco was admitted under the premise that the SADR would continue to be part of the African Union and said that its statutes do not allow for the suspension or expulsion of any of its members. However, analysis said that Morocco has not changed its policy on Western Sahara despite its unconditional return to the AU, so there is a prospect of permanent struggle in the pan-African organisation. In fact, Morocco chose not to attend the AU's Peace and Security Council in March to assess the situation of Western Sahara.

Furthermore, in April 2017 Morocco permitted the return of 17 MINURSO members who had not been

able to resume their duties since March 2016, when Rabat took issue with statements made by the UN Secretary-General at the time, Ban Ki-moon, alluding to the (Moroccan) "occupation" of Western Sahara. This episode led to the expulsion of most of the civilians working on the mission. Meanwhile, the programme of confidence-building measures remained at a standstill. It has been suspended since mid-2014. According to figures collected by UNHCR, more than 12,000 people were still awaiting the possibility of benefitting from family visits. In terms of human rights, Morocco continued to delay the visit of the special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, originally scheduled for April 2015. As such, complaints continued about the lack of investigation into allegations of abuse against Sahrawi people, as well as the problems faced by Sahrawi human rights NGOs in pursuing their activities and the harassment of activists. Rabat also upheld its policy of expelling foreigners from the territories it considers part of its "southern provinces", including journalists and human rights advocates.

3. Peace negotiations in America

- In the Americas, three peace processes took place, two in Colombia and one in Venezuela, a 7% of the negotiations that took place during 2017.
- The peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the ELN began and a temporary ceasefire agreement was reached, although the process advanced with enormous difficulties.
- The process of disarmament and the demobilization of the FARC and its transformation into a political party were both completed.
- The dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and the opposition did not advance, despite international mediation and there was no rapprochement between the parties.

This chapter analyses the most significant peace processes and negotiations in the Americas in 2017. First, the characteristics and the overall trends of the peace processes in the region are examined, and secondly, the development of each of the four cases is analysed during the year, including references to the gender perspective.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Colombia (FARC-EP)	Government and FARC-EP	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Norway), accompanying countries (Venezuela, Chile), UN
Colombia (ELN)	Government and ELN	Guarantor countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Norway, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy), Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (UN, Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)
Venezuela	Government, opposition (MUD)	UNASUR, Vatican

3.1. Negotiations in 2017: regional trends

Three processes of dialogue took place in the Americas during the year. Colombia was the scenario for two of these processes, while one was held in Venezuela. It should be noted that in the Colombian case, one of the processes was focused on negotiating the implementation of the peace agreement that was signed by the FARC and the Government of Colombia in 2016. The other process was held by the guerrilla forces of the ELN and the Colombian Government in Ecuador, and officially began in 2017.

With respect to the actors involved in the negotiations, major differences between the Colombian and Venezuelan cases must be stressed. In the negotiation processes held in Colombia, the participants were the Colombian Government on the one hand, and on the other, the guerrillas of the FARC and the ELN. It should be stressed that in 2017 the FARC transformed itself into a political force and definitively abandoned its character as a guerrilla organisation. In the

Venezuelan case however, the process was undertaken solely by actors of a political nature, the Venezuelan Government and the MUD opposition coalition. In all three cases external involvement took place in facilitating dialogues, with the participation of third parties. In the Colombian cases, the formulas applied by the facilitators were similar. In their negotiations with the ELN, the governments of Ecuador, Brazil and Norway acted as guarantors, while Cuba, Venezuela and Chile took on the role of “accompanying” countries. With respect to the FARC, it should be noted that after the formal conclusion of the peace process (whose guarantor countries were Cuba and Norway, and Chile and Venezuela as “accompanying” countries) the UN took charge of verifying several components of the agreements that had been reached with the FARC. In the Venezuelan dialogue process, facilitation was undertaken by UNASUR with the participation of the Vatican and the former presidents of the Government of Panama, Spain and the Dominican Republic.

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America 2017



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2017

The negotiating agendas of the processes held on the American continent were marked by the specific characteristics, in addition to the specific stages that each process underwent. In the negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government, the agenda focused on the implementation of the agreement reached in 2016 and on the structure established between those institutions responsible for the aforementioned agreement. In terms of the peace process between the ELN and the Government of Colombia, the negotiating agenda had been agreed upon during the exploratory phase of the process and it comprised six points: the participation of society in the construction of peace, democracy for peace, transformations for peace, victims, the end of the armed conflict, and implementation. However, it is important to stress that the negotiation of a ceasefire agreement was upheld from October until the end of 2017, although not without difficulties. The agenda of the dialogues in Venezuela was of a preparatory character and had the aim to create the necessary conditions conducive to the initiation of a substantive dialogue.

With respect to the progress of the negotiations, it is well-worth noting that the three contexts analysed in the Americas experienced enormous difficulties and were marked by moments of fragility, tension and blockage. In the negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian Government on the implementation of the agreement, the vast differences between both actors regarding their evaluation of the results in the implementation

must be noted; this evaluation was highly positive in the case of the executive body, while the FARC's appraisal was more critical. The negotiations between the ELN and the Government of Colombia advanced amid enormous difficulties, and even threatened the continuity of the talks. With respect to Venezuela, the attempts to attain rapprochement between the parties did not lead to a specific result, nor did they lead to the negotiating actors moving closer together in their stances; a situation that was aggravated by the heightening of the political crisis of the country.

Regarding the gender perspective in peace processes and the significant participation of women, it should be noted that in Colombia important initiatives arose in this area, although with certain limitations. In the process related to the implementation of the agreement with the FARC—which was a relevant agreement from a gender perspective, resulting from a peace process that included an outstanding level of participation by women's organizations—the Special Instance was appointed in 2017 in order to contribute to the implementation of the Final Agreement with a gender approach. With respect to those talks held with the ELN, the integration of the gender perspective was far more limited, given that the issue did not occupy an important place on the negotiating agenda, although the process of dialogue received the support of women's organizations and the negotiating delegations included women among its members.

3.2. Case study analysis

Colombia (FARC-EP)	
Negotiating actors	Government and FARC-EP
Third parties	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Norway), accompanying countries (Venezuela, Chile)
Relevant agreements	The Havana peace agreement (2016)
Summary: Since the founding of the first guerrilla groups in 1964 there have been several negotiation attempts. In the early 1990s several small groups were demobilized, but not the FARC and the ELN, which are the two most important. In 1998, President Pastrana authorized the demilitarization of a large region of Colombia, around the area of San Vicente del Caguán, in order to conduct negotiations with the FARC, which lasted until 2002 and were unsuccessful. In 2012, and after several months of secret negotiations in Cuba, new talks began with the FARC in Cuba based on a specific agenda and including citizen participation mechanisms. After four years of negotiations, a historic peace agreement for the Colombian people was signed in late 2016..	

In 2017, progress was made on implementing the peace agreement signed between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government in 2016. FARC-EP combatants were disarmed and demobilised during the year, as laid out in the agreement. The machinery of implementation was also set up, which entailed transforming the agreement into legislation to make the different agreed points effective. Several institutions agreed by the parties during the negotiating process were also created. Thus, the Commission for Monitoring, Furthering and Verifying Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI), made up of representatives of the FARC-EP and the government, made progress throughout the year in the different negotiations necessary for implementing the peace agreement. **The United Nations Mission in Colombia verified the ceasefire agreement and the end of armed hostilities between the FARC and Colombian security forces. The FARC laid down their weapons and transformed into a political party, the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), abandoning their armed activity for good.** The new political party showed its willingness to participate in the country's different electoral processes. Meanwhile, the UN began the process of destroying all the weapons surrendered by the FARC-EP. Once the disarmament and demobilisation process was completed, the reintegration process began, for which the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia was established. Transitional rural areas, which served as quartering centres for the combatants,

Amidst many obstacles, significant progress was made in Colombia in implementing the peace agreement, such as the disarmament and demobilisation of the FARC and the creation of the Truth Commission

were transformed into Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation. However, the UN identified the reincorporation of FARC-EP members as one of the most crucial aspects for implementing the peace agreement, pointing to significant operational and logistical delays.

The legislative mechanism called the “Special Legislative Procedure for Peace” was operational during the year. Also known as the “Fast Track”, it simplified processes to pass laws to facilitate and speed up implementation of the peace agreement. The process ended on 30 November with mixed results, because even though it allowed for the approval of important aspects set out in the peace agreement, the FARC-EP complained that essential issues had been left out and that some of the deals made in Havana had been distorted. For example, approval was not granted for special peace districts for the victims of the armed conflict, which included reserving legislative seats for them. Further signs of progress reported throughout the year included the creation of the Truth Commission, whose members were appointed by the Selection Committee.¹ Composed of six men and five women, the Truth Commission will be chaired by Francisco de Roux and will operate for three years. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace also became operational. It consists of 51 magistrates, of which 53% are women, 10% indigenous and 10% Afro-Colombian.

In addition to including women in all the aforementioned organisations, a special body was appointed to help to ensure a gender focus in implementing the final agreement. Involved in ongoing talks with the CSIVI, this body must guarantee the implementation of a gender approach. However, difficulties and delays were identified in implementing this approach. Moreover, the Ombudsman's Office issued warnings regarding the heightened risk of sexual violence against women and girls as a result of the expansion of illegal armed groups such as the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC), the EPL, the ELN and FARC dissidents.

Colombia (ELN)	
Negotiating actors	Government and ELN
Third parties	Guarantor countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Norway, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy), Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (UN, Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)
Relevant agreements	“Heaven's Door” Agreement (1988)

1. The Selection Committee is an autonomous, independent and impartial body in charge of selecting some members of the Integrated System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. The committee is composed of five people appointed by the Penal Cassation Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice, the United Nations Secretary-General, the Permanent Commission of the State University System, the President of the European Court of Human Rights and the International Center for Transitional Justice's delegation in Colombia.

Summary:

Since the ELN emerged in 1964, various negotiating processes have tried to bring peace to the country. The first negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN date from 1991 (Caracas and Tlaxcala). In 1998, both parties signed a peace agreement in Madrid that envisaged holding a national convention. That same year, the “Puerta del Cielo” agreement between the ELN and civil society activists was signed in Mainz, Germany, focused on humanitarian aspects. In 1999, the Colombian government and the ELN resumed meetings in Cuba, which ended in June 2000. The government of Álvaro Uribe resumed peace negotiations with the ELN in Cuba between 2005 and 2007, though no results were achieved. At the end of 2012, the ELN showed its willingness to open new negotiations with President Juan Manuel Santos, appointing a negotiating commission, and exploratory meetings were held. Formal peace negotiations began in 2017.

In January, the Colombian government and the ELN insurgent organisation announced the beginning of formal peace talks in Quito, adding that they would take place in Ecuador.

This announcement came after agreement was reached on a six-point agenda during the exploratory talks that took place in 2016, including the participation of society in peacebuilding, democracy for peace, transformations for peace, victims, an end to the armed conflict and implementation. The announcement that the talks would begin was joined by the ELN’s commitment to free former congressman Odín Sánchez Montes de Oca before 2 February, lifting that obstacle to them. In turn, the government announced the pardon of two ELN members, Juan Carlos Cuéllar and Eduardo Martínez Quiroz, who would join the ELN’s negotiating delegation led by Pablo Beltrán as “peace managers”, just like all other members of the delegation. The talks formally began on 7 February in Quito and were supported by Ecuador, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Norway and Venezuela as guarantors. Both negotiating delegations included women among the main negotiators. At first, the head of the government negotiating team was Juan Camilo Restrepo, who announced the creation of two initial working groups in February: one focused on establishing mechanisms for the participation of society in the peace talks and another centred on humanitarian affairs aiming to de-escalate the armed conflict gradually. Four rounds of negotiations were held throughout the year, amidst many difficulties and obstacles, whilst progress was made on different points of the agenda. The most notable headway was gained in the third round of negotiations, when **the parties agreed to a bilateral ceasefire that entered into force on 1 October and was supposed to remain in force until 12 January 2018**, although Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said that it could be renewed “insofar as it is fulfilled and progress is made in negotiations on the other points”. In addition, both parties negotiated several protocols to monitor compliance with the agreement, supervised by the United Nations mission in the country and the Catholic Church. The parties agreed on the creation of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism formed

The Colombian government and the ELN started formal peace talks and agreed to a bilateral ceasefire that entered into force on 1 October

by the government, the ELN, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) and the Episcopal Conference of Colombia for the purpose of preventing and reporting any incident. Deployment of this mechanism was planned to be local, regional and national. The ceasefire committed the ELN to desist from all violent offensive actions against civilians and attacks against infrastructure and pipelines, the recruitment of minors and the use of antipersonnel mines. The government pledged to suspend military action against the ELN guerrillas, redouble its protection of social leaders to prevent further assassinations and launch a humanitarian plan to improve the prison conditions of incarcerated ELN members. The ceasefire announcement came a few days before Pope Francis visited the country, considered a public boost to the peace process. Meanwhile, preparatory dialogue hearings were concluded between the negotiating parties in Quito and different civil society representatives and territorial representatives, including women’s organisations and LGBTI organisations. The objective of these hearings was to prepare the negotiations for the agenda item referring to “the participation of society in peacebuilding”.

However, the fragility of the peace process became evident in November and the ELN warned that the ceasefire agreement was at risk, given the large number of social leaders and human rights advocates who have been threatened and murdered in recent months. It stressed the killing of female human rights defenders. In December, the peace process underwent a major crisis, with changes in the government negotiating team and the appointment of Gustavo Bell as the government’s new chief negotiator with the ELN, replacing Juan Camilo Restrepo, who resigned from the position after the end of the fourth round of negotiations in Quito. Gustavo Bell had been Colombia’s ambassador to Cuba during the peace negotiations between the FARC and the government. Journalistic sources claimed that Restrepo’s resignation was due to internal disagreements in the negotiating delegation. Along with Restrepo, General Herrera and other members of the negotiating team also resigned. The ELN withdrew its representatives from the ceasefire agreement verification

mechanism, in which the government, the United Nations and the Catholic Church also participate, protesting the “collapse of the ceasefire agreement” and claiming that the mechanism did not fulfil its mandate. The ELN also disagreed with the deployment of military operations in territory where guerrillas were present, even though the government asserted that it was merely fulfilling its constitutional mandate. However, the ELN reiterated its willingness to respect the ceasefire until 9 January, as stipulated in the agreement. The report submitted by the United Nations to monitor the activity of the verification mechanism noted that 27 incidents had taken place, but there were no clashes between security forces and the ELN.

With regards to the gender dimension, the negotiations received the support of women's organizations, who spoke publicly about it, supporting the process through a statement issued by the National Summit of Women and Peace, a platform that emerged during the negotiation process with the FARC-EP to promote the active participation of women in the peace negotiations and the inclusion of the gender perspective in the agreements. However, gender issues were not central to the agenda of the negotiations throughout the year. The National Summit of Women and Peace issued a series of recommendations in the framework of the Public Hearing held by the ELN with different civil society organizations. These recommendations contemplated guarantees for the direct participation of women, as well as the establishment of mechanisms to enable the participation, combining forms of representative and direct participation. In addition, parity was demanded in all the instruments and mechanisms to be agreed during the dialogue process, as well as in a possible peace agreement. On the other hand, the Summit recommended the creation of two specific gender mechanisms for the peace process: 1) a civil society subcommission (for dialogue and consultation) to propose a mechanism to review the agenda on the inclusion of women's rights and parity, with guarantees for the participation of Afro-descendant, indigenous, young, peasant, lesbian, urban women, women from churches, women from political parties and businesswomen; and 2) a mechanism at the negotiating table, responsible for the women's rights approach and the gender approach to contribute by means of reviewing the women's proposals to all points of the agenda.

Venezuela	
Negotiating actors	Government, opposition (MUD)
Third parties	UNASUR, Vatican
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

The political and social crisis affecting the country worsened during the political transition that followed the death of Hugo Chávez in March 2013. Tensions rose after the presidential elections in April 2013, which were won by Nicolás Maduro. Then, in December 2015, the Venezuelan opposition (Democratic Unity Roundtable – MUD) gained an overwhelming victory at the legislative elections, granting them control of the National Assembly (Parliament) for the first time since Chávez arrived in power. This has further increased tension between the Executive of Nicolás Maduro and the new Legislative chamber, in the hands of the opposition, opening up a new space for disputes and confrontation in the country. Several international actors have tried to mediate and help finding a way out of the conflict.

During the year, several attempts were made to resume the dialogue that had taken place in 2016, and there were even several rounds of negotiation between the Government and the opposition during the last quarter

of 2017, but they didn't yield any tangible outcomes nor did it help to bring the positions of both parties closer.

It is worth noting that all of the dialogue initiatives took place in a context of a deepening political and social crisis affecting the country for years, with up to four electoral processes, and the largest demonstrations called by the opposition in recent years. According to official data disclosed in July, during the protests since April, more than 120 people were killed and several thousand had been arrested.

In January, the UNASUR Secretary-General, Ernesto Samper, the former presidents of Panama, Martín Torrijos, of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, of the Dominican Republic (Leonel Fernández) and the Apostolic Nuncio of the Vatican in Venezuela, Aldo Giordano, met with both President Nicolás Maduro and several senior officials of the Government, and also with the top senior representatives of the political opposition, in an attempt to recover the facilitation that UNASUR had provided the previous year and ended in December 2016 after the parties accused one another of breaching the agreements that had been met. Both the Government and the opposition welcomed the UNASUR initiative and the document – the Agreement on Democratic Coexistence– containing 21 items that was submitted to the two parties by this agency. In February, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) submitted an alternative document with four basic demands (while making it clear that these were not substantive points on the agenda, rather the basic demands for any possible agreement): the date to call elections; the releasing of all political prisoners; attention to the victims of what it considered to be a humanitarian crisis; and respect for the competences of the National Assembly, where the opposition gained a majority of seats at the legislative elections in December 2015. In the months that followed, and in light of the difficulties that UNASUR was having to appoint a successor to Ernesto Samper as the organisation's secretary general and in light also of the deepening of the political crisis that emerged following the decision by Venezuela's Supreme Court of Justice to withdraw parliamentary immunity to the members of Congress and take over the competencies of the National Assembly, no significant dialogue initiatives happened. The only thing worth noting was the meeting held between Leonel Fernández and Nicolás Maduro towards the end of April (the opposition rejected all meetings), or the statement made by Pope Francis, also at the end of April, expressing his willingness to recover his facilitation role only if a set of clear conditions were met and if required to do so explicitly (as was the case for UNASUR the previous year).

Towards mid-September, shortly after the President of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, and Rodríguez Zapatero made an urgent call to dialogue and after this call was explicitly backed by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, **the Government and the opposition started a dialogue in the Dominican Republic (a country where both parties had meet previously) to explore the**

conditions, support and agenda for a possible formal negotiation. After two days of meetings, the parties agreed to meet on 27 September (in the end, this meeting did not happen because the MUD declared that the conditions were not met to formalize the dialogue), while Medina announced the **establishment of a group of guarantor countries where, according to some media, the Government had chosen Nicaragua, Bolivia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the opposition had chosen Chile, Mexico and Paraguay.** At this first meeting, the Government focused its demands on the recognition of the National Constituent Assembly or the capacity to issue foreign debt. The opposition, in turn, added to the demands made the previous year the commitment from the Government not to veto candidates for the regional elections scheduled to take place at the end of the year, nor for the renewal of positions at the Supreme Court of Justice or the National Electoral Commission, both of which are considered biased and pro-government by the opposition. Also, some sectors

of the opposition called for the National Constituent Assembly to be dissolved as a condition to continue with the conversations.

During the month of December, the Government and the opposition met on two occasions in the Dominican Republic, both times with the presence of the guarantor countries. These two rounds of negotiations (on 1-2 December, and on 15 December once again) ended with the commitment to meet again towards the middle of January and with significant steps, albeit insufficient for the opposition. In fact, the start of formal conversations with the Government contributed to further increase the internal divisions and tensions in those sectors of the opposition that are more inclined to dialogue (the MUD) and those that are more reticent (such as Soy Venezuela). By the end of December, 44 political prisoners were released, although the Commission for Truth in Venezuela had recommended that 80 of such prisoners should be released.

4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- In Asia in 2017, eight negotiation processes were registered, which accounted for almost a fifth of the total number of cases that occurred at the international level.
- Asia was the continent with the highest number of cases involving direct negotiation without the participation of third parties.
- In Afghanistan formal negotiations were not initiated, although several advances were made, such as the first meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group in Oman, after a year and a half of total inactivity.
- In the Philippines, after several months of ceasefire violations and disagreements between the Government and the NDF, Manila ended the peace negotiations and labelled the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines as terrorist organizations.
- In Myanmar, after being postponed on several occasions, the second session of the Panglong 21 Peace Conference was finally held in May, an event that ended with the approval of 37 points.
- In the Philippines, the Government decided to expand the membership of the body responsible for drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law in order to accommodate various factions of the MNLF and to facilitate the harmonization between the peace agreements with the MNLF and the MILF.

This chapter analyses the main processes and peace negotiations that took place in Asia during 2017, both the characteristics and the overall trends of the negotiations, as well as the development of each of the contexts in the continent during the year, including references to the gender perspective.

Table 4.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgents, Haqqani Network, USA	Quadrilateral Group (Pakistan, USA, China, Afghanistan), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UN
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD	--
India (Nagaland)	Government, NSCN-IM	--
Myanmar	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, NMSP, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA	--
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF	Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team
Philippines (MNLF)	Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)	Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
Philippines (NDF)	Government, NDF (umbrella organisation of different communist organisations, among them the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is the political arm of the NPA)	Norway
Thailand (south)	Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups)	Malaysia

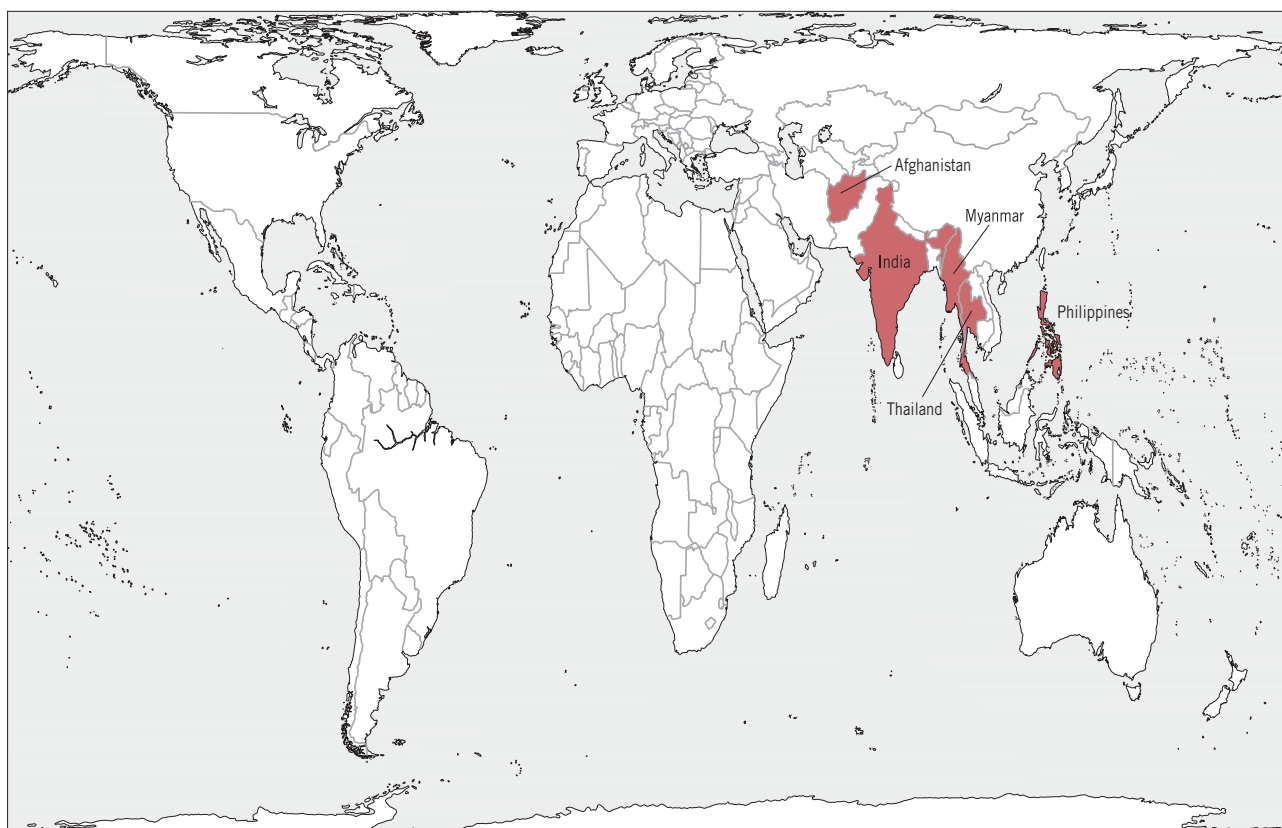
The peace negotiations in bold type are described in the chapter.
 -- There are no third parties or no public proof of their existence.

