

Peace Talks in Focus 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios



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Index

Executive Summary	7
Introduction	13
1. Negotiations in 2018: global overview and main trends	15
2. Peace negotiations in Africa	29
2.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends	30
2.2. Case study analysis	33
Horn of Africa	33
Great Lakes and Central Africa	39
Maghreb – North Africa	49
Southern Africa	53
West Africa	54
3. Peace negotiations in America	57
3.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends	57
3.2. Case study analysis	59
Central America	59
South America	60
4. Peace negotiations in Asia	65
4.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends	66
4.2. Case study analysis	69
East Asia	69
South Asia	73
South-east Asia and Oceania	75
5. Peace negotiations in Europe	81
5.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends	81
5.2. Case study analysis	84
Eastern Europe	84
Russia and the Caucasus	87
South-east Europe	90
Western Europe	93
6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East	95
6.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends	95
6.2. Case study analysis	98
Mashreq	98
The Gulf	104
Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2018	109
Annex 2. Summary of socio-political crises in 2018	113
About the School for a Culture of Peace	119

List of tables, boxes, graphs and maps

Table 1.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in 2018_____	15
Graph 1.1.	Regional distribution of peace negotiations_____	18
Map 1.1	Peace negotiations in 2018_____	19
Table 1.2.	Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2018_____	21
Table 1.3.	Intergovernmental organisations in peace processes in 2018_____	23
Table 1.4.	Main agreements of 2018_____	27
Table 2.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2018_____	29
Map 2.1.	Peace negotiations in Africa 2018_____	31
Table 3.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2018_____	57
Map 3.1.	Peace negotiations in America 2018_____	58
Table 4.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2018_____	65
Map 4.1.	Peace negotiations in Asia 2018_____	66
Table 5.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2018_____	81
Map 5.1.	Peace negotiations in Europe 2018_____	82
Table 6.1.	Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2018_____	95
Map 6.1.	Peace negotiations in the Middle East 2018_____	96

Executive summary

Peace Talks in Focus 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2018. 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. 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 49 peace processes and negotiations that took place in 2018 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. At the beginning of each of these five chapters, a map is included indicating the countries where peace processes and negotiations have occurred in 2018.

Peace processes and negotiations in 2018

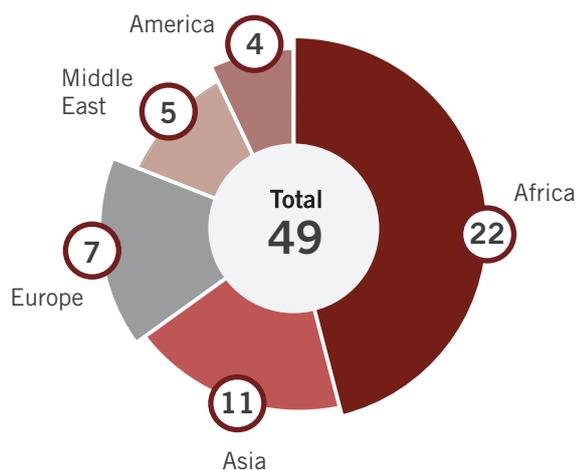
AFRICA (22)	ASIA (11)	EUROPE (7)
Burundi CAR Djibouti – Eritrea DRC Eritrea – Ethiopia Ethiopia (Ogaden) Ethiopia (Oromia) Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) Libya Mali (north) Morocco – Western Sahara Mozambique Nigeria (Niger Delta) Rep. of the Congo Senegal (Casamance) Somalia South Sudan Sudan Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) Sudan – South Sudan Togo	Afghanistan China (Tibet) DPR Korea – Republic of Korea DPR Korea – USA India (Assam) India (Nagaland) Myanmar Philippines (MILF) Philippines (MNLF) Philippines (NDF) Thailand (south)	Armenia–Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) Cyprus Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) Moldova (Transdnistria) Serbia – Kosovo Spain (Basque Country) Ukraine
	AMERICA (4)	MIDDLE EAST (5)
	Colombia (FARC-EP) Colombia (ELN) Nicaragua Venezuela	Iran (nuclear programme) Israel-Palestine Palestine Syria Yemen

Negotiations in 2018: global overview and main trends

During 2018, there was a total of 49 peace processes and negotiations worldwide: 22 in Africa (45% of the total), 11 in Asia (23%), seven in Europe (14%), five in the Middle East (10%) and four in the Americas (8%). Compared to the previous year, the number of peace processes and negotiations grew worldwide, since there were 43 in 2017. This increase in 2018 was due to more peace processes and negotiations in Africa, Asia

and the Americas, while Europe and the Middle East maintained the same number as the previous year. The new peace negotiations in Africa 2018 were conducted between Ethiopia and Eritrea, between Djibouti and Eritrea and between the Ethiopian government and the politico-military movement OLF in Oromia. In Asia, new cases included the resumption of dialogue between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives and

Regional distribution of peace negotiations



high-level meetings between North and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States. In the Americas, talks began in Nicaragua amidst a serious political and human rights crisis gripping the country.

In almost all the cases analysed, the governments of the respective countries were parties to the negotiations. These governments held direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors according to the particular aspects of each context that generally ranged from non-governmental armed groups (individually or as a group) to a more complex combination of armed actors and opposition politicians, opposition groups or political platforms, foreign governments, in the case of interstate disputes, representatives of regions seeking to secede or gain recognition as independent and more.

In the vast majority of the processes (39 out of 49, corresponding to 80%), a third party was involved as a facilitator or mediator. In addition, in almost all mediated processes, there was more than one mediating actor (35 out of 39). The UN was involved in 19 of the 49 processes in 2018 and in practically half of the cases that had third parties (49%). In contrast, negotiations without third parties were a distinctive feature of the peace processes in Asia, as nearly two thirds of the cases analysed there had no foreign support. Yet even though the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment efforts are clearly identifiable in many cases, in others they operated discreetly or away from the public eye.

One of the issues that came up in the **negotiating agendas** on every continent in 2018 was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities, under different formats. This was the case in Ethiopia (for the conflicts in the Ogaden and Oromia regions), Sudan (for both the conflicts in Darfur and in Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Colombia (ELN), the Philippines (for the conflict with the NPA), Afghanistan, Thailand, Yemen, Syria, Israel-Palestine and Ukraine. Another item on the agenda in various peace negotiations was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants,

which was an issue in Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia), the Republic of the Congo, Mali and Sudan (Darfur). Various processes addressed issues related to political power-sharing, such as in Mozambique, Mali, Libya, Burundi, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine. Other processes addressed issues of a region's status and/or minority recognition and rights, such as in the Philippines (MILF), China-Tibet, Myanmar, India (Assam and Nagaland) and many others. Denuclearisation was a key issue on the agenda in the processes in Iran and North Korea-United States.

Regarding the **evolution of the processes**, our analysis of the different cases in 2018 shows a diverse range of dynamics. On a positive note, there were contexts in which significant progress or historic agreements were achieved, or where negotiations were resumed after years without negotiations. In a significant number of cases, however, there were difficulties, obstacles and setbacks, or the negotiations remained at an impasse that prevented the substantive issues of the disputes from being addressed, among other things. Some of the cases that evolved in the most positive direction took place in Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa, where historic agreements were reached between the Ethiopian government and the armed groups ONLF and OLF, which operate in the Ogaden and Oromia regions, respectively; and between Ethiopia and Eritrea, whose approach facilitated the normalisation of relations between Eritrea and Djibouti and improved relations between Eritrea and Somalia. In some cases, the positive development was reflected in the resumption of talks after a long period of deadlock, as between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front regarding the dispute over Western Sahara and between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives. At the same time, the dialogue between North and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States began and made progress. Despite the absence of a formal negotiating process, headway was made in Afghanistan during the year, including with the first ceasefire between Afghan security forces and the Taliban insurgency since 2001. The implementation of peace agreements was another area in which there was some progress in 2018, as seen in the Philippines (MILF), with the approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. However, many processes were at an impasse or faced significant obstacles in 2018, such as Burundi, Mali, Libya, the Philippines (NDF), Colombia (ELN), Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, Syria and others.

Finally, regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, our analysis of the different peace processes in 2018 confirms the difficulties and obstacles that women face in participating in formal processes and the challenges in incorporating a gender perspective in the architecture and agenda of the negotiations. This was the complaint of women's organisations that demonstrated during the year to warn of the impacts of conflicts on women and to demand their participation in negotiations in places like Mali, Libya, Myanmar,

Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2018

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	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 (2)	Negotiations with third parties (8)
AFRICA							
Burundi		x					
CAR		x					
Djibouti - Eritrea							x
DRC		x					
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		x					
Ethiopia (Oromia)		x					
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	x						
Libya		x					
Mali		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					
Nicaragua		x					
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
Afghanistan ¹					x		
China (Tibet)	x						
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea						x	
Korea, DPR – USA						x	
Myanmar	x						
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (MNLF)	x						
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	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 (2)	Negotiations with third parties (8)
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					
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ^v		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.

Thailand, Israel-Palestine, Syria, Yemen and many others. Some progress was also made in 2018, such as the creation of the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group, which is mandated to advise the UN Special Envoy in Yemen, the creation of the Network of Women Mediators of South Caucasus and the increase in the number of women in some negotiating processes, such as the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong in Myanmar and the inclusion of a woman in both the Moroccan and POLISARIO Front delegations.

Regional trends

Africa

- Twenty-two (22) peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2018, accounting for 45% of the 49 peace processes worldwide.
- All the negotiating processes in Africa involved third parties in mediating and facilitating roles, except in four cases: Ethiopia (Oromia), Nigeria (Niger Delta), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo.
- The number of interstate negotiating processes increased in 2018 due to Eritrea-Ethiopia and Djibouti-Eritrea.
- The Horn of Africa was the scene of historic agreements in 2018, such as those between

Ethiopia and the insurgents of the Ogaden and Oromia regions and the agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea regarding their border dispute, which led to progress in other processes in the region.

- At the end of the year, there was tension over the results of legislative and presidential elections in the DRC, in which President Joseph Kabila did not run.
- The government of South Sudan and the SPLM/A-IO reached a new peace agreement, which envisages a coalition government involving all actors, though it was met with scepticism due to the history of previous peace initiative violations.
- Talks between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front were resumed thanks to the impetus of a new UN special envoy after remaining deadlocked since 2012.

America

- Four negotiating processes took place in the Americas (two in Colombia, one in Venezuela and one in Nicaragua), accounting for 8% of the negotiations that took place during 2018.
- Negotiations between the ELN and the Colombian government underwent enormous difficulties and were suspended and restarted at various times during the year, though they were scrapped indefinitely after the inauguration of President Iván Duque.

Main agreements of 2018

Peace processes	Agreements
Afghanistan	Ceasefire agreement (June) initiated unilaterally by the government, coinciding with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr and followed later by the Taliban.
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Agreement between the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan to create a direct communication channel between the ministries of defence to prevent incidents. The agreement was reached in September at an informal meeting during a summit of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and began to be implemented in October.
Korea, DPR – Korea, Rep. of	The Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula, signed by the leaders of North Korea and South Korea on 27 April in the Peace House of the Joint Security Area, inside the Demilitarised Zone. Both governments pledge to start a new stage of peace and stability in the peninsula, to end the Korean War (which ended with an armistice and not a peace treaty) and to denuclearise the Korean peninsula. Leaders of both countries met again in May and September, ending the last meeting with the Pyongyang Joint Declaration.
Korea, DPR – USA	Joint statement by the leaders of the United States and North Korea following the summit held in Singapore on 12 June, in which both commit to establishing new relations and guaranteeing peace in the Korean peninsula, with the United States offering security guarantees to North Korea and North Korea affirming its willingness to conduct complete denuclearisation.
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship, of July 9, by which both countries put an end to 20 years of war, and which includes the agreement on implementation of the border decision, the re-establishment of diplomatic, economic and communications agreements and other issues. Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation, reached on 16 September in Jeddah and facilitated by Saudi Arabia. Appended to the Joint Declaration of 9 July, this agreement provided for the creation of investment projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones, collaboration in the fight against terrorism and human, drug and weapon trafficking, and a committee and subcommittees to monitor implementation of the agreement.
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Framework agreement between the ONLF and the Ethiopian government signed in Asmara (Eritrea) on 21 October, which includes the establishment of a joint committee intended to continue working to address the root causes of the conflict.
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Reconciliation Agreement reached on 7 August between the Ethiopian government and the OLF in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.
The Philippines (MILF)	Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, approved by Congress and ratified by the president in July, which mainly establishes the creation of a new autonomous region to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.
Libya	Modified road map of the UN plan to implement the Libyan Political Agreement (2015), which establishes a new timetable for holding elections and a dialogue conference, presented to the UN Security Council in November.
Mali	Pact for Peace, signed in October by the signatories of the 2015 peace agreement as a way to reaffirm the desire for early implementation of the commitments made therein. After winning a new term of office in the presidential election, the new government of Ibrahim Boubakar Keita signed this agreement with the head of MINUSMA, while the CMA and the Platform signed separately.
Moldova (Transnistria)	Rome Protocol, signed in May by Moldova, Transnistria, the OSCE, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, whereby the parties to the conflict undertake to reach an agreement on the outstanding issues of the Vienna Protocol (2017), such as the sphere of telecommunications. The parties also propose to make progress on implementing the agreements reached.
Mozambique	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security aspects, reached on 6 August, which establishes the steps to proceed to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants in the security forces and in society, and the creation of four working groups to implement the MoU: a military affairs commission and three joint technical groups.
South Sudan	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 12 September, signed in Addis Ababa by President Salva Kiir and the rebel leader and former vice president, Riek Machar, who heads the SPLM/A-IO, as well as the rest of the parties to the conflict.
Yemen	Stockholm Agreement, reached on 13 December between the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Houthis/Ansarallah at the request of the UN. The agreement addresses three key issues: an immediate cease-fire in the port city of Al Hudaydah and in the ports of Salif and Ras Issa and the creation of a mechanism for exchanging prisoners and a memorandum of understanding for the city of Ta'iz. The parties also agree to avoid any action, escalation or decisions that may affect the prospects of implementing the agreement.

- The process to implement the peace agreement signed between the government of Colombia and the FARC progressed with various difficulties and was determined by electoral processes in the country.
- The Episcopal Conference's facilitation of talks between the government of Nicaragua and the opposition was unable to solve or deflect the most serious socio-political crisis to grip the country in recent decades.
- Given the impasse in negotiations between the Venezuelan government and the opposition, some European and Latin American countries were willing to form an international contact group to facilitate the dialogue.

Asia

- There were 11 negotiating processes in Asia in 2018, accounting for over one fifth of the total number of cases worldwide.
- Asia was the continent with the highest percentage of cases in which there was direct negotiations without third-party participation.
- Significant progress was made in the process in Afghanistan and the year ended with the government's appointment of a negotiating team after several direct meetings had taken place between the US government and Taliban representatives in Qatar.

- In the Indian state of Nagaland, the armed group NSCN-IMJ rejoined the ceasefire agreement, which also opened the door to its resumption of the peace negotiations.
- In the Philippines, the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law paved the way for the full implementation of the 2014 peace process and to the demobilisation of tens of thousands of MILF combatants.
- In Myanmar, two armed opposition groups joined the 2015 ceasefire agreement, which still did not include the main armed groups.
- The Korean peninsula experienced a substantial fall in tension after the historic summits that Kim Jong-un held separately with the presidents of the United States and South Korea.
- The Tibetan government-in-exile stated that there had been exploratory talks with the Chinese government to resume the negotiations, interrupted since 2010.

Europe

- In 2018, 14% of the peace processes in the world (seven of the 49) were in Europe.
- Some progress was made in 2018, such as the agreements on confidence-building measures in Moldova, the establishment of a direct line of communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the unilateral and definitive dissolution of the Basque group ETA.
- The peace process in Georgia ran into new difficulties, with the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia withdrawing from the incident prevention mechanisms, although the mechanism on South Ossetia resumed in December.
- Negotiations in Ukraine continued at a standstill, while relations between Ukraine and Russia deteriorated due to escalating military tension in the Azov Sea.

- The South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network was formally established to promote women's participation in peace processes in the region.
- Georgia and Moldova approved action plans on Resolution 1325. It was Georgia's third plan and Moldova's first, with the latter mostly focused on defence and security.

Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of five negotiating processes that accounted for 10% of the total cases studied in 2018.
- The regional and international dimension of the conflicts and socio-political crises that were subject to negotiation and the influence of external actors in several of the disputes were key factors shaping the progress of the processes.
- The United Nations played a prominent role as a third party in most of the negotiations in the region, especially through its special envoys for the various contexts.
- The process to implement the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme was affected by the US decision to withdraw from the deal reached in 2015.
- After months of deadlock in meetings, the disputing parties in Yemen held a round of talks in December and reached an agreement on several key issues.
- Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians remained at an impasse and contact between the parties was limited to trying to establish a ceasefire amidst the escalation of violence reported during the year.
- The intra-Palestinian reconciliation process remained blocked, in a context of intensified tensions between Hamas and Fatah.
- Several negotiating plans for Syria involved various local, regional and international actors, though they had limited impact on the dynamics of violence.

Introduction

Peace talks in Focus 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses the peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world in 2018. 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 2018, 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, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda.

1. Negotiations in 2018: global overview and main trends

- Forty-nine (49) peace processes and negotiations were identified around the world in 2018. The largest number of cases were reported in Africa (22), followed by Asia (11), Europe (seven), the Middle East (five) and the Americas (four).
- Central governments and armed opposition groups or politico-military movements were the main negotiating actors in most of the processes analysed.
- Third-party participation in mediation, facilitation and other efforts was identified in most of the processes and negotiations analysed (80%).
- The UN was present in almost half the cases where a third party was involved. The international organisation participated in these negotiating processes through various formats, including special envoys.
- One of the issues that came up the most in the negotiating agendas was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities.
- The analysis of the different processes in 2018 confirmed the difficulties and obstacles that women face in participating meaningfully in formal peace processes and in incorporating a gender perspective in negotiations.

During 2018, a total of 49 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 2018

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Africa		
Burundi	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED)	East African Community (EAC), UN
CAR	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Cente for Humanitarian Dialogue, Russia, Sudan
Djibouti – Eitrea	Government of Djibouti, Government of Eritrea	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Somalia

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		
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, SADC, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EU, UN, International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), USA
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia	United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Government, ONLF military political movement	Kenya, United Arab Emirates and Sweden
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Government, OLF military political movement	--
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction)	--
Libya	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)	Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France
Mali	Government, Coordinator of Azawad Movements (CMA) – MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA–	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU,
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and River of Gold (POLISARIO)	UN, Algeria and Mauritania (observers), Group of Friends of the Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)
Mozambique	Government, the RENAMO armed 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)	--
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 Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) and its different factions	The Community of Sant Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau
Somalia	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans	UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others
South Sudan	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others)	IGAD Plus: IGAD (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, South Sudan Council of Churches
Sudan	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties and 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	AU, UNAMID, Chad, Germany, Qatar, USA, United Kingdom, France
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	Government, SPLM-N	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Uganda
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)	Government and FARC	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, Colombian Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
America		
Nicaragua	Government, political and social opposition	Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua
Venezuela	Government, opposition (MUD)	Dominican Republic Government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (former president of Spain) and accompanying countries (Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua and Bolivia)
Asia		
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, UN
China (Tibet)	Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD	--
DPR Korea – Republic of Korea	North Korea, South Korea	--
DPR Korea – USA	North Korea, USA	--
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD	--
India (Nagaland)	Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA	--
Myanmar	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP, LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA	--
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF	Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team
Philippines (MNLF)	Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)	--
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	OSCE Minsk Group (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, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom (guarantee countries)
Spain (Basque Country)	ETA, political and social actors in the Basque Country	International Contact Group (ICG), Social Forum and the Permanent Social Forum, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ³	OSCE, EU, 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
Ukraine (east)	Ukraine, representatives of the self-proclaimed popular 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

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.

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Middle East		
Israel-Palestine	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (AP)	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman
Palestine	Hamas, Fatah	Egypt, Qatar
Syria	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, International Syria Support Group (ISSG)
Yemen	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansarallah	UN, Kuwait, Oman

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

Regarding the **geographical distribution of the peace processes and negotiations in 2018**, most of the cases studied were located in Africa, where there were 22 negotiating processes, equivalent to 45% of the total. Asia was the region with the second-highest number of cases, with 11, accounting for 23% of the negotiations in 2018. The remaining peace processes were distributed between Europe, with seven cases (14%), the Middle East, with five (10%) and the Americas, with four (8%). The high percentage of negotiations in Africa correlates with the fact that it is also the continent with the highest number of armed conflicts and socio-political crises worldwide.⁸ Compared with the previous year, there was a rise in the number of peace processes and negotiations analysed around the world, since 43 cases were counted in 2003. This increase in 2018 owed to the higher number of cases in Africa, Asia and the Americas, while Europe and the Middle East had the same number of processes and negotiations as in the previous year. The new cases of peace negotiations in 2018 included the processes between Ethiopia

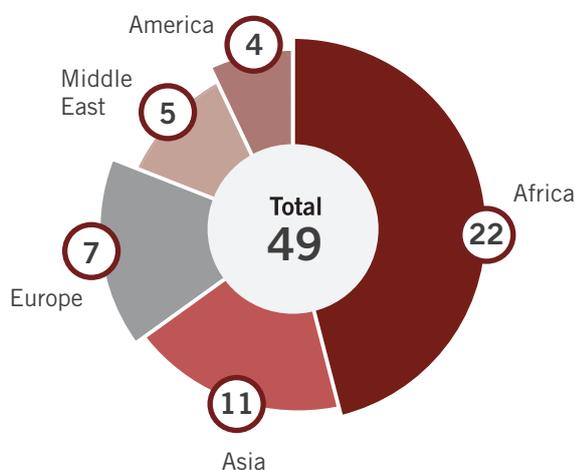
Most of the negotiations in 2018 took place in Africa (45%), followed by Asia (23%), Europe (14%), the Middle East (10%) and the Americas (8%)

and Eritrea and between Djibouti and Eritrea, as well as the process between the Ethiopian government and the politico-military movement OLF in Oromia, in Africa; the resumption of dialogue between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives and high-level talks between North and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States, in Asia; and the process in Nicaragua, which began as a consequence of the serious political and human rights crisis gripping the country, in the Americas.

Once again, almost all **actors involved in the peace processes and negotiations** were central or state governments in which the conflicts and/or socio-political crises occurred. In fact, only one of the 49 cases analysed in 2018 was an exception to this situation. This was the peace process in the Basque Country, the only case in Spain, where the government was not one of the negotiating parties, although other negotiations in the past did involve the Spanish government. The negotiations in the Basque Country were conducted by other political and social actors, and particularly in 2018 the scenario was marked by ETA's unilateral decision to dissolve all its structures definitively. In the rest of the cases studied in 2018, the governments of the respective states held direct or indirect negotiations with various kinds of actors according to the particular aspects of each context that generally ranged from non-governmental armed groups (individually or as a group) to a more complex combination of armed actors and opposition politicians, opposition groups or political platforms, foreign governments, in the case of interstate disputes, representatives of territories seeking to secede or win recognition as independent and more.

Negotiations were conducted by governments of states and armed opposition groups or political-military movements in all regions in 2018. These included several peace processes in Africa, such as those between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF, in Ogaden; between the latter and the OLF, in Oromia;

Graph 1.1. Regional distribution of peace negotiations



8. See Annex 1 (Summary of armed conflicts in 2018) and Annex 2 (Summary of socio-political crises in 2018). For more information on the scenario of armed conflicts and tensions at a global level, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.

between the Mozambican government and RENAMO; between the government of the CAR and groups of the former Séléka coalition and the anti-balaka militias; between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N; and between the South Sudanese government and the SPLM-IO and other minor groups, among others. In the Americas, the Colombian government held talks with the ELN and with the former FARC guerrilla group, which has transformed into a political party as part of implementation of the peace agreement reached in 2016. Several processes of this type were also identified in Asia, in some cases with direct negotiations between the respective governments and the armed groups—such as the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the NSCN-IM in India—and in others through political organisations that acted as representatives of armed groups, such as in the negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF, which has acted as the representative for the armed group NPA for decades. In several instances in Asia, the armed actors involved in the negotiations were grouped under joint platforms or umbrella organisations representing several armed groups, such as the Naga National Political Groups in India (Nagaland), Mara Patani in Thailand and the Northern Alliance in Myanmar. The main example in the Middle East was

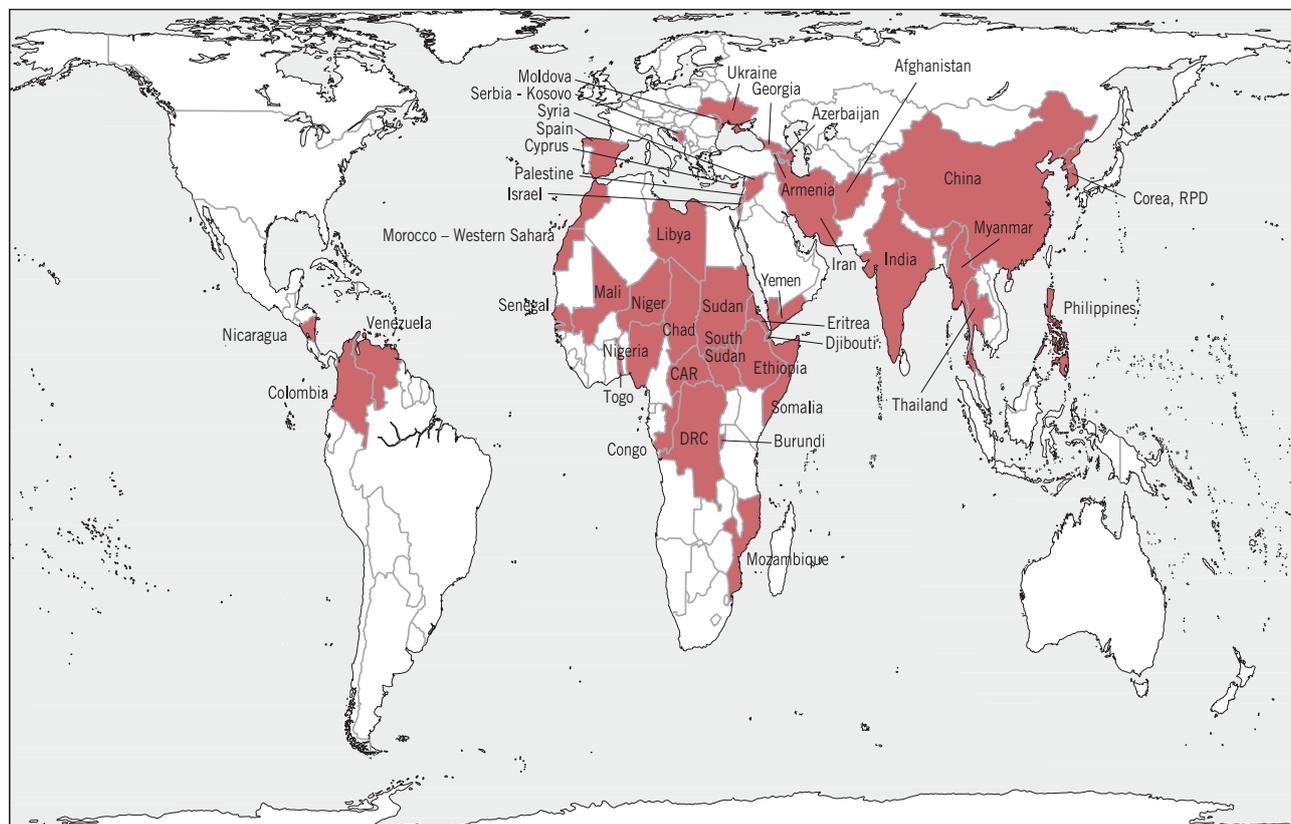
The higher number of peace negotiations in 2018 compared to the previous year was due to the implementation of new processes in Africa, Asia and the Americas

provided by Yemen, since the internationally recognised government and the armed group known as the Houthis or Ansarallah participated in the negotiations. Other processes involved the respective governments and a broader and more complex range of political and armed actors. This was the case in Libya, Mali, Syria, Somalia and Sudan. A lower number of peace processes involved the government and purely political opposition groups or coalitions, like in Burundi, Nicaragua, the DRC, Venezuela and Togo.

Another group of peace processes dealt with interstate disputes involving the governments of different countries. There were examples of this in all regions, except for the Americas. The number of interstate negotiations in Africa rose during the year, from one to three. The dialogue between

Sudan and South Sudan was joined by the negotiations between Djibouti and Eritrea and between Eritrea and Ethiopia in the context of positive dynamics in 2018 that provided a chance for peace in the Horn of Africa in the future. Asia also provided a remarkable and unique example in this regard, since two negotiating processes began (between North Korea and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States) that consisted mainly of presidential summits, accompanied a posteriori by political, military and high-level

Map 1.1. Peace negotiations in 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in 2018

technical meetings to flesh out the commitments made in the meetings between the respective presidents. In Europe, the emblematic interstate peace process was between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, while in the Middle East it involved Iran and its nuclear programme. The negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme involved several countries and led to a historic agreement in 2015, but implementation of the deal was compromised in 2018 due to the US decision to withdraw from it.

The negotiations in another significant amount of peace processes involved central governments and representatives of groups seeking secession, a new political or administrative status or independence with full international recognition. These groups, some of which were self-proclaimed states, with territorial control, enjoying limited international recognition and usually external support from some regional or international power, participated in the negotiations in various different ways, sometimes as a consulted party but with the capacity for limited influence, and other times involved as a full party. Europe was the scene of several cases of this type, including the peace process in Cyprus, involving the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is only recognised by Turkey; the peace process in Moldova, involving the self-proclaimed republic of Transnistria, which is backed by Russia but lacks international recognition; and Kosovo, which is internationally recognised as a state by more than 100 countries and is acting as a negotiating party in the talks with Serbia. In this vein, other processes with unique aspects were related to the conflict over Western Sahara, involving the Moroccan government and the POLISARIO Front, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which deals with the governments of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The UN continues to consider Western Sahara a territory pending decolonisation, whose alleged possession by Morocco is not recognised either by international law or by any UN resolution. Likewise, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) proclaimed by the POLISARIO Front has not received any international majority recognition. Meanwhile, decades of negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders have not led to the full configuration of a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, Palestine has been recognised as such by other states and has been an "observer member" of the UN since 2012.

Regarding the **third parties involved in peace and negotiation processes**, although in many cases we can clearly identify the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment activities, in others these tasks were carried out discreetly or behind closed doors. Taking this variable into account, our analysis of the negotiations worldwide in 2018 allows us to conclude that third-party participation was confirmed in the vast majority (39 out of 49, corresponding to 80%). The processes where there no third party was involved and where meetings were held directly or bilaterally were concentrated in Asia, with seven cases (China (Tibet),

North Korea-South Korea, North Korea-United States, Philippines (MNLF), India (Assam), India (Nagaland) and Myanmar), and in Africa, with three cases (Nigeria (Niger Delta), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo). Negotiations without third parties were a distinctive feature of the peace processes in Asia, since there were none in almost two thirds of the cases studied there. Third-party involvement was independent of the format of the negotiations. Thus, there were third parties in most internal peace processes, whether in negotiations (28) or national dialogues (one), as well as in most interstate negotiations (eight).

In nearly all processes with a third party (35 of the 39), more than one actor performed mediation or facilitation tasks. The actors involved in the negotiations were of a diverse nature, highlighting the work of intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, IGAD, OIC, SADC, EAC, ECCAS and OIF, foreign governments, religious organisations and NGOs. In some cases, third parties acted alone, such as Norway in the Philippine peace process (NDF), Malaysia in Thailand (south) and the Episcopal Conference in Nicaragua. In other cases, third-party intervention in negotiating processes was organised in structured formats, in groups of countries or platforms that brought together various kinds of actors. The former include, for example, the Group of Friends on Western Sahara, which brings together France, the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia; the Troika in Sudan, made up of the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway; and groups of countries that are guarantors or accompany the peace processes between the Colombian government and both the FARC and the ELN. Third-party formats with several different actors included the Quartet in Libya, consisting of the UN, AU, EU and Arab League; the International Contact Group in the negotiating process between the Philippine government and the MILF, composed of four states (Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four NGOs (Muhammadiyah, The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Conciliation Resources); and the Quartet for the Middle East, made up of the UN, the EU, the United States and Russia.