4.1 Negotiations in 2017: regional trends

In Asia in 2017, eight negotiation processes were registered, which represents almost a fifth of the total number of cases that took place at the international level. All negotiations in Asia were linked to active

armed conflicts, except with respect to India, in the cases of Assam and Nagaland, and which are considered contexts of socio-political crisis. It should be noted that all the cases were located either in Southeast Asia (five

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia 2017



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2017

contexts) or in South Asia (three cases), as such, no negotiations were recorded in Central or Eastern Asia.

With respect to those **actors in the negotiations**, all the negotiations included as their main players the governments of the countries where the peace process took place –in Afghanistan through the High Council for Peace and in the Philippines through the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Processes– and armed opposition groups. One of the specific characteristics in the Asian cases was that in a significant number of the cases identified, the armed opposition negotiated with the Philippine Government through “umbrella” organizations that brought together and represented several armed organizations. This was the case of Mara Patani in Thailand, of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) in Nagaland and that of the UNFC in Myanmar –in this latter case, in 2017 the UNFC split into two platforms of different armed groups, the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee, which comprised seven groups, and the United Nationalities Federal Council, which comprises five other groups that mainly operate in south-eastern Myanmar. However, it should be noted that some of the armed groups represented in these umbrella organizations also had, either on an occasional or systematic basis, a direct dialogue with the respective governments, such as the case of the NSCN-IM in Nagaland, the BRN in

southern Thailand or several groups in Myanmar, such as the UWSA, the KIA, the SSPP, the NDAA, the MNDAA, the AA or the TNLA. In the Philippines, since the mid-1980s, the armed NPA group has negotiated with the government through the National Democratic Front, the latter being an umbrella organization comprising numerous communist organizations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has an organic relationship with the NPA.

With respect to **third parties**, Asia was the continent with the highest percentage of cases –three out of eight: India (Assam), India (Nagaland) and Myanmar– in which direct negotiation took place without third party participation. In the same vein, Asia was the continent in which intergovernmental organizations participated less in tasks of mediation and the facilitation of dialogue and observation and verification of the implementation of agreements and the cessation of hostilities. It is notable that the United Nations only exercised some of the aforementioned functions in Afghanistan, and through the UNAMA. The EU is part of the International Monitoring Team responsible for supervising the ceasefire in the southern Philippine region of Mindanao. The former EU Ambassador to the Philippines, Alistair MacDonald, is at the head of the Third Party Monitoring Team in the Philippines and is in charge of overseeing the implementation of the agreements signed between

Asia was the continent with the highest percentage of cases in which direct negotiation took place without third-party participation

the MILF and the Philippine Government, especially the Bangsamoro Framework Agreement (and its annexes), which was signed in 2012. In the case of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (the OIC), this organisation facilitated negotiations between the Philippine Government and the MNLF –which had been recognized for decades by the OIC as the legitimate representative of the Moro people. These negotiations led to the signing of the 1996 peace agreement. Later, through its Peace Committee for the South of the Philippines, the OIC continued to undertake tasks with the aim of facilitating dialogue in the so-called Tripartite Review Process between Manila, the OIC and the MNLF – so as to achieve the full implementation of the aforementioned peace agreement. In 1996, on a more informal level, the OIC played an important role in promoting dialogue between the MNLF and the MILF, with the aim of aiding both organizations (which claim to represent the same group, and which have similar aspirations) to move closer together and promote the harmonization and convergence of the parallel but separate negotiation processes that both groups are holding with the Philippine government.

Asia was the area in which inter-governmental organisations participated less in mediation and dialogue facilitation tasks

Despite the significant number of those cases that involved direct negotiations and which did not include the participation of third parties and the low involvement of intergovernmental organizations in the region, two cases –the Philippines (MILF) and Afghanistan– involved high levels of internationalization. In the case of the Philippines (MILF), in addition to official mediation by the Government of Malaysia, the peace process currently involves three other support structures of an international character: the International Monitoring Team –in which the EU is a member body, together with countries such as Malaysia, Libya, Brunei Darussalam, Japan and Norway–, the Third Party Monitoring Team –which is in charge of overseeing the implementation of the agreements signed between the MILF and the government– and, finally, the International Contact Group, which is a structure that has been created to provide support for dialogue with an innovative format (it comprises four states –Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia– and four international NGOs –Muhammadiyah, The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources). In the case of Afghanistan, the main negotiating support framework was the so-called Quadruple Contact Group –which comprised China, Pakistan, the USA and Pakistan– although it remained inactive for most of 2016 and 2017 and had suffered from the recurrent criticisms of the Afghan Government with respect to the role played by Pakistan. Furthermore, the facilitation mandate of the UN dialogue through the UNAMA and the role of Qatar (a country that in recent years has hosted an office of the Taliban insurgency movement), should also be highlighted. As an example of the level of internationalization in the negotiation

process in Afghanistan, in June over 20 representatives from countries in Europe and Asia participated in a conference held as part of the “Kabul Process”.

It should also be noted that several countries are participating in numerous negotiation processes in Asia. Malaysia, for example, is the official mediator in the negotiations between the Philippine Government and the MILF and also between the Thai military junta and Mara Patani, which comprises several armed groups in the south of the country. Norway also acts as the official facilitator for dialogue between Manila and the NDF and also participates in the supervision of the ceasefire in Mindanao as a member of the International Monitoring

Team. Saudi Arabia has a participatory role in the International Contact Group of Mindanao and has played an important part at specific moments in the rapprochement process in Afghanistan between Kabul and the Taliban insurgent, while it has also exercised its influence in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in negotiations with the MNLF (numerous trips to Saudi Arabia made by the group’s founder, Nur Misuari in recent decades have helped to overcome moments of stagnation in the negotiations). Finally, is also worth mentioning the role of Japan, which is a member of both the International Monitoring Team and the International Contact Group.

With respect to the **negotiations agenda**, almost all the processes centred on aspects related to self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional recognition or the identity recognition of various national minorities, as in the case of the Moro people in the Philippines, the Patani people in southern Thailand, several national minorities in some of the “ethnic states” of Myanmar or the state of Assam in India, or the Naga people in the Indian state of Nagaland. In the case of Afghanistan and the NDF in the Philippines, the negotiations agenda was more linked to structural and systemic reforms in the political, social and religious spheres. In addition to those issues addressed by the substantive agenda, one of the procedural aspects of the negotiations that caused the most debate was the inclusiveness of the negotiations. In the Philippines, for example, the government authorized the expansion of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission membership in order to accommodate the drafting of the Bangsamoro Basic Law to include various MNLF factions and certain collectives in Mindanao. In southern Thailand, both sides spent a large part of the year discussing the designation of several security zones in the south of the country and the establishment of an office where both parties could oversee the implementation of this process and promote a wider societal participation within a secure environment. In this case, the debate on the inclusiveness of the process also centred on the actual representative character of Mara Patani among the insurgent groups in the south of the country and

especially on its ascendancy and control over the BRN, which is the most important armed organization. With respect to Nagaland, new armed organizations joined negotiations that until then had been carried out by the NSCN-IM, while the main government negotiator held several meetings with representatives of numerous tribes and student organizations, women's organizations and civil society in general. In Afghanistan, the government held several meetings in order to obtain a higher level of active involvement from countries such as India, Iran or several Central Asian republics, these meetings also served to gather the opinion of hundreds of religious leaders in a strategy aimed at designing a negotiating format with the Taliban insurgents.

With respect to the **progress of the peace negotiations**, several important meetings were held in specific cases, however in the majority of the contexts no significant progress was made, and in none of these processes was any final, overall or structural agreement reached. With respect to the Philippines, for example, none of the three peace processes underway in the country managed to progress in a positive manner. The negotiation between the Philippine Government and the NDF is particularly exemplary, given that during the course of the year the level of trust between the parties deteriorated, with repeated ceasefire disruptions, until Manila ended the negotiation process at the end of 2017. In the case of the MNLF, several exploratory meetings were held between the government and the MNLF faction led by Nur Misuari, as well as several meetings between Misuari and the President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte. Despite these efforts not a single formal meeting took place between the negotiating panels of the "Tripartite Review Process" of the 1996 peace agreement. In a positive light, it should be noted that the other MNLF factions were integrated into the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, with the aim of including the group in the peace process with the MILF through of the drafting of the law designed to regulate the establishment of a new political structure –named the Autonomous Region of Bangsamoro– so replacing the present-day Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. With respect to the MILF, several significant advances took place in the discussions of the Bangsamoro Basic Law of, which is the cornerstone of the peace process, however no advances were made in other aspects of the process, such as the disarmament and demobilization of the MILF. Nor did Thailand witness any form of substantial progress, and the Thai Government and Mara Patani met only on two occasions in order to address the creation of several security zones in the three southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.

There were however cases in which several important advances were registered, although none of these resulted in a peace agreement. In the Indian state of Nagaland, for example, although speculations that had circulated during the year about the possibility of a definitive peace agreement came to nothing, for the

first time in 20 years a round of peace negotiations were held in the state of Nagaland. One of these was a closed-door meeting in Diampur in which six armed groups assembled under the umbrella organisation of the "Naga National Political Groups" (NNPG). In much the same way, the Myanmar peace process ran into serious difficulties, nonetheless, in the second round of the Panglong Peace Conference 21, an agreement was reached on 37 points of the substantive agenda and several direct meetings also took place between the Executive and the armed groups that form part of the "national ceasefire agreement". These meetings were held both bilaterally (firstly involving the UWSA, KIA, SSPP and NDAA and later the MNDAA, AA and the TNLA) and with the coordinator –the UNFC (which comprises groups of those armed organizations that have not signed a cessation of hostilities deal with the government). Finally, in Afghanistan, official negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban insurgents did not begin, progress however was made both in the "Kabul Process for Cooperation and Security" –representatives from numerous European and Asian countries met in Kabul mid-year– and in the contacts between the Afghan Government and the international community. Regarding this point, the resumption in Oman of Quadrilateral Coordination Group meetings –involving China, Pakistan, the USA and Afghanistan– is especially relevant, given that this body had been inactive since mid-2016.

Finally, in none of the active negotiations in Asia was the **gender perspective** or the women's, peace and security agenda addressed in a major or specific manner, although there were cases –as in the Philippines– where several women played a relevant role in negotiations and other events in which women's organizations held meetings or mobilizations in favor of peace or a greater participation of women in the negotiation process. In Myanmar, for example, the AGIPP platform denounced that the national ceasefire did not include any international standards on gender, peace and security, and stated that the number of women participating in the Panglong 21 Peace Conference was far less than the previously assumed commitments, and that only three of the 37 points on which an agreement had been reached during 2017 were directly linked to women's rights. In Afghanistan, meanwhile, Afghan and Pakistani women met in Islamabad to demand a more extensive participation of women in the negotiation, while in the Indian state of Nagaland, organizations such as the Naga Mothers Association called for any possible future peace agreement to incorporate a gender perspective. Finally, in the Philippines, several women actively participated in the majority of the different negotiation processes in the country –the role of Miriam Coronel-Ferrer as head of the Philippine Government's negotiating panel with the MILF should be highlighted–, as well as in the Transitional Commission of Bangsamoro, although only four women were included among the 21 members of the body.

4.2. Case study analysis

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Negotiating actors	Government, Taliban insurgents, Haqqani Network, USA
Third parties	Quadrilateral Group (Pakistan, USA, China, Afghanistan), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UN
Relevant agreements	Bonn Agreement –Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions – (2001)

Summary:

Afghanistan has been in a state of continuous armed conflict since 1979. The different parties have attempted to negotiate in all of the stages of the struggle. During the 1980s the UN worked to facilitate rapprochement between the US and the USSR. After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the United Nations again facilitated the process that led to the Bonn Agreement, which marked the beginning of the country's transition. In recent years the persistence of armed conflict and the inability to stop it using military means has led the Afghan and U.S. Governments to gradually reach out to the Taliban insurgency, a process that has not been without difficulties and has not passed the exploration and confidence building stages. Different international actors such as the UN and the German and Saudi Arabian Governments have played different roles in facilitating and bringing the parties together.

As in recent years, **the peace process in Afghanistan continued in its exploratory format, and although different meetings were held and statements made by multiple actors, formal negotiations did not begin between the government and the Taliban rebels. However, the year ended with the High Peace Council offering peace negotiations to the Taliban that could adopt the Taliban's preferred mechanism and open the door for it to have a political office in Kabul.** The government agency urged the insurgents to submit a plan for negotiations, although this offer came alongside the announcement of a possible closure of the Taliban office in Qatar amidst accusations by the Afghan government that it was being used to raise funds and promote its activities. In December, the chairman of the High Peace Council said that a new stage was beginning in which it sought direct or indirect negotiations with the Taliban. He also said that consultations had been held with different social groups, including political parties, religious leaders, women and others. He also mentioned a recent trip to Indonesia in which Indonesian political and religious leaders showed their support for a peace process in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the High Peace Council held a meeting in late December in which 700 Afghan religious leaders participated to discuss a possible format for peace talks with the Taliban insurgency. This meeting was intended to prepare for the peace conference that would take place in the coming months in Kabul as part of the so-called Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation, involving

The peace process in Afghanistan remained at the exploratory stage, without starting official peace negotiations

delegations from over 20 countries. The first meeting of this process was held in June, which brought more than 20 representatives of different Asian and European governments to the Afghan capital. However, the meeting was marred by a serious attack on 31 May that killed over 150 people. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called again for a process led by Afghanistan and asked that there be no more bilateral attempts at negotiating with the Taliban rebels that exclude Afghanistan.

Alongside the Kabul Process, different meetings and events were held throughout the year, sponsored both by the Afghan government and by different international governments. In April, Russia hosted a meeting on peace in Afghanistan for the third time since December 2016. The Taliban did not attend this meeting on the grounds that it only followed the political agenda of the organisers. Whilst only Russia, China and Pakistan were present at the first meeting in 2016, Afghanistan, India and Iran joined the second one and the five republics of Central Asia participated in the last one. However, neither the US, which declined to participate, nor any other Western country with troops deployed in Afghanistan are attending this dialogue process. During the meeting in Moscow, the Afghan government allegedly expressed its willingness to hold direct talks with the Taliban insurgency, but only if they took place inside Afghanistan. This contrasted with statements made by the Russian government that the parties were willing to let Russia serve as a platform for intra-Afghan dialogue. Afghanistan also continued to claim that Pakistan was playing a negative role in the process, indicating that the failure of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, made up of China, Pakistan, the US and Afghanistan, was due to a lack of compliance with the commitments made by the member countries, alluding to Pakistan. However, in October the first meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group took place in Oman after a year and a half of inactivity,

since the assassination of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor by a US drone in Pakistan led to its suspension in May 2016. However, no joint statement was issued after the meeting and no concrete progress was made. Although some media outlets had reported that the Taliban could possibly participate, according to sources close to the Afghan government, the rebels

said they had not planned to send any delegation and denied having been invited to participate. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that they had no interest in this initiative. In fact, much of the meeting was focused on the role of Pakistan in the process and the fact that it was held at all was a sign of a certain degree of rapprochement between the US and Pakistan, whose relationship was going through a deep crisis. In November, a meeting organised by the Afghanistan Peace Studies Organisation (APSO) that was supposed to be held in Dubai was cancelled. Taliban representatives, different Afghan politicians and representatives of civil society organisations had planned

to participate. The organisers rejected reports of direct talks between the Taliban and the High Peace Council.

With regard to the gender dimension in the peace process, in July a delegation of women's rights activists met with a delegation of Pakistani women in Islamabad (Pakistan) and jointly called for a larger role for women in any peace negotiation aimed at ending the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The women said that both governments should begin processes to empower women to facilitate their participation in diplomatic peacebuilding initiatives, arguing that women's inclusion could lead to breaking the current impasse and thawing relations between the governments of both countries.

India (Nagaland)	
Negotiating actors	Indian Government, NSCN-IM
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Framework agreement (2015)
Summary: The Indian state of Nagaland has suffered armed conflict and a socio-political crisis since the 1950s as a result of much of the Naga population's unfulfilled aspiration to win independence and create a sovereign state. There have been different attempts at negotiation since the 1960s, but it was not until 1997 that a ceasefire agreement was reached with the NSCN-IM group, one of the main actors in the conflict. Although the agreement has remained in force to date, the negotiations have not made significant progress on the central issues. In 2012, however, the peace process received a boost from greater involvement from the Naga government and state MPs. Alongside the negotiations with the NSCN-IM, in 2001 the government reached another ceasefire agreement with the NSCN-K insurgent organisation. However, these negotiations have also failed to make significant progress.	

The peace process in the Indian state of Nagaland made significant headway, but the year ended without a final peace agreement being reached, contrary to speculation expressed at different times of the year. Important meetings were held between the insurgency and the government during the year, but a definitive agreement was not reached to end the conflict. Thorny issues included the post-agreement territorial definition of Nagaland, since calls persisted to incorporate territories that currently belong to neighbouring states, especially Manipur and Assam, but also Arunachal Pradesh and even Myanmar. These territorial claims have been a source of tension with non-Naga populations in neighbouring states, as well as with local authorities. In January, Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju said during a hearing in the Assamese capital, Guwahati, that peace talks with the Naga armed opposition group NSCN-IM were in their final stage and that there were few issues pending agreement, indicating that a peace agreement could be signed soon. He said this after inviting several civil society organisations from Manipur to engage in dialogue with the government to address the

issue of territorial definition. However, the subsequent arrest of insurgent leader ZD Bob prompted the NSCN-IM to question the government's seriousness about the negotiating process. In March, it was repeated that an agreement was forthcoming and the leader of the NSCN-IM and top negotiator with the government, Thuingaleng Muivah, revealed that the Framework Agreement signed with the Indian government in August 2015, whose content has never been made public, recognised the maximum sovereign power of the Naga people. This was said during a meeting attended by 3,000 members of the armed group at its main headquarters in Hebron. Muivah also said that the agreement recognises the NSCN-IM's demand to integrate all territories inhabited by the Naga population. A particularly significant event for the peace process took place in October, when a round of peace negotiations was held in Nagaland state territory for the first time in 20 years. However, the subject of the meeting was not revealed. It took place in Diampur behind closed doors and was attended by six armed groups grouped under the umbrella known as "Naga National Political Groups (NNPG)", consisting of the GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN (R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA, getting new insurgent organisations to join the peace process led until then by the NSCN-IM after the NSCN-K broke off negotiations. At the time, various local media outlets reported that a final agreement could be reached in December, though the year ended without that coming to pass. Also noteworthy were the meetings that government negotiator RN Ravi held with civil society organisations representing the different tribes, as well as women's and student organisations, to consult with them about a possible agreement between the government and the insurgency. The organisations that participated in the meetings with Ravi expressed how important it was for the agreement to be inclusive to all the Naga political groups and warned of the risks of signing one that is not, as it could lead to new clashes. Meanwhile, the members of the Naga Mothers Association voiced concern about the lack of dialogue with the NSCN-K and urged talks to take place. They also stressed the need for the agreement to have a gender perspective. Representatives of the Naga Hoho, which brings together several of the state's tribes, urged both sides to reach an agreement before the state elections scheduled for early 2018 and called for the elections to be postponed if they did not.

South-east Asia and Oceania

Myanmar	
Negotiating actors	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU,KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, NMSP, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (October 2015)

Summary:

Since the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of Myanmar and ethnic-based insurgent groups began in 1948, several negotiations have taken place in an attempt to end the violence. Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have reached ceasefire agreements with the Burmese Government. Although definitive peace agreements were never reached, violence did decrease significantly as a result of these pacts. In 2011 there was a change in the Administration as a result of the 2010 elections and the new Government made several overtures to the armed insurgency that brought about the start of peace negotiations and the signing of agreements with most of the armed groups operating in different parts of the country. By mid-2012 the Government had signed a ceasefire agreement with 12 insurgent organizations. In 2013, talks began with different insurgent groups aimed at reaching a nationwide ceasefire agreement and promoting political talks. In 2015, the government and eight armed opposition groups signed a ceasefire agreement (NCA), taking the first steps towards political dialogue

The peace process in Myanmar remained active throughout the year, though there was no significant progress, and the peace negotiations were tarnished by the extreme violence in the country, with the escalation of the armed conflict in Rakhine State and serious human rights violations against the Rohingya population. The second session of the 21st-Century Panglong Peace Conference was held in May. Initially scheduled for February, it had been postponed several times. The conference concluded with the approval of 37 points that had already been pre-approved by the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee and was attended by the Burmese government, Parliament, political parties, the Burmese Army and armed groups that signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA). These points included issues such as recognition of a union based on democracy and federalism, the end of granting privileges to any ethnic group and the possibility of letting states draft their own constitutions and laws based on the 2008 Constitution. Several issues remained pending, such as the possibility of secession from the union and self-determination, on which the discussions of the conference focused. No consensus on these points could be reached, since some armed groups refused to give up the possibility of secession. In addition to approving these points, another main achievement of the second conference was its greater inclusiveness, as in the end several armed groups attended that had not been invited to the first conference and met with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. Two meetings were held with insurgent groups that had not signed the nationwide ceasefire (NCA): the first with the UWSA, KIA, SSPP and NDAA and the second with the MNDAA, AA and TNLA. However, these armed groups did not participate in the negotiations that were held during the official conference and held on to their demands for fresh negotiations, thereby remaining outside the NCA.

Progress was made in the negotiations in Myanmar to get more insurgent groups to join the ceasefire agreement, although none formally signed it

These meetings with the insurgents that did not sign the NCA during the 21st-Century Panglong Peace Conference had been preceded by a meeting in February between State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and a delegation of political negotiators of the armed opposition group coalition UNFC, which unites insurgent organisations that have not signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA). This meeting was described as a success by the insurgents, which indicated that it opened the door to taking further steps in the peace process. The UNFC presented nine points to be negotiated, the last one being its signature of the NCA once the previous agreements have been reached. One point discussed with Suu Kyi was the establishment of a joint ceasefire supervisory committee if the UNFC signs the NCA. However, the UNFC's demand that the Burmese Armed Forces impose a unilateral ceasefire was rejected by the military high command, which urged the rebels to sign the NCA, noting that the Burmese Armed Forces had no reason to hold peace talks with the AA, MNDAA or TNLA groups, which have thus far been excluded from the negotiations. In April, the UNFC split into two platforms of armed groups, the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC), made up of seven armed groups and known as the Northern Alliance; and the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), composed of five insurgent organisations and known as the Southeast Alliance. There was no further progress in the discussions during the year, and in December the UNFC asked to meet again for the second time since March with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the Chief of the Burmese Armed Forces in an attempt to break the impasse in the peace negotiations.

At the end of the year, it was agreed that the third session of the 21st-Century Panglong Peace Conference would take place in early 2018, although at different times of the year, and insurgent organisations complained that the peace process has run aground as a result of profound differences between the Burmese government and the Burmese Armed Forces (Tatmadaw). The various armed groups that signed the ceasefire agreement also disagreed, including over their different approaches to the peace process. One example of the differences between the Burmese government and the Tatmadaw is the fact that the latter is trying to stop ethnic insurgent groups from holding nationwide political talks authorised by the government. Even though armed clashes between the groups that have signed the NCA and the Burmese Army have all but disappeared, little progress has been made in the political dialogue and the rebels criticised the new government negotiating team's lack of preparation and delays in the process due to the fact that all decisions had to go through the State Counsellor. Following the announcement of the new 21st-Century Panglong Peace Conference, different sources said that it seemed unlikely that armed groups that had not signed the NCA would do so before the third session

began. By the end of the year, disagreement lingered on issues such as the denomination of the union and the use of the adjectives “democratic” and “federal”.

Different organisations and platforms demanded the inclusion of a gender perspective and significant women’s involvement in the peace process throughout the year. The peace process continued to exclude women from participating and very few agreements were reached and discussions took place on including a gender perspective. According to figures provided by the government, only 154 of the 910 people attending the second session of the 21st-Century Panglong Peace Conference were women, accounting for 17%, far below the 30% that had previously been promised. In August, a forum on women, peace and security was held in Yangon that was attended by 180 delegates to discuss the role of women in peace processes. The Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP), a platform that brings together different women’s organisations to promote their inclusion in the peace negotiations, pointed out that only three of the 37 points agreed at the conference directly referred to issues related to women’s rights, with four referring to them indirectly.

Philippines (MILF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MILF
Third parties	Malaysia, International Contact Group, ThirdParty Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team
Relevant agreements	Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities (1997), Agreement on Peace between the Government and the MILF (2001), Mutual Cessation of Hostilities (2003), Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2012), Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2014)

Summary:

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

No violent episodes between the parties took place over the course of the year. The ceasefire supervisory mechanisms functioned correctly and some significant

progress was made in the parliamentary processing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), aimed at replacing the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, which should incorporate the main aspects of the peace agreements reached between the government and the MILF between 2012 and 2014. However, several analysts highlighted the delays and difficulties that are affecting the overall implementation of the peace agreements. On the one hand, **there has been no progress in respect of the disarmament and demobilisation of the MILF (which is supposed to occur in four stages) since 2015, when only 75 weapons were handed over and just 145 fighters were demobilised.** On the other hand, the approval of the the BBL, which is the cornerstone of the implementation of the peace agreement, seems to have stalled significantly. Although the Bangsamoro Peace and Development Roadmap (approved by Rodrigo Duterte’s new administration in July 2016) was on schedule to meet the July 2018 deadline for preparing a draft version of the law, by the end of the year it was clear that that it would be impossible to meet the deadlines set forth in the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) of March 2014. The elections scheduled for May 2019 in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao should be the first ones in which the authorities of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region are elected. Given that (according to the provisions of the peace agreement) the Transitional Authority of Bangsamoro must be operational for at least a year, this body must be up and running by the end of June 2018 at the latest. The Electoral Commission would need around six months to prepare the referendum that must validate the BBL, which means that the commission needed to be approved by both chambers of Congress by December 2017 at the latest. However, by the time the deadline arrived, the draft of the BBL was still at a very preliminary stage in parliament with no clear date for its approval.

In February, following several months of inactivity, the president appointed the members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), the body entrusted with drawing up a draft of the BBL and whose membership had already been extended from 15 to 21 in November 2016, in order to accommodate new groups and make the aforementioned law more inclusive. It should be pointed out that three of the ten members designated by the government were the representatives of the MNLF faction led by Yusoph Jokiri and Muslimin Sema. **Following several months of work and consultations in various parts of Mindanao, in mid-July the BTC delivered the draft law to the president’s office in order for it to be reviewed and ratified. In turn, the president’s office sent it in August to the Senate and the House of Representatives in order for it to go through the parliamentary process.** Over the following months, President Duterte expressed his support for the law and asked Congress to pass it urgently, even suggesting that a special meeting should be held between the two houses to address the issue. However, by the end of the year it was clear that there was significant opposition in

both houses to the text drafted by the BTC. Some voices warned about the alleged unconstitutional nature of the draft text, while others expressed concerns that the state was offering too many concessions. Another group felt that the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region should be conditional on the progress of one of Duterte's priorities: the reform of the constitution in order to turn the Philippines into a federal state. It should be pointed out that the MILF has voiced its support for the federalisation of the country but has argued that the approval of the BBL must take place before that reform. In December, Congress agreed to set up a sub-committee to discuss the issue and to bring the text drafted by the BTC into line with the other three draft laws drawn up by other lawmakers, some of which (such as the one drawn up by former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) were fiercely opposed by the MILF. According to the schedule planned by Congress, the resulting text of the harmonisation of the four aforementioned draft laws would be subject to a series of consultations and hearings. In early 2018 some media outlets reported that Duterte's goal was for the law to be approved in March. Meanwhile, mention must be made of the fact that in January the Malaysian government appointed (with the agreement of Manila and the MILF) Tan Sri Zakaria Bin Abdul Hamid as the new facilitator of peace talks, replacing Tengku Datuk Abdul Ghafar Mohamed, who died at the end of 2016. Following some months in which the government of the Philippines expressed doubts and concerns about the role that Malaysia should play in the peace process, considering that the negotiation stage had ended and that it was now time to implement the agreement, the two negotiating panels (led by Irene Santiago in the case of the government and by Mohagher Iqbal in the case of the MILF) agreed to continue their work as facilitators of dialogue.

Philippines (MNLF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)
Third parties	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
Relevant agreements	Tripoli Agreement (1976), Final Peace Agreement (1996)

Summary:

After five years of high intensity armed hostilities between the Government and the MNLF, both parties signed a peace agreement in 1976 in Tripoli under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which, shortly before, had recognized the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Moro people. However, the unilateral implementation of this agreement by the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos caused the armed conflict to re-ignite. After the fall of Marcos and the recovery of democracy in 1986, peace negotiations resumed and in 1996 a new peace agreement was reached for the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli agreement. Nevertheless, both the MNLF and the OIC considered there were substantial elements of the new peace agreement that had not been implemented, so since the year 2007 a tripartite process to revise the peace agreement started. Despite the advances achieved with that process (the so-called '42 points of consensus'),

the attack launched by the MNLF on the town of Zamboanga in September 2013, the search and arrest warrant against the founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, the criticism by the MNLF of the peace agreement signed by the Government and the MILF in March 2014 and the differing interpretations between the Government and the MNLF on the conclusion or not of the revision of the agreement led the peace negotiations to a standstill at the end of 2013. With Rodrigo Duterte arriving in power in mid 2016, the conversations resumed with Nur Misuari, who was granted a temporary judicial permit for this purpose. Nevertheless, the majority faction of the MNLF decided to include the main demands of the MNLF in the peace process with the MILF, which led to three of its representatives being included into the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, in charge of drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law (a new political entity foreseen in the 2014 peace agreement with the MILF and which should replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao).

No significant progress was made in the bilateral negotiations between the government and the faction of the MNLF led by the group's founder, Nur Misuari. However, representatives of the main faction of the MNLF (led by Yusoph Jokiri and Muslimin Sema) were appointed by the government as members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), the body entrusted with producing the draft of the law establishing the bases for replacing the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. As far as negotiations between Manila and the Misuari faction are concerned, no formal meeting was held between the negotiating panels but there were at least four meetings between the chairperson of the government's negotiating panel (Nabil Tan, assistant of Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser for the peace process) and his MNLF counterpart (lawyer Randolph Parcasio). Furthermore, Nur Misuari and Rodrigo Duterte held bilateral meetings in March, July and September to discuss the future of the peace process in Mindanao and to address Duterte's attempt to turn the Philippines into a federal state. The legal status of Misuari was addressed in the last of the three meetings held between Duterte and Misuari. At the end of 2016, after being declared a fugitive from justice for his participation in the military siege of the city of Zamboanga in 2013, in which more than 200 people were killed and many thousands were displaced, a local court annulled for a six-month period the search and arrest warrants issued against him. At the end of May 2017, the aforementioned court extended the annulment for a further six months in order for Misuari to take part in the peace talks with the government. However, at the end of August another court issued an arrest warrant for Misuari, accusing him of misuse of public funds for the purchase of school material during his time as governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao between 1996 and 2001.

By the end of the year, it was not clear what strategy the government had in mind in order to bring into line or reconcile the peace agreement signed with the MILF in 2014 with the various political agendas and

strategies of the different factions of the MILF. On the one hand, the government indicated that one of the main reasons for extending the membership of the CTB from 15 to 21 and for incorporating three members of the MNLF (faction of Jokiri and Sema) was precisely in order for the Bangsamoro Basic Law to include the main aspects of the 1996 peace agreement between the government and the MNLF that were not implemented. It should be pointed out that tripartite talks began in 2006 between Manila, the MNLF and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on the full implementation of the aforementioned 1996 agreement, and that a 42-point substantive agenda emerged from the various rounds of talks in order to amend the organic law that led to the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. On the other hand, at the end of the year, Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser for the peace process, declared that peace talks with the MILF and MNLF (Misuari faction) would in the future converge in some way in Congress.

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

Summary:

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

Despite the fact that substantial progress was made in the peace process and that several meetings were held over the course of the year, by the end of the year the level of trust between the parties had deteriorated to the point where the government called off the peace

talks. During the third round of official negotiations, held in Rome at the end of January, both parties signed the rules for discussing the Agreement on Economic and Social Reforms (considered by many analysts the cornerstone of a potential final peace agreement) and reactivated the Joint Monitoring Committee, a mechanism for supervising human rights violations under the auspices of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, the only item of the four-point substantive negotiation agenda on which agreement has been reached after three decades of negotiation. According to some human rights defence groups, the reactivation of the Joint Monitoring Committee was important in light of the 4,000 reported human rights violations perpetrated by the State during the terms of office of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Benigno Aquino and Rodrigo Duterte. Furthermore, during the Rome meeting, the government delivered its draft proposals for the agreement on political and constitutional reforms, one of the four items of the substantive agenda. According to the NDF, both the agreements on economic and social reforms and those on political and constitutional reforms could be signed in 2017; the shift from a unitary state to a federal state (one of the main reforms promoted by the president, Rodrigo Duterte, and which has the support of the NDF) could take place in 2018; and, last of all, a final peace agreement could be signed in around 2020. During this round of talks in Rome, the government agreed to ask the US to remove both the Communist Party of the Philippines and its founder, Jose Maria Sison, from its list of terrorist organisations and people, facilitating the possible return to the Philippines of Sison, who has been in exile in Holland since the mid-1980s.

Despite this progress, early signs of tension were detected in this Rome meeting. Indeed, the parties agreed to address this issue in the following round of negotiations, scheduled for the end of February in Holland; the government did not achieve its goal of getting the bilateral agreement on the indefinite cessation of hostilities signed in Rome. The NDF did not even want to schedule the discussion on this issue, arguing that the government must release almost 400 NDF political prisoners before it could take place. The status of the unilateral ceasefires declared respectively by the government and the NDF had been in danger following clashes in Cotabato just before the start of the third round of talks. Against this backdrop of tension, on 1 February the NPA broke the aforementioned ceasefire agreement and killed three soldiers. Over the following days, the government responded by declaring the end of its unilateral cessation of hostilities and the president, Rodrigo Duterte, ordered government representatives to withdraw from the peace talks. Following a series of informal meetings held in Holland, facilitated by the Norwegian government, both parties agreed to get the crisis talks back on track and scheduled a

new round of negotiations for early April with the goal of discussing the Comprehensive Agreement on Economic and Social Reforms. Nevertheless, the fourth round of negotiations got under way in a hostile atmosphere, with mutual accusations between the parties and without a prior cessation of hostilities. The NDF stated that this had not occurred due to Manila's refusal to declare its own ceasefire. It also warned that it was expecting an escalation of armed actions by the army. Meanwhile, the government argued that since the ceasefire had been broken in February, the NPA had carried out more than 60 armed attacks and acts of extortion. Furthermore, it accused the NPA of taking advantage of the ceasefire in order to step up its recruitment of fighters and to obtain resources through extortion. In this respect, Rodrigo Duterte imposed several conditions on the NDF and the NPA in order for the peace process to continue: the end of extortion (or of the so-called revolutionary tax); the release of hostages; the end of attacks on companies, infrastructures and facilities; and the signing of a bilateral ceasefire agreement. According to the NPA, the government's attempt to get the NDF to sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement as a condition for continuing peace talks is a clear violation of the so-called Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, considered the framework agreement that defines the parties' substantive agenda. The fourth round of talks (which should have been held in Oslo but which was finally held in Holland, where the leadership of the NDF has lived for decades) produced a commitment by the parties to sign a temporary joint ceasefire and an agreement to release prisoners. In respect of the first point, the parties agreed the guidelines on the presence of the NPA and the armed forces in communities, as well as establishing demilitarised zones and defining which military acts should be considered hostile and which ones should be prohibited. The parties decided to postpone addressing the issue of extortion, including it instead in the framework of negotiations on the Comprehensive Agreement on Political Reforms. As regards the second point, the NPA agreed to release its last four prisoners of war, while Manila agreed to release 23 prisoners, in most cases due to humanitarian reasons.

Despite holding the fourth round of talks in Holland, the rest of the year saw a significant erosion of trust between the parties. On 23 May, the president, Rodrigo Duterte, declared martial law in Mindanao after serious clashes took place in Marawi (Province of Lanao del Sur) between the armed forces and the so-called Maute group. Two days later, the Communist Party of the Philippines stated that the imposition of martial law was unacceptable and ordered the NPA, its armed wing, to carry out a nationwide offensive and to step up its recruitment campaigns in response to the military operations and human rights violations that occurred both before and after the declaration of martial law. Meanwhile, Manila announced the cancellation of the fifth round of formal talks, which

had been scheduled to take place in Holland from 27 May to 2 June. At the end of May, the NDF renewed its criticism of the government's decision, stating that Manila was exclusively responsible for calling off the talks. At the same time, it expressed its willingness to resume talks without imposing preconditions and offered its help in dealing with the fighting in Marawi. In early June the parties decided to resume official talks in August in a place yet to be determined (press reports speculated that Japan or Hong Kong might be the chosen venue). However, in mid-June, the government announced once again that it was calling off the talks after the NPA attacked a convoy of the Presidential Security Group in Cotabato. Furthermore, Duterte declared at the end of June that once the clashes in Marawi had been dealt with, he would order a military offensive against the NPA. Over the following months, both the presidential adviser for the peace process, Jesus Dureza, and the chairperson of the negotiating panel with the government, Silvestre Bello III, stated on several occasions that the peace talks had not formally been brought to an end and even President Duterte declared that there was still hope of a possible resumption of peace talks.

Nevertheless, armed hostilities intensified and relations between the parties became increasingly hostile. Indeed, on 23 November, **Duterte signed a presidential proclamation bringing to an end the peace talks with the NDF. A few days later he signed another proclamation declaring the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines terrorist organisations** and urging the members of the NDF who had been released in the preceding months to present themselves in order to form part of the negotiations. Furthermore, soon after these decisions were made, the government ordered the intensification of military operations against the NPA and the president himself predicted intensive fighting over the following months. In mid-December, a clear majority in Congress approved a presidential request to extend martial law in Mindanao to the end of 2018, arguing the need to combat ISIS and other Islamist groups, along with the need to wipe out the NPA. As regards the NDF, the chairperson of its negotiating panel, Fidel Agcaoli, stated that the talks could only be considered cancelled 30 days after the reception of a letter of notification by the government. Moreover, Agcaoli declared that Duterte had cancelled peace talks three times and complained that both the NDF and the Norwegian government (the facilitator of the peace talks) were constantly subject to the arbitrary decisions of President Duterte. Meanwhile, the founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, issued a communique expressing his disappointment at the calling off of negotiations. He stated that over the course of the preceding months both parties had worked discretely and had made significant progress on three draft agreements regarding the items to be discussed in the Oslo meeting that did not finally take place.

Thailand (south)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MARA Patani (umbrella organisation representing several armed groups)
Third parties	Malaysia
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

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

Although the levels of violence continued to decrease and reached a historic low since the start of the armed conflict in 2004, little progress was made in the peace process. The parties only met on two occasions in Kuala Lumpur with the facilitation of the Malaysian government: in February and in September. At the end of February the parties announced an agreement on the issue that they had been recently negotiating: the establishment of several safety zones in Yala, Patanni and Narathiwat in which agreements could be reached on the cessation or reduction of violence. It emerged in March that the establishment of safety zones in five districts had been agreed (although without determining which ones), along with the setting up of teams to supervise the agreement, made up of members of the government, of MARA Patani and of the local population. However, no progress was made over the course of the year in implementing the said agreement. According to the government, there were two main explanations for this stalemate: first of all, the lack of agreement on the demands for immunity made by MARA Patani in order for some of its members to be able to move freely around the designated districts and

supervise the progress of the February agreement. The second element that complicated progress in the peace process were the doubts about whether the main armed group that operates in the south of the country, the BRN, formed part of MARA Patani and, therefore, whether it supported talks. Several media outlets speculated on the bad relations between the BRN and MARA Patani, and on several occasions the government questioned the BRN's commitment to peace talks. In fact, soon after details emerged on the agreement reached at the end of February on safety zones, there was a significant increase in the number of violent incidents. Moreover, in mid-April the BRN issued a communique in which it criticised the peace negotiations between Bangkok and MARA Patani, and in which it made clear once again its conditions for taking part in talks (therefore insinuating that it wasn't taking part in the talks with MARA Patani): the joint designation of a mediator, the joint design of a negotiation process and the presence of international observers. At the end of September a BRN spokesperson stated that the group did not intend to form part of the current negotiation process and warned that the group would continue with its armed struggle until the government agreed to design a negotiation process acceptable to both parties. At the end of the year, some analysts predicted that peace talks might begin in 2018 in Saudi Arabia with the presence of the BRN faction led by Doonoh Wae-mano. Meanwhile, MARA Patani denied on several occasions reports on the cooling of relations between the BRN and MARA Patani and the effect on the peace process, pointing out that three of the main posts in the umbrella organisation (which formally brings together the main insurgent groups of the south of the country) are occupied by members of the BRN (Awang Jabat, Sukree Hari and Ahmad Chuwol). Nonetheless, the government expressed doubts regarding how much sway the aforementioned three people held in the BRN.

In September the parties held a technical meeting in Kuala Lumpur, but the chairperson of the government's negotiating panel did not attend and no significant agreements were reached. Nevertheless, **at the end of the year, the secretary of the government's negotiating panel stated that the government had plans to unveil in the next round of talks (scheduled for the start of 2018) a plan for the the implementation of the safety zones: the creation of a safety coordination office for all the parties in which members of the government, MARA Patani and civil society** could evaluate the implementation of the agreement and meet the demands of the civilian population of Yala, Patani and Narathiwat in this respect. Despite the lack of substantial progress over the course of the year, the government denied on several occasions that the peace process had stalled or ended.

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2017, 16% of the peace processes in the world (7 of the 43) were in Europe.
- All peace processes on the European continent involved the state governments as one of the negotiating parties, except for the case in the Basque Country, which was a multilateral dialogue process without the central Government.
- All peace processes on the continent were accompanied by third parties, using different formats and playing different roles.
- Most peace processes in Europe followed a format that was not inclusive enough, without citizen participation despite civil society demands for participation.
- Some progress was achieved during 2017 regarding humanitarian aspects in several peace processes, like the largest exchange of prisoners in the Ukraine to date, even if the processes remained at a standstill regarding the main issues.
- Peace processes in Europe continued to lack a gender perspective and 2017 brought to light, once again, the absence of gender architectures, as evidenced by the marginal role of the Cypriot gender equality committee.
- The Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan were unable to come up with concrete measures for the commitments made to reinforce the ceasefire monitoring and establish investigation mechanisms.
- The armed group ETA disarmed in 2017 through an international verification process and with citizen participation, while remaining challenges in the Basque Country included coexistence, memory and prisoners, as well as others.
- In Cyprus, although some landmarks were achieved in 2017 and progress was made in terms of governance, power sharing and property, insufficient progress was made to reach the long overdue agreement, and a period of reflection started at the end of the year.

This chapter studies the main peace processes in Europe during 2017. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the dialogue processes in the region are presented, followed by the analysis on the evolution of each specific context during the year, including references to the gender perspective.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Armenia, Azerbaijan	Minsk Group of the OSCE (co-chaired by Russia, France and USA, the remaining permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey)
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	UN, EU, Guarantor Powers (Turkey, Greece and the UK)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ¹	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ²
Moldova (Transdniestria)	Moldova, the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria	OSCE, Ukraine, Russia, USA and EU
Serbia – Kosovo	Serbia, Kosovo	EU, UN
Spain (Basque Country)	ETA, political and social actors in the Basque Country	International Contact Group (ICG), International Verification Commission (IVC), Social Forum to Promote the Peace Process and the Permanent Social Forum
Ukraine (east)	Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia ³	OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁴); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁵)

1. Russia's status in the peace process in Georgia is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia as an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
2. Ibid.
3. Russia's status in the peace process in Ukraine is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia as an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

5.1. Negotiations in 2017: regional trends

In 2017, seven peace processes were identified on the **European continent**, the same figure as in 2016. This represents 16% of the total number of peace processes globally in 2017 (43 processes around the world). From these seven dialogue processes, only one was for an active armed conflict: the war in the Ukraine, which started in 2014. All other processes refer to past situations of armed conflict or social-political conflict and, with the exception of Spain (Basque Country), they were all still in a context of socio-political crisis, of different intensity (high intensity in the case of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh; and low intensity in Georgia regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Moldova, Cyprus and Serbia-Kosovo).⁶ **Geographically, 57% of peace processes (four cases) were in former Soviet countries.** Of these four cases, three processes were in the South Caucasus, and the fourth in Eastern Europe (Ukraine). The atypical multilateral dialogue process for the Basque issue is the only remaining active process in Western Europe.

All of the peace processes on the European continent involved state governments as negotiating actors except for the case of the Basque Country

In terms of the **actors** involved in negotiations, **all dialogue processes in Europe included the state government as a negotiating party, with the exception of Spain (Basque Country).** In this last process, and despite negotiations in the past with different Spanish Governments (including attempts made by to hold peace conversations with the armed group ETA by all central governments since the reintroduction of democracy and until the end of the peace process in 2006 with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as PM), the new scenario that opened up in 2011 has engaged dialogue and multilateral contacts among political parties, city councils and regional governments, trade unions, civil society and international actors, as well as interactions with the armed group ETA. So, **the case in the Basque Country consolidated an innovative dialogue model**, where despite the State's refusal to negotiate, a broad range of political and social actors –with international support– were able to establish a broad framework for dialogue, and achieving important progress in key aspects on the agenda of a conventional process, such as the

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe 2017



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2017

6. For further information on the evolution of these socio-political crises, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alerta 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

disarmament of ETA in 2017 and the prospect that the group would dissolve in 2018.

Another point worth mentioning in Europe was the **large number of processes (86%, or six cases) with the participation of actors self-proclaimed as States, with a territorial control, mostly without international recognition, and all of which were supported by at least one regional or international power.** However, **the status of these entities in the negotiation format varied: they were consulted but with little margin to negotiate in some cases, while in others they were full-fledged negotiating actors.** So, in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh –supported but not recognized by Armenia– the region was consulted in the framework of a bilateral process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with OSCE mediation. In Cyprus, the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is only recognized by Turkey, was a negotiating party in the dialogue among political representatives from both communities on the island, facilitated by the UN. In the so-called Geneva International Discussions (GID), the representatives of South Ossetia and Abkhazia –entities that are recognized as States by Russia– negotiate at the same table with Georgia and Russia, in a process facilitated by the OSCE, the EU and the UN, and are a negotiating party with Georgia in other dialogue mechanisms in the process (known as the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, IPRMs). In the case of Transdniestria, which is not internationally recognized but is supported by Russia, the entity was a negotiating party in the bilateral peace process with the Government of Moldova, with the mediation of the OSCE. At the same time, the leaderships of the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk (eastern Ukraine), which have political and military support of Russia but without formal recognition of their independence, they participated as a consulted actor by the Trilateral Contact Group (the Ukraine, Russia and OSCE), in a parallel format to the so-called Normandy format (the Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France). In a separate case, in Kosovo –which contrary to other cases does have a broad international recognition as a State, from more than one hundred countries– it is a negotiating party in the bilateral dialogue with Serbia, facilitated by the EU.