Our analysis of the processes and negotiations in 2018 confirms the prominent role played by the UN in mediation and facilitation efforts. The organisation was involved via different formats in 19 of the 49 peace processes identified during the year, and in almost half the processes involving a third party (49%). The United Nations carried out its activity through different formats. Special mention should be made of the work carried out by special envoys and representatives in 2018, some of them recently appointed, whose work combined with other factors to help some processes to resume. Thus, for example, the new Special Envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, managed to arrange a meeting in late 2018 between representatives of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front after six years without direct contact. After getting around various difficulties, the new Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, managed to get the

Table 1.2. Internal and interstate peace processes/negotiations with and without third parties in 2018

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	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 (2)	Negotiations with third parties (8)
AFRICA							
Burundi		x					
CAR		x					
Djibouti - Eritrea							x
DRC		x					
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		x					
Ethiopia (Oromia)		x					
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	x						
Libya		x					
Mali		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					
Nicaragua		x					
Venezuela		x					
ASIA							
Afghanistan ¹					x		
China (Tibet)	x						
India (Assam)	x						
India (Nagaland)	x						
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea						x	
Korea, DPR – USA						x	
Myanmar	x						
Philippines (MILF)		x					
Philippines (MNLF)	x						
Philippines (NDF)		x					
Thailand (south)		x					

Peace processes	INTERNAL					INTERSTATE	
	Direct negotiations without third parties (8)	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 (2)	Negotiations with third parties (8)
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					
MIDDLE EAST							
Iran (nuclear programme)							x
Israel-Palestine							x
Palestine		x					
Syria ^v		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.

Hadi government and the Houthis to sit down together in Sweden in December in the first meetings between them in over two years. In Libya, the UN Special Envoy tried to get the parties involved in implementing the plan proposed by the UN in late 2017 to reactivate the political process. Regarding the process between Israel and Palestine, the UN Special Envoy for the Middle East worked with Egypt to broker a ceasefire between the Israeli government and Hamas. In other cases, like in Syria, UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura left office after years of unsuccessful efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict. In addition to special envoys, the UN was also involved through missions with mandates that included aspects of verification, ceasefire monitoring, assistance, accompaniment, good offices and other tasks (such as missions in Libya, Mali, the CAR, Western Sahara, Colombia, Afghanistan and Cyprus), as well as mechanisms or platforms supporting the search for a solution to various conflicts (such as the Quartet Supporting the Libyan Political Agreement, the Quartet for the Middle East and the IGAD Plus in South Sudan, to name a few).

In addition to the UN, regional organisations also played a role, both in their respective areas and beyond their most direct regional spheres. For example, the EU was prominent in European disputes, but it was also involved in other contexts beyond Europe, for example in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and in several

in Africa, including Libya, Mali, Mozambique, the CAR and the DRC. The AU participated in 10 of the 22 peace processes in Africa (Libya, Mali, the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Togo), where other regional organisations were also involved, such as ECOWAS (in Togo and Mali) and the IGAD (in South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Somalia). In Asia, in keeping with the more limited presence of third parties, intergovernmental organisations were less involved in mediation and facilitation activities.

Regarding the work of third-party states in negotiations, several European countries made efforts at different latitudes, but so did some states in the Middle East. These included Qatar (involved in the peace processes related to Djibouti-Eritrea, Sudan (Darfur), Afghanistan and Palestine), Saudi Arabia (Djibouti-Eritrea, Eritrea-Ethiopia and Afghanistan) and the United Arab Emirates (Eritrea-Ethiopia and Ethiopia (Ogaden)). Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates performed their mediation and facilitation work while actively involved in the armed conflict in Yemen, where they were interested parties to the conflict. The role of some states as third parties aroused suspicions and mistrust in various processes, where they were perceived as actors with glaring bias for one of the parties in the dispute. This was true of the Israel-Palestine process, where the Palestinian Authority continued to express its dissatisfaction with US policies

Table 1.3. Intergovernmental organisations as third parties in peace processes in 2018

UN (18)	
AFRICA	
Burundi	UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Burundi
CAR	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the CAR UN is member of the International Support Group for CAR
DRC	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
Libya	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
Mali	UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Mali United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
Somalia	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)
South Sudan	"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 UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for South Sudan UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
Sudan (Darfur)	United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
Western Sahara	UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)
AMERICA	
Colombia	UN Verification Mission in Colombia
ASIA	
Afghanistan	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
EUROPE	
Cyprus	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Mission of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Cyprus
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	United Nations Special Representative in the Geneva International Discussions on Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)
Serbia - Kosovo	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)
MIDDLE EAST	
Iran	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)
Israel-Palestine	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
Syria	UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria
Yemen	UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen
UE (10)	
AFRICA	
CAR	EU is member of the International Support Group for CAR
DRC	EU delegation in the DRC EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region
Libya	The EU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the AU, UN and Arab League
Mali	EU Special Representative for the Sahel
Mozambique	EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Mozambique
EUROPE	
Cyprus	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia, in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) EU Observation Mission in Georgia (EUMM)
Moldova (Transnistria)	EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM)

UE (10)	
Serbia - Kosovo	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)
MIDDLE EAST	
Israel-Palestine	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
UA (9)	
CAR	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)
DRC	The AU leads the Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue in the DRC
Libya	The AU forms part of the Quartet for the Libyan Political Agreement along with the Arab League, UN and EU
Mali	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
Sudan	AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP)
Sudan (Darfur)	United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile)	AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP)
Sudan – South Sudan	African Union Border Programme (AUBP)
Togo	UA Delegation
OSCE (4)	
Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Minsk Group Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Conflict Related to the Minsk Conference of the OSCE
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the South Caucasus
Moldova (Transnistria)	Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process OSCE Mission in Moldova
Ukraine	Special Representative of the Rotating Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group OSCE Special Observation Mission in Ukraine (SMM) OSCE Special Observation Mission at the Gukovo and Donetsk Checkpoints Coordinator of OSCE projects in Ukraine
IGAD (3)	
South Sudan	“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
Sudan – South Sudan	IGAD Delegation
Somalia	IGAD Delegation
ECOWAS (2)	
Mali	ECOWAS Delegation
Togo	ECOWAS Delegation
OIC (1)	
CAR	OIC Delegation
SADC (1)	
DRC	SADC Delegation
EAC (1)	
Burundi	EAC Delegation
ECCAS (1)	
CAR	ECCAS Delegation
OIF	
DRC	OIF Delegation

aligned with Israeli interests. It was also an issue in the peace processes in Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Ukraine (east), where Russia's role remained subject to different interpretations. Moscow presented itself as a third party in these processes, but both the Georgian and the Ukrainian governments consider it a party to the conflict. Russia's role also continued to arouse suspicion in Syria, given its prominent role in support of the Damascus regime, but also as the promoter of a negotiating process parallel to the one sponsored by the UN. Known as the Astana process, this Moscow-based initiative also involves Iran (an ally of Damascus) and Turkey (a defender of some opposition groups). The peace process in Syria also illustrated the role that actors working as mediators or facilitators can play, since Russia and Turkey directly negotiated a truce between Syrian armed actors in 2018. Parallel processes, like those in Syria, can generate mistrust and risk incoordination. A similar situation was observed in the CAR in 2018, where Russia and Sudan promoted a facilitation process parallel to the multilateral initiative backed by the African Union.

The UN participated in almost half the peace processes involving a third party and took part in negotiating processes through various formats

With regard to the **negotiating agendas**, we must consider the particular aspects of each case and bear in mind that the details of the issues under discussion did not always become known to the public. That said, our analysis of the various peace processes and negotiations that took place during 2018 identifies recurring themes in the negotiating agendas. **One issue that came up in negotiations in all the continents was the search for truces, ceasefires and cessations of hostilities**, under various formats and closely linked to scenarios of active armed conflict. In Africa, this issue was key in Ethiopia (where in response to confidence-building measures taken by the government, both the OLF in Oromia and the ONLF in Ogaden declared ceasefires that were essential stepping stones to a cessation of hostilities), in Sudan (where the government extended its ceasefire declaration in the Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile regions and some armed groups did the same) and in South Sudan (where the ceasefire between the government and the SPLM/A-IO was decisive for achieving a global peace agreement). In the Americas, the ceasefire issue came up in the talks between the Colombian government and the ELN, while it was also significant in several processes in Asia. In the Philippine government's negotiations with the NDF, the opposition group's refusal to declare a ceasefire before the authorities agreed to some of their demands was one of the main obstacles to making headway in the negotiations. In Afghanistan, the government and the Taliban agreed to the first ceasefire since the US invasion of the country in 2001. In Thailand, the government and Mara Patani agreed to create ceasefire areas called "safety zones", an issue that was part of the substantive agenda of the negotiations in the last three years. In the Middle East, attempts to stop the violence were an issue in the negotiations in Yemen, leading to

an agreement for a limited ceasefire at the end of the year. In Syria, it was agreed to establish a demilitarised zone around Idlib to prevent clashes between the Syrian government and armed opposition groups and ceasefire agreements were made between other armed actors involved in the conflict. In Israel-Palestine, the Israeli government and Palestinian groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad reached specific ceasefire agreements, despite not being involved in a negotiating process to resolve the substantive issues of the conflict. In Europe, several ceasefire agreements were reached in Ukraine, but then were systematically broken.

Another subject that came up in various peace negotiations was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants. DDR processes were significant in Africa, in Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia), the Republic of the Congo, Mali and Sudan (Darfur). In other contexts, negotiations addressed the release or exchange of prisoners, as illustrated by the peace processes in Yemen and Syria. This was also an issue in non-active armed conflicts. In the Basque Country, for example, prisoners continued to be a key issue pending resolution.

Comparing cases at the global level also reveals issues related to the distribution of political power (Burundi, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan, to name a few), including territorial and administrative decentralisation in some processes, such as in Mozambique and Mali. In other cases, struggles over political power were reflected in debates on electoral issues, such as in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine. Elsewhere, the emphasis was on self-determination, independence, land use or recognition for the identity of national minorities, as in the case of the Moro people in the Philippines, the Tibet region in China, several minorities in Myanmar and the Naga of Nagaland, in India. Substantive discussions on the status of disputed territories usually remained at an impasse, despite being a key issue in various processes, such as those in the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine, the Serbia-Kosovo process, Cyprus and Western Sahara. However, some border issues between states were addressed during the year, leading to some progress in Eritrea and Ethiopia and in Sudan and South Sudan. Finally, in Iran and North Korea, denuclearisation was one of the key issues on the agenda.

Regarding the **evolution of the peace processes and negotiations**, it is usually possible to identify a great variety of trends: a good development of meetings leading to draft agreements; the establishment of negotiations where there had been no talks or the reactivation of dialogue after years of standstill; intense exploratory efforts fuelling expectations; rounds of negotiation that make no progress on key points, but keep a channel of dialogue open; situations of serious

impasse and an absence of contact despite the efforts of third parties to facilitate negotiations; obstacles and difficulties in implementing agreements; and contexts in which violence and ceasefire violations have a profound impact on the prospects for peace processes. Our analysis of the different cases in 2018 confirms these diverse dynamics. There were also contexts in which significant progress or historic agreements were achieved, or where negotiations were resumed after years of no dialogue. However, there were difficulties, obstacles and setbacks in a significant number of cases, or deadlock persisted in the negotiations that prevented the substantive issues of the disputes from being addressed, among other issues.

Some of the cases that evolved in the most positive direction took place in Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa region. The coming to power of a new prime minister in Ethiopia gave a boost to a series of actions that enabled progress in negotiating processes both with internal insurgencies and at the interstate level. Thus, historic agreements were reached between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF and OLF groups in the Ogaden and Oromia regions, respectively in 2018. Progress was also made in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, also under the impulse of Addis Ababa, which led to the signing of agreements on the unresolved border dispute between both countries since the war between 1998 and 2000 and to the re-establishment of bilateral relations in multiple areas. The agreements between Ethiopia and Eritrea also facilitated the normalisation of relations between Eritrea and Djibouti, though the dispute over the border area of Ras Doumeira remained unsolved, and between Eritrea and Somalia, countries whose bilateral relations improved. Important agreements were signed elsewhere that aroused certain expectations, but the record of mistrust between the parties involved and/or the history of violations of previous agreements caused scepticism among observers and experts about whether they could be implemented. This was true of the agreement between the South Sudanese government and the SPLM/A-IO in September and the deal between the Yemeni government and the Houthis in December, as a result of the first contact between the parties since 2016.

Though the results are not yet final, positive developments in some contexts were mainly due to a resumption of negotiations after a long period of standstill, as in the case of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front in the dispute over Western Sahara, which held the first direct talks since 2012 in 2018, and in the process between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives, which maintained exploratory meetings after almost a decade without speaking. In other peace processes, the positive trend was linked to the openness and good development of meetings, as happened between North and South Korea and between North Korea and the United States in 2018, which together could favour the stabilisation and denuclearisation of the Korean

peninsula. Though formal negotiations were not initiated in Afghanistan, meetings and declarations throughout the year meant that the situation was significantly different than in previous years, including all the actors' willingness to negotiate without conditions and the first ceasefire between Afghan security forces and the Taliban insurgents since 2001. Elsewhere, progress was linked to implementing agreements. This was true of the process between the Philippine government and the MILF, which in 2018 was marked by approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, a key milestone to continue with implementation of the agreement reached in 2014 and to facilitate the demobilisation of thousands of the armed group's fighters. This was also the case of Moldova, where progress continued in implementing the confidence-building measures package agreed in late 2017.

In other cases, however, difficulties were observed in implementing the agreements. This was true in Mali and Libya, for example, as a consequence of the disagreements between the actors involved in the respective peace processes, among other factors, and the context of persistent violence. In both cases, new implementation schedules were being considered in late 2018. In Colombia, implementation of the agreement between the government and the FARC advanced amidst many problems and mutual accusations of non-compliance. Efforts to implement the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme were affected by the US decision to withdraw from the agreement. Other cases provided examples of deadlock in the negotiations or deterioration and setbacks amidst intensified tension and/or violence. These included Burundi, where the dialogue remained at a standstill despite regional initiatives to try to promote negotiations; the Philippines (NDF), where the deadlock in the negotiations was accompanied by a significant rise in hostilities between the NPA and the Philippine Armed Forces; Colombia (ELN), where the end of the ceasefire agreement and the change of government resulted brought a halt to the negotiations; Ukraine, where difficulties persisted in moving forward in discussing the substantive issues; Israel-Palestine, where the chronic impasse of the negotiations between the parties remained with no short-term prospects for a change in the dynamics; and Syria, where the negotiations failed to move the discussion forward on substantive issues, while the Damascus regime seemed determined to impose its will by military means. Although the particular aspects of each case must be considered, generally speaking it is possible to identify some crisis factors in the negotiations, including the impact of the dynamics of violence, the distrust between the parties and the influence of other political processes (like holding elections).

Finally, regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, our analysis of the different peace processes in 2018 confirms the obstacles that women face in participating in formal processes and the difficulties in incorporating a gender perspective in negotiations.

Table 1.4. **Main agreements of 2018**

Peace processes	Agreements
Afghanistan	Ceasefire agreement (June) initiated unilaterally by the government, coinciding with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr and followed later by the Taliban.
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Agreement between the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan to create a direct communication channel between the ministries of defence to prevent incidents. The agreement was reached in September at an informal meeting during a summit of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and began to be implemented in October.
Korea, DPR – Korea, Rep. of	The Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula, signed by the leaders of North Korea and South Korea on 27 April in the Peace House of the Joint Security Area, inside the Demilitarised Zone. Both governments pledge to start a new stage of peace and stability in the peninsula, to end the Korean War (which ended with an armistice and not a peace treaty) and to denuclearise the Korean peninsula. Leaders of both countries met again in May and September, ending the last meeting with the Pyongyang Joint Declaration.
Korea, DPR – USA	Joint statement by the leaders of the United States and North Korea following the summit held in Singapore on 12 June, in which both commit to establishing new relations and guaranteeing peace in the Korean peninsula, with the United States offering security guarantees to North Korea and North Korea affirming its willingness to conduct complete denuclearisation.
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship, of July 9, by which both countries put an end to 20 years of war, and which includes the agreement on implementation of the border decision, the re-establishment of diplomatic, economic and communications agreements and other issues. Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation, reached on 16 September in Jeddah and facilitated by Saudi Arabia. Appended to the Joint Declaration of 9 July, this agreement provided for the creation of investment projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones, collaboration in the fight against terrorism and human, drug and weapon trafficking, and a committee and subcommittees to monitor implementation of the agreement.
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Framework agreement between the ONLF and the Ethiopian government signed in Asmara (Eritrea) on 21 October, which includes the establishment of a joint committee intended to continue working to address the root causes of the conflict.
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Reconciliation Agreement reached on 7 August between the Ethiopian government and the OLF in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.
The Philippines (MILF)	Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, approved by Congress and ratified by the president in July, which mainly establishes the creation of a new autonomous region to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.
Libya	Modified road map of the UN plan to implement the Libyan Political Agreement (2015), which establishes a new timetable for holding elections and a dialogue conference, presented to the UN Security Council in November.
Mali	Pact for Peace, signed in October by the signatories of the 2015 peace agreement as a way to reaffirm the desire for early implementation of the commitments made therein. After winning a new term of office in the presidential election, the new government of Ibrahim Boubakar Keita signed this agreement with the head of MINUSMA, while the CMA and the Platform signed separately.
Moldova (Transnistria)	Rome Protocol, signed in May by Moldova, Transnistria, the OSCE, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, whereby the parties to the conflict undertake to reach an agreement on the outstanding issues of the Vienna Protocol (2017), such as the sphere of telecommunications. The parties also propose to make progress on implementing the agreements reached.
Mozambique	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security aspects, reached on 6 August, which establishes the steps to proceed to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants in the security forces and in society, and the creation of four working groups to implement the MoU: a military affairs commission and three joint technical groups.
South Sudan	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 12 September, signed in Addis Ababa by President Salva Kiir and the rebel leader and former vice president, Riek Machar, who heads the SPLM/A-IO, as well as the rest of the parties to the conflict.
Yemen	Stockholm Agreement, reached on 13 December between the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Houthis/Ansarallah at the request of the UN. The agreement addresses three key issues: an immediate cease-fire in the port city of Al Hudaydah and in the ports of Salif and Ras Issa and the creation of a mechanism for exchanging prisoners and a memorandum of understanding for the city of Ta'iz. The parties also agree to avoid any action, escalation or decisions that may affect the prospects of implementing the agreement.