At the same time, the processes on the European continent are mostly characterized by non-participatory formats, where the formal channels of negotiation only included the confronted parties, without involving other political or social actors. Once again, the Basque Country was the exception, where there was the participation of political parties, trade unions, regional and local governments, and civil society. Nevertheless, in some of the processes, as in the cases of Cyprus or Georgia, there were parallel channels of dialogue among civil society actors (such as the Religious Track for the Cyprus Peace Process in Cyprus; or consultations of government representatives of Georgia, who participated in the GID

and IPRM formats, with civil society organizations, including women, despite the lack of ability of these consultations to influence formal negotiations).

With regards to third parties, **all of the peace processes on the European continent had international involvement for mediation –including facilitation tasks– or verification, with a special role played by intergovernmental organizations** compared to other mediation actors. This was especially the case of the OSCE and the EU, which mediated or facilitated in four and two of the processes, respectively. The EU was also an observer in the processes in Cyprus and Moldova (Transdniestria). The UN, in turn, was the mediating actor in the long-lived Cyprus peace process, while it was also a co-mediator in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), and contributed to the dialogue among Serbia and Kosovo, playing a smaller role. Beyond the predominant role of intergovernmental organizations, some countries also participated as third parties. This is true for France and Germany in the peace process of Ukraine, within the framework of the Normandy format. Also the UK, Greece and Turkey, the three Guarantor Powers in the Cypriot conflict –a status given to them

in the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, which ultimately gives them the power to act with the sole purpose of re-establishing the situation defined in the treaty– participated in the peace process in 2017 based on this specific status. Finally, third parties also included **individual facilitation actors**, as in the case of the Basque Country, where international personalities make up the so-called International Contact Group (ICG)

and the International Verification Commission (IVC), adding to other facilitation actors such as the Social Forum to Promote the Peace Process and, as part of the latter, the Permanent Social Forum.

As for the points on the **negotiation agenda**, they were several and not all of the peace processes made it possible to identify the details of the working areas and the status of the discussions in each round. Since these are processes that fit within a structured framework of discussion – or, in the Basque Country, with broad social and political consensus on the points to be discussed– they all had defined agendas. One case stands out from the other, and that is the **disarmament** in the case of the Basque Country. The armed group ETA announced its disarmament in April 2017, as the outcome of a process with the participation of civil society and international supervision of the IVC, including the collaboration of the French authorities –who accepted the disclosure and delivery of the location of the arsenals and their management– and the Basque and Navarre governments, and counted with the support of political parties from the Spanish and French Basque Country. The **future dissolution of ETA** was another of the points discussed in 2017, both within the group and under the framework of the multilateral dialogue with the different political and social actors. Also, progress was also made in terms of

Negotiations in Europe in 2017 had facilitation actors in all cases, but most processes did not include citizen participation

memory and coexistence at different levels. The issue of **prisoners** remained on the agenda, with announcements made by the group of prisoners on this matter (accepting the legal pathways and individual benefits), while Spain continued to refuse to adopt measures to move prisoners closer to the Basque Country and to transfer competencies on prisons. The issue of prisoners was also present in the case of the Ukraine, **on a humanitarian basis**, with the greatest **exchange of prisoners** since the armed conflict started, facilitated by the ICRC. Also in Georgia, and in humanitarian terms, progress was made to exchange information to **find and identify the remains of disappeared persons** in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia armed conflicts.

Most peace processes on the European continent lacked a gender perspective

Another substantive point is the one relating to the definition of the **status of the areas in dispute** – a point on the agenda of many of the processes in Europe (Ukraine, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Moldova and, indirectly, also in Georgia and Serbia-Kosovo). It continued to be mostly at a standstill in the negotiations analyzed. In Ukraine this continued to generate controversy, partly in relation to the interpretation of the timeline for the implementation of the Minsk agreements (Ukrainian demand for **arms and external forces to withdraw** and recovering **control of the border** with Russia, and the position held by Russia and the authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk demanding progress in political issues such as the status and elections, before discussing the border control). In the case of Moldova, the Moldovan government announced a draft proposal for the status of Transdniestria and negotiations on this point, even if analysts and experts predict there will be delays and difficulties. Issues on **security** were among the key elements in the peace processes on the European continent. So, the issue of security and guarantees was one of the crucial points in the discussions in Cyprus in 2017. Although the parameters were set in January, finally an agreement was not met at the Cyprus Conference in June. The issue of security was also present in the negotiations of **non-use of force** commitments in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflict –without any progress–; and in the **ceasefire** negotiations in Ukraine, with new and partial truces during 2017 and reiterated breaches, and on **monitoring mechanisms**. With regards to this last point, in Ukraine a door opened to hold discussions on a possible peacekeeping mission of the UN, while for the process in Armenia and Azerbaijan no concrete progress was made in terms of the commitments adopted beforehand to increase the small team of OSCE observers, neither to create an incident investigation mechanism. It is worth mentioning that Russia decided to withdraw from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC) –an entity that had been created to facilitate the implementation of the Minsk ceasefire agreements in Ukraine, the working of which had been supervised by the OSCE. Also relating to security, many points were discussed at the Geneva International Discussions –trying to settle the conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia– regarding measures that are considered

as threats by the respective participants. In the case of Cyprus, beyond issues of security and guarantees, the other points high on the agenda –and for which there was still no agreement– were **territory, property** and issues relating to **governance and the sharing of power**. In the case of the process in Kosovo, to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo, one fundamental aspect in the year was the **integration of judges, prosecutors and judicial staff** from the Serbian areas in northern Kosovo into the Kosovar judicial system. Another important point was the issue of **trust-building measures**, which was high on the agenda in 2017 between Moldova and Transdniestria, with several agreements being reached.

With regards to the evolution of negotiations, it is worth mentioning the **stalled processes in Armenia-Azerbaijan** –with no significant progress with regards to the commitments taken on beforehand, even if the conflict did not experience a crisis like the one in 2016 and the presidents held a presidents' summit–, in **Ukraine** –where there was no substantial progress achieved but where important steps were taken in the humanitarian field– and in **Georgia** –with an escalation in accusations of hostile measures, present at the negotiating table, and with no progress in relation to the underlying issues. In **Cyprus** progress was made at different moments during the year –including some historical milestones– and there were high expectations, but these did not translate into an agreement at the end, giving way to a phase of reflection in the second half of the year. Also, in the case of Serbia-Kosovo, there were some regressions and limited progress was made.

Moving on to the **gender perspective** in the peace processes on the European continent, it was largely absent, and there wasn't a prominent or effective participation of women's organizations or gender experts in the processes. **Neither the EU nor the OSCE provided public data on the number of gender experts in their mediation or facilitation teams**. In the case of Georgia, the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) –which is co-facilitating dialogue mechanisms at a lower level than the GID, the IPRM– did have one gender advisor and various gender focal points, but this was not the case for the EU special representative for the Southern Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia –co-mediator in the GID together with the OSCE and the UN–. The Georgian delegation at the GID had 30% women, with no information on their expertise on gender. The UN, in turn, through the UN Secretary-General's report does mention the presence of women, requests for expertise on gender, and consultations with civil society in all of the processes that are co-mediated by the UN as a whole, but not for each process. With regards to obstacles, new investigative evidence in 2017 showed there was a **lack of political will** to integrate the gender perspective into the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot delegations, as well as the **limitations of the gender architecture** in the process, given the marginal role of the technical committee on

gender equality and the lack of interaction with women's organizations on the island. Women's organizations in Ukraine, in turn, called for a greater participation in the negotiations. It is worth noting that from the seven peace process on the European continent, one of them (14%) –the peace process of Nagorno-Karabakh– took place in countries with high levels of gender-based discrimination (Armenia and Azerbaijan) according to the OCDE's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). Precisely, none of these two countries have a National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325, even if there were preparations for NAPs in both of them. Nevertheless, civil society representatives from Armenia reported on the lack of participation of civil society in the governmental process to prepare the NAP.

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria
Third parties	OSCE (mediator), Ukraine and Russia (guarantor countries), and the US and EU (observers) in the 5+2 format
Relevant agreements	Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova (1992), Memorandum on the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdniestria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997)

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 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 of full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in Transdniestria. Since the beginning of the dispute there have been several proposals, partial agreements, commitments and confidence-building measures in the framework of the peace process, as well as important obstacles and periods of stagnation. Geostrategic international disputes also hover over this unresolved conflict, which deteriorated due to the war in Ukraine.

The peace process underwent highly significant progress, with the signing of a protocol of confidence-building measures at the end of the year. The momentum in 2017 draw on the progress made in 2016, when the negotiating process resumed in the 5+2 format and the so-called Berlin Protocol⁷ was signed, which included detailed steps to advance on concrete issues to build trust. In 2017, under the Austrian chairmanship of the OSCE, which is mediating the conflict, the parties negotiated on the so-called “package of eight”, which included four fundamental aspects of the Berlin Protocol (including mutual recognition of diplomas issued in Transdniestria, recognition of vehicles with license plates issued in Transdniestria for international road traffic and telecommunication), as well as the use of the Latin alphabet in Transdniestrian schools, access to cultivable land in Dubasari, the freedom of movement for people, goods and services and the reopening of the Gura Bicului-Bychok Bridge. The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson in-Office for the Transdniestrian settlement process, Wolf Dietrich Heim, made several trips to the region and met separately and jointly with representatives of both parties. Heim also met with the negotiating heads of both parties to the conflict in the town of Bender in September, in which both sides listed the areas where they were willing to reach agreement under the “package of eight”. In the first confidence-building measure in this new stage, **in November the delegations of Moldova and Transdniestria agreed to reopen the Gura Bicului-Bychok Bridge, which connects both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River.** A strategic asset for communication between both territories, the bridge was destroyed during the armed conflict and restored in the early 21st century, but had remained closed. The decision to reopen it resulted from the joint signing of a protocol on 3 November and was described as historic by the head of the OSCE mission in Moldova and co-mediator of the 5+2 format, Michael Scanlan. The special representative of the OSCE also hailed its symbolism and practical significance.

The decision to reopen the Gura Bicului-Bychok Bridge gave rise to further steps. **On 25 November, Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration George Balan and Transdniestrian chief negotiator and self-styled Foreign Minister Vitaly Ignatiev signed four other agreements on confidence-building measures,** which included the recognition of diplomas issued by Shevchenko Transdniestria State University, operational guarantees for schools managed by the Moldovan authorities that use the Latin alphabet, the resumption of direct telephone service between both territories and the legalisation of mobile telephone service in Transdniestria and authorisation for Moldovan farmers to access land in the Dubasari region. Finally, in a new meeting of the 5+2 format held in Vienna on 27 and 28

7. *Protocol of the Official Meeting of the Permanent Conference for Political Questions in the Framework of the Negotiating Process on the Transdniestrian Settlement*, 2-3 June 2016, Berlin.

November, the first since June 2016, both parties signed a new protocol (known in its abridged version as the Vienna Protocol⁸) recapitulating the recent agreements reached, such as the reopening of the bridge and the four agreements of 25 November, and agreeing on the steps to follow. Among these, first, both parties agreed to exert further efforts to resolve other priority issues laid down in the Berlin Protocol. Second, they reaffirmed their willingness to coordinate and sign an agreement for the use of Transdnistrian vehicles on international roads before February 2018. Third, they agreed to achieve practical results on implementing points 5 and 6 of the Berlin Protocol during 2018, notably the exchange of information on criminal proceedings and guarantees to implement the agreements reached in the negotiating process. Fourth, they pledged to continue based on the achievements made and to progress further on socio-economic and humanitarian issues. Fifth, they declared their desire for well-paced work at all levels of the process, though without specifying frequencies of rounds of meetings. Sixth, the parties reaffirmed their previous commitments to resolve all issues exclusively through negotiations.

Meanwhile, in line with the commitment already expressed by the Moldovan government in 2016 to develop a political concept of a special status for Transdnistria, **Moldova's special representative in the negotiations, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration Gheorghe Balan, said in November that it would be possible to start negotiations on special status for Transdnistria by the end of the year.** Balan said that the government had already prepared a draft document on special status for the region, on which consultations with non-governmental actors were being held and which would later be shared with international actors. Some analysts were sceptical about progress in the final resolution of the conflict and predicted a slowdown of the process and difficulties in 2018 in relation to the special status issue.

Regarding other levels of the peace process, such as meetings between the populations of both territories, around 30 representatives of civil society organisations from both sides of the conflict held an informal retreat in August where they addressed ways to cooperate and shared experiences on joint projects. With regard to the gender dimension, **Moldova remained without a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.** Lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex individuals continued to be stigmatised in 2017, with the Moldovan president publicly criticising the LGTBI population.⁹

Moldova and Transdnistria agreed on confidence-building measures, included in the Vienna Protocol, as well as further steps to take

Ukraine (east)	
Negotiating actors	Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia ¹⁰
Third parties	OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹¹), Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹²)
Relevant agreements	Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group (Minsk Agreement) (2014), Memorandum on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Protocol on the Outcome of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan (Minsk Memorandum) (2014), Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (Minsk II Agreements) (2015)

Summary:

The armed conflict active in eastern Ukraine since April 2014 pits state forces against pro-Russian separatist militias backed by Russia over the status of those areas and is fuelled by many other contextual factors. It is the subject of international negotiations involving the Trilateral Contact Group (OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) and pro-Russian militias, as well as the diplomatic initiatives of some foreign ministries. Since the Trilateral Contact Group was created in May 2014, various agreements have been attempted, including a peace plan in June of that year and a brief, non-renewed truce that same month; a pact (Minsk Protocol, September 2014) including a bilateral ceasefire supervised by the OSCE and the decentralisation of power in areas under militia control; as well as a memorandum that same year for a demilitarised zone, which completed the Minsk Protocol. New escalation of violence led to Minsk II agreement in 2015, but violence continued and disagreements between the sides hindered the implementation of the peace deal. The obstacles to resolving the conflict include its internationalisation, mainly owing to Russian support for the militias and the background of confrontation between Russia and the West projected onto the Ukrainian crisis. The armed conflict was preceded by a serious general crisis in Ukraine (mass anti-government protests in 2013-2014, the departure of President Yanukovich in 2014 and the annexation of Crimea by Russia that year), when there were also some attempts at negotiation between the government and the opposition.

The peace process in Ukraine continued to face many problems, with repeated ceasefire violations and deadlock in the negotiations and in implementation of the Minsk Agreements. New ceasefires were agreed in 2017, in line with the previous year. Thus, new truces came into force in February (after the serious escalation of violence in February), in April (to mark Orthodox Easter), in June (described as a "harvest ceasefire"), in late August (in order to help to start the school year) and in

8. Protocol of the Official meeting of the Permanent Conference for Political Questions in the Framework of the Negotiating Process on the Transdnistrian Settlement, 27-28 November 2017.

9. Amnesty International, *Report 2017/18. The state of the world's human rights*. AI, 2018.

10. Russia's status in the peace process in Ukraine is subject to different interpretations. Ukraine considers Russia as an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

late December (to mark Orthodox Christmas). However, these agreements were repeatedly broken and ceasefires were violated daily in the conflict zone. According to the International Crisis Group, the 16 ceasefires since 2014, in addition to many local ceasefires, have only resulted in short-term de-escalations.¹³ Moreover, regarding the three demilitarised zones agreed by the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine in 2016, which were to cover the areas of Zolote, Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska, no progress was made on Stanytsia Luhanska in 2017. On the other hand, the architecture for supervising security issues was weakened at the end of the year by **Russia's decision to withdraw from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC), a body established in 2014 to facilitate implementation of the ceasefire of the Minsk Agreements. Composed of Ukrainian and Russian military representatives,** its work is overseen by the OSCE mission. Russia justified its exit, citing pressure from Ukraine on its Russian officers in the JCCC and Kiev's restrictions on its access to the front lines by introducing new rules for the entry of Russian citizens into Ukraine, which it claims breach the agreement on a visa-free system.

Meanwhile, the formal peace negotiations remained deadlocked, with the parties entrenched in their positions. Ukraine upheld its refusal to move forward in implementing the political issues of the Minsk Agreements (including elections, special status for the eastern areas and others) until security conditions are met, arms and troops are withdrawn and Ukraine regains control of the Ukrainian side of the border with Russia. Moscow continued to demand that the political issues be implemented before moving forward on the issue of border control. This was made clear in the meetings of the Normandy format (Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France) that took place during the year. Meanwhile, in anticipation of the expiration in October 2017 of the special status law of the eastern areas initially approved in 2014, which was supposed to come into effect once elections were held in Donetsk and Luhansk and those elections were validated by the OSCE, the Ukrainian Parliament approved renewing the law for one more year, but its implementation remained conditional on the elections and their validation, as well as disarmament in the eastern areas and the withdrawal of Russian forces. The new text omitted any reference to the Minsk Agreements, demonstrating their widespread rejection by Ukrainian politicians, except for the majority of the government coalition and pro-Russian parties. The new law triggered new protests before Parliament, though participation was limited. The Ukrainian Parliament also approved the first reading of the Law of Reintegration, which aroused scepticism in Western diplomatic circles due to the limited provisions it contained for reintegrating the eastern areas.¹⁴ The law designates Russia as an aggressor in the conflict and describes the Donbas region as occupied territory.

In a new development, **the Russian government raised the possibility of a UN peacekeeping mission in the political discussion, in contrast to its previous opposition to the presence of international troops,** which the Ukrainian government has called for since 2015. Thus, Russia presented a draft UN Security Council resolution in September proposing a UN mission, albeit limited in size and mandate, aimed at protecting the OSCE mission on the line of separation. Ukraine and its Western partners rejected the proposal due to the risk that it would cause the conflict to drag on or become permanent. **The Ukrainian president said that he was willing to evaluate the proposal, but noted that a possible UN mission would have to be deployed throughout the conflict zone and on the border with Russia.** The Russian government submitted a second draft, of which not all the details were disclosed, which raised the possibility of deployment beyond the front lines, but did not clarify the issue of the border. Despite the reluctance about whatever real path the mission proposal might take, given the differences between Ukraine and Russia, both parties left the door open, whilst the foreign ministries involved in the peace process were supportive of exploring options. Thus, the question of a possible UN mission was one of the topics of the bilateral negotiations format between the US and Russia that began following the creation of the new position of US Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations, filled by Kurt Volker in July 2017. Volker and Vladislav Surkov, an advisor to Russian President Vladimir Putin, held several meetings in the second half of the year.

In humanitarian terms, progress was made on the exchange of prisoners. Thus, discussions and preparatory work led **to the largest exchange of prisoners to date in December as part of an agreement facilitated by the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross.** The exchange took place at the end of December and involved the Ukrainian government's release of 233 people, while the authorities of Luhansk freed 16 and those of Donetsk freed 58. Ukraine formally freed 306 people, although in practice it had only freed 233 by late December. Part of the remaining 73 had previously been released and about 30 refused to return to areas under rebel control. Also, one person released in Donetsk refused to return to territory under Ukraine's control. The exchange agreement contained mechanisms for this type of situation.

Regarding the gender dimension, **women's organisations criticised the barriers to women's participation in the peace process in Ukraine.** A joint report by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and other organisations blasted the stigmatisation against organisations working for dialogue and cooperation, including women's rights

13. International Crisis Group, *Can Peacekeepers Break the Deadlock in Ukraine?*, Europe Report No. 246, 15 December 2017.

14. International Crisis Group, *Ukraine: Military Deadlock, Political Crisis*, Crisis Group Europe Briefing No. 85, 19 December 2016; Sasse, Gwendolyn, *High Time to End the War in Ukraine*, Carnegie Europe, 4 December 2017.

organisations.¹⁵ WILPF also warned of the impact that the austerity measures imposed on Ukraine had on the economic and social rights of Ukrainian women, and therefore on their chances of participating in peacebuilding efforts, including peace negotiations. WILPF urged the Ukrainian government to take measures to promote and protect the space for civil society and to act against the stigmatisation of those promoting dialogue. It also recommended evaluating and rectifying the negative impacts that the International Monetary Fund's conditions had on the most vulnerable parts of the population, using a gender approach in poverty reduction programmes, harmonising anti-discrimination legislation, amongst other issues.

Armenia and Azerbaijan resumed dialogue at the presidential level, but failed to make progress on specific measures to implement their 2016 commitments to strengthen supervision of the ceasefire

on ceasefire monitoring, whilst the context remained seriously volatile, with ceasefire violations that included the use of heavy weapons. In 2017, the negotiating process did not face a crisis of the magnitude of the previous year (with at least 200 deaths in April 2016, when the armed conflict resumed and resulted in Azerbaijan's military takeover of two areas of Nagorno-Karabakh). New escalations of violence did occur, however, such as in February and May, which included the use of heavy weapons and anti-tank weapons. These new increases in violence, the volatility and the greater presence and use of heavy weapons raised new calls of alarm from mediators and analysts due to the risks that escalating violence could lead to a large-scale resumption of the war.

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Negotiating actors	Armenia, Azerbaijan
Third parties	OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; the other permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey)
Relevant agreements	Bishkek Protocol (1994), Ceasefire agreement (1994)

Summary:

The armed conflict going from 1992 to 1994 between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh –an enclave of Armenian majority belonging to Azerbaijan that declared independence in 1992– ended with a ceasefire agreement in 1994, after causing more than 20,000 dead and one million displaced people as well as the military occupation by Armenia of several districts around Nagorno-Karabakh. Since then negotiations have been in place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with several failed attempts to reach peace plans during the first years and a renewed impulse through the Prague Process, which started in 2004 and since 2005 has focused on negotiating some basic principles to base the discussions on a future agreement (withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, granting provisional status to Nagorno-Karabakh, the right for displaced persons to return, an eventual decision on the final status of the territory through a binding expression of will, international security safeguards). The deadlock of negotiations since 2010 and the fragile ceasefire have increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race, a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions.

The peace process for Nagorno-Karabakh remained at an impasse, with no progress on the main issues and no new measures for implementing recent commitments

Following the escalations in February and May, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Russia, France and the USA) urged the parties to refrain from using force, take steps to reduce the tension and resume negotiations. In March and June, they also paid separate visits and held separate meetings with the presidents and foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, in addition to visits to Nagorno-Karabakh. **The presidential-level talks were resumed in October, with a meeting between Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Geneva under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group.** This was preceded by new meetings of the Minsk Group with the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Brussels in July and again during the UN General Assembly in September. According to the Minsk Group, the presidential summit was held in a constructive atmosphere and the presidents agreed to take steps to intensify the negotiating process and reduce tensions on the line of contact. However, no agreements were announced on concrete measures stemming from the commitment reached in 2016 to agree as soon as possible on an incident investigation mechanism under the umbrella of the OSCE, nor on strengthening the team of observers of the Office of the Special Representative of the OSCE. Additional measures were once again on the agenda of new meetings held in November between the co-mediators and the foreign ministers separately. Both parties agreed to resume discussions on expanding the Special Representative's team at the OSCE ministerial summit in Vienna in December. During the summit, the representatives of the co-mediating countries expressed satisfaction at the intensification of the negotiations. However, the year ended with no specific results on substantive issues or on additional measures.

Regarding other levels of the peace process, in November the OSCE Minsk Group welcomed the

15. Alternative Youth Centre, Center for Social and Labour Research, Centre of the Future, Child Smile, East Donbas Regional Development Agency Gender Dnipro, Theatre for Dialogue, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, *Obstacles to Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Efforts in Ukraine. Impact of Austerity Measures and Stigmatisation of Organisations Working for Dialogue*, Universal Periodic Review of Ukraine, Joint submission to the UPR Working Group 28th session, November 2017.

opposing sides' decision to consider its proposal for meetings to resume between civilians from both sides of the line of contact. Furthermore, pro-dialogue activists continued to voice concern about the risks of the conflict resuming and the lack of mechanisms for the participation of civil society.

Concerning the gender perspective, **the peace process continued without mechanisms for women to participate**, as reported by female activists from Armenia and Azerbaijan. At the same time, Armenian activists pointed to the upcoming development of a National Action Plan (NAP) based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as an opportunity. In this regard, in 2017 the Armenian government established an inter-ministerial working group to draft the NAP, which is expected to be passed in 2018. However, women activists reported lack of participatory mechanisms in this process. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) had expressed concern about the lack of a National Action Plan in Armenia in 2016, as well as the lack of female participation in the peace talks.¹⁶ It further recommended that the Armenian government meet the specific needs of women affected by the conflict regarding education, health and economic opportunities; expend new efforts to resolve the conflict; promote the full participation of women at all stages of the peace process and finalise and pass the NAP on 1325 in cooperation with women's organisations, taking all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda into consideration. In relation to Azerbaijan, during the UN Security Council's global debate on women, peace and security in 2017, the Azerbaijani government did not report specific steps taken to implement its commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. Gender experts from Azerbaijan reported that the government had started preparations for a future National Action Plan hand in hand with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and with the participation of some local organisations and gender experts.

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ¹⁷
Third parties	OSCE, EU and UN; USA Russia ¹⁸
Relevant agreements	Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian–Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement) (1992), Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (1994) [agreement dealing with conflict on Abkhazia], Protocol of agreement (2008), Implementation of the Plan of 12 August 2008 (2008)

Summary:

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, which began in South Ossetia and spread to Abkhazia and undisputed Georgian territory, ended in a six-point peace agreement mediated by the EU. The peace plan included the start of international talks on security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two small territories in the northwest and north-central Georgia bordering Russia that are internationally recognised as regions of Georgia, though de facto independent since the end of the wars between Abkhaz and Georgian forces (1992-1994) and between Ossetian and Georgian forces (1991-1992) regarding their status. The 2008 agreement gave way to the start of talks known as the Geneva International Discussions (GID), which bring together representatives of Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia under international mediation (the OSCE, EU and UN, with the US as an observer). According to the agreement, the talks were supposed to focus on provisions to guarantee security and stability in the region, the issue of the refugees and displaced populations and any other issue agreed by the parties, so the disputed status of the territories was not explicitly addressed. After the 2008 war, Russia formally recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and established agreements and a permanent military presence there despite Georgian opposition. The post-2008 phase involved the dismantling of previous dialogue and observation mechanisms, including the OSCE and the UN missions, and replaced the previous separate talks with a single format covering both disputed regions. An EU observation mission was also authorised, though it was given no access to the disputed territories. The GID have two working groups (on security and humanitarian issues) and under its aegis one Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) was created for each region in 2009, facilitated by the EU and OSCE. Amidst a context of geopolitical rivalry between Russia and Western political, economic and military players (the US, EU and NATO) and chronic antagonism between the disputed regions and Georgia, the negotiating process faces many obstacles.

The peace process remained active at various levels of negotiations, but faced difficulties during the year, whilst the security situation stayed mostly calm. New rounds of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) were held in March, June and October, **though no progress was made on the main issue of the working group on security: the commitment to the non-use of force.** Thus, although the Georgian government spoke of “small steps forward” on this issue at the GID in March, it also said that both parties remained fundamentally at odds in their approaches to it. Russia upheld its position that it did not consider itself a party to the conflict and thereby refused to commit to the non-use of force, defending bilateral commitments between Georgia and the disputed regions instead. Georgia upheld its demand for a prior formal commitment from Russia as a requirement to support the multilateral declaration of the non-use of force presented years ago by the co-mediators, on which the parties are working and would not need to

16. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Armenia*, 25 November 2016, CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6.

17. Russia's status in the peace process in Georgia is subject to different interpretations. Georgia considers Russia as an actor in the conflict and a negotiating party, while Russia considers itself a third party.

18. Ibid.

be signed. The parties also addressed other issues during the GID. For example, Georgia exposed and denounced what it considers the absorption of both regions by Russia in military, political, economic and humanitarian terms, equating it with annexation. It specifically criticised the establishment of a Russian customs office in Abkhazia in 2017, South Ossetia's referendum to change its name in April¹⁹ and the presidential election, which was not internationally recognised. Meanwhile, Russia deplored the mounting tension in the region that it claimed had been caused by cooperation between NATO and Georgia and, more specifically, by NATO's military exercises in Georgia.

The Georgian government also raised issues regarding the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) at the GID during the year, such as the setting up of barriers on the borderline, about which Georgia had already complained in previous years. In addition, **Abkhazia's decision in late 2016 to close two of the four border crossings in the region (Navakevi-Khurcha and Meore Otobaia-Orsantia), used daily by hundreds of people**, was much discussed during the IPRMs and the GID in 2017. Tbilisi's criticism of the decision was joined by calls of alarm and concern from international actors like the co-mediators of the GID and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres due to its impact on the freedom of movement and welfare of the population on both sides of the border, including schoolchildren. Despite this international criticism, the Abkhaz authorities kept the border crossings closed. Georgia also denounced the introduction of restrictions on Georgian education in South Ossetia, as well as previous restrictions in Abkhazia. Georgia claims that these restrictions are intended to close schools conducted in the Georgian language, which are concentrated in the regions of Gali (in Abkhazia) and Akhagori (in South Ossetia), where most of the Georgian population of both territories reside. Another source of tension, reflected in the negotiating process, was the Abkhaz authorities' decision to drop charges against the Abkhaz security force member allegedly responsible for the death of a Georgian citizen in Khurcha, a town under Georgian control near a border crossing leading to Abkhazia, in May 2016. IPRM meetings also addressed issues such as arrests on both sides of the line, obstacles to accessing arable land, the distribution of residence permits to the Georgian population of Abkhazia and restrictions related to those documents. In humanitarian developments, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) made progress in locating, identifying and exhuming the remains of people who disappeared in the armed conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. **Both joint coordination mechanisms established by the ICRC, the first for representatives of Georgia and Abkhazia, and the other for representatives of Georgia, South Ossetia**

and Russia, provided necessary information on the locations to excavate. In October, the remains of 25 people who disappeared in the war in Abkhazia were handed over to their families, for a total of 126 since the mechanism was launched in 2010. Another 2,400 people remained missing.

Representatives of Georgia involved in the IPRMs met with representatives of civil society organisations, including women's organisations and women displaced by the conflict to share information and listen to demands regarding the issues addressed in the IPRMs and their results. The topics of discussion included issues related to crossing the border, health services and the socio-economic situation. The meetings serve as a mechanism to promote the participation of women, promoted by UN Women since 2013 and later institutionalised by the government of Georgia. **Progress was also made in preparing the third National Action Plan (2018-2020) on Resolution 1325 in 2017**, coordinated by the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The recommendations made by women's organisations and the Office of the Public Defender included a budget allocation for the new NAP, the "localisation" or translation of the NAP into different local levels and realities, the creation of mechanisms for women affected by the conflict to participate in local decision-making and political planning processes, the expansion of aid programmes and the improvement of communication and coordination between civil society organisations, local authorities and the central government.

Meanwhile, the Georgian and Russian Orthodox churches will study the creation of a joint working group to address issues related to the church in Abkhazia. In November, the Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Ilia II, met with Metropolitan Hilarion, the head of external relations for the Moscow Patriarchate. The Moscow Patriarchate does not formally recognise the Abkhaz Orthodox Church, established in 2009 after separating from the Georgian Orthodox Church and backed by the Abkhaz authorities. Nor does the Moscow Patriarchate acknowledge any splinter branch of the Abkhaz Orthodox Church.

South-east Europe

Cyprus	
Negotiating actors	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Third parties	UN, EU, Guarantor Countries (Turkey, Greece and the UK)
Relevant agreements	13 February agreement (2004)

19. The referendum to change the region's name approved a new name, "Republic of South Ossetia—the State of Alania", which will be reflected in a constitutional amendment. The referendum was rejected by the Georgian government, which considered it illegal.

Summary:

Inhabited by a Greek majority, a Turkish population and other minorities, the island of Cyprus faces a situation of long-lasting unresolved conflict. Preceded by the violence of the 1950s, followed by independence in 1960, Cyprus was affected by a crisis in which the Turkish Cypriot population was displaced from power, calling into question the distribution of power stipulated in the Constitution and triggering new violent incidents, which led to the deployment of the UNFICYP peacekeeping mission in 1964. There was an underlying confrontation between the aspirations of *enosis* (union with Greece) of the Greek Cypriot population and *taksim* (partition) by Turkish Cypriot population. A coup in 1974 with the aim of promoting unification with Greece triggered a military invasion of the island by Turkey. The crisis led to population displacement and the division of the island between the northern third under Turkish Cypriot control and two-thirds in the south under Greek Cypriot control, separated by the "Green Line", under UN monitoring. Since the division of the island there have been efforts to find a solution, such as high-level dialogues in the 70s and initiatives in the following decades promoted by successive UN Secretaries-General. The Annan Plan for a bizonal bicomunal federation was approved in referendum in 2004 by the Turkish Cypriots and rejected by the Greek Cypriots. After the failure of the Christofias-Talat dialogue (2008-2012), a new phase of negotiations began in 2014, which generated high expectations.

The opposing parties were close to reaching a global agreement to resolve the conflict on the island, thanks to the progress made since 2015 and significantly in the first half of 2017, with historic milestones reached, although differences curbed the process in the second half of the year and gave way to a period of reflection. A round of negotiations between both leaders of the island, Greek Cypriot Nikos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot Mustafa Akinci, held from 9 to 11 January in Geneva, gave a boost to the process. **For the first time in the history of the negotiations, both parties submitted proposals for maps with the administrative border**, which were safeguarded by the UN Office in Geneva. The round was followed by the **Conference on Cyprus on 12 January, which brought the parties in conflict together with the guarantor powers (Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey) for the first time, as well as the EU as an observing party, in what was intended to be the beginning of the international phase of the negotiations.**

The Conference on Cyprus addressed the issue of security and guarantees, which is the sixth chapter of the negotiating process. According to the UN, **parameters were set at the conference to resolve security issues and guarantees**, as reflected in the statement on 12 January. Thus, the parties agreed on the need for mutually acceptable solutions, established that those solutions must address the fears of both communities regarding security and agreed to build a vision of security for the future. However, differences between them also came up again over issues such as the Greek Cypriots' insistence on the departure of Turkish troops from the island and the termination of Turkey's right to intervene

and the Turkish Cypriots' emphasis on the need for guarantees. The conference ensured continuity through three steps, including the creation of a working group to identify specific questions on security and guarantees, the continuation of negotiations between both parties for the remaining chapters and the resumption of the high-level political conference once the results of the working group were evaluated.

Despite the significant progress made in January, **the process ran aground between mid-February and early April due to the political uproar** following the Greek Cypriot Parliament's decision to commemorate the 1950 referendum on union with Greece (*enosis*) in the public schools. The Turkish Cypriot authorities criticised the decision, which they considered provocative and contrary to a solution for the reunification of the island. The process was revived in early June, when Anastasiades and Akinci agreed to resume the Conference on Cyprus in a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York on 4 June. The Conference on Cyprus was formally restarted on 28 June in Crans-Montana (Switzerland), attended by the parties to the conflict, the guarantor countries and the EU, in a two-table format, the first on security and guarantees with international participation, and the second of a bilateral nature, dealing with all other pending issues, such as territory, property, governance and power sharing. The conference started without an end date and agreed to continue for as long as necessary, though it was initially planned to end on 7 July. Despite the high level of agreement achieved on governance and power sharing, including in relation to the federal executive branch, effective participation (although not on the issue of equivalent treatment of Turkish citizens in Cyprus) and on the chapter on property, it failed to make enough headway in the chapters on security and guarantees or on territory, even though an incipient agreement on territorial adjustments was beginning to take shape. **The UN Secretary-General told the parties that there was still a broad understanding on the parameters for strategic agreement on six of the unresolved issues, related to territory, political equality, property, equal treatment and security and guarantees.**

A strategic package was proposed in order to overcome the problem of sequencing. However, **the parties failed to overcome their differences and the Conference on Cyprus ended on 7 July without agreement**, despite the expectations generated. The parties blamed each other for the conference's failure. The UN Secretary-General said that several issues had made the agreement impossible. Media analysts cited the presence of troops and the status of the guarantor powers as the main points of disagreement.

Parts of the population expressed their disappointment with the failure of the negotiations, such as the so-called Gender Advisory Team (GAT), a platform composed of academics and women's human rights defenders that was created in 2009.

The peace process in Cyprus reached historic milestones in 2017, but disagreements brought it to a standstill by mid-year, followed by a period of reflection

The end of the Conference on Cyprus gave way to a period of reflection in the second half of the year, when both parties were to determine whether conditions were sufficiently met to resume the process. However, the year ended with no agreement on resuming them. The context in those months was also affected by the political dynamics ahead of the Greek Cypriot presidential election and Turkish Cypriot parliamentary elections in January 2018. Despite the period of reflection prompted by the end of the Conference on Cyprus, several bi-communal technical committees continued to carry out their work during the second half of the year, such as the Technical Committee on Education, which launched a programme called “Let’s Imagine” on peace education with joint activities for schools of both communities during the 2017-2018 school year. Other committees that remained active were the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and the Crossings Committee. With regard to the Committee on Gender Equality, created in August 2015, the UN Secretary-General noted in his report on good offices in August 2017 that despite the in-depth analysis prepared by the committee on relevant issues related to gender and its submission of some recommendations to the negotiating teams since its inception, they were not always adopted and their impact was limited. Moreover, **new research findings on the gender perspective in the process showed that there were still barriers to women’s participation in 2017** and that neither negotiating delegation had incorporated a gender perspective based on their perception that the priorities of the agenda had no gender dimension to consider.²⁰ According to this study, published by the Berghof Foundation (Germany) and the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (Cyprus), the Committee on Gender Equality occupied a marginal position and did not receive attention from the negotiators. The report noted that no concrete gender results had been achieved and that women’s experiences and demands for participation were being questioned. The study also highlighted the complaints made by activists and civil society organisations about the lack of public information on the committee’s mandate, resources and agenda, as well as the degree of the negotiating teams’ response to the committee’s proposals and women activists’ frustration over the committee’s lack of interaction and exchange of ideas with the women’s movement on the island.

At other levels of the peace process, such as that of parallel diplomacy, **different parts of the populations of both communities on the island continued with initiatives of rapprochement.** Thus, religious leaders kept the so-called Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process active, with support from the Swedish Embassy.

New research findings showed the negotiating teams’ lack of commitment to a gender perspective and to the marginal and non-transparent role of the Committee on Gender Equality in Cyprus peace process

And in August, the UN Secretary-General said that the final success of any solution to the conflict through referenda in both communities will hinge on whether the parties to the conflict encourage the population to participate as soon as possible.

Serbia – Kosovo	
Negotiating actors	Serbia, Kosovo
Third parties	EU, UN
Relevant agreements	Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force (KFOR) and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia (1999), First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between the republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia (Brussels Agreement) (2013)

Summary:

Since the end of the 1998-1999 war between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanian armed group KLA, with the participation of NATO, the status of Kosovo has remained in dispute. This Albanian-majority land has historically been part of the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and more recently the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia (as an autonomous region and autonomous province, successively). Following an interim international administration for Kosovo with a mandate from the UN Security Council (Resolution 1244, of 1999), a process to discuss its status began in 2006 under the aegis of the United Nations. Kosovo supported the proposal made by the UN Secretary-General’s special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, entailing internationally supervised independence for Kosovo and decentralisation for its Serbian minority, though Serbia rejected it. This was followed by fresh attempts at dialogue facilitated by a troika (USA, EU, Russia) that also failed. In 2008 Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence and pledged to implement the Ahtisaari plan. The start of a new process of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo in 2011 under facilitation of the EU (Brussels Process) opened the doors to rapprochement on technical and political issues. Since its inception there has been significant progress, including the agreement to dismantle parallel political, judicial and security structures of the Serb-inhabited areas of Kosovo; as well as to create an association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. However, there are still outstanding pending challenges, especially in the field of implementation of the agreements, reconciliation and the final resolution of the political status.

The negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo to normalise relations faced difficulties during the year, due both to the gulf between the parties’ positions and to pressure from Kosovo concerning transitional justice. At an EU-facilitated meeting in January, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic and Kosovar President Hashim Thaci agreed to intensify the negotiations, with new rounds of meetings in high-level negotiating format. Serbian

20. Anna Koukkides-Procopiou, *Gender and Inclusive Security: A new approach to the Cyprus Problem within the framework on Security Dialogue*, Security Dialogue Project, Background Paper, 2017. Edited by Ahmet Sözen and Jared L. Ordway. Berlin: Berghof Foundation and SeeD.

Prime Minister Aleksander Vucic and Kosovar Prime Minister Isa Mustafa also participated in the January meeting. However, a new joint round between the presidents and prime ministers in early February made no headway. **The Kosovo Parliament voted to suspended the talks in March until former Kosovar guerrilla leader and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj is released. Haradinaj was arrested in France in January on the orders of Interpol and is wanted by the Serbian authorities, who have charged him with war crimes** against the Serbian civilian population during the armed conflict of 1998-1999. Proposed by the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, the resolution was approved by the Kosovo Parliament with 78 votes in favour and one against (out of 120 total). The EU criticised Pristina's suspension of the talks, arguing that it did not help to normalise relations, and urged Kosovar political leaders to get involved in the negotiating process.

The Kosovo Parliament suspended the EU-facilitated talks with Serbia in protest of the arrest in France of former guerrilla leader and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, wanted by the Serbian authorities for war crimes

The talks resumed with an informal meeting between the Serbian and Kosovar presidents facilitated by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini in July and with a formal meeting, also at the presidential level, on 31 August. At the August meeting, the leaders agreed to finalise implementation of the February 2015 agreement on integrating judges, prosecutors and judicial staff from the Serb-majority northern areas of Kosovo into the Kosovar judicial system. As agreed in August, this was supposed to be fully implemented by 17 October. The presidents of Serbia and Kosovo, as well as the EU as facilitator, said that the agreement had been fully implemented by the agreed date. However, weeks before 17 October, the Kosovar media reported that the judicial staff of northern Kosovo had not yet received information about the details of the agreement. In September, the EU reported that a new stage in the talks would soon begin, though the year ended without any new high-level meetings. In local developments, Kosovar authorities and Serbian local representatives from northern Mitrovica, the divided northern area of Kosovo, agreed to reduce local tensions early in the year, following a meeting in February facilitated by the EU and US political representatives.

Meanwhile, in July the Serbian president announced the start of internal dialogue on Kosovo in Serbia in order to encourage public debate on the issue and to help to search for a solution. Belgrade announced a new stage of this internal dialogue in September with the creation of a working group on Kosovo, designed to involve state institutions, academics, civil society organisations and the general public in the discussions on Kosovo. However, after this new stage was announced, analysts said that there had been no information about the first

stage, so they were sceptical about any second stage. Civil society representatives criticised the lack of real dialogue in the initiative. With regard to transitional justice, tensions mounted after **Kosovar MPs attempted to repeal legislation supporting the recent creation of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, a new court that is part of the Kosovo judicial system. Located in The Hague, it has a mandate to prosecute crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes committed during the armed**

conflict in Kosovo.²¹ Forty-three (43) of the 120 Kosovar MPs had signed a petition for an extraordinary parliamentary session to vote to annul the law. However, the session was dissolved due to lack of quorum and amidst strong international criticism. Victims' organisations and human rights activists also criticised attempts to block the court. The Specialist Chambers, which began its work in 2016, is a temporary institution created to investigate and respond to the allegations contained in the 2011 report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on war crimes, which indicated that members of the armed

group Kosovo Liberation Army had engaged in organ trafficking and other crimes. Representatives of the new court held a consultative meeting with civil society activists in Kosovo in October 2017. This meeting was an informal forum for continued dialogue between the court and civil society organisations and was followed by another meeting in November. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia ended its work in December 2017.

Regarding women's participation in the peace process, in December the women's organisations Mitrovica Women's Association for Human Rights and Pescanik Women's Association joined forces with the Swedish organisation Kvinna till Kvinna to organise a seminar in Kosovo to discuss the EU-facilitated talks and how women can play a role in the process and ensure that their needs and priorities are taken into account. The meeting was part of a project that brings together women activists from Serbia and Kosovo in order to assist peacebuilding efforts.²²

Western Europe

Spain (Basque Country)	
Negotiating actors	ETA, Basque Country political and social actors
Third parties	International Contact Group (ICG), International Verification Commission (IVC), Social Forum to Promote the Peace Process and Permanent Social Forum
Relevant agreements	--

21. For further details about its mandate, see https://www.scp-ks.org/sites/default/files/public/content/ksc_at_a_glance_eng_1.pdf.

22. For further information about the meeting and some of the contributions of the Kosovo Women Network, *Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue from Women's Perspective*, 29 December 2017.

Summary:

Since the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, there have been several attempts to resolve the conflict involving the armed organisation ETA, created in 1959 with demands for self-determination of the territories considered Euskal Herria and for the creation of a socialist state. Throughout decades of conflict, multiple forms of violence were denounced, including deaths caused by ETA's violence (837 deaths), by security forces action (94) and paramilitary groups (73), as well as other human rights violations, including torture by security forces and ETA's economic extortion. Negotiations in 1981 and 1982 led to the dissolution of ETA political-military at the Seventh Assembly in 1982. The Conversations of Algiers in the late 1980s under the social-democratic PSOE-led government failed. The conservative PP-led government's approaches to ETA in the late 1990s, accompanied by truces, were also unsuccessful. The socio-political and military tension continued in the 2000s, with new attacks by ETA and the banning of the Batasuna party (2003), as well as the arrest and prosecution of other political and social actors alongside secret rapprochement between Basque socialist leaders and the Basque pro-independence left (Abertzale), public calls for dialogue, new political proposals and a transformation in the Abertzale left in support of peaceful means. Exploratory meetings led to the formalisation of a new process in 2005, which included two parallel negotiations: one between political parties and the other between the government and ETA, which was backed by a new truce. The process failed amidst multiple hurdles and a new ETA attack in late 2006. The following decade began with new initiatives and declarations, such as the Abertzale left's Alsasua Proposal (2009) and Zutik Euskal Herria (Euskal Herria on Its Feet) (2010), which included the Mitchell principles of negotiation, and the Brussels Declaration (2010), signed by international figures. International facilitators called for ETA to observe a permanent, unilateral and verifiable ceasefire and civil society organisations called for a new push for peace, with international cooperation. Following the Aiete International Peace Conference (2011), ETA announced the definitive end of its armed activity in 2011 and took new steps towards unilateral disarmament in subsequent years, with the involvement of civil society.

New developments concerning the conflict in the Basque Country during the year included ETA's disarmament in April and its internal debate over its future, which could lead to its dissolution in 2018.

In March, ETA announced that it would disarm unilaterally and unconditionally by 8 April. Prior to the announcement, Basque President Íñigo Urkullu met in advance with Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to inform him of ETA's disarmament plans.

In public statements, Rajoy demanded that ETA disarm and dissolve. A few days before the announced disarmament, a spokesman for the group announced that after disarming, the group would begin internal discussions about its future lasting several months. The main Basque trade unions and most political parties in the Basque Country and Navarre, except for the PP, UPN and PSN-PSOE, signed a manifesto in support of the planned disarmament. Victim's organisations, politicians and intellectuals issued a joint statement supporting the dissolution of ETA

***The armed group
ETA carried out
its disarmament,
supervised by
the International
Verification
Commission***

without impunity, demanding strict application of the law by the Spanish and French governments and calling for the disarmament to be subject to the rule of law. This statement was supported by associations like the Victims of Terrorism Foundation, the Victims of Terrorism Association and Covite.