Despite this general observation, some formats and mechanisms have been designed to favour or guarantee greater female involvement in negotiating processes and integrating a gender perspective in the agreements and their implementation. This was true of the process in Colombia after the agreement with the FARC in 2016, which led to the setting up of a Special Body on Gender to advise the CSIVI, the body in charge of monitoring implementation of the peace agreement. This evaluation report and those issued by other organisations revealed that the gender provisions of the agreement were being implemented slowly, indicating that multiple challenges in this area remain.

A greater role for women in political decision-making was observed in some cases, although it did not always

guarantee the creation of a gender perspective in peace processes and negotiations. In the talks on Western Sahara, one woman participated in the delegations of both Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. In Myanmar, there was a notable increase in female participation in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, although the proportion of participants (17%) was still far from women's organisations goal to have 30% representation. The Syrian Women's Advisory Board remained active during the year as part of the negotiations promoted by the UN, and the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group was created to advise the UN Special Envoy in Yemen on strategies to address the conflict. A gender mechanism continued to exist in the peace process in Cyprus, but it remained stagnant for most of 2018. Meanwhile, civil society promoted

the creation of the Network of Women Mediators of the South Caucasus, which joins other similar networks created in recent years.⁹

In many contexts, groups of women recalled the gender impact of conflicts and socio-political crises and tried to give visibility to their exclusion from the negotiations, demanding an end to their marginalisation. This was true of the peace processes in Mali, Libya, Myanmar, Thailand, Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. In many cases, women's initiatives were aimed at promoting dialogue between opposing parties, guaranteeing or promoting the establishment of ceasefire agreements and identifying priorities in the relevant political and security sphere from a gender perspective. In India (Nagaland), for example, women's organisations were key to the decision of the armed group NSCN-K to rejoin the ceasefire through direct negotiations with

the leaders of the insurgency and demands that the government lift the ban on the group. In the Philippines, women's organisations maintained an active role during the processing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law for the purpose of ensuring the participation of women in the future Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In Mali, women's meetings resulted in a proposal to design a gender strategy for implementing the 2015 peace agreement. In Libya, civil society organisations with support from international NGOs identified issues that should have a much more significant role in negotiations from the perspective of women's security needs and concerns. In Cyprus, women's organisations tried to reinvigorate the peace process given the stalemate in the negotiations. Meanwhile, Yemeni women expressed their priorities to the new UN Special Envoy and demanded effective participation at all levels of the peace process.

9. See Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

2. Peace negotiations in Africa

- Twenty-two (22) peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2018, accounting for 45% of the 49 peace processes worldwide.
- All the negotiating processes in Africa involved third parties in mediating and facilitating roles, except in four cases: Ethiopia (Oromia), Nigeria (Niger Delta), Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo.
- The number of interstate negotiating processes increased in 2018 due to Eritrea-Ethiopia and Djibouti-Eritrea.
- The Horn of Africa was the scene of historic agreements in 2018, such as those between Ethiopia and the insurgents of the Ogaden and Oromia regions and the agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea regarding their border dispute, which led to progress in other processes in the region.
- At the end of the year, there was tension over the results of legislative and presidential elections in the DRC, in which President Joseph Kabila did not run.
- The government of South Sudan and the SPLM/A-IO reached a new peace agreement, which envisages a coalition government involving all actors, though it was met with scepticism due to the history of previous peace initiative violations.
- Talks between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front were resumed thanks to the impetus of a new UN special envoy after remaining deadlocked since 2012.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in Africa during 2018. Firstly, the main characteristics and general trends on the negotiation processes in the region are presented, followed by the evolution of each different context during the year, including in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the start of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Africa that were the scenario of negotiations during 2018.

Table 2.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2018

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Burundi	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (CNARED)	East African Community (EAC), UN
CAR	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Russia, Sudan
Djibouti – Eritrea	Government of Djibouti, Government of Eritrea	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Somalia
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, SADC, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EU, UN, International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), USA
Eritrea – Ethiopia	Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia	United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	Government, ONLF military political movement	Kenya, United Arab Emirates and Sweden
Ethiopia (Oromia)	Government, OLF military political movement	--
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram)	Government of Nigeria, Boko Haram (Abubakar Shekau faction), Boko Haram (Abu Musab al-Barnawi faction)	--
Libya	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)	Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France
Mali	Government, Coordinator of Azawad Movements (CMA) – MNLA, MAA and HCUA–, Platform –GATIA, CMFPR, CPA, faction of the MAA–	Algeria, France, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU,
Morocco – Western Sahara	Morocco, Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and River of Gold (POLISARIO)	UN, Algeria and Mauritania (observers), Group of Friends of the Sahara (France, USA, Spain, United Kingdom and Russia)

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Mozambique	Government, the RENAMO armed 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)	--
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 Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) and its different factions	The Community of Sant Egidio, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau
Somalia	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans	UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others
South Sudan	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others)	IGAD Plus: IGAD (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 and UN; South Sudan Council of Churches
Sudan	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties and 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	AU, UNAMID, Chad, Germany, Qatar, USA, United Kingdom, France
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	Government, SPLM-N	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Uganda
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.

-- There are not third parties or there is no public proof of their existence

2.1 Negotiations in 2018: regional trends

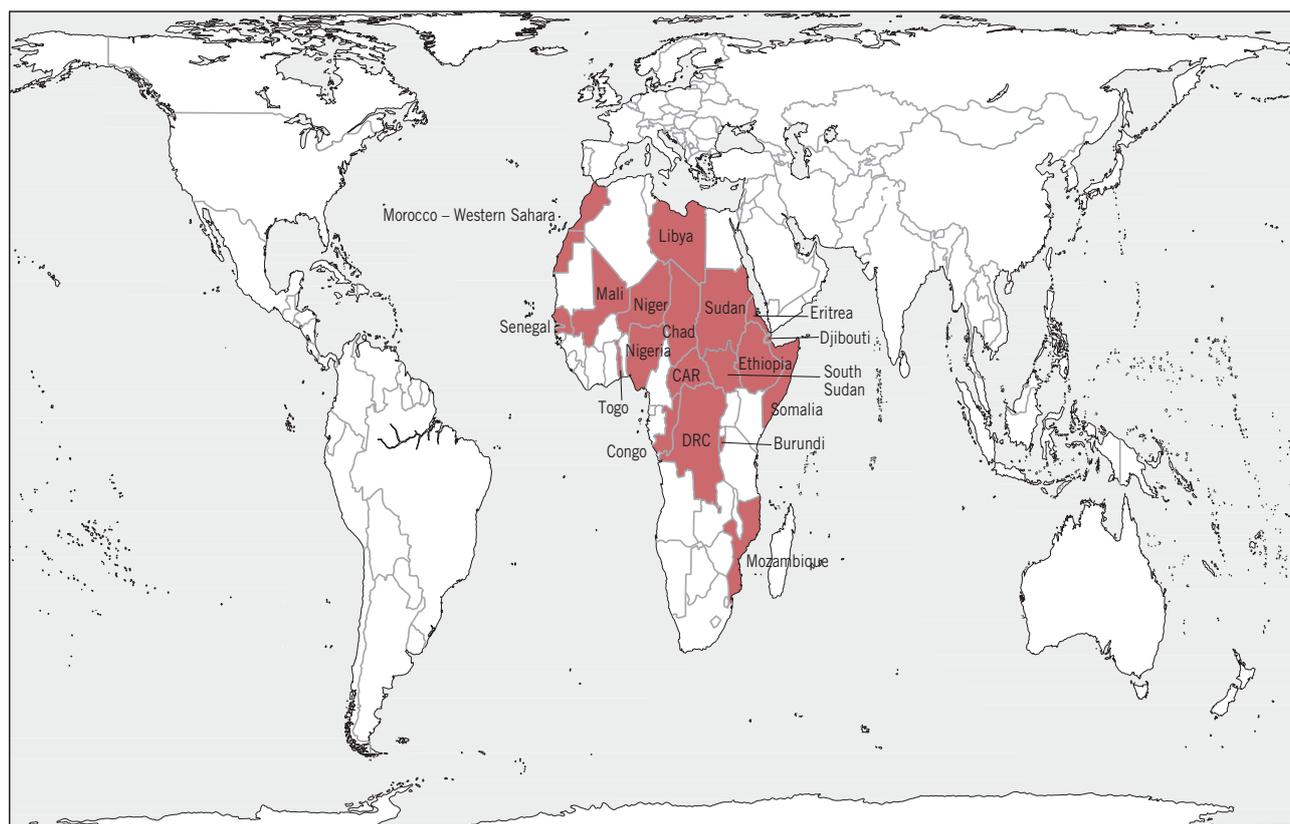
Twenty-two (22) peace processes and negotiations were identified in Africa in 2018, which accounts for practically 45% of the 49 peace processes identified worldwide. The analysis of the different contexts reflects some trends related to the processes and negotiations in Africa.

There was much continuity in the actors involved in the negotiations in 2018 compared to the year before. **In a large number of cases (nine of the 22), the negotiations exclusively involved the governments of the respective countries and armed groups or political-military movements.** This was the case in Ethiopia (Ogaden) between the Ethiopian government and the ONLF; in Ethiopia (Oromia) between the Ethiopian government and the Oromo armed group OLF; in Mozambique between the government and the armed group RENAMO; in the Central African Republic (CAR) between the government and different members of the old Séléka coalition and the anti-balaka militias; in the Republic of the Congo between the government and Pastor Ntoumi's political-military movement; in Sudan (Darfur) between

the government and the insurgents in Darfur; in Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) between the government and the armed group SPLM-N; and in South Sudan between the government, the armed group SPLM/A-IO and other minor armed groups.

Other peace processes were characterised by a more complex host of actors, including governments, armed actors and the political and social opposition. This was the case in Mali (north), where the negotiating process has involved the national authorities and many political and armed actors in the northern region of Azawad in recent years; Libya, between political and military forces that control different areas of the country; Somalia, between the federal government, the leaders of the federal states and other political and military actors in the country; and Sudan, between the government, the political opposition and insurgents from different regions of the country. Other cases involved only government actors and the political and social opposition. This was true of Burundi, the DRC and Togo.

Map 2.1. Peace negotiations in Africa 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Africa in 2018

Other negotiating processes were conducted by the governments of neighbouring countries as part of interstate disputes. In 2018, the number of interstate negotiating processes rose. Thus, the talks between Sudan and South Sudan were joined by the negotiations between Djibouti and Eritrea and those between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018. One case, that of Morocco-Western Sahara, involves a government (Morocco) and the political-military actor (the POLISARIO Front) of a self-proclaimed independent territory that enjoys no international recognition but is considered by the UN as a territory to be decolonised.

All the peace processes and negotiations analysed in Africa were supported by third parties, with the exception of Ethiopia (Oromia), Nigeria (Niger Delta), the Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) and the Republic of the Congo. Whereas in many cases the actors involved in mediation, facilitation and accompaniment are known to the public, in other contexts these tasks are carried out discreetly and behind closed doors. In all cases involving third parties, more than one actor performed mediation and facilitation tasks. The UN played a predominant role, as it was involved in cases in Burundi, Libya, Mali (North), Morocco-Western Sahara, the CAR, the DRC, Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan and Togo. Another prominent player was the African Union, which was involved in 10 processes as part of its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA):

The number of interstate negotiating processes in Africa rose in 2018

Libya, Mali (north), the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, Sudan (Darfur), Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile), South Sudan, Sudan-South Sudan and Togo. African regional intergovernmental organisations also participated as third parties in negotiating processes, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali (north) and Togo; the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGRL) in the CAR and the DRC; the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the CAR; and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan-South Sudan. In addition to African intergovernmental organisations, other intergovernmental organisations participated as third parties in Africa, such as the EU (in Mozambique, the CAR, the DRC and South Sudan), the Arab League (in Libya) and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) in the CAR.

States also played a prominent role as third parties in peace processes and negotiations in Africa. In three cases, all the third-parties were state actors: Saudi Arabia, the USA and especially the United Arab Emirates mediated and facilitated the negotiations between Eritrea and Ethiopia; Kenya, Eritrea, the United Arab Emirates and Sweden played roles in the talks between the Ethiopian government and the armed group ONLF; and Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and Somalia used their good offices in the

dialogue between Djibouti and Eritrea. In the rest of the processes mediated by states, many states, both from Africa and other continents, became involved as third parties in processes in which other mediating and facilitating actors also participated. Notable local and international roles were also played by third-party religious actors: the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Community of Sant'Egidio (Vatican) in the CAR; the local Catholic Church and the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique; the Community of Sant'Egidio in the Senegalese region of Casamance; the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) in the DRC; and the South Sudan Council of Churches in that country.

Given the many mediating actors, third parties frequently participated in joint formats, such as so-called groups of friends and support groups. This was the case with the Group of Friends on Western Sahara (France, the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia) regarding the negotiating process between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front and the International Support Group (which includes the UN and the EU) in the talks in the CAR. Other coordination formats included the IGAD Plus, which facilitates dialogue in South Sudan and is made up of the IGAD, the five members of the African Union Ad Hoc High-Level Committee (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria), the countries of the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway), the EU, the AU and the UN. Also prominent was the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, promoted by the AU and the ECCAS, with the support of the UN, the ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Chad, which in turn coexisted with other mediating actors in the CAR. **In some cases, the proliferation of actors and parallel processes was viewed with mistrust.** For example, the beginning of a facilitation process in South Sudan headed by Russia and Sudan, alongside the multilateral initiative led by the African Union, caused concern about risks of incoordination in 2018.

Many different subjects were tackled in the negotiations, but especially notable were ceasefires and cessations of hostilities. In Ethiopia, two armed groups, the ONLF (in Ogaden) and the OLF (in Oromia), declared unilateral ceasefires in response to steps taken by the government to build confidence, which led to cessations of hostilities under peace agreements. In the Darfur region in Sudan, the armed groups SLM-MM and JEM extended their unilateral ceasefires, while the government also extended its unilateral ceasefire in both Darfur and the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile until the end of the year. In neighbouring **South Sudan**, the government and the SPLM/A-IO reached a ceasefire

In all negotiations with third parties in Africa, more than one actor performed mediation and facilitation tasks

The issue of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration was addressed during the year in the negotiating processes in Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia) and the Republic of the Congo, with positive developments in all three

as part of a framework agreement that preceded the achievement of a comprehensive peace agreement.

Another security-related issue was **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), which was part of some peace processes**, such as in Mozambique, Ethiopia (Oromia) and the Republic of the Congo. In Mozambique, the government and RENAMO reached a DDR agreement in August, which established the steps to be followed for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of RENAMO fighters into society and into the security forces, and a disarmament programme started in October. The historic reconciliation agreement signed between the Ethiopian government and the Oromo group OLF in August also included matters related to disarmament. The disarmament process in the Republic of the Congo began, as laid out in the peace agreement reached in 2017. The negotiations between South Sudan and the opposition SPLM/A-IO and the resulting comprehensive peace agreement in August included issues related to the quartering of all armed actors and a halt to any training and recruitment activity, alongside the creation of an expanded military unit, the Regional Protection Force (RPF).

Other items on the agenda were related to decentralisation. As part of the implementation of the peace agreement in Mozambique, a decentralisation project was approved following the ratification of some constitutional amendments that opened the door for the selection of provincial governors by the winners in local elections, instead of by presidential designation. In Mali, the approval of a new timeline for the peace process in 2018 was intended to accelerate implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, including decentralisation.

At the end of the year, some measures were adopted for the establishment of interim administrations in several regions, though its operationalisation remained deadlocked. Negotiating processes also addressed **border issues**. This was a crucial issue in the impetus for the negotiations between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018, in which Ethiopia finally accepted the 2002 ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which assigned Eritrea the disputed border village of Badme and was rejected by Ethiopia at the time. Both countries also agreed to withdraw troops from their shared border, paving the way for its demilitarisation after hundreds of thousands of soldiers had been concentrated there. In the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, both governments restarted talks on defining the border, which affects several areas, including the Abyei oil enclave.

Other processes focused on issues related to **political power-sharing and political participation**, such as in Burundi, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and Libya. Presidential and legislative elections were held in the DRC in December, in which President Joseph Kabila did not run in the end, fulfilling the requirement set by the Episcopal Conference of the Congo, the facilitator of the process that ended in the 2016 agreement. Seven opposition platforms agreed to a unitary candidate, but finally splintered. In South Sudan, the global agreement reached in 2018 established the mechanisms and timetable for a transitional government involving all the opposing actors, and stipulated future elections under a revised Constitution. The issue of political participation also came up often in the negotiating initiatives in Libya. However, the differences between the main political and military actors delayed key aspects of the political process, such as holding a national conference and elections.

Progress was achieved in various negotiating processes in Africa in 2018, especially in the Horn of Africa. Two historic agreements were reached in Ethiopia: a framework agreement between Ethiopia and the ONLF, an armed group operating in the Ogaden region, and a reconciliation agreement between the Ethiopian government and the OLF, another armed group active in the Oromia region.

The change of leadership in the country was decisive in both instances. The resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn under social pressure and the appointment of Abiy Ahmed to the office paved the way for the government to take confidence-building steps such as removing the ONLF and the OLF from its list of terrorist groups, releasing prisoners and enacting an amnesty law for former prisoners. These and other gestures were met with unilateral ceasefires by both insurgent groups, which in turn resulted in peace agreements. Another crucial breakthrough came in the negotiating process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which faced off in a war from 1998 to 2000 and have remained affected by an unresolved territorial dispute ever since. Also preceded by confidence-building measures due to the change of leadership in Ethiopia, this development resulted in both countries signing two agreements: the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship in July and the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation in September. The agreements concerned implementation of the EEBC border ruling, the restoration of diplomatic, economic and communications agreements, joint investment projects, the creation of implementation monitoring mechanisms and other aspects. The historic agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea also boosted positive developments in other regional disputes. For example, **Djibouti and Eritrea announced the normalisation of their relations**, even

The issue of power-sharing and political participation came up in the negotiating processes in Burundi, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and Libya in 2018

The Horn of Africa was the scene of historic agreements in 2018, such as the pacts between Ethiopia and the insurgents of the Ogaden and Oromia regions and the agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea on their border dispute, which swept in progress in other processes in the region

though the conflict between them, the border dispute in the Ras Doumeira area, which was occupied by Eritrea in 2008, remained unresolved. And in Somalia, where the conflict involves many different actors and Eritrea has been accused of supporting the armed group al-Shabaab, **Eritrea and Somalia improved their relations**, facilitated by a series of positive events taking place between Eritrea and Ethiopia and Eritrea and Djibouti, which could result in greater regional integration, with positive impacts on the various conflicts and processes in the region.

In the Great Lakes region, the peace process in South Sudan resulted in a global agreement between the government and the SPLM/A-IO in 2018 that established power-sharing mechanisms, a cessation of hostilities and other achievements. However, the history of breaches in previous deals prompted scepticism about its sustainability and implementation. In the Maghreb, the new UN special envoy helped to make headway in resuming the talks between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front after remaining deadlocked since 2012.

In contrast, **other processes faced many obstacles**, such as in Burundi, where regional initiatives failed to promote inclusive political dialogue amidst stiff disagreement between the government and opposition political and social sectors, as well as divisions among the opposition. The peace process in the CAR also hit snags during the year, as its lack of inclusiveness was criticised by members of civil society, MPs and other national actors. The process also risked failure by beginning a new facilitation channel that is not part of the main mediating format. Negotiations in Sudan were resumed between the Sudanese government and opposition and rebel groups under the National Dialogue and the roadmap agreed in 2016, but no significant progress was achieved. In the Maghreb, the negotiating process in Libya faced serious problems in implementing the UN's 2017 plan for restarting the political process, which delayed the whole process in 2018.

2.2. Case study analysis

Horn of Africa

Djibouti – Eritrea	
Negotiating actors	Government of Djibouti, Government of Eritrea
Third parties	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Somalia
Relevant agreements	Agreement of Ceasefire (2010)

Summary:

The demarcation of the border between both countries has been a historical source of disagreement and tension. This border was set confusingly in 1901 by a treaty between France (the colonial power in Djibouti) and Italy (the colonial power in Eritrea). The unresolved demarcation caused both countries to face off in 1996 and 1999. This dispute was aggravated at a regional level due to strained relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, since the United States is a firm Ethiopian ally; to the war in Somalia, where Eritrea has been accused of supporting the opposition coalition while Ethiopia and the United States supported the Somali government; and to the war in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, where Eritrea supports the insurgency fighting against the Ethiopian government. Djibouti, a neutral country in the conflict in Somalia, has hosted several peace initiatives in Somalia and other countries in the region. It enjoys a strategic position for controlling maritime traffic in the Red Sea (France, the United States, China and Japan all have military bases there, and soon Saudi Arabia will have one too) and after the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Djibouti provides Ethiopia's only point of access to the sea. The situation escalated in 2008 with new clashes between both countries and the occupation of the area of Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island by Eritrea, which had until then been under the sovereignty of Djibouti, but without a definitive agreement on the border issue. In 2009, the UN Security Council established an arms embargo against Eritrea for its collaboration with Somali armed actors and for its refusal to withdraw from Ras Doumeira. Qatar began mediating between both countries and reached a ceasefire agreement in June 2010, establishing a contingent of 500 soldiers to monitor the situation. Despite attempts to turn the ceasefire into a peace agreement, little progress has been made. In March 2016, Qatar succeeded in getting Eritrea to release four Djibouti soldiers who had been held prisoner since 2008. In June 2017, Qatar withdrew its observation mission for various reasons, including both countries' support for Saudi Arabia's accusation that Qatar supported radical Islamism and Iran. As a result, Eritrea again occupied the area and Djibouti requested the intervention of the AU and the UN following Qatar's withdrawal.

The historic peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia¹ that was reached in 2018 led to breakthroughs in various regional disputes, including the border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti regarding Ras Doumeira.

Although the conflict is still pending resolution, on 7 September 2018, both countries announced the normalisation of their relations following a visit by Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh to Djibouti. Likewise, Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf announced the start of a new era of relations between both countries. Following the meeting, Ethiopia publicly hailed the change in attitude. Osman Saleh appeared in Djibouti accompanied by his respective Somali and Ethiopian counterparts, Ahmed Isse Awad and Workneh Gebeyehu, who travelled to Djibouti to facilitate the dialogue.

These events were preceded in July by the restoration of diplomatic relations between Eritrea and Somalia. The UN Security Council had accused Eritrea of supporting the Somali armed group al-Shabaab, an allegation that it had denied despite some supporting evidence. Eritrea

needed to resolve the different disputes in which it is involved before the arms embargo and the different UN Security Council sanctions could be lifted. Ethiopia has been an important ally of Somalia in its fight against al-Shabaab, so that peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea could open the doors to improving relations with their mutual neighbour and lifting the sanctions. This normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea was also preceded in early September by a meeting in Asmara between the Somali, Eritrean and Ethiopian foreign ministers. For Eritrea, resolving this dispute was the last obstacle to lifting the UN sanctions and ending its international isolation, while for Djibouti, peace with Eritrea reduces the risks of it being isolated in the region by its high dependence on Ethiopia. The port of Djibouti accounts for 95% of Ethiopia's exports and imports, so the agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia could spell isolation for Djibouti if it is not accompanied by peace with Eritrea. Indeed, peace between all three countries could lead to greater regional integration, according to several analysts. The international community hailed the beginning of the end of the territorial dispute and the improvement of relations. After these meetings, on 17 September Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki met with Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and agreed to open a new chapter in relations between both countries. Both leaders thanked Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz for all the efforts and arrangements to facilitate the situation. On 14 November, the UN Security Council lifted the sanctions imposed on Eritrea since 2009 through Resolution 2444, which was approved unanimously.

Eritrea – Ethiopia

Negotiating actors	Government of Eritrea, Government of Ethiopia
Third parties	United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA
Relevant agreements	Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (Algiers, 2000), Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia or the December Agreement (Algiers, 2000), Decision Regarding Delimitation of the Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, EEBC (2002), Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation (2018)

Summary:

Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993, although the border between both countries was not clearly defined, causing them to face off between 1998 and 2000 in a war that cost over 100,000 lives. In June 2000 they signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, the UN Security Council established the UNMEE mission to monitor it and they signed the Algiers peace agreement in December. This agreement established that both would submit to the ruling issued by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which is in charge of delimiting and demarcating the border based on the relevant colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and on international law. The EEBC announced its opinion in April 2002, assigning

1. See the summary on Eritrea-Ethiopia in this chapter.

the disputed border village of Badme (the epicentre of the war, currently administered by Ethiopia) to Eritrea, though Ethiopia rejected the decision. Frustrated by the lack of progress in implementing the EEBC's ruling due to insufficient pressure on Ethiopia to comply, Eritrea decided to restrict UNMEE operations in late 2005, forcing its withdrawal in 2008. A year earlier, the EEBC had ended its work without being able to implement its mandate due to obstructions in Ethiopia, so the situation has remained at an impasse ever since. Both countries maintained a situation characterised by a pre-war climate, with hundreds of thousands of soldiers deployed on their shared border, sporadic clashes and belligerent rhetoric. A historic agreement was reached in 2018, ending the conflict between them.

In 2018, a historic agreement was reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia that put an end to 20 years of conflict between both countries. The appointment of Abiy Ahmed as the new prime minister of Ethiopia was decisive, although according to some sources, the process began to take shape during the government of Hailemariam Desalegn. Eritrea and Ethiopia had been exchanging messages since 2017 with the support of the United States and particularly the United Arab Emirates, a country that has been the greatest backer of this process. On 15 February, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn announced that he would resign from office and from the leadership of the ruling coalition to facilitate the implementation of reforms due to the serious crisis affecting the country. On 16 February the Ethiopian government reinstated the state of emergency, which had been in force between October 2016 and October 2017. However, in January the government had announced that it would pardon hundreds of political prisoners, and in February the attorney general decreed the release of hundreds of prisoners, though the demonstrations and tension continued. On 27 March, Abiy Ahmed was appointed president of the ruling coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forum (EPRDF). A member of the Oromo community, former military intelligence officer and MP, Abiy Ahmed was put forward as a candidate by the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), one of the four parties that make up the governing EPRDF coalition. He was appointed prime minister of the country on 2 April. His first acts were aimed at mitigating ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. In his inaugural address, Abiy Ahmed promised that he would achieve peace with Eritrea. However, Eritrea dismissed the statement and again urged Addis Ababa to withdraw its troops from the border area.

On 5 June, the governing EPRDF coalition announced that it would accept the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission's (EEBC) ruling, which includes the transfer of Badme, the epicentre of the conflict, to Eritrea. At

the same time, it urged Asmara to accept its openness to dialogue without preconditions. The announcement did not establish any agenda for withdrawing troops, which was Eritrea's main concern and demand, but was unanimously welcomed by the international community nonetheless. The Eritrean opposition movement Forum for National Dialogue² urged the Ethiopian government to withdraw its troops from Eritrean soil without preconditions. However, peaceful civic demonstrations were staged days later in Badme and the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray in protest against the government's announcement. The TPLF party, a member of the ruling coalition representing the Tigray minority, also criticised the decision. On 20 June, Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki revealed plans to send a delegation to hold peace talks with Ethiopia, which became effective on 26 June with a meeting in Addis Ababa between the Eritrean foreign minister and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. After the meeting, Abiy said that his country was willing to end hostilities and make sacrifices to restore peace with Eritrea if necessary. The decisive moment came on 8 July, when Abiy set out on a two-day visit to Asmara. On the same day, telephone connectivity between both countries was re-established for the first time in

A historic agreement was reached between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018 that put an end to 20 years of conflict between both sides

20 years. **On 9 July, the leaders of both countries signed the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship**, ending 20 years of war and including agreement on implementing the border decision and on restoring diplomatic, economic and communications agreements, among other issues. Abiy asked UN Secretary-General António Guterres to lift the sanctions on Eritrea. Between 14 and 16 July, Afewerki visited Ethiopia for the first time in 20 years and reopened the Eritrean Embassy. Ethiopian Airlines resumed flights with Eritrea on 18 July and its Eritrean counterpart did the same on 4 August. On 24 July, both leaders thanked Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates for his role in promoting peace between the two countries. Abiy Ahmed made his second visit to Eritrea on 5 September and the Ethiopian Embassy opened in Asmara the next day. On 11 September, both leaders agreed to withdraw their troops from the shared border. This decision gave way to the tripartite meeting between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) that culminated in the **signing of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia on 16 September, known as the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation**, with the leaders of both countries and King Salman of Saudi Arabia, the UN Secretary-General, the chair of the AU Commission and the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates in attendance. This agreement added the creation of joint investment projects to the Joint Declaration of 9 July, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones and collaboration in the

2. Opposition movement created in London in 2014 that promotes democracy and political transition in the country that includes several former senior officials of the ruling party, the EPLF, who reject the authoritarian path that the country has taken since the 1990s.

fight against terrorism and human, drug and weapons trafficking, as well as a committee and subcommittees to monitor implementation of the agreement.

Ethiopia (Ogaden)	
Negotiating actors	Government, ONLF military political movement
Third parties	Kenya, United Arab Emirates and Sweden
Relevant agreements	Framework Agreement (2018)

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. The ONLF also condemns the plundering of the region's natural resources by the government. 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. The first round of negotiations took place in 2012. Since then, there have been sporadic and mostly confidential meetings between the parties with Kenya mediating. It was not until 2018 that the Ethiopian government and the ONLF signed a framework agreement to work together on the root causes of the conflict.

The meetings held in late 2017 bore fruit in 2018 with the signing of a historic peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the armed group ONLF. At the end of 2017, the United Arab Emirates hosted an unofficial preparatory meeting between representatives of the Ethiopian government and the insurgents in Ogaden, region officially called the Somali Regional State, in a prelude to a second round of negotiations in early 2018. In January 2018, Kenya sent a delegation to Sweden led by the former defence minister and MP representing Garissa County (Kenya), Mohamed Yusuf Haji, to meet representatives of the ONLF to facilitate the official resumption of talks, according to local sources. On 22 January, ONLF representatives held a meeting with Somali Ogadeni communities in the United States to hear their recommendations for the peace talks. The second round of negotiations took place on 11 February 2018 in Nairobi. The governor of Garissa County, Ambassador Ali

The appointment of new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was decisive in the positive development of the situation in Ethiopia and the local and regional conflicts affecting it

Bunow Korane, who coordinated the meeting, 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. No statements were issued by either 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 by Abdi Mohamud Omar (aka Abdi Iley), the president of the Somali Regional State (SRS). The ONLF delegation included its political and military wings and was composed of its chief negotiator, Abdirahman Mahdi; the commander of the military wing (ONLA), Sulub Abdi Ahmed; the chairman of the ONLF Committee, Ahmed Yasin Dirane; and the group's finance chief, Ibado Hirsi Mahad. These talks took place alongside clashes between the ONLF and the Liyu Police, a regional police force responsible for fighting against terrorism that has been accused of serious human rights violations.

Days after the meeting, the Ethiopian government released 1,500 inmates from Jail Ogaden, a prison located in the Ogaden region and the scene of serious human rights violations according to the armed group and human rights organisations. The insurgents declared that these prisoners were linked to the ONLF, although they added that there were still many other prisoners in Ethiopian prisons. However, they repeated through social networks that no agreement had been reached with the government. The appointment of new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was decisive in the positive development of the situation in the country regarding this and other conflicts affecting it.³ In February, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned before social pressure and Abiy Ahmed was nominated by the ruling EPRDF coalition on 27 March. A member of the Oromo community, former military intelligence officer and MP, Abiy Ahmed was put forward as a candidate by the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), one of the four parties that make up the governing EPRDF coalition. His first acts were aimed at mitigating ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. On his first trip, in April, he visited Jijiga, the capital of the Somali region, to meet with representatives of the Oromo and Somali communities.