The disarmament of ETA was carried out on 8 April with a non-public act in which the International Verification Commission (IVC) disclosed the locations of ETA's arsenals to French justice. Civil society associations and activists close to Basque pro-independence left staged a public day of celebration of disarmament in the French town of Bayonne on the same day. The day before, on 7 April, ETA issued a statement through the British BBC declaring that it was an unarmed organisation, having surrendered its entire arsenal. After the locations of these weapons were disclosed to the French judicial authorities, state security forces seized and analysed them. The IVC reported on the inventory of weapons, which consisted of around 120 firearms, three tonnes of explosives, ammunition and detonators stored in eight depots. Civil society organisation representatives participated in the disarmament process through an initiative called Artisans of Peace, whereby 172 observers guarded the eight deposits until the weapons were collected by the French authorities. The Basque government was involved in the disarmament process, maintaining active communication with the French and Spanish governments. However, the Basque government did not participate in the public events on 8 April in celebration of disarmament in Bayonne.

Further steps were taken to resolve the conflict in the second half of the year. Among them, **in July the group of ETA prisoners (EPPK) said that it supports the option to forgo existing legal channels and individual prison benefits in order to obtain release**, with 73% of the prisoners voting in favour and 14% against in the internal discussion, with a turnout of 87.2%, thereby ending the self-styled "phase of resistance". In June, the Permanent Social Forum said that there were conditions for inclusive talks about the prisoners' situation involving most political parties, political actors and all unions in the Basque Country. This came about after the rounds of meetings that began in May following the conclusion

of the Fourth Social Forum, which focused on the issue of prisoners and fugitives. Meanwhile, as part of the Permanent Social Forum of Navarre, the Navarran Parliament hosted an event in April on Navarran women who were victims of torture, in which victim's testimonies were shared and public policies for building coexistence were discussed. In turn, **a report prepared by the University of the Basque Country's**

Basque Institute of Criminology, commissioned by the Basque government as part of its coexistence plan, found that a total of 3,415 people reported 4,113 cases of torture in the Basque Country between 1960

and 2014 (17% women and 83% men), adding that the actual scope may have been much greater. The work carried out corroborated victims' reports on the basis of testimonial, documentary and expert evidence. The report indicates a drop in cases since 2004, and none in 2015 and 2016. Meanwhile, thousands of people (around 6,200 according to police sources and 11,000 according to organisers) demonstrated in Paris in December to demand the end of the prisoners' dispersal

in prisons far from the Basque Country. Several months after the disarmament, in September, ETA announced that it had already started an internal debate to decide on the future of the organisation. On the other hand, during the year, all the political parties of the Basque Parliament, except the Popular Party, agreed to create the sub-committee on Memory and Coexistence under the Human Rights Commission. Its constitution is a step forward after the deadlock in the previous term.

6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East

- The Middle East was the scenario of five negotiation processes, representing 12% of the total number of cases studied in 2017.
- The United Nations played a prominent role as a third party in most of the negotiations in the region.
- The implementation of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme was affected by a climate of growing tensions since Donald Trump was inaugurated as president of the USA.
- In Yemen, negotiations remained stalled since 2016, despite some initiatives to reactivate the dialogue.
- The decision taken by the US Administration to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel seriously compromised the possibilities of reactivating a negotiating process between the Palestinians and Israelis.
- Fatah and Hamas announced a new reconciliation agreement to conform a Palestinian government of unity, but by the end of the year doubts remained as to how this would be put into practice.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East during 2017. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the negotiation processes in the region are presented. This is followed by the description of each different context evolution during the year, including a gender analysis in some cases.

Table 6.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2017

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Iran (nuclear programme)	Iran, G5+1 (USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU	UN
Israel-Palestine	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA)	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia
Palestine	Hamas, Fatah	Qatar, Egypt
Syria	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Jordan
Yemen	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis, forces of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh	UN, Kuwait, Oman, EU

6.1. Negotiations in 2017: regional trends

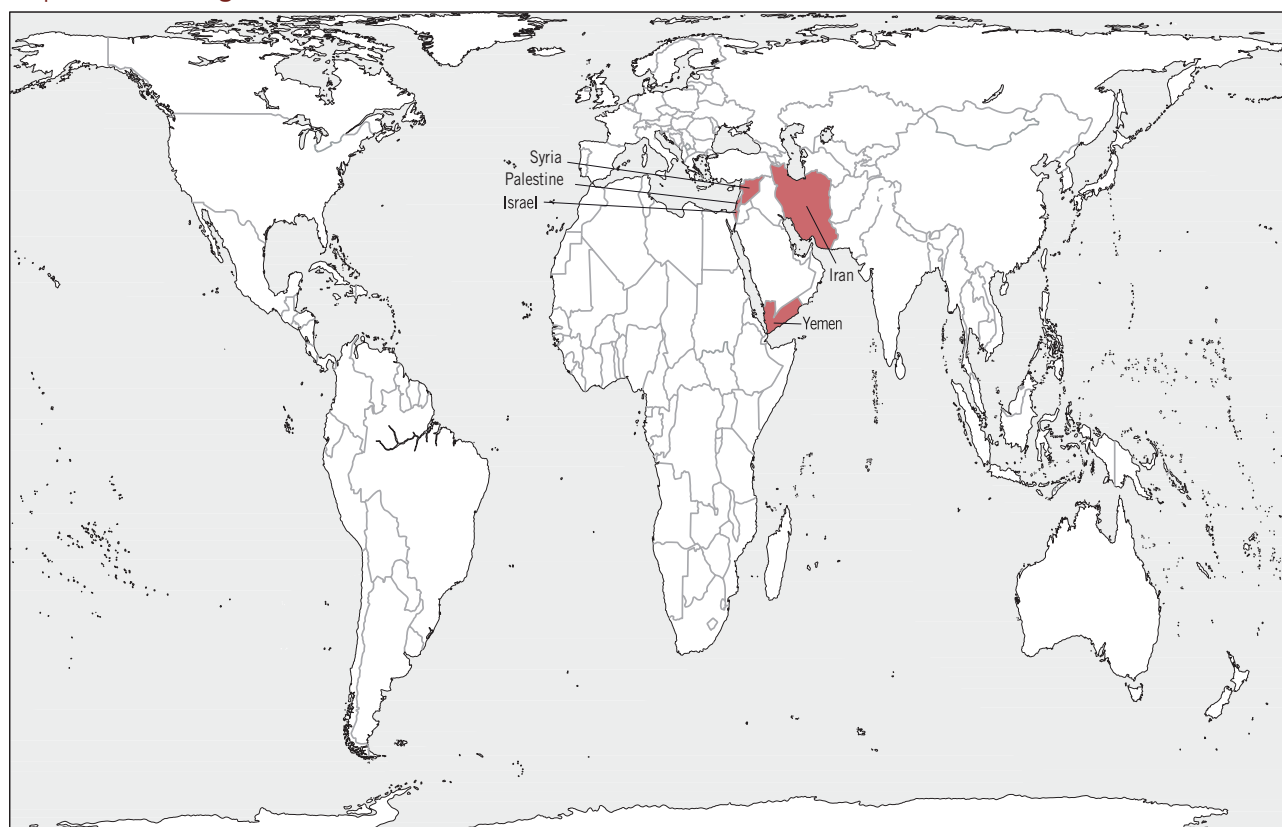
With regards to the Middle East, this chapter studies the five negotiation processes in 2017, representing 12% of the total number of peace processes identified globally. Three of these negotiations are linked to contexts of armed conflict and correspond to the cases of Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. The remaining two processes are linked to cases of socio-political crises, on the one hand, referring to the dispute between the Palestinian parties Hamas and Fatah; and, on the other hand, the socio-political crisis linked to the Iranian nuclear programme which led to the signing

of an agreement in 2015.¹ With the exception of the dispute within Palestine, which is internal, all other cases are international (the Israel-Palestine conflict and the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme), or internationalized internal ones (the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen), which also have an impact on the dynamics of the negotiation processes.

Regarding the **actors** involved in the negotiation processes in the Middle East, in all cases the governments of the respective countries were one of

1. For further information on the armed conflicts and socio-political crises around the world, please see Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

Map 6.1. Peace negotiations in the Middle East 2017



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2017

the main protagonists, interacting with different types of actors. As for Iran, the main interlocutors were the signatory States of the agreement on the nuclear programme –known as the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council –China, Russia, the United Kingdom, USA and France plus Germany– and the EU.² In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the interests of the parties continued to be represented by the respective Governments –the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Administration led by Benjamin Netanyahu– although the process continued to be marked by an absence of direct contact between both parties. Tensions within Palestine showed some singularities, in the sense that discussions focused largely on establishing a government of unity with Hamas – governing in the Gaza Strip– and the PA, led by Fatah, managing the West Bank.

In the cases of Yemen and Syria, negotiations involved the respective governments, as well as political actors in the opposition and non-governmental armed actors. So, in Yemen, during 2017 the attempts to reactivate the negotiations between the ousted government of Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi –supported by an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia– and the Houthis and forces of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh did not prosper. In the case of Syria, Bashar al-Assad's Government –

supported by Russia and Iran– and some political and armed actors of the Syrian opposition were immersed in a process of negotiation, although other external actors played a main role in the developments that followed.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting that **one of the main features in the Middle East is the strong presence of international and regional actors involved in the disputes. In some cases, these actors align with one of the parties to the dispute, while also trying to play a role as a third party doing mediation or facilitation for a negotiated solution to the conflict.** An example of this is Russia, one of the main supporters of the Syrian regime that, in 2017, promoted a negotiating framework for the Syrian conflict –the Astana process– also with the participation of Iran –another key ally of Damascus– and

Turkey –which supported the Syrian opposition groups. These countries proclaimed to be the guarantors of the ceasefire agreements. In the Syrian case, for instance, the involvement of a regional actor like Turkey had led to a veto –both in the Astana process and in the negotiations on Syria fostered by the UN – on other local protagonists that are relevant to the framework of the conflict in Syria, such as the Kurds linked to the YPG. Meanwhile, in the Israel-Palestine conflict,

The peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East represented 12% of the cases at a global level and were linked to three contexts of armed conflict and two scenarios of socio-political crises

2. The format is also known as the E3/EU+3.

the very clear influence of external actors in the conflict's dynamics and, consequently, the prospect for negotiations to happen, was especially clear with regards to the policy followed by the US. Even when the US is part of the Quartet on the Middle East –also including Russia, the UN and the EU– aiming to mediate in a political solution to the conflict, some statements and measures adopted by Trump's Administration in 2017 meant a clear support to Israel's interests. In this regard, the most problematic episode was the US Government recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, breaking the international consensus that had avoided legitimizing the annexation of the city by the State of Israel and that defends that the unique status of this city should be decided within the framework of negotiations.

As for **third parties** involved in the negotiation processes, it is worth mentioning the role played by the United Nations in the Middle East, participating in four of the five cases using different formats. For the cases of Yemen and Syria, the UN got involved in promoting negotiations through special envoys – Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Staffan de Mistura, respectively–; in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the UN is part of the Quartet on the Middle East and also has a special envoy for the peace process in the Middle East –Nikolay Mladenov–; while in Iran the UN supported the agreement adopted in 2015 regarding Iran's nuclear programme by adopting resolution 2231. Since then, the UN Secretary-General publishes periodic reports on the implementation of the agreement and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) –an independent agency established under the umbrella of the United Nations that regularly informs the General Assembly and the Security Council of the UN– is monitoring that Iran complies with its commitments in the nuclear field. Another actor playing a prominent role in the Middle East is the EU, which is also part of the Quartet on the Middle East for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During 2017 the EU also promoted several second track diplomacy initiatives in Yemen. In Syria, the EU was part of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) –made up of some twenty countries and organizations– playing a prominent role in fostering the negotiations in 2016, but not so active in 2017.³

Beyond the specific singularity of each case, a general assessment of the points on the **negotiation agendas** reveals that several recurring points present in other contexts were also present in the cases in the Middle East, especially in armed conflicts. They were linked

The United Nations was involved in four of the five cases studied in the Middle East in 2017, using different formats

In most cases, peace negotiations in the Middle East were stalled or the adopted agreements did not bring any substantive change to the dynamics of conflict or tension

especially to the quest to reach agreements on truces, ceasefire agreements and the cessation of hostilities or relief measures in humanitarian crises, as in the cases of Syria and Yemen. The humanitarian situation in Gaza also underpinned the negotiations between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine. It is worth mentioning that, in some cases, key actors of civil society that did not participate in the formal negotiation spaces called for the need to deal with some crucial aspects. So, for instance, in the case of Syria, the group

Families for Freedom highlighted the need to urgently deal with the problem of arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances within the framework of the conflict and posed this demand to the UN special envoy in Geneva. In Yemen, the women's platform Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafaq) conveyed to the UN special envoy the need to react to the way the conflict was unfolding and deal with its consequences for the economy and public health in the country.

As for the general evolution in negotiations in the Middle East during 2017, it is important to note that the outlook was not encouraging. In the cases studied, either the negotiations had come to a halt, the adopted agreements did not bring significant changes to the dynamics of conflict, or the climate was adverse for the evolution of the peace process. So, for instance, in the case of the process for the Iranian nuclear programme, the implementation of the agreement was affected by increased tension. In the cases of Israel-Palestine and Yemen, the stall in the contacts between the contesting parties persisted even if some initiatives tried to re-launch the negotiations. In the case of Palestine, even if a reconciliation agreement was reached between Fatah and Hamas, by the end of the year there was growing uncertainty with regards to its implementation and there was fear that the agreement would collapse as had occurred in the past. Finally, as for Syria, even if two channels of negotiation remained open –one under the auspices of the UN and another promoted by Russia– in practice there was no moves forward to find a way out of the conflict and the ceasefire agreements had an unequal and relative impact, with no final repercussion on the dynamics of violence and serious impacts of the conflict on the population.

Finally, with regards to the gender dimension in the peace and negotiation processes in the Middle East, some of the examples studied in 2017 show the difficulties and obstacles that women face when it comes to participating in the formal negotiation spaces.

3. See the summary on Syria in chapter 3 (Peace processes) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2017! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2017.

All of this despite the initiatives and demands made by women for a greater presence of women in negotiations. In this regard, it is worth pointing out the case of Yemen. Despite the blockade of formal negotiations, initiatives by women's organizations such as the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafaq) continued to meet and defend an immediate ceasefire, the primacy of political solutions above military ones and a rapid access to humanitarian aid to face the crisis that is ravaging the country, worsened by the context of violence. In the case of Syria, the Syrian Women's Advisory Board –a platform bringing together Syrian women from different political backgrounds that holds direct contacts with the UN special envoy for Syria– remained active, while the Women's Advisory Committee of the opposing High Negotiations Committee renewed its call for women to play a greater role in the search for a way out of the conflict and demanded a greater involvement of the UN in supervising the ceasefire agreements in the country. As for Palestine, on a positive note it is worth mentioning the launching of its first National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UN resolution 1325. The plan, designed for the period 2017-2019 and approved in 2016, included among its priorities to protect Palestinian women and girls from rape committed within the framework of the Israeli occupation; increase the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacekeeping at all levels; integrate women's perspective into the peace and reconciliation agreements, and tackle the impact that conflicts have on women. Palestine is one of the three countries in the region that already have a NAP: Iraq, since 2015, and Jordan, which adopted a NAP in 2017.

The analysis of some of the processes in the Middle East in 2017 show the difficulties that women face when it comes to participating in the formal negotiation spaces

Summary:

The Palestinian-Israeli peace process launched in the 1990s has not resulted in an agreement between the parties on the most complex issues (borders, Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian refugees and security) or the creation of a Palestinian state. Since the timetable established by the Oslo Accords broke down a series of rounds of negotiation have been conducted and various proposals have been made, but they have all been unsuccessful. The peace process has developed amidst periodic outbursts of violence and alongside the fait accompli policies of Israel, including with regard to its persisting occupation. These dynamics have created growing doubts about the viability of a two-state solution.

In keeping with the trend in recent years, **direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis remained at an impasse during 2017 and the general outlook for a solution to the conflict was directly influenced by US foreign policy throughout the year, following the presidential inauguration of Donald Trump in January.**

Meanwhile, some international players promoted initiatives to try to rescue the two-state formula. In mid-January, a conference was hosted by the French government in Paris involving representatives of more than 70 countries and regional organisations. The conference was broader than the previous one organised as part of the French initiative in June 2016, which was attended by delegates from around 30 countries. The meeting was surrounded by an atmosphere of uncertainty over the possible impact of measures announced by the Trump administration and over doubts expressed by diplomatic representatives about its effectiveness, including delegates from the United Kingdom, whose government only attended as an observer. Neither Palestinians, who support the French conference, nor Israelis, who oppose it (Benjamin Netanyahu called it “fraudulent”, a “relic of the past” and “anti-Israeli”), were invited to attend. The conference ended with an appeal to the parties to avoid unilateral actions that could hamper future negotiations. The following months were marked by several controversies connected to Washington's positions regarding the conflict, which led to the adoption of positions favourable to Israel. Trump and other senior representatives of his administration, such as the US Secretary of State and the US ambassador to Israel, made statements that in some cases broke with previous US policies. For example, in January it was suggested that Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories were not an impediment to peace, although it was acknowledged that expanding them might not help to achieve an agreement. In a joint conference with the Israeli prime minister in February, the US president relativised his country's commitment to the two-state solution, saying that he was willing to consider the formula, in addition to other alternatives, including the possibility of a single state, and advocated that the Palestinians recognise Israel as a Jewish state. Meanwhile, the US ambassador to Israel, which is against a two-state solution, made

6.2. Case study analysis

Mashreq

Israel-Palestina	
Negotiating actors	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (PA)
Third parties	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia
Relevant agreements	Israel – PLO Mutual Recognition (1993), Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo I Accords), Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Cairo Agreement) (1994), Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) (1995), Wye River Memorandum (1998), Sharm el Sheikh Memorandum (1999), Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2003), Annapolis Conference Joint Understanding on Negotiations (2007)

statements alluding to the “supposed” occupation of the Palestinian territories. Trump’s son-in-law and advisor on Middle Eastern issues, Jared Kushner, who has ties to the Israeli settler movement, visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories in June with the ambitious task of paving the way for what the US president has described as the “definitive agreement” to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli issue.

The most critical episode, with more direct consequences on the prospects of future negotiations that really address the most complex issues of the conflict, came in December, when the Trump administration decided to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. To ratify this decision, Washington began procedures to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv. Trump therefore backed one of Israel’s main claims that Jerusalem is its “eternal and indivisible” capital, which had not received international recognition until then. The move was rejected by the various Palestinian political actors and a large part of the international community, since it involves breaking an international consensus that considers the status of Jerusalem to be one of the key issues to be resolved as part of the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. In addition to sparking protests in Gaza and the West Bank, triggering an escalation of violence towards the end of the year, the decision also prompted Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to question the role of the US as a mediator in the peace process. The Palestinian leader said that the US government had crossed a red line and was clearly aligned with Israel’s arguments and interests. Consequently, he asked the UN to take charge of the peace process. The UN Security Council put forth a resolution to urge compliance with all existing resolutions on the Palestinian issue establishing that the final status of Jerusalem must be decided in direct negotiations between the parties. The US was forced to exercise its right of veto to block the initiative, which had the support of the other 14 members of the Security Council. As a result, the UN General Assembly convened an emergency meeting in which 128 countries demanded that Washington revoke its decision on Jerusalem (35 other countries abstained and nine voted against, after an intense campaign by the US Government). UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also criticised the move, rejecting any unilateral measure that compromises the prospects for peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Pope Francis also appealed to Trump to respect the status of the city and to act in accordance with United Nations resolutions. At an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Ankara, Muslim leaders rejected the US policy and declared East Jerusalem to be the capital of Palestine. The situation was also met with widespread condemnation in the Arab world and was

During 2017 the US Government decided to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a move that was rejected by the various Palestinian political actors and a large part of the international community

criticised by a Washington ally in the region, Saudi Arabia, who said that efforts to negotiate a peace agreement and unify the Palestinian leadership were damaged by the US plan. Various analysts warned of the consequences of Trump’s move in a destabilised and highly volatile region. The US decision also raised alarms in many European capitals. At the end of the year, after explaining that the US could no longer act as a mediator from the Palestinian perspective, Abbas travelled to Paris and asked France and Europe to assume a more prominent role in the peace efforts.

Along with the issue of Jerusalem and its impact, another key issue in 2017 was the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas’ decision to modify its political programme, changing its positions towards Israel. During the year the group issued the Document of Principles and General Policies, which it claims does not replace its founding charter. For the first time it accepts a Palestinian State in the territories occupied by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967. The document states that Hamas does not seek war with

the Jewish people, but with the Zionism that promotes the occupation of Palestine and declares that Hamas is not a revolutionary force that intends to intervene in other countries (eliminating prior references to Hamas’ links with the Muslim Brotherhood). During the presentation of this programme in Doha in May, the leader of Hamas’ political bureau, Khaled Mashal, specified that the organisation wanted to liberate all of Palestine, but was willing to support a state inside the 1967 borders as a formula of Palestinian national consensus, though without explicitly recognising Israel. The largest concession of the new document provides for “the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, along the lines of 4 June 1967”, thus implying that there would be another state outside those borders, though it did not mention Israel. According to diplomatic sources, the content of the text was the subject of discussion and debate for several years between Hamas leaders in exile and in prison. The document was released two days before Mahmoud Abbas’ trip to Washington to meet with Trump in May. Amidst the tension between Hamas and Fatah, the document was thought to bring the positions of both groups closer to a negotiating objective. According to some analysts, the new document aims to reflect the group’s positions almost 30 years after its inception and demonstrate pragmatism without compromising the ideological base of the movement. Israel rejected the document and accused Hamas of deceptive intent. Following rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah,⁴ Netanyahu’s government warned in October that it would not negotiate with a Palestinian unity government if the Islamist group was part of it. Finally, in July the EU Court of Justice ruled that Hamas

4. See the summary on Palestine in this report.

should remain on the EU's list of terrorist organisations. Originally added to the list in 2001, the decision had been annulled for procedural reasons in 2014.

With regards to gender and peace, a positive note in 2017 was the launching of Palestinian first National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UN resolution 1325. The plan, designed for the period 2017-2019 and approved in 2016, included among its priorities to protect Palestinian women and girls from rape committed within the framework of the Israeli occupation; increase the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacekeeping at all levels; integrate women's perspective into the peace and reconciliation agreements, and tackle the impact that conflicts have on women. Palestine is one of the three countries in the region that already have a NAP: Iraq, since 2015, and Jordan, which adopted a NAP in 2017.

Palestina	
Negotiating actors	Hamas, Fatah
Third parties	Qatar, Egypt
Relevant agreements	Mecca Agreement (2007), Cairo agreement (2011), Doha agreement (2012), Beach Refugee Camp agreement (2014)

Summary:

Since the start of the confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, which materialized as of 2007 with a de facto separation between Gaza and the West Bank, several mediation initiatives have been launched in an attempt to reduce tensions and promote an approximation between these two Palestinian formations. It was not until May 2011 that the confluence of several factors—including the deadlock in negotiations between the PA and Israel, changes in the region as a result of the Arab revolts and the pressure exerted by the Palestinian public opinion—facilitated the signing of a reconciliation agreement between the parties. The diverging opinions between Hamas and Fatah on key issues have hampered the implementation of this agreement, which aims at establishing a unity government, the celebration of legislative and presidential elections, and reforming the security forces. In the following years, new reconciliation agreements between both parties were announced, but not implemented. Changes in the region following the Arab revolts have also had an impact on rapprochement between the Palestinian groups, to which Israel is openly opposed.