On 30 June, the government presented a proposal to Parliament to remove three armed groups from the list of terrorist organisations (OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7), opened access to more than 200 forbidden websites, dismissed senior prison officials for failing to protect prisoners' rights and promoted the release of political prisoners. On 20 July, Parliament passed an amnesty law for former political prisoners. The escalation of interethnic tension in early August was decisive for moving forward in the situation. This escalation prompted the deployment of

3. See the summary on Eritrea-Ethiopia in this chapter.

the Ethiopian Army in Jijiga, the capital of Ogaden, following the refusal of the president of the regional state, Abdi (“The Hawk”) Iley, a member of the former administration of late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who held office from 1995 to 2012, to obey a government summons to explain how the situation in the region has developed and the demand to dismantle the Liyu Police, which he directed. Two days later he was forced to resign. Supporters of Abdi, supported by the Liyu Police, staged violent protests against the Ethiopian Army, causing dozens of fatalities (up to 90, according to some sources). On 27 August, Abdi was arrested. His replacement, the activist and humanitarian worker Mustafa Muhumed Omer, had been critical of the former regional and federal government’s management of human rights abuses and violations, which is why he was in exile. His appointment was widely celebrated and after his election, he became the vice president of the ruling party in the region, the ESPDP, of which he had not been a member prior to his appointment. Following these historic decisions, the ONLF declared a unilateral ceasefire on 12 August. **The ONLF attributed this decision to the positive steps taken by the government to facilitate and promote meetings and peace talks “to find a viable and lasting solution to the conflict in Ogaden”. Finally, the ONLF and the Ethiopian government signed a framework agreement in Asmara (Eritrea) on 21 October and agreed to establish a joint committee that will continue working to address the root causes of the conflict.** The agreement stipulates that both parties will end the hostilities and that the ONLF will continue to pursue its political objectives through peaceful means.

Gender, peace and security

In October, the Ethiopian Prime Minister approved a historic cabinet shake-up that reduced the number of ministry positions and established that half were occupied by women, including the defence ministry, which has traditionally only been occupied by men, and was entrusted to Aisha Mohammed Musa. He also created the new ministry of peace, headed by the former speaker of Parliament, Muferiat Kamil, who will oversee important organisations such as the national intelligence agency, the NISS, and other federal information, security and economic bodies and agencies. Both chambers unanimously appointed the diplomat Sahlework Zewde to be the new president of the country, a position without executive powers but of high representative value, making her the first female Ethiopian head of state and the only one currently holding that office in Africa. Sahlework had thus far served as UN Secretary-General António Guterres’s special representative to the African Union.

On 30 June, the Ethiopian government presented a proposal to Parliament to remove three armed groups from the list of terrorist organisations (OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7)

Ethiopia (Oromia)	
Negotiating actors	Government, OLF military political movement
Third parties	–
Relevant agreements	Reconciliation Agreement (2018)

Summary:

Ethiopia has experienced secessionist movements or rejection of central power since the 1970s. The Oromo OLF emerged between 1973 and 1974 and operates in the Ethiopian region of Oromia, in the centre and south of the country, against the Mengistu dictatorship and with the goal of establishing an independent State for the Oromo community. Despite differences, the political and armed nationalist movements of the Oromo participated together with other insurgent groups in the country to overthrow the Mengistu regime in 1991. However, the OLF split away in 1992 from the transitional Government led by Meles Zenawi’s TPLF party, that controls the coalition in power, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and since then it initiated an armed struggle against the central Government and against other Oromo pro-government political movements. It demands independence for the Oromo community. After the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, much of its leadership moved to Eritrea and its military wing, the OLA, began to receive training and support from Eritrea. Between 2000 and 2005, the membership of the OLF fluctuated due to government repression against Oromo student activists and general dissidence, as well as internal divisions among factions of the group, which weakened their capacity for action. Since late 2015, the region has become the epicentre of the protests against the Ethiopian regime, causing hundreds of deaths and an increase in armed actions by the Liyu Police, a governmental paramilitary body responsible for serious human rights violations that was created to take action against opposition groups in the Oromia and Ogaden regions.

The appointment of the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in March 2018 was decisive for the development of the situation in the country regarding the conflict in Oromia and others affecting it.⁴ In February, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned and on 27 March Abiy Ahmed was nominated by the ruling EPRDF coalition to replace him. A member of the Oromo community, former military intelligence officer and MP, Abiy Ahmed was put forward as a candidate by the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), one of the four parties that make up the governing EPRDF coalition. His first acts were aimed at mitigating ethnic tensions in the country, promoting national unity and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. On his first trip, in April, he visited Jijiga, the capital of the Somali region, to meet with representatives of the Oromo and Somali communities.

On 30 June, the government presented a proposal to Parliament to remove three armed groups from the list of terrorist groups (OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7), opened access to more than 200 forbidden websites, dismissed senior prison officials for failing to protect prisoners’ rights and

4. See the summary on Ethiopia (Ogaden) and on Eritrea-Ethiopia in this chapter.

promoted the release of political prisoners. **After it was removed from the list of terrorist groups, where it had been listed since 2008, the OLF declared a unilateral ceasefire in July.** On 20 July, Parliament passed an amnesty law for former political prisoners. After these historic decisions, the government and the OLF reached a reconciliation agreement to end the hostilities. Thus, on 7 August the Ethiopian government and the OLF signed a Reconciliation Agreement in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, according to the Eritrean information minister. The leader of the OLF, Dawud Ibsa, who lived in exile in Asmara, signed on behalf of the armed group. The president of the Oromia region, Lemma Megersa, signed on behalf of Ethiopia. Also present at the event was Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu, a member of the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) and the EPRDF coalition since 1991, as well as a member of the executive committees of both parties since 2012 and a former transport minister. Both parties agreed to establish a joint committee to monitor implementation of the agreement. This agreement represents a new step by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to improve the country's security situation and diplomatic relations, reform its institutions and open its economy.

However, after these breakthroughs, there was an escalation of violence in the capital, Addis Ababa, and the surrounding area linked to the return of OLF members who had been in exile. On 15 September, a major demonstration was staged to commemorate their return, which ended with acts of violence committed by sympathisers of the rebellion against other communities. Other acts of violence occurred in some neighbourhoods and districts of the capital in the days that followed, in which 28 people lost their lives. Later, the government asked the OLF fighters who had not yet disarmed as established by the reconciliation agreement reached in August to proceed to disarm. Around 1,300 OLF fighters had already disarmed in compliance with the agreement. However, clashes were reported between the OLF and Ethiopian security forces in the district of Qelem de Wolega between 28 and 29 October, which were repeated at the end of the year. The OLF accused the government of not having respected the August agreement.

Gender, peace and security

In October, the **Ethiopian Prime Minister approved a historic cabinet shake-up** that reduced the number of ministry positions and **established that half were occupied by women**, including the defence ministry, which has traditionally only been occupied by men, and was entrusted to Aisha Mohammed Musa. He also created the new ministry of peace, headed by the former speaker of Parliament, Muferiat Kamil, who will oversee important organisations such as the national intelligence agency, the NISS, and other federal information, security and economic bodies and agencies. Both chambers unanimously appointed the diplomat Sahlework Zewde to be the new president of the country, a position

without executive powers but of high representative value, making her the first female Ethiopian head of state and the only one currently holding that office in Africa. Sahlework had thus far served as UN Secretary-General António Guterres's special representative to the African Union.

Somalia	
Negotiating actors	Federal Government, leaders of the federal and emerging states (Puntland, HirShabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest), political-military movement Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, clan leaders and sub-clans
Third parties	UN, IGAD, Turkey, among others
Relevant agreements	Road map to end the transition (2011), Kampala Accord (2011), Provisional Federal Constitution (2012), Mogadishu Declaration of the National Consultative Forum (2015)

Summary:

The armed conflict and the absence of effective central authority in the country have their origins in 1988, when a coalition of opposing groups rebelled against the dictatorial power of Siad Barre and three years later managed to overthrow him. Since 1991, more than 15 peace processes with different types of proposals were attempted to establish a central authority. Of note were the Addis Ababa (1993), Arta (2000) and Mbagathi (2002-2004) processes. The centrality of the Somali state had led to a high degree of authoritarianism during Barre's rule, and the different proposals intended to establish a State that did not hold all of the power, a formula widely rejected by Somali society. However, some clans and warlords rejected the federal or decentralized model because it represented a threat to their power. The resolution of the conflict has been complicated by several issues: the power of some warlords who have turned conflict into a way of life; the issue of representation and the balance of power used to establish the future government between the different stakeholders and clans that make up the Somali social structure in conflict for years during Siad Barre's dictatorship; interference by Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the erratic stance of the international community. The rise of political Islam as a possible governing option through the Islamic courts, and the internationalization of the conflict with the arrival of foreign fighters in the armed wing of the courts, al-Shabaab, as well the Ethiopian invasion and the U.S. role in the fight against terrorism, have all contributed to making the situation more difficult. The Transitional Federal Government, which emerged from the Mbagathi peace process (2004), came to an end in 2012 and gave way to the Federal Government, which was supposed to be in charge of holding the elections in 2016. The National Consultative Forum held in 2015 laid the foundations for the different agreements to be reached on holding the elections in 2016. The elections were held in late 2016 and early 2017.

The armed groups al-Shabaab and ISIS remained active in the country during the year, while relations deteriorated between the federal states and the Federal Government of Somalia. Attempts at negotiation and mediation between the federal states and the government were unsuccessful. Finally, the leaders of five states – Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland, Puntland and South West– met in Kismayo on 8 September and announced

that they were breaking off relations with the Federal Government, arguing that there was no cooperation between it and the regions and citing the corruption and growing insecurity. According to several analysts, this break took place in a context of relations maintained by the federal states with regional actors such as the United Arab Emirates, which are opposed to relations between the Federal Government and its Qatari and Turkish allies. Following the announcement, the Federal Government called for peace talks with the regions in dispute.

Relations between Somalia and Eritrea also improved after the peace agreements were signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Eritrea and Djibouti. Following Ethiopia's offer to begin demarcating the border and reach an agreement with Eritrea in June, the presidents of Somalia and Eritrea met in Asmara on 28 July and announced that they were restoring diplomatic relations and bilateral cooperation and investment. Later, on 13 August, the Eritrean foreign minister visited Mogadishu to strengthen relations. The Somali president met with his counterpart in Djibouti on 16 August to discuss Somalia's support for lifting the arms embargo and sanctions against Eritrea, which had been in force since 2009 and was also related to Eritrea's occupation of the Ras Doumeira area, disputed with Djibouti.⁵ At the end of the year, relations between the Somali government and the United Nations were strained after the former declared the UN Secretary-General's special representative in Somalia, Nicholas Haysom, to be a persona non grata and forced him to leave the country. The crisis began after the Somali police and Ethiopian contingents of the African Union mission arrested Mukhat Robow, a former spokesman for al-Shabaab who left the armed organisation in 2017 and who expressed his intention to run in regional elections that were to be held a few days after his arrest. The arrest sparked several protests and prompted a joint communiqué from the United Nations, AMISOM and several governments that questioned the legal framework in which the arrest took place, as well as the deaths that occurred during the protests against Robow's arrest.

Relations between Somalia and Eritrea normalised as a result of the peace agreement signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Eritrea and Djibouti

Great Lakes and Central Africa

Burundi	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition grouped in the National Council for the Respect of the Peace Agreement and the Reconciliation of Burundi and the Restoration of the Rule of Law (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.

The peace process promoted by the East African Community (EAC) remained deadlocked and the atmosphere of violence that has characterised the situation in the country for over four years persisted. The year 2018 was marked by preparations for the referendum to reform the Constitution, held in May, and attempts to restart negotiations between the parties. In January, 23 civil society organisations launched the "Teshwa Ute" ("Stop") campaign against the referendum. In March, the opposition coalition in exile CNARED⁶ created the platform Forum Citoyen with activists and journalists to block the referendum in Belgium. On 18 March, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced the constitutional referendum for 17 May, which would open the door for him to run until 2034 and extend the term of office of the presidency from five to seven years. He won with 73% of the vote in a campaign marked by government repression and intimidation towards voters opposed to the referendum, the criminalisation of abstention (punishable by three years in prison) and the opposition coalition CNARED's call for a boycott. The day passed without incident, although the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi denounced pressure and threats from security agencies and pro-government groups such as the youth wing of the

5. See the summary on Eritrea and Djibouti in this chapter.

6. The CNARED is made up of 22 parties and opposition political movements. It is led by Jean Minani, who has served as president of the National Assembly twice and leader of the FRODEBU party.

CNDD-FDD government party, the Imbonerakure. France and the United States condemned the atmosphere of repression. Days before the referendum, an attack against police families in the northwestern province of Cibitoke killed 26 people. The government blamed the attack on “terrorists from the DRC”. However, on 7 June, during the ceremony to proclaim the new Constitution approved by the referendum, Nkurunziza announced that he would not run in the 2020 elections. This news was welcomed in the United States and Belgium, which then called for better governance and for opening the political sphere.

In this context, **regional initiatives to promote an inclusive political dialogue failed**. The president postponed holding a new round of talks until after the referendum, so after the new Constitution was proclaimed in June, the EAC facilitator sent his team to consult with the government, the political parties, the external opposition coalition, civil society organisations, youth organisations, women’s groups, religious groups and the media to discuss the fifth round and its programme. The fourth round, held between 28 November and 8 December 2017, was boycotted by the opposition coalition in exile CNARED. In August 2018, the government promoted a meeting in Kayanza with the different pro-government and opposition parties to prepare the way for the 2020 elections. The opposition was divided between those who participated in the meeting but did not sign the agreement, known as the Kayanza Road Map 2018 (as the case of Sahwanya-FRODEBU and the National Alliance for Change, RANAC), and other opponents who did not attend the meeting (Amizero y’Abarundi, led by the historical leader of the FNL rebellion, Agathon Rwasa), who denigrated the event as a way to hollow out the inter-Burundian talks promoted by the EAC. On 9 August, the UN Secretary-General’s special representative in Burundi, Michel Kafando, asked the UN Security Council to pressure all parties to participate in the negotiating process promoted by the EAC. Representatives of the mediation team of the EAC met in Bujumbura with government and opposition representatives on 16-17 August. The government announced that it would participate in the fifth session promoted by the EAC, provided that it was the last. The CNDD-FDD noted that the Kayanza Road Map 2018 should serve as a basis for dialogue and called for the process to be moved to Burundi, instead of being held outside the country. The mediation team also met with Amizero y’Abarundi and other opposition political parties, which stressed that there were several unresolved issues in the proposed programme that should be discussed during the negotiations, including the reconfiguration of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the creation of an agreed road map with a hybrid mechanism for strictly monitoring its implementation.

It was agreed to hold the fifth round of dialogue in Kampala in September, then the EAC met with

the opposition coalition CNARED between 5 and 7 September in Brussels. CNARED and internal opposition representatives met in Entebbe (Uganda) between 21 and 23 September to reach common ground ahead of the fifth round that finally came to an end on 25 to 29 October. The mediating team thought that there was a basis for negotiations, although the government made some objections and excuses for postponing the start of the session. In addition to the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the death of former President Ndadaye and the mourning period that was extended for the entire month, government representatives also objected that certain preconditions had not been met, namely that the fifth session was supposed to be focused exclusively on the Kayanza Road Map 2018 (conditions surrounding the 2020 elections) and that the list of participants had to be made public prior to the session. The facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue held talks with civil society organisations, including women’s, youth, media and religious groups between 20 and 22 October. On 25 October, the facilitator formally began the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue in Arusha (Tanzania). The government, the ruling party and its allied parties were absent, arguing that they would not participate in a meeting that included people responsible for the failed coup d’état in 2015. The session, which ended on 29 October, was attended by 41 representatives of political parties and political actors from inside and outside Burundi, including two former heads of state and six women prominent in politics and civil society. The AU repeated its support for the EAC and the EU extended its sanctions against government representatives, arguing that they lacked the political will to resolve the dispute. The facilitator closed the session on 29 October. In his concluding remarks, he stressed that the time had come to re-evaluate his role and the facilitation process as a whole and announced that he would present a summary of the minimum issues of the different road maps presented in preparation for the fifth round.

Regional initiatives to promote an inclusive political dialogue in Burundi failed in 2018

At the end of the year, uncertainty regarding the peace process increased after the government issued international arrest warrants against former President Pierre Buyoya (1987-1993 and 1996-2005) and 16 of his collaborators (11 military and five civilians) for their alleged participation in the assassination of former President Melchior Ndadaye in 1993, the first democratically elected president, which led to the start of a period of violence in which some 300,000 people lost their lives. Buyoya, who currently works in the African Union, said that the arrest warrants were politically motivated and could plunge the country into a spiral of ethnic violence. The AU issued a statement urging Pierre Nzukuriza’s government not to begin political and judicial actions that could jeopardise peacebuilding efforts in the country. The government urged the AU not to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. A few days later, in December, the government announced

the closure of the United Nations Rights Office. Relations between the Burundian government and the UN had been strained by the UN's complaints about human rights violations during the crises generated by Nzukuriza's decision to stand for re-election for a third term in 2015, as well as Burundi's recent decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court.

Gender, peace and security

Since January 2015, UN Women has supported the creation of a network of women that, together with local authorities and civil society, has helped to strengthen effective female participation in local and nationwide mediation initiatives. **This network, known as Abakanguriramahoro (Women Network for Peace and Dialogue), has 534 mediators belonging to more than 200 civil society organisations working in the 129 municipalities of the country.** This network has helped to resolve thousands of local conflicts, but since the escalation of violence in April 2015, it has started and participated in dialogue initiatives in all the provinces of the country with political parties, security agencies and civil society, making it an even more important actor.

CAR	
Negotiating actors	Government, armed groups belonging to the former Seleka Coalition, Antibalaka militias
Third parties	The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation (AU and ECCAS, with the support of the UN, ICGLR, Angola, Gabon, the Rep. of the Congo and Chad), Community of Sant Egidio, ACCORD, International Support Group (UN, EU, among others), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Russia, Sudan
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 various regional initiatives have come together in a single negotiating framework, the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation launched in late 2016, under the auspices of the AU and ECCAS with the support of the UN, which established the Libreville Roadmap in July 2017.

The situation remained marked by the persistence of violence and clashes in different parts of the country while attempts to facilitate dialogue initiatives competed with each other and did not bear fruit. In October the UN Secretary-General stated that although the African Union's Peace Initiative was the fundamental framework for peace in the country, it had been unable to resolve the causes of the conflict and the state still had serious difficulties in increasing its capacity and presence in the country, which remained in the hands of the armed groups. The implementation of the Peace Initiative took time and lacks the necessary resources, according to the UN. Despite the arms embargo and the ban established under the Kimberley Process, armed groups continued to profit from illegally exploiting natural resources, levying taxes at illegal checkpoints and trafficking weapons.

One year after the Libreville Roadmap was approved in July 2017, the facilitators of the Peace Initiative met with the 14 main armed groups. In August, a meeting was held in Bouar in which the facilitators helped to harmonise the armed groups' demands, which were then submitted to President Touadéra for examination by the government, which should serve as the basis for preparing for the talks between the government and armed groups initially planned for November 2018. The facilitators also met with two former heads of state in exile, François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, the Community of Sant'Egidio and the South African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), in July the Peace Initiative organised training sessions to prepare the armed groups, government representatives and political and social leaders for direct negotiations. UN Women and UNDP organised workshops and seminars to promote the participation of women and youth. Nonetheless, civil society, members of Parliament and other national actors criticised the peace initiative's apparent lack of inclusiveness by limiting the negotiations to the 14 armed groups, which could influence popular support. Concern was also expressed about the inconsistency between regional, national and local initiatives and about the failure to raise the interests of civilians and victims as a central issue in the talks.

Although the UN Secretary-General himself called for all mediation initiatives to be closely coordinated with the Peace Initiative to strengthen the peace process, Russia and Sudan facilitated parallel spaces for dialogue, which may finally enter in competition with the Peace Initiative. At the end of the year, the partial arms embargo on

the country remained active, despite the Central African president's requests that it be lifted, and Russia, which is exempt from the UN Security Council's ban and may ship weapons to the country, stepped up its role. Moscow established military and economic cooperation agreements with the government and proposed to mediate between the armed groups. In late September the UN Secretary-General's special representative for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, said that the country's need to strengthen security and acquire weapons was essential and undeniable, but he also stressed that it was key that this process be conducted in a transparent and orderly manner, so he asked the different actors for diplomatic consistency (in reference to Russia, China and the United States). On 28 August, a meeting with the three main ex-Séléka factions and an anti-balaka faction was held in Khartoum with the support of Russia, in continuation of another meeting held in Khartoum previously, on 10 July. The second meeting culminated in a declaration in which the armed factions committed to support peace and dialogue under the African Union's Peace Initiative. Russia informed the Central African MPs of the conclusions of the meetings held in Khartoum. This initiative in Khartoum aroused misgivings because it opened a parallel and uncoordinated dialogue process. The special representative said that peace initiatives should be coordinated because otherwise there was a risk of generating a cacophony of messages. On 28 September, Sudan announced that the AU had adopted the Sudanese peace initiative at a meeting held outside the UN General Assembly. However, both mediation processes continued in parallel, one led by the AU and the other led by Russia and Sudan. In this context, French Foreign Minister Le Drian visited Bangui in early November and encouraged President Touadéra to get involved in the AU-led Peace Initiative instead of the Russian-Sudanese track, and pledged economic and military support to the Central African government. France voiced concern at the growing Russian presence in the country with the support of the Sudanese government. On 12 November, a coalition of political parties and civil society groups signed a memorandum requesting that the AU-led dialogue be more inclusive. The expansion of MINUSCA's mandate was delayed for a month in November due to the reservations of different UN Security Council countries, such as the United States and Russia. In mid-December, with China and Russia abstaining, the UN Security Council finally extended MINUSCA's mandate until the end of 2019. The peacekeeping force has 11,650 troops and 2,080 police officers.

Uncertainty about the future of the peace process grew in mid-December after two anti-balaka groups withdrew from the national disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration plan due to the arrest of Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona. Detained at the request of the International Criminal Court, he is accused of committing war crimes

The emergence of new mediating actors that are not coordinated with the AU-led multilateral initiative, such as the Russian-Sudanese route in the CAR peace process, may make the mediation effort fail

and crimes against humanity between September 2013 and December 2014. Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona was one of the top leaders of the anti-balaka militias and the president of the national soccer federation, as well as a former minister. His arrest, which sparked numerous protests, came shortly after the detention of Alfred Yekatom, an anti-balaka commander, who was deported to The Hague in November. Organisations like Amnesty International and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) supported these arrests because they believe that they help to end impunity, but the FIDH also urged the International Criminal Court to act against leaders of the Séléka coalition.

DRC	
Negotiating actors	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
Third parties	Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO), Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, Support Group for the Facilitation of the National Dialogue on the DRC led by the AU, SADC, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), EU, UN, International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), 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 National Transition Government (NTG) integrating the previous Government, the political opposition and the main insurgent actors, in an agreement to share political power. Since 2003, the NTG was led by President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents, two of whom from the former insurgency. The NTG 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 agreement stipulated that elections must be held in 2017, they were finally postponed until December 2018.

The year 2018 was focused on preparations to hold the elections in December, amidst a climate of political violence and insurgent activity in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu (east) and in the central Kasai region, as well as the tension resulting from the Ebola outbreak in the eastern province of North Kivu. The fragility of the opposition, divided by a leadership vacuum following the death in early 2017 of historical opposition leader Étienne Tshisekedi, the head of the opposition party UDPS, affected the implementation of the peace agreement. Moreover, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) declared that holding the elections in 2017 would be impossible and published a new election schedule in November 2017. Though rejected by the opposition and triggering large demonstrations, in the end the UN Security Council validated this new schedule, which provided for holding national presidential and legislative and provincial elections on 23 December 2018 and for appointing the president in January 2019, more than a year after what was stipulated in the agreement of 31 December 2016. The government justified the delay in the elections due to the security situation and the logistical and technical difficulties.

The entire year was rife with disputes between the presidential majority and the opposition around the preparations for the elections. It was not until August 9, the deadline for submitting candidacies for president, that government spokesman Lambert Mende announced that Joseph Kabila would comply with the two-term limit established by the Constitution and would not run in the December elections, adding that the candidate of the ruling coalition led by Kabila would be former Interior Minister Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, thereby keeping the promise made to the Episcopal Conference (CENCO), which had facilitated the process that led to the agreement of 31 December 2016. Kabila had kept everyone in suspense about his candidacy until the last moment. Many local actors and countries and organisations of the international community welcomed Kabila's decision, but stressed the need to resolve various outstanding issues to ensure that free and transparent elections could be held. In September, the CENI published the list of candidates for the presidential election following the review of appeals by the Constitutional Court, which rejected the candidacies of important leaders such as Jean-Pierre Bemba, Adolphe Muzito, Antoine Gizenga and Moïse Katumbi, provoking

various demonstrations in protest. There was only one female candidate, Marie-Josée Ifoku, the former vice-governor of Tshuapa province, who had belonged to the Alliance of the Presidential Majority. In March, a meeting was held between the CENI and female leaders of all political persuasions in which they demanded a transparent electoral process and asked the CENI to facilitate female participation in the elections.

On 8 June, the International Criminal Court acquitted Bemba. He had been arrested in 2008 and sentenced in 2016 to 18 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity. He had appealed his sentence and was acquitted by the ICC in mid-2018, arguing that he could not be held responsible for many of the crimes committed by his armed group in the CAR, clearing the way for his candidacy to be president. Bemba returned to the DRC on 1 August. In October, a delegation from the UN Security Council visited the country and met with different political and social actors who voiced concern about the growing tension around the elections. The Security Council called for agreement on the electronic voting machines and voter lists, which caused demonstrations and protests throughout the year. Several meetings took place in 2018 to try to set up a single opposition candidate. Seven opposition platforms met in South Africa to designate a candidate in late October and seven opposition candidates created the Lamuka coalition on 11 November, harshly criticising the voting machines and voter registration and agreeing that if the coalition won, they would hold elections within two years so that Moïse Katumbi and Jean-Pierre Bemba could run, two main opponents excluded from the upcoming elections. However, two days later Felix Tshisekedi and later Vital Kamerhe backed out of the agreement under pressure from their bases. They agreed to an alliance between their parties and the appointment of Tshisekedi as a candidate on 23 November, in Nairobi.

Finally the presidential, legislative and regional elections were held on 30 December, a week later than planned (23 December) because a fire destroyed around 8,000 electronic counting machines stored in a local electoral commission. After several days in which some governments and international organisations pressured the CENI to publish the results of the elections, finally on 10 February it declared Felix Tshisekedi (38.57%) the winner, followed by Martin Fayulu (34.83%) and the ruling party candidate Emanuel Ramazani Shadary (23.84%), with a turnout of 47.5%. The CENI also announced the results of the legislative and local elections, in which the parties supporting former President Kabila won an overwhelming majority. Both Tshisekedi and Kabila accepted the results, but Martin Faluyu filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court alleging electoral fraud and claiming that he would have received 62% of the votes and Tshisekedi 18%, according to his estimates and those of the Catholic Church. The Church, which deployed 40,000 electoral observers, publicly stated that the official

results did not coincide with their own conclusions. According to some media outlets, diplomatic sources have confirmed that most international observations, including those of the AU and SADC, would have given Faluyu the victory. Some governments also questioned the official results. Faluyu demanded from the Constitutional Court a manual recount of the votes of all three elections, which replied that there were two options: accepting the official results or cancelling the elections. The CENI said that the inauguration of the new president was scheduled for 22 January. Regarding the protests sparked by the situation that caused the death of several people, both the United Nations and the AU appealed to the parties not to commit or incite violence.

In July, the Congolese justice system lifted the arrest warrant against Pastor Ntoumi, a key step for implementing the Kinkala Agreement

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 remains 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, which culminated with the signing of a peace agreement in late 2017.

Implementation of the peace agreement reached in 2017 in the Republic of the Congo was slow during the year.

On 23 December 2017, representatives of the government and of Pastor Ntoumi's political and military movement reached the Kinkala Agreement. According to the agreement, Ntoumi was expected to facilitate the disarmament of his combatants and restore state authority in the southern Pool region, while the government was supposed to guarantee the disarmament, demobilisation and social and economic reintegration of the former combatants, as well as the resettlement of the population displaced by the violence in the area and the freedom of movement. A joint commission was created to monitor implementation of the agreement, which submitted its recommendations to the government on 22 January 22, stating that it was necessary to begin collecting weapons in the Pool region, restoring the authorities in the region and guaranteeing Ntoumi's freedom, since there has been a warrant out for his arrest since 2016. In March a court was supposed to consider lifting the arrest warrant against Ntoumi, though the issue was not resolved until July. On 28 July, a ruling was announced invalidating the arrest warrant for Pastor Ntoumi and two of his lieutenants, Gozardio and Elie Malanda.⁷ Previously, on 26 June, the government had released 80 people linked to the Ntoumi movement, most of them former combatants of the Ninjas militias, in compliance with the Kinkala Agreement. The disarmament process officially began on 7 August and Ntoumi called on his followers to disarm on August 22.

South Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government (SPLM), SPLM / A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and several minor groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD, among others)
Third parties	IGAD Plus: IGAD (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 and UN; South Sudan Council of Churches
Relevant agreements	Peace Agreement (2015), Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (2017), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (2018)

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 agreement 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

7. Congo-Site, "Congo: arrêt des poursuites judiciaires contre Ntumi", *Congo-Site*, 31 July 2018.

the territory, livestock and political power, as well as by neo-patrimonial 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 SPL/A-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, as well as other later agreements.

Clashes between both sides persisted throughout the year in systematic violation of the agreement reached in December 2017, while meetings were promoted mainly by the regional organisation IGAD to try to revitalise the peace process between the South Sudanese government and the different warring factions, with the threat of new sanctions on both sides for breaching the December ceasefire agreement. A new round of negotiations was held between the parties between 5 and 16 February, though no agreement was reached. In March, the IGAD planned to hold a new round on 26 April, which was postponed until May due to the parties' lack of will. On 17 May, the third round of talks was held between the signatories of the 2015 peace agreement, known as the High Level Revitalisation Forum, mediated by the South Sudan Council of Churches under the auspices of the IGAD, though no progress was made. The government of Salva Kiir and the SPLM/A-IO led by Riek Machar held several meetings facilitated by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to try to find common ground. On 27 June, a framework agreement was signed in Khartoum that included implementation of the ceasefire as of 30 June. This led to agreement on new measures on 25 July and a more comprehensive agreement was reached (first agreements concerning power-sharing within the government). These previous agreements opened the door to the signing of a global agreement in August. However, these preliminary agreements were made amidst several violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement. At the behest of the United States, on 31 May the UN Security Council agreed to extend the sanctions given the parties' history of non-compliance.

On 5 August, the main parties to the conflict, the South Sudanese government of Salva Kiir and the SPLM/A-IO led by Riek Machar, as well as a series of smaller

groups (SSOA, SPLM-FD and others), reached a peace agreement in Khartoum in a ceremony attended by the presidents of Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti, Uganda, the prime minister of Somalia and the deputy prime minister of Ethiopia, as well as representatives from other countries and the international community. The power-sharing agreement states that Salva Kiir will remain as president and that Riek Machar will be its first vice president, and four other vice presidents will be appointed to support them. There will also be power-sharing in the transitional government (it will have 35 ministers, 20 for Kiir's faction and nine for Machar's faction), in Parliament (with 550 MPs, 332 for Kiir's faction and 128 for Machar's faction) and at other levels of the central government. Thus, **the deal reached in August was ratified in a final agreement in September between President Salva Kiir and the rebel leader, former Vice President Riek Machar, who heads the SPLM/A-IO and the other parties to the conflict. Signed on 12 September in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and facilitated by the IGAD, the agreement is known as the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).** Different delegates present at the signing of the agreement hailed this new step towards the reconciliation of the key stakeholders of South Sudan, such as new Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, although other actors were sceptical due to both sides' history of violating the previous peace initiatives. However, the UN Secretary-General's special representative and head of UNMISS, David Shearer, called for caution, and the Troika (the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway) and the European Union expressed scepticism and announced that they would not provide new funds unless certain conditions were met, such as respect for the ceasefire agreement signed in December 2017. The R-ARCSS peace agreement establishes an eight-month pre-transition period that should take effect in May 2019, which is when the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity will be launched. This coalition government will involve all actors and have a mandate for three years, after which elections will be held under the Constitution, which will have been revised during this period.

According to several analysts, this ambitious schedule required the immediate establishment of the National Pre-Transitional Committee on 26 September and the Independent Border Commission, which will establish new state administrative divisions and borders for the states, one of the major obstacles that weakened the previous agreement. This issue was probably the most controversial issue in the peace talks, which the mediators hoped to dispel by stipulating that it would be resolved through a referendum before the new government takes office if the parties fail to reach an agreement in time.