Throughout 2017, conditions were provided for new announcements of reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. However, at the end of the year the problems in moving forward in implementing the agreement between both Palestinian factions and in forming an effective unity government were once again laid bare. After a meeting between Hamas and Fatah representatives in Moscow in early 2017, both groups announced their intention to work together in a common administration and in the preparing for elections for the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian Parliament in 2018. The announcement was viewed sceptically given the many failed attempts to establish a political agreement between both parties in recent

years, as well as the persisting tension. During the first quarter, in fact, both groups disagreed about the calendar of the municipal elections, suspended in September 2016, which Hamas argued should only take place as part of a working intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement. Tensions also rose over a series of PA measures in retaliation for Hamas' decision to create an administrative committee for the Gaza Strip called the Supreme Civil Council. The PA said that the Islamist group had crossed a "red line" and shortly after cut the salaries of between 40,000 and 60,000 Gaza officials employed by Hamas by 30%, claiming the cuts were caused by a drop in aid. The salary cuts sparked protests in Gaza, which was also affected by the reimposition of taxes on the entry of fuel. The dispute led to the closure of Gaza's main power plant, with a consequent reduction in supply. The government of Mahmoud Abbas insisted that the solution to the crisis required the transfer of Gaza's administration and the dissolution of the administrative committee, while Hamas said that the fuel taxes had to be lifted as precondition. In the following months, the PA threatened to take fresh action, such as forcing the early retirement for thousands of Gaza officials or cutting aid to around 80,000 local families.

It was not until the second semester that efforts towards reconciliation intensified. In early August, a Hamas delegation led by Nasser al-Din al-Shaer (a former minister, considered a pragmatic figure within the Islamist group) met in Ramallah with Abbas and PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah. After the meeting, both Abbas and al-Shaer called for unity and an end to intra-Palestinian fragmentation. Some analysts suggested that Abbas had reacted this way due to the growing influence of his political rival, former senior Fatah official Mohammed Dahlan, in pro-reconciliation initiatives in which Abbas had no involvement. Thus, events in October inclined towards rapprochement. Hamas released five Fatah prisoners. Days later, the PA cabinet met in Gaza for the first time in three years and members of Fatah and Hamas announced a new round of talks in Egypt with the intention of ending a decade of division. On 12 October, rival Palestinian factions announced a fresh agreement to form a new national consensus government after Hamas agreed to relinquish administrative control of Gaza, including the border crossing with Egypt in Rafah. Several analysts said that Hamas' decision was motivated at least in part by the fear of suffering greater political and economic isolation, especially after its main supporter and donor, Qatar, was involved in a serious diplomatic dispute with Saudi Arabia. The agreement was mediated by Egypt, whose efforts were reportedly supported by Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. The agreement was allegedly based on the previous accord reached between both Palestinian factions in 2011. Media sources indicated that according to the agreement, control of the Rafah crossing was to be managed by presidential guards supervised by the

EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), instead of officials linked to Hamas. Around 3,000 PA security officials were expected to be deployed in Gaza, who were supposed to make it easier to lift the restrictions imposed by Israel and Egypt at the border posts and improve access to supplies for Gaza's weakened economy. Other topics on the agenda of the talks were the future of the approximately 40,000 employees that Hamas had hired in the Gaza Strip since taking control of it in 2007 (half of which performed civilian tasks and the other half security), the date for Palestinian presidential and parliamentary elections (which both parties agreed to hold before the end of 2018 during a new round of negotiations in late November) and the enactment of reforms in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Analysts stressed that the agreement presented an opportunity to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and end the blockade permanently, though they recognised the challenges of getting around the parties' rivalry and mutual distrust.⁵

In the following weeks, however, the disputes and difficulties in agreeing on the practical details and implementing some of the measures became clear, forcing delays to the implementation schedule, including the transfer of the Gaza administration that was initially scheduled for 1 December. At the end of that month, the parties traded accusations: Hamas complained that the PA had not paid the salaries in Gaza as agreed and Fatah said that Hamas had not made the transfers of money provided for in the deal. Thus, at the year's end and only ten weeks after the agreement was announced, the process foundered, with the PA maintaining the sanctions imposed on Gaza in early 2017 and the leaders of Hamas warning that the pact was about to collapse. Before the announcements about possible intra-Palestinian reconciliation, Israel repeated its policy of rejecting any Palestinian government that includes Hamas and said that the process would have negative consequences for any potential revival of peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis. In this context, Hamas made an important announcement regarding its political ideology in May when it released the Document of Principles and General Policies, which is seen as moderating its positions regarding Israel and taking a more pragmatic approach. The document, which does not replace Hamas' founding charter, admits the recognition of a Palestinian state in the borders prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli War as a formula for a Palestinian national consensus and claims that its conflict is with Zionism, and not with Jews because of their religion.⁶

At the end of 2017 the problems in moving forward in implementing the agreement between Hamas and Fatah and in forming an effective unity government were once again laid bare

Syria	
Negotiating actors	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition
Third parties	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Jordan
Relevant agreements	Geneva Communiqué from the Action Group for Syria (2012); UNSC Resolution 2254 in support of the International Syria Support Group Roadmap for a Peace Process (Vienna Statements (2015)) ⁷

Summary:

Given the serious consequences of the armed conflict in Syria and amidst concern about the regional repercussions of the crisis, various regional and international actors have tried to facilitate a negotiated solution and commit the parties to a cessation of hostilities. However, regional actors' and international powers' different approaches to the conflict, together with an inability to reach consensus in the UN Security Council, have hindered the possibilities of opening the way to a political solution. After a brief and failed attempt by the Arab League, the UN took the lead in the mediation efforts, led by special envoys Kofi Annan (2012), Lakhdar Brahimi (2012-2014) and Staffan de Mistura (since July 2014). Other initiatives have come from the United States, Russia and leaders of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). Alongside the intra-Syrian conversations hosted by De Mistura in Geneva, the Russian-backed Astana process began in 2017, which also involve Turkey and Iran. The various rounds of negotiations held since the beginning of the armed conflict have shown the deep differences between the parties and have not been able to halt the high levels of violence in the country.

Negotiations on the armed conflict in Syria continued in 2017, but the different efforts failed to advance an agreement leading to a significant reduction of violence in the country.

The two main frameworks for dialogue were the process led by the United Nations and its special envoy, Staffan de Mistura, who continued to hold regular meetings in Geneva; and the process backed by Russia, which involved other regional powers, like Turkey and Iran. This process, which mainly consisted of talks in the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, was the first to become active in the beginning of the year and held eight rounds throughout 2017. The point of departure for the Astana talks was a ceasefire for all of Syria agreed by Russia, Turkey, the Syrian government and armed opposition groups at the end of 2016, excluding armed groups such as ISIS, the al-Nusra Front and the Kurdish organisation YPG. This agreement received support from the United Nations Security Council through its unanimous approval of Resolution 2336 on 31 December 2016. The first round of negotiations of the Astana process took place in January 2017 and resulted in the first, albeit brief, direct meeting between a Syrian government

5. Asseburg, Muriel, *The Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement of October 2017*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, November 2017.

6. See the summary on Israel-Palestine in this report.

7. Both the Geneva Communiqué of 2012 and United National Security Council Resolution 2254 are reference documents for the negotiations, but neither one has been signed by the parties to the conflict.

delegation and a delegation of representatives of Syrian armed opposition groups. Talks between the Syrian actors were mostly indirect during the two-day meeting and did not lead to the signing of any kind of agreement. As happened in Geneva, Turkey vetoed Kurdish participation in the Astana meeting. The talks did lead to the establishment of a trilateral ceasefire monitoring mechanism managed by Russia, Turkey and Iran. Moscow also sent the Syrian opposition a proposal for a future Constitution, with some federalist elements, greater powers for Parliament and a commitment to strengthen secularisation by abolishing Islamic jurisprudence as a source of legislation.

The Astana process aroused misgivings in some Western diplomatic circles, which voiced concern about parallel tracks and the possibility that Moscow intended to dominate the terms of a potential agreement, excluding the UN.

Despite these suspicions, De Mistura participated in the meeting in Astana and claimed that the different parties involved continued to recognise the UN as the main mediator. Some analysts called attention to the changes in the opposition delegation in Astana, which was dominated by armed groups, compared to representatives with (limited) political influence in the Geneva process. In February, Russia, Turkey and Iran met again to establish the ceasefire monitoring mechanisms. The Astana talks held a new round of meetings in March, which was boycotted by a delegation of the political opposition in protest of continuous truce violations. In this round, Russia and Turkey decided to formally incorporate Iran as the third country to guarantee the ceasefire. In the fourth round, in May, Russia, Iran and Turkey signed a memorandum to establish four “de-escalation zones” in Syria aimed to achieve a cessation of hostilities among the warring parties and no-fly zone, initially for a renewable period of six months, as well as conditions for boosting humanitarian aid, quick and safe access to assistance, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and the rebuilding of infrastructure. The Astana memorandum, together with the so-called “Amman discussions” (involving Russia, the US and Jordan) resulted in the general definition of four de-escalation zones in areas mainly controlled by the opposition and inhabited by around 2.5 million people: one in the governorate of Idlib and some parts of the neighbouring governorates of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia; a second in parts of the governorate of Homs (Rastan and Talbiseh); a third in Eastern Ghouta; and a fourth in some parts of southern Syria, in the governorates of Deraa and Quneitra, near the Jordanian border. Bashar Assad’s regime approved of the plan, whilst opposition groups expressed their reservations about Iran’s involvement. Russia defended the

proposal, assuring that it would allow Syria to focus efforts on fighting groups like ISIS and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front). Critics argued that the plan involved a de facto partition of Syria.

Although the plan for the four de-escalation zones was launched in May, the exact demarcation of the areas remained pending for future negotiations. Thus, the fifth round ended in July without an agreement on the final delimitation of all four areas, whilst doubts also persisted on the mechanisms for resolving

violations of the agreement and on how the role of guarantors played by Russia, Iran and Turkey would take shape in the field. It was not until September, in the sixth round of the Astana process, that an agreement was reached on the demarcation and operation of the fourth pending area (Idlib). However, questions and misgivings remained about the deployment of troops from the guarantor countries of the agreement. In the seventh

and eighth round of talks in Astana (in October and December, respectively), the parties continued discussing implementation of the ceasefire in these areas and the scope of international oversight. In general terms, since the de-escalation zone agreement was announced, levels of violence did drop in some of these areas, but the trend was uneven. In southern Syria, for example, where the ceasefire took effect in July, the reduction in hostilities was significant, whilst other areas suffered an upsurge in violence, as illustrated by the situation in Eastern Ghouta.⁸ At the end of the eighth round of meetings in Astana, held on 21 and 22 December, Russia, Iran and Turkey announced that a national dialogue conference would be held to try to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict in the Russian town of Sochi in January 2018. The conference was expected to bring together representatives from all parts of Syrian society, even though Ankara upheld its veto against the YPG, and was presented as complementary to the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. The agenda of the Astana talks also addressed other issues such as the situation of the detainees, demining, the search for missing people and the exchange of dead bodies (the creation of a working group to address these issues was announced in December).

In addition to the Astana talks, the meetings of the UN-backed Geneva process continued during 2017. Five new rounds were held throughout the year, in February, March, May, July and November-December. Between 23 February and 3 March, after 10 months without a meeting, Geneva hosted the fourth round of talks of the Geneva process in a climate of scepticism, taking the parties’ positions and the failed results of previous rounds into account. De Mistura met with

Negotiations on the armed conflict in Syria continued in 2017, but the different efforts failed to advance an agreement leading to a significant reduction of violence in the country

8. See the summary on Syria in chapter 1 (Armed conflicts) in Escola de Cultura de Pau. *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

representatives of the opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC), which pressed its demand for Bashar Assad and his regime to relinquish power and form a transitional government, whilst his delegates arrived in Geneva IV in a stronger position after defeating the opposition forces in Aleppo and due to an international climate less willing to demand a change of regime. Meanwhile, the UN special envoy continued to try to focus the agenda on a non-sectarian and inclusive system of governance, on holding elections and on a new Constitution drafted by Syrians (which was interpreted as a veiled allusion to the draft Constitution prepared by Moscow). The parties agreed to receive a non-paper on principles, expert reports on topics from the four items of the agenda and proposed timetables. Twenty days later, the fifth round of sessions took place from 23 to 31 March, in which the parties submitted comments (in writing and orally) on the four items of the agenda outlined by the UN: constitutional changes, governance and political transition, elections and counterterrorism (the latter being a priority issue for the regime). However, De Mistura acknowledged that several issues had yet to be resolved before substantive negotiations could begin.

The sixth round of intra-Syrian negotiations took place between 15 and 19 May, during which De Mistura began technical consultations on legal and constitutional issues related to the political transition with experts appointed by the negotiating delegations. The seventh round was held between 10 and 14 July. It did not make any headway, but suffered no significant breakdowns either. According to reports, Syrian government representatives refused to discuss any potential political transition and insisted on focusing attention on combatting terrorism. After months of deadlock, the eighth round of meetings in Geneva took place between 28 November and 14 December. It focused on the 12 Living Intra-Syrian Essential Principles, which aim to provide a vision of the future of Syria, and the process and timetable for a new Constitution and elections supervised by the UN under implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015). This round also failed to make progress and De Mistura said that a “golden opportunity” for a possible solution to the conflict had been lost. The UN special envoy mainly blamed the Syrian government, which he accused of setting preconditions to holding direct meetings with the opposition, of being unwilling to meet with anyone with different opinions and of refusing to consider two of the most important items on the agenda: the constitutional process and the presidential election. Damascus’ representatives were only willing to discuss terrorism-related issues. As a result, De Mistura explicitly asked Russia to put more pressure on Syrian negotiators to agree to talk. In addition to meeting

The Astana process established four de-escalation zones in Syria that had an uneven impact in terms of reduction of violence

with the opposing parties during 2017, the UN special envoy also met with various international and regional stakeholders, such as Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the Arab League and others. He also met several times with members of Syrian civil society, including Syrian women, as part of the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board (SWAB). A constant subject in the meetings with the civil society was their desire for a greater role in the negotiations.

There were also some specific ceasefire agreements during the year. One such agreement, mediated by Russia and Egypt in July, facilitated access to humanitarian aid to East Ghouta (however, the area remained under siege and was continually attacked by the regime). Other ceasefires were agreed between the Syrian government and various armed opposition groups in the so-called “reconciliation agreements” that involved the forced displacement of thousands of civilians, mostly from areas besieged by the government of Bashar Assad.⁹

From a gender perspective, it should be noted that the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board (SWAB) remained active during 2017, holding various meetings with UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura as part of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. Given the negotiating delegations’ general reluctance to increase civil society’s involvement in the negotiations, De Mistura invited two women to the opening session of the February 2017 negotiations, one representing the SWAB and another representing the Civil Society Support Room (CSSR), and reminded the delegations of the importance of the presence of women and civil society in the talks. Members of the Women’s Advisory Committee (WAC) of the opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC), which was created in 2016 to boost women’s involvement in the Syrian opposition delegation in the UN-sponsored negotiations, called for a greater role and asked the UN and the International Syria Support Group to get involved in supervising the ceasefire in Syria. Also during the year, a group of Syrian women met with De Mistura to express their yearning to discover the whereabouts of their missing children, husbands and brothers. The women of the Families for Freedom movement, which is opposed to arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, was the major force behind the demonstrations in Geneva to remind the negotiating delegations that one of the key issues to be resolved in the conflict concerned missing persons and demanded that the lists of those who have been arrested in an irregular manner be made public as a start. Both the UN and organisations like Amnesty International have reported that the scale of cases of forced disappearance in Syria makes it a practice constituting crimes against humanity.

9. Ibid.

The Gulf

Iran (nuclear programme)	
Negotiating actors	Iran, G5+1 (USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany), EU
Third parties	UN
Relevant agreements	Joint Plan of Action (provisional agreement, 2013), Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015)

Summary:

Under scrutiny by the international community since 2002, the Iranian nuclear programme has become one of the main sources of tension between Iran and the West, particularly affecting Iran's relationship with the United States and Israel. After more than a decade of negotiations, and despite the fact that various proposals were made to resolve the conflict, the parties failed to reach an agreement and remained almost unchanged in their positions. The US, Israel and several European countries remained distrustful of Tehran and convinced of the military objectives of its atomic programme, whilst Iran continued to insist that its nuclear activities were strictly for civilian purposes and in conformance with international regulations. In this context, the Iranian atomic programme continued to develop whilst the UN Security Council, US and EU imposed sanctions on Iran and threats of military action were made, mainly by Israel. Iran's change of government in 2013 encouraged expectations about the possibility of engaging in substantive talks on nuclear issues, facilitated new rounds of negotiations and led to the signing of agreements aimed at halting the Iranian atomic programme in exchange for lifting the sanctions. Negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme have been met with resistance by Israel, certain countries such as Saudi Arabia and groups in the United States in a context marked by historical distrust, questions of sovereignty and national pride, disparate geopolitical and strategic interests, regional struggles and more.

Unlike developments in the last two years, the process to implement the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme (2015) was affected during 2017 by a tenser atmosphere resulting from mutual allegations, incidents and greater animosity between Tehran and Washington after Donald Trump was inaugurated as president of the United States. Strictly in terms of compliance with the provisions of the agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that the Iranian government was taking the agreed steps in its successive reports during the year. The IAEA satisfactorily verified Iran's commitments regarding centrifuges and uranium reserves. However, other activities carried out by Tehran in relation to its ballistic missile programme and other areas aroused suspicions and complaints from several countries about the possibility that such armaments could eventually transport nuclear weapons (due to their capacity and travel potential). Countries like France, Germany, the United Kingdom and especially the United States and Israel drew attention to several Iranian ballistic missile tests and to evidence related to the Iranian space programme. Israel especially condemned the medium-range missile tests conducted by Iran in the Khorramshahr area in late January,

which were capable of travelling a distance of 1,000 kilometres, and claimed that the missiles were originally from North Korea. Tehran responded with assurance that its activities did not contravene the provisions of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme and were part of its scientific and technological programmes or efforts to develop its conventional defensive capabilities. Russia supported Iran's position, recalling that the 2015 agreement, ratified by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, did not ban Iran's space or ballistic programmes. Washington then imposed new sanctions on individuals and bodies linked to the Iranian ballistic programme, which Tehran considered a breach of the agreement. In retaliation, the Iranian government imposed sanctions on US companies that it accused of violating human rights and cooperating with Israel.

The implementation of the agreement was also influenced by a series of incidents involving armed actors (including warning shots between Iranian and US vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, drills and military exercises, reports of territorial water violations and mutual threats) and by the position adopted by the new US administration of President Donald Trump, which is openly against the pact with Iran. Thus, Washington supported making changes to the agreement, though its approach met with both foreign and domestic resistance, including from US scientists and atomic experts who stressed the importance of the nuclear agreement and demanded that it be preserved. Other international actors involved in reaching the agreement, including the EU, ruled out renegotiating all or part of it. In mid-October, the Trump administration decided not to certify lifting the sanctions from Iran as approved under the agreement (and in compliance with the provisions, as certified by the IAEA). As a result, the US Government opened the door for Congress to approve new sanctions against the country within 60 days. Trump also warned that the US could withdraw from the agreement if his government did not see changes in areas that it did not cover, such as the ballistic missile programme and Iran's activities in the region. **The UN Secretary-General criticised Washington's position and said that these policies brought "considerable uncertainty" to the future of the agreement.** In his last report in 2017 on the implementation of the agreement, published in early December, the UN Secretary-General also stated that he was willing to investigate allegations about the possible transfer of missiles or ballistic material from Iran to the armed Houthis, one of the main parties to the war in Yemen and an adversary of Saudi Arabia. The investigation would look into the launch of at least two missiles against Saudi territory in July and November 2017. The UN Secretary-General's report also mentioned that a senior Iranian military officer (Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleiman) travelled to Iraq and Syria in breach of the travel ban established in Resolution 2231. At the end of the year, the US Congress let the deadline pass for reimposing sanctions on Iran and let the White House decide whether it wanted to impose new sanctions. Meanwhile, the members of the JCPOA

Joint Commission ratified their commitment to it during their meeting in Vienna on 13 December. The EU acts as coordinator of this commission, which consists of the eight parties that signed the agreement and is responsible for supervising its implementation.

Yemen	
Negotiating actors	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis, forces of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh
Third parties	UN, Kuwait, Oman, EU
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

Scenario of several conflicts in recent decades, Yemen began a difficult transition in 2011 after the revolts that forced Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down as president after more than 30 years in office. The eventful aftermath led to a rebellion by Houthi forces and former President Saleh against the transitional government presided over by Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who was forced to flee in early 2015. In March 2015, an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia decided to intervene militarily in the country in support of the deposed government. Since then, levels of violence in the conflict have escalated. Given this turn of events, the United Nations, which has been involved in the country since the beginning of the transition, has tried to promote a political solution to the conflict, joined by some regional and international actors. The hostilities have significantly worsened the security and humanitarian situation in the country.

The deadlock in negotiations between the parties in conflict in Yemen since mid-2016 persisted throughout 2017, despite various players' efforts to try to restart the talks and amidst increasing violence and deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the country. UN Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed held several meetings with the warring parties throughout the year to try to commit them to reducing the violence, taking steps to alleviate the grave humanitarian crisis and returning to the negotiating table to discuss a comprehensive political agreement, but these efforts were unsuccessful. During the first quarter, Ahmed met with deposed Yemeni President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi in Aden and with leaders of the Houthis (or Ansar Allah) and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) in Sana'a. These meetings took place in January as part of the special envoy's tour that also took him to Doha, Muscat, Amman and Riyadh. Ahmed met again with Houthi and GPC representatives in May. In July, he met in Cairo with other Yemeni political actors based in Egypt. In addition to a cessation of hostilities and the humanitarian crisis, these meetings addressed issues such as the lifting of restrictions on commercial flights at the Sana'a airport, possible steps to settle the unpaid

salaries owed to public officials and actions to prevent the intensification of military operations in the port of Hodeida, which ended up becoming one of the main flashpoints for the fighting in 2017. Oman reportedly also tried to mediate between Hadi's government and its Houthi opponents, hoping to get them to agree to resume the UN-sponsored talks.

At meetings in May and July, other Yemeni groups, such as youth, civil society and women's representatives through the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafaq), told the UN special envoy of their concerns about the direction that the conflict was taking, the serious economic deterioration and the rapid expansion of the cholera outbreak in the country, which had already caused the deaths of more than 2,000 people by the end of 2017. In the first half of the year, the special envoy for Yemen met in Europe with several senior diplomatic officials in France and Germany. He also held meetings with experts, including one promoted by the German-based Berghof Foundation to discuss possible ways to end the conflict. Ahmed also met in March with the so-called Quintet to study the situation in Yemen. The Quintet consists of the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman. Notably, two of these countries are directly involved in the Yemeni conflict as belligerents, since Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been involved in supporting Hadi's forces and both the United States and the United Kingdom provide weapons and logistical support to the Saudi-led international military coalition in the conflict.

The conflict in Yemen was one of the main issues addressed during the 36th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September. For the third year in a row, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein called for the establishment of

The UN Special Envoy for Yemen denounced the warring parties for their contempt for the conflict's effects on the civilian population and for the continuing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law

an independent international body to investigate the many violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Yemen. His call was backed by more than 60 international and Yemeni NGOs. Supported by Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg, the governments of the Netherlands and Canada promoted a resolution to create a commission of inquiry with a one-year mandate, taking into account the many complaints about Yemen's National Commission and Saudi Arabia's Joint Incident Assessment Team, established respectively in 2015 and 2016 to investigate allegations of abuse. These initiatives have been described as biased and ineffective. Egypt, however, had submitted another resolution on behalf of the so-called Arab Group to provide technical assistance and training to Yemen's National Commission. Finally, after intense negotiations, a compromise formula was adopted that established a group of regional and international experts to work in alongside Yemen's National Commission and provide

it with technical assistance before the end of 2017. Alongside these activities in Geneva, the EU delegation in Yemen hosted a meeting for around 30 tribal leaders from different Yemeni regions, also in September. The secret meeting was held in Belgium, although it was revealed that its purpose was to explore alternative formulas for ending the conflict and promoting second-track diplomacy negotiations.

During the last quarter of the year, amidst rising violence, the difficulties in restarting the talks between the main warring sides became more evident.

In his report to the UN Security Council in October, Ahmed denounced the warring parties for their contempt for the conflict's effects on the civilian population and for the continuing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including the recruitment of minors and sexual and gender-based violence. He cautioned that influential and powerful leaders were benefitting from the conflict and were not interested in promoting peaceful solutions. Despite this assessment, he continued with his efforts. In late October, he held new meetings with senior Yemeni and Saudi leaders in Riyadh and explored the possibility that both sides might agree to adopt a three-point proposal to resume the cessation of hostilities, take some specific confidence-building steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and return to the negotiating table to reach a comprehensive peace agreement. Nevertheless, the situation in the country continued to deteriorate. After the Houthis launched a missile towards Riyadh that was intercepted by Saudi forces, the Saudi-led coalition imposed an iron blockade on the port of Hodeida, a strategic site for the entry of supplies to Yemen, thereby worsening the humanitarian crisis in the country. Friction and internal divisions within both sides also started to show, especially in the alliance of convenience between the Houthis and groups affiliated with former President Saleh. In December, Saleh was killed by the Houthis after offering to switch sides and reach an agreement with the Saudis. Several other GPC leaders died in the attack, including General Secretary Aref Zouka, the head of the party's delegation for the peace talks. The breakdown in the pact between Saleh and the Houthis and the death of the former president forced a remarkable change in the political dynamics in Yemen and motivated the Saudi-led coalition to step up its offensive in an attempt to take advantage of its adversaries' destabilisation.

Thus, in late 2017 Yemen was embroiled in increased hostilities whilst the international community tried to arrange lifting the blockade from Hodeida. By the end of the year, a pledge had been made to allow

commercial vessels to enter the port for a period of 30 days. Given the situation, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed provided a bitter assessment at the end of his mission in Yemen in early 2018, noting that the warring parties had opted for a zero-sum game that has led to the impoverishment and destruction of the country and regretting that many Yemeni political decision-makers viewed the concessions necessary for negotiations as signs of weakness. According to his assessment, this was leading to irresponsible actions and acts of provocation that have increased the suffering of the Yemeni people.

From a gender perspective, it should be noted that since the armed conflict escalated in Yemen in 2015, Yemeni women have insisted on the need to be included in the peace process. However, women have been mostly excluded from formal negotiations. This situation continued during 2017, amidst deadlock in negotiations between the warring parties. Even so, women's initiatives like the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security continued to meet and

Since the armed conflict escalated in Yemen in 2015, Yemeni women have insisted on the need to be included in the peace process

define priorities, including an immediate ceasefire and the primacy of political solutions over military ones, quick access for humanitarian aid, the equitable distribution of aid and the resumption of comprehensive peace negotiations based on inclusiveness and the results of the National Dialogue Conference held in 2013 and 2014, especially with regard to female representation at all levels of government.

This group represents a wide range of women from various Yemeni social and political groups, from rural and urban areas alike, united in the call to end the war and provide a vision of the country anchored in non-violence, peace and better living conditions for the entire population. The platform held at least two meetings with the UN special envoy for Yemen in 2017 in order to study the situation in the country, the impact of the armed conflict and the main challenges posed by the crisis.

The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security has been created under Resolution 1325 and is part of a UN Women programme to increase women's participation in the formal peace process and to strengthen the gender perspective in peacebuilding and in future reconstruction in the country. Its activities are supported by the UN Women office in Yemen and are financed by the governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security grew out of a meeting among Yemeni women to share their concerns and demands that was held in Cyprus in October 2015 with the support of UN Women. Once this group was established, consisting of around 60 women, seven members were invited to the peace talks held in Kuwait in May 2016,

where they outlined what they considered priorities for the Yemeni population: first, to commit to a cessation of hostilities and to building a fair and comprehensive peace; second, to release people imprisoned and detained during the conflict; third, to protect women and children, especially by ending the recruitment of minors and creating rehabilitation programmes; and, fourth and last, to guarantee the provision of medical and health services. However, this group of women only participated in sessions parallel to the negotiations, separate from the meetings of the official delegations

(which, in turn, had a very low proportion of women, at just three of 28 representatives), despite calls for them to be composed of at least 30% women. According to reports and studies issued in 2017, the marginalisation of women from the formal process and the perception that the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security was unable to have an effective influence may have led some women to abandon it.¹⁰ Still, some members combined efforts with other civil society representatives to participate in initiatives like the National Agenda for Women, Peace and Security, created in November 2016.

10. Sanam Anderlini et al., *Bringing Peace to Yemen by Having Women at the Table: What the US Must Do and Why It Matters*, US CSWG Policy Brief, 21 August 2017.

Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2017¹

Conflict ² -beginning-	Type ³	Main parties ⁴	Intensity ⁵
			Trend ⁶
Africa			
Algeria -1992-	Internationalised internal	Government, AQIM (formerly GSPC), MUJAO, al-Mourabitoun, Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS, governments of North Africa and the Sahel	1
	System		=
Burundi -2015-	Internationalised internal	Government, factions of former armed groups	1
	Government		↓
CAR -2006-	Internationalised internal	Government, rebel groups of the former coalition Séléka (FPRC, MPC, UPC), anti-balaka militias, 3R militia, France (Operation Sangaris), MINUSCA, EUFOR, groups linked to the former government of François Bozizé, other residual forces from armed groups (former Armed Forces), LRA armed Ugandan group	2
	Government, Resources		↑
DRC (east) -1998-	Internationalised internal	Government, FDLR, factions of the FDLR, Mai-Mai militias, Nyatura, APCLS, NDC-R, Ituri armed groups, Burundian armed opposition group FNL, Rwanda, MONUSCO	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↑
DRC (east – ADF) -2014-	Internationalised internal	DRC, Uganda, Mai-Mai militia, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO	2
	System, Resources		=
DRC (Kasai) -2017-	Internal	DRC, various ethnic militias (Bana Mura, Kamwina Nsapu)	3
	Government, Identity		↑
Ethiopia (Ogaden) -2007-	Internationalised internal	Government, ONLF, OLF, pro-government militias (“Liyu Police”)	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-	Internationalised internal	Boko Haram (BH), MNJTF regional force (Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad)	3
	System		=

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.
2. This column includes the states in which armed conflicts are taking place, specifying in brackets the region within each state to which the crisis is confined or the name of the armed group involved in the conflict. This last option is used in cases involving more than one armed conflict in the same state or in the same territory within a state, for the purpose of distinguishing them.
3. The *Alert* 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.
4. 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.
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.
6. This column compares the trend of the events of 2017 with those that of 2016. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2017 has been more serious than in the previous year; the reduction of violence symbol (↓) indicates an improvement in the situation; and the unchanged (=) symbol indicates that no significant changes have taken place.

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Africa			
Libya -2011-	Internationalised internal	Government of National Accord with headquarters in Tripoli, government with headquarters in Tobruk/Bayda, armed factions linked to Operation Dignity (Libyan National Army, LNA), armed groups linked to Operation Dawn, militias from Misrata, Petroleum Facilities Guard, Benghazi Defence Brigades, ISIS, AQIM, among other armed groups; USA, France, UK, Egypt, UAE, and other countries	3
	Government, Resources, System		↑
Mali (north) -2012-	Internationalised internal	Government, CMA (MNLA, MAA faction, CPA, HCUA), Platform (GATIA, CMPFPR, MAA faction), Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, MRRA, al-Mourabitoun, GSIM, MLF, ANSIPRJ, MINUSMA, ECOWAS, France (Operation Barkhane), G5-Sahel Joint Force	1
	System, Self-government, Identity		↑
Somalia -1988-	Internationalised internal	Federal government, pro-government regional forces, Somaliland, Puntland, clan militias and warlords, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, US, France, Ethiopia, AMISOM, EUNAVFOR Somalia, Operation Ocean Shield, al-Shabaab	3
	Government, System		↑
South Sudan -2009-	Internationalised internal	Government (SPLM/A), SPLM/A-in Opposition armed group (faction of former vice president, Riek Machar), dissident factions of the SPLA-IO led by Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, communal militias (SSPPF, TFN), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS	3
	Government, Resources, Identity		=
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, PDF pro-government militias, RSF paramilitary unit, <i>janjaweed</i> , Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), other groups, UNAMID	2
	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		↓
America			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, FARC-EP, ELN, paramilitary groups	1
	System		↓
Asia			
Afghanistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, international coalition (led by USA), NATO, Taliban militias, warlords, ISIS	3
	System		=
India (CPI-M) -1967-	Internal	Government, CPI-M (Naxalites)	1
	System		↓
India (Jammu and Kashmir) -1989-	Internationalised internal	Government, JKLF, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, United Jihad Council, All Parties Hurriyat Conference	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Myanmar -1948-	Internal	Government, armed groups (KNU/KNLA, SSA-S, SSA-N KNPP, UWSA, CNF, ALP, DKBA, KNPLAC, SSNPLO, KIO, ABSDF, AA, TNLA, HaY, MNDAA)	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias, international militias, USA	3
	System		↓
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	Internationalised internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, civil society, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura)	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↓
Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/Dawlah Islamiyah/ Maute Group, Ansarul Khilafah Mindanao, factions of MILF and MNLF	3
	Self-government, Identity, System		↑
Philippines (NPA) -1969-	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		↑
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, separatist armed opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Europe			
Russia (Dagestan) -2010-	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Republic of Dagestan, armed opposition groups (Caucasus Emirate and ISIS)	1
	System		End
Turkey (southeast) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Ukraine (east) ⁷ -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups in the eastern provinces, Russia	2
	Government, Identity, Self-government		=
Middle East			
Egypt (Sinai) -2014-	Internationalised internal	Government, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) or Sinai Province (branch of ISIS), other armed groups (Ajnad Misr, Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis, Katibat al-Rabat al-Jihadiya, Popular Resistance Movement, Liwaa al-Thawra and Hassam), Israel	3
	System		=
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Iraqi military and security forces, Kurdish (peshmerga), Shia militias (Popular Mobilization Units, PMU), Sunni armed groups, Islamic State (ISIS), international anti-ISIS coalition led by USA, Iran, Turkey, PKK	3
	System, Government, Identity		↑
Israel-Palestine -2000-	Internacional	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups, Ahfad al-Sahaba knaf Bayt al-Maqdis (linked to ISIS)	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 PYD/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, among other armed parties	3
	Government, System, Self-government, Identity		↑
Yemen (AQPA) - 2011-	Internationalised internal	Government, AQAP/Ansar Sharia, ISIS, USA, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, UAE, tribal militias, Houthi militias	1
	System		↓
Yemen (Houthis) -2004-	Internationalised internal	Armed forces loyal to Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi's Government, followers of the cleric al-Houthi (al-Shabaab al-Mumen/Ansar Allah), armed factions loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, tribal militias linked to the al-Ahmar clan, Salafist militias, armed groups linked to the Islamist Islah party, international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, Iran	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

Annex 2. Summary of socio-political crises in 2017¹

Socio-political crisis ²	Type ³	Main parties	Intensity ⁴
			Trend ⁵
Africa			
Angola (Cabinda)	Internal	Government, armed group FLEC-FAC, Cabinda Forum for Dialogue	3
	Self-government, Resources		↑
Burkina Faso	Internationalised internal	Government, political opposition, state security forces, civil society, armed groups operating in the Sahel region, France	3
	Government		↑
Cameroon (Ambazonia/North West and South West)	Internal	Government, political and social opposition of the English-speaking provinces of North West and South West, armed groups ADF, SOCADEF and SCDF	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Central Africa (LRA)	International	AU regional force (RTF, composed of the Ugandan, Congolese and South Sudanese Armed Forces), Operation Observant Compass (USA), self-defence militias from DRC and South Sudan, LRA, the former Central African armed coalition Séléka	2
	Resources		↓
Chad	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Congo, Rep. of	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		=
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		↑
Djibouti	Internal	Government, armed group FRUD, political and social opposition (UAD/ USN coalition)	1
	Government		↑
DRC	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
DRC – Rwanda	International	Governments of DRC and Rwanda, ADF, M23 (former CNDP), LRA, armed groups operating in Ituri	1
	Identity, Government, Resources		=
DRC – Uganda	International	Governments of DRC and Rwanda, ADF, M23 (former CNDP), LRA, armed groups operating in Ituri	1
	Identity, Government, Resources, Territory		=
Equatorial Guinea	Internal	Government, political opposition in exile	1
	Government		=
Eritrea	Internationalised internal	Government, internal political and social opposition, political-military opposition coalition EDA (EPDF, EFD, EIPJD, ELF, EPC, DMLEK, RSADO, ENSF, EIC, Nahda), other groups	2
	Government, Self-government, Identity		↑
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Internationalised	Eritrea, Ethiopia	2
	Territory		=

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, Alert 2018! *Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.
2. 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.
3. The *Alert* 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.
4. 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.
5. This column compares the trend of the events of 2017 with 2016, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2017 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.

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Africa			
Ethiopia	Internal	Government (EPRDF coalition, led by the party TPLF), political and social opposition, various armed groups	3
	Government		=
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Internal	Central government, regional government, political opposition (OFDM, OPC parties) and social opposition, armed opposition (OLF, IFLO)	3
	Self-government, Identity		=
Gambia	Internal	Government, factions of the Armed Forces, political opposition	1
	Government		↓
Guinea	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, political parties in the opposition, trade unions	1
	Government		↑
Guinea-Bissau	Internal Internationalised	Transitional government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, international drug trafficking networks	1
	Government		↑
Kenya	Internal Internationalised	Government, ethnic militias, political and social opposition (political parties and civil society organisations), armed group SLDF, Mungiki sect, MRC party, Somali armed group al-Shabaab and groups that support al-Shabaab in Kenya, ISIS	3
	Government, System, Resources, Identity, Self-government		↑
Lesotho	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties	2
	Government		↑
Madagascar	Internal	High Transitional Authority, opposition leaders, state security forces, dahalos (cattle rustlers), self-defence militias, private security companies	1
	Government, Resources		=
Morocco	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Morocco – Western Sahara	International ⁶	Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), armed group POLISARIO Front	1
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		=
Mozambique	Internal	Government, former armed group RENAMO, islamist armed group al-Shabaab	3
	Government, System		↓
Niger	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, external and internal armed groups (Sahel region)	3
	Government, System		↑
Nigeria	Internal	Government, political opposition, Christian and Muslim communities, farmers and livestock raisers, community militias, IMN, IPOB, MASSOB	3
	Identity, Resources, Government		↑
Nigeria (Delta Níger)	Internal	Government, armed groups MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF and NDV, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from the Ijaw, Itsekere, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	2
	Identity, Resources		↑
Rwanda	Internal Internationalised	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the governing party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West	1
	Government, Identity		=
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, armed group MFDC and its various factions	1
	Self-government		↑
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State	1
	Territory		=
Sudan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Sudan, South Sudan	1
	Resources, Identity		=

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

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Africa			
Togo	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigades (branch of AQIM), Jund al-Khilafa (branch of ISIS), ISIS	2
	Government, System		↓
Uganda	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Zimbabwe	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
America			
Bolivia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition (political parties, authorities and civil society organisations from the eastern regions)	1
	Government, Self-government, Resources		=
El Salvador	Internal	Government, state security force groups, gangs (Mara Salvatrucha-13, Mara/Barrio/Calle 18, 18 Revolucionarios, 18 Sureños)	2
	Government		↓
Guatemala	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, gangs	1
	Government		=
Haiti	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, MINUSTAH, former military officers	1
	Government		↓
Honduras	Internal	Government, political opposition, social movements, organised crime structures (drug trafficking, gangs)	2
	Government		↑
Mexico	Internal	Government, political and social opposition (peasant and indigenous organisations, unions, students), armed opposition groups (EZLN, EPR, ERPI, FAR-LP), cartels	2
	System, Government		↑
Peru	Internal	Government, armed opposition (remnants of Shining Path), political and social opposition (farmer and indigenous organisations)	1
	Government, Resources		=
Venezuela	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Asia			
Bangladesh	Internal	Government (Awami League), political opposition (Bangladesh National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami), International Crimes Tribunal, armed groups (Ansar-al-Islami, JMB)	2
	Government		↓
China (Xinjiang)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed opposition (ETIM, ETLO), political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, System, Identity		=
China (Tibet)	Internationalised internal	Chinese government, Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile, political and social opposition in Tibet and in neighbouring provinces and countries	1
	Self-government, Identity, System		=
China – Japan	International	China, Japan	1
	Territory, Resources		↓
India (Assam)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups ULFA, ULFA(I), NDFB, NDFB(ICS), KPLT, NSLA, UPLA and KPLT	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Manipur)	Internal	Government, armed groups PLA, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), KCP, KYKL, RPF, UNLF, KNF, KNA	3
	Self-government, Identity		↑
India (Nagaland)	Internal	Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF	1
	Identity, Self-government		↓

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Asia			
India – Pakistan	International	India, Pakistan	3
	Identity, Territory		↑
Indonesia (West Papua)	Internal	Government, armed group OPM, political and social opposition (autonomist or secessionist organisations, indigenous and human rights organisations), indigenous Papuan groups, Freeport mining company	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		=
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	International	DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea	2
	System		↓
Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea ⁷	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	3
	Government		↑
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↑
Nepal	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias), Armed Forces, secret services	3
	Government, System		↓
Sri Lanka	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, Tamil political and social organizations	1
	Self-government, Identity		=
Tajikistan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, former warlords, regional armed groups, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	2
	Government, System, Resources, Territory		=
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		↓
Europe			
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Government of Azerbaijan, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, government of Armenia	3
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓
Belarus	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Internationalised internal	Central government, government of the Republika Srpska, government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, high representative of the international community	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Cyprus	Internationalised internal	Government of Cyprus, government of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Greece, Turkey	1
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↓
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Internal Internationalised	Government of Georgia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Georgia (South Ossetia)	Internationalised internal	Government of Georgia, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Macedonia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑

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

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Europe			
Moldova, Rep. of (Transdnjestria)	Internationalised internal	Government of Moldova, government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdnjestria, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Russia	Internationalised internal	Government, social and political opposition, armed groups including ISIS	2
	Government, System		↑
Russia (Chechnya)	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Chechen Republic, armed opposition groups	2
	System, Government, Identity		↑
Serbia – Kosovo	International ⁸	Government of Serbia, government of Kosovo, political and social representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Spain (Catalonia)	Internal	Government of Spain, Government of Catalonia, pro-independence and anti-independence political parties, civil society actors, judiciary	1
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Turkey	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, Fetullah Gülen organization	2
	Government, System		↓
Middle East			
Bahrein	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government, Identity		↑
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed group PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internal Internationalised	Government, armed groups Jundullah (Soldiers of God / People's Resistance Movement), Harakat Ansar Iran and Jaish al-Adl, Pakistan	2
	Self-government, Identity		=
Iran – USA, Israel ⁹	International	Iran, USA, Israel	2
	System, Government		↑
Iraq (Kurdistan)	Internal Internationalised	Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran, PKK	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↑
Israel – Syria – Lebanon	International	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia)	2
	System, Resources, Territory		=
Lebanon	Internationalised internal	Government, Hezbollah (party and militia), political and social opposition, armed groups ISIS and Jabhat al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front), Saraya Ahl al-Sham	3
	Government, System		↑
Palestine	Internal	PNA, Fatah, armed group al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Hamas and its armed wing Ezzedine 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)	2
	Government, Identity		=
Yemen (south)	Internal	Government, secessionist and autonomist opposition groups from the south (including the South Yemen Movement/al-Hiraak al-Janoubi)	2
	Self-government, Resources, Territory		=
1: low intensity; 2: medium intensity; 3: high intensity. ↑: escalation of tension; ↓: decrease of tension; =: no changes.			

8. The socio-political crisis between Kosovo and Serbia is considered “international” because even though its international legal status remains unclear, Kosovo has been recognised as a state by over 100 countries.
9. This international socio-political crisis refers mainly to the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program.

About the School for a Culture of Peace

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.
- Teaching and training. ECP staff gives lectures in postgraduate and graduate courses in several universities, including its own Graduate Diploma on Culture of Peace at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It also provides training sessions on specific issues, including conflict sensitivity and peace education.
- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II initiatives, including facilitation tasks with different actors and on various themes.
- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.

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Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2017. The examination of the development and dynamics of negotiations worldwide allows to provide a comprehensive overview of peace processes, identify trends and comparatively analyse the various scenarios. *Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios* also analyses the evolution of peace processes from a gender perspective. One of the main objectives of this report is to provide information and analysis to those who participate in peaceful conflict resolution at different levels, including parties to disputes, mediators, civil society activists and others. The yearbook also aims to grant visibility to different formulas of dialogue and negotiation aimed at reversing dynamics of violence and channelling conflicts through political means in many contexts. Thus, it seeks to highlight, enhance and promote political, diplomatic and social efforts aimed at transforming conflicts and their root causes through peaceful methods.

Peace talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a reference for clear, precise and contrasted information on peace processes. For all mediators working in some of these contexts, the report is extremely useful to clarify doubts on other cases and to find inspiration or discard other elements. By shedding light on new trends in this field, the report is also useful to consolidate the lessons learnt from previous negotiations, and this should allow designing processes that are better focused, and ultimately lead to more sustainable agreements.

Juan Garrigues, Special Advisor, Dialogue Advisory Group

The histories of peace processes are built on comings and goings, possibilities and obstacles, political contexts, armies and armed groups and, unfortunately, on breaches. There are wars that become chronic, and long peace processes that seem impossible to deal with, where responsibilities lie not only with the local actors, but also the international ones. In these cases the social fabric becomes a military target. Many generations have lived like this for entire generations. Peace processes from above are based on the possibility to reach agreements and thus not only to find a solution to an armed conflict, but also to transform its conditions. Nevertheless, a transformative peace that will help to rebuild the social fabric must activate the processes from the grassroots level. The conflicts explained in the report *Peace talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios* are inhabited by invisible stories, which sometimes the political or military actors hide away. The panorama shows us a different world map; a mirror where we can learn from others, and gain awareness of our shared responsibilities.

Carlos Martín Beristain, Coordinator of the REMHI report (Guatemala) and member of the Colombian Truth Commission

**Foreword by Dr. Norbert Ropers,
Director of Peace Resource Collaborative (Thailand) and
Senior Advisor at the Berghof Foundation (Germany)**

Peace Talks in Focus 2018. Report on Trends and Scenarios serves as an important reminder of how the participation of a broader group of stakeholders in peace processes, particularly women, can assist in the collective establishment of a more durable peace. While mediators and their teams need to work for inclusive peace processes taking gender perspectives into account, each intervention also needs to be tailored to its specific context. Despite similar challenges for women's participation, especially in Track I processes, the yearbook illustrates how conflict dynamics vary widely among the processes reviewed and how the role and level of women's participation vary accordingly. The publication carefully demonstrates that the integration of a gender dimension in formal and informal peace processes provides unique insight to the root causes and consequences of conflict, and advances a more targeted response to the peacebuilding and security needs of women and girls.

**Lone Jessen, Senior Gender & Political Advisor UN
Department of Political Affairs, Policy and Mediation Division**

Whilst there seems to be a certain consensus among academics and decision-makers that each peace process merits attention to its own particular issues and dynamics, that does not seem to be the case regarding the usefulness of using learning from past experiences in new contexts and geographical areas. This yearbook provides magnificent material not only for those who seek to delve into these particularities, but also for those of us who think that the decisions that parties to negotiations make at the table and elsewhere will be more or less likely to succeed in ending violence according to how they combine instinct and interpretation of the moment with the systematic learning of what, with some degree of certainty, we already know works or tends to fail.

**Juan Esteban Ugarriza, Associate Professor of the
University of Rosario (Colombia) and former Advisor of the
Colombian government for the talks with the ELN**

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