The agreement also stipulated various measures to foster the cessation of hostilities, including the quartering of all the armed actors in locations agreed on within 30 days

The peace agreement reached in the conflict in South Sudan was accompanied by a climate of scepticism given the mistrust between the parties and the violation of previous agreements

and an immediate halt to all training and recruitment activity. The agreement also establishes a hybrid tribunal and the creation, training, financing and deployment of an expanded military unit, the Regional Protection Force (RPF). In addition, it includes the establishment of a ceasefire verification mechanism (Revitalised Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism – RCTSAMVM) and a joint monitoring and evaluation committee before the formation of the government in May. Although the IGAD insisted that all actors were involved in the agreement, Salva Kiir's former chief of staff, Paul Malong Awan, did not participate and represented a threat from the western area he controls, populated by the Dinka community of the northern state of Bahr al-Ghazal. Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLM/A-IO, said that he fully accepted the agreement, though he had some reservations regarding some issues, such as the number of states, the mechanism of constitutional review and governance-related matters. President Salva Kiir suggested that the parties return to the capital, Juba, as a mechanism for building trust, but the SPLM/A-IO spokesperson rejected the offer, saying that they would return once the RPF force was deployed, which would facilitate access to humanitarian aid and the beginning of a national reconciliation process. After the agreement in September, envoy David Shearer remarked that it was necessary to strengthen trust between the parties and the clear political will to try to put an end to the violence. In this vein, a new study by the USIP placed the total number of deaths in the conflict at 382,900, and Amnesty International said that there was evidence that war crimes had been committed. In mid-November the under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, stressed that the UN would support the deployment of a regional mission led by the IGAD countries as part of implementation of the peace agreement, but stressed that the current mission in the country, UNMISS, needed an extra contingent of troops to pursue its mandate. The IGAD urged the South Sudanese government to devote more resources to implementing the peace agreement and directed its special envoy to contact the parties that had not signed the September agreement. Meanwhile, clashes took place between parties that had not signed the R-ARCSS agreement, such as the National Salvation Front (NSF) and the SPLM/A-IO. The ceasefire between the parties that signed the agreement was also violated later on.

The peace negotiations between the Sudanese government and the country's opposition and rebel groups were resumed under the National Dialogue after two years without progress

Sudan	
Negotiating actors	Government of Sudan, the opposition coalition "Sudan Call" formed by national opposition parties and 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 negotiations conducted under the Sudanese National Dialogue and the road map agreed in March 2016 were resumed at the end of the year, though they did not make any significant progress.

On 17 October, after months without negotiations between the parties, the Sudanese government representative, Faisal Ibrahim, announced Khartoum's readiness to resume dialogue with the political opposition and the rebels, represented by the Sudan Call coalition, based on the road map signed in 2016. The announcement was possible thanks to the mediation of Thabo Mbeki, the head of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP),⁸ who managed to reopen the dialogue. Thus, from 9 to 13 December, a new round of talks was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, involving the Sudanese government and representatives of the Sudan Call coalition, including delegates from the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) and the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi (SLM-MN) and the SPLM-N factions led by Al-Hilu and Agar. The round of talks was mediated by the AUHIP and attended by representatives of the international community, including the so-called "Troika" (the United Kingdom, Norway and the United States), as well as France, Qatar and the UN. The meeting was called for two reasons: first, to discuss returning to the 2016 road map, which had been signed by the Sudanese government, the SPLM-N, the JEM, the SLM-MM and the opposition Sudan Call, chaired by El Sadig El Mahdi; and second, to get more parties to sign it that have not already. The Sudanese government's resumption of dialogue was interpreted as a step forward in the context of US pressure to remove it from the list of states that

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

support terrorism. To this end, the US State Department asked the Sudanese government for progress in six areas, which included expanding its efforts in the fight against terrorism, the ceasefire with the rebels and joint efforts to restart the peace talks. However, on 13 December the round of negotiations ended without agreements. The AUHIP stated that it would meet soon with the NUP, JEM and SLM-MM, while excluding groups that had not signed the road map, including the SCP and the warring factions of the SPLM-N.

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, Germany, Qatar, USA, United Kingdom, France
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.

Progress was made in the peace negotiations during the year and the respective unilateral cessations of hostilities signed by the government and several rebel groups were upheld, concentrating tension in the Jebel Marra region. In mid-April, the first peace talks of the year took place in Berlin under German mediation between the two main Darfuri rebel groups –the Sudan Liberation Movement, led by Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)– and the Sudanese government, though they were unable to agree on a framework for future talks. However, after various meetings and several rounds of negotiations and informal consultations that took place during the year, **a pre-negotiation agreement was signed in Berlin on 6 December to later initiate substantive negotiations in Doha between all three parties could begin.** The agreement, which paves the way for broader peace negotiations, was made possible by the mediation of the German foreign

The Sudanese government and Darfuri rebel groups signed a preliminary agreement to begin peace talks and return to the Doha road map

ministry and the participation of the United Nations and the African Union through the UNAMID mission, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Norway, Qatar and the German Barkov Foundation. The agreement stipulated that future Doha negotiations between the Sudanese government and the two signatory rebel groups will be resumed on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) signed in 2006. The parties pledged to discuss all issues that the two rebel movements consider necessary to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable peace in Darfur and to establish mechanisms to facilitate implementation of the agreements.

The government and rebels also took various steps to reduce violence during the year, especially during the unilateral cessation of hostilities. Thus, on 7 May the rebel movements SLM-MM and JEM extended the unilateral ceasefire for three months. The same groups and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC) later extended it again until the end of the year. Khartoum upheld a unilateral ceasefire during the first half of the year, then on 12 July announced that it would extend it in Darfur and regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile until the end of the year. The most critical episode during the period was due to **tension and violent clashes in the Jebel Marra region** between SLA rebel forces led by Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW) –which is not participating in peace negotiations– and government forces, mainly the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia. Faced with this situation, which remained this way throughout the year, the UN Security Council urged all parties to adhere to the unilateral cessation of hostilities and allow humanitarian access to populations at risk, due to the deterioration of the situation of security in the region.

In October, Salah al-Tayeb, the commissioner in charge of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme, reported that 3,700 combatants had demobilised in the state of West Darfur. Al-Tayeb also reported that the illicit weapons collection program will continue its work in all states. According to official data, around 30,000 weapons out of the estimated 700,000 have been collected in the five states of Darfur since the voluntary process began in August.

Progress was made in reconfiguring the **hybrid United Nations-African Union mission in Darfur (UNAMID)** in 2018, as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 2429 (2018). It reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to the transition to peace and development in Darfur, transforming its peacekeeping mission into one of peace and development. Some questioned the UN Security Council’s decision to reduce the peace mission, including MPs from the United Kingdom, who demanded a clear plan to leave the mission to prevent a resurgence of

violence. The mission transferred different bases to the Sudanese government during the year, in accordance with Resolutions 2363 (2017) and 2429 (2018), while strengthening its presence in Jebel Marra due to the deteriorating security situation.

Finally, tribes native to the East Darfur region, the **Rizeigat and Maaliya**, which had clashed violently in mid-July, causing several deaths that led to the arrest and imprisonment of 22 community leaders and another 73 other members of the communities, signed a declaration of peaceful coexistence at the end of the year. They pledged to promote stability and security in East Darfur through a commitment to comprehensive peace and peaceful coexistence throughout the state. The agreement was signed at the Presidential Palace in Khartoum, in the presence of Vice President Dr. Osman Kibir and community leaders Nazir Mahmoud Madibbo (Rizeigat) and Nazir Mohamed El Safi (Maaliya).

Gender, peace and security

In late March, UNAMID's Gender Advisory Unit (GAU) hosted the Worldwide **Open Day on UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**. The event took place in El Fasher, North Darfur, and involved around 100 women from five states of Darfur, including state government representatives, MPs, civil society organisations and internally displaced persons. Entitled "Women Count for Peace", the event addressed the implementation of UNSCR Resolution 1325 in the conflict in Darfur, analysing achievements and challenges to increasing women's participation in decision-making, reconciliation and peace process mechanisms. The participants called for the creation of a women's forum to monitor the implementation of peace agreements in their communities and Gender Consultative Units in the five states of Darfur. They also demanded approval of the national action plan to implement Resolution 1325 and laws against female genital mutilation and early marriage.

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 progressed timidly through different bilateral meetings that made no significant progress in building the agenda for the negotiations.

The year began with the Sudanese government's declaration of a six-month state of emergency in the state of Kassala (South Kordofan) for the purpose of supporting the disarmament campaign in the area. At the end of January, the SPLM-N faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu (a result of the splintering of the rebels during 2017),⁹ announced a four-month extension of the unilateral ceasefire it had upheld since the previous year. This led to the resumption of peace talks between the government and the faction led by al-Hilu in Ethiopia in early February, as agreed in late 2017, thereby restarting the negotiations that had been deadlocked since October 2016. The other SPLM-N faction, led by Malik Agar, was excluded from these negotiations due to its inability to implement any possible agreements. The talks failed to secure the cessation of hostilities agreements and humanitarian access to the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile). In relation to the first, on 12 July the Sudanese government again extended the unilateral ceasefire in the Two Areas and the state of Darfur until the end of the year. Regarding humanitarian access, in late September President Omar al-Bashir accepted the UN's proposal to deliver aid to the areas affected by the conflict.

Then, in October the SPLM-N rebels led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu and the Sudanese government were invited to a round of consultative talks mediated by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in Addis Ababa and Johannesburg. During the talks, the AUHIP and Khartoum suggested that they agree on three working documents: the draft framework agreement of 2014, the draft agreement on the cessation of hostilities on humanitarian grounds and the 2016 Road Map. The Sudanese government proposed not discussing issues included in the National Dialogue, since the SPLM-N had not participated in it. Difficulties arose when prioritising the agenda, since the rebels wanted to discuss political issues first, followed by the humanitarian issue and security and ceasefire agreements. Due to lack of agreement, AUHIP proposed that both parties continue with the bilateral consultative meetings until a minimum common ground could be reached in the negotiating agenda, so the meetings were cancelled without any significant progress. In late November, the SPLM-N faction headed by al-Hilu announced that it

9. For more details, see the summary on Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2018! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2018.

was extending its unilateral cease of hostilities until the end of the year to continue supporting the negotiations.

Gender, peace and security

Different civil society women's organisations in South Kordofan, like the Collaborative for Peace of Sudan, promoted the creation of "peace committees" during the year to facilitate mediation between the communities and ethnic groups and uphold local peace agreements. The initiative also aims to include women in peace negotiations and mediation for conflict resolution.

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.

Relations between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan improved during the year with the reopening of bilateral meetings on border delimitations and the normalisation of relations, as well as the signing of a new peace agreement in South Sudan staged in Sudan.

In March, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan resumed talks on the border demarcation still pending between the two countries, which affects Abyei, the Mile 14 area, Joudat Al-Fakhar, Jebel al-Migainais, Kaka and the enclave of Kafia Kingi. This meeting was held under the conditions established in late 2017 by the UN Security Council, which had renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and extended its support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) on the

condition that the parties take specific steps before 15 March, which included holding at least one meeting to resume discussions on border demarcation. As a result of the resumption of the talks, the UN Security Council again extended its support to the JBVMM (until 15 October) and to the UNISFA (until 15 November) on the condition that both parties achieve measurable progress in delimiting the border, guarantee full freedom of movement for the UNISFA and within the so-called Safe Demilitarised Border Zone (SDBZ) from which both countries must withdraw, begin the first phase to open border crossings and reactivate the specific committee on the disputed Mile 14 area.

In the middle of the year, another gesture was made to improve the relationship between both countries with the signing of the new agreement of principles to consolidate peace in South Sudan (Khartoum Declaration of Agreement)¹⁰ between the South Sudanese government and the main opposition groups in the county. Signed in Khartoum on 27 by President Omar al-Bashir, the agreement not only contained clauses for peace in South Sudan, but also others seeking to pave the way for economic integration and normality between both countries. In addition to other issues, they agreed to resume repairing the damaged oil facilities in the Unity region (Blocks 1, 2, 4 and 5) through collaboration between both governments. As a result of the agreement, both governments agreed to reopen different border crossings to facilitate trade, resuming the agreement they had reached in March. Due to the progress in the negotiations, at the end of the year the UN Security Council again agreed to extend the UNISFA mission and its support to the JBVMM, though it continued to link its renewal in the future to real progress in continuing the measures already established.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in November the UNISFA held an internal workshop aimed at military, police and civil service personnel on gender parity in order to raise awareness about incorporating and integrating a gender perspective in all mission operations.

Maghreb – North Africa

Libya	
Negotiating actors	Presidential Council and Government of National Agreement (GAN), House of Representatives (CdR), National General Congress (CGN)
Third parties	Quartet (UN, Arab League, AU, EU), Italy, France
Relevant agreements	Libyan Political Agreement or Skhirat Agreement (2015)

10. See the summary on South Sudan in this chapter.

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 October 2017, the United Nations submitted a new plan to start the political transition and facilitate implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

Amidst persistent violence in Libya, **there were difficulties in implementing the plan proposed by the UN in 2017 to reactivate the political process in the North African country** throughout 2018. Similarly to what happened in previous years, the disagreements between the main political and military actors that control different areas of the country paralysed its implementation and eventually delayed the whole process. At the end of the year, in fact, a new timetable was reported that postpones some of the decisive aspects of the UN plan until 2019. Promoted by the new UN special envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salamé, and announced in October of 2017, this plan rested on three main points. The first was to facilitate a deal to make some changes to the Libyan Political Agreement, signed in 2015, which theoretically should frame the transition in the country and end the different poles of power that have arisen there after the fall of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. The second key aspect of the plan was to convene a national conference to guide the transition process. The third point was to hold elections. In addition, the UN said that it intended to strengthen Libyan institutions, involve armed groups in the process and promote local and national reconciliation. Various initiatives were promoted to try to advance this agenda during the year, but the central aspects of the plan faced major problems in implementation. **Part of the difficulties were related to internal power struggles and the positioning of some of the most significant actors in Libya.** This included General Khalifa Haftar, who earlier this year declared that Libya was not ready for democracy and that he would not hesitate to take action if the UN-driven process failed. In this context, despite the fact that meetings were held, no agreement was reached on the changes that should have been made to the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015.

During 2018, the disagreements between the main political and military actors of Libya paralysed implementation of the agreements and ended up delaying the whole process

One issue in which the differences between different Libyan actors were evident, leading to much deadlock, was the new Constitution for the country, which according to plan must be endorsed by a popular vote. As part of the Libyan Political Agreement, the body responsible for drafting the new Constitution, the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) approved a draft in July 2017, but the validity of the vote was questioned and legally challenged. In February 2018, the Libyan Supreme Court ruled in favour of the draft and removed the obstacles to holding a constitutional referendum, followed by presidential and parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, members of the House of Representatives (HoR), the legislative body located in the eastern part of the country (Tobruk), rejected the CDA's draft and argued for the creation of a committee of experts to amend the Libyan Constitution of 1951. The CDA then met with various Libyan actors to promote holding the constitutional referendum. Meanwhile, the HoR initiated discussions on the legislation necessary to hold the referendum, but did not approve it in the months that followed.

Progress was made in some technical aspects of the preparations for the elections, such as updating the voter registry, which ended in March and listed more than one million people. In May, as part of a summit on Libya promoted by France, a commitment was made to hold the legislative and presidential elections on 10 December 2018. The Paris Conference brought together four of Libya's main political and military actors –Prime Minister, Fayez al-Sarraj; the spokesman of the HoR, Agila Saleh; the president of the High State Council, Khaled al-Meshri; and General Haftar, the leader of the Libyan National Army (LNA)– who pledged to ensure a safe environment for the elections, respect the results of the vote and recognise the importance of developing a constitutional basis for the elections. Although a verbal commitment was made to develop the legal framework for the elections before the end of September, there was no significant progress in this area. Regarding the national conference, another pillar of the plan promoted by the UN, a series of preparatory meetings were held during the year and in February the UN special envoy charged the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue with coordinating the public consultation phase. In November, the organisation released a report with the main conclusions of the process, which should serve as a starting point for the national conference.¹¹ The UN also supported local reconciliation in different parts of the country throughout the year, including between tribes. These community-level initiatives led to some reconciliation agreements in the southern and western parts of the country. **There were also several ceasefire agreements between different armed actors**

11. The Libyan National Conference Process. Final Report, November 2018.

throughout the year, which developed differently, some of them facilitated by the UN. These included one signed by several armed groups in Tripoli after an escalation of violence in late August that led to the creation of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism. Still, security in the Libyan capital remained highly fragile in the months that followed.

A new high-level international conference on Libya took place in November 2018, this time driven by Italy, which tried to present itself as the main European player in the North African country. The meeting, which took place in Palermo, showed the persistent rivalries and differences between the various Libyan actors and the regional tensions projected onto the conflict. Thus, for example, Haftar hesitated to participate because he thought the Islamist and Western groups invited to the conference were overrepresented. The attendance of one of his main regional allies, the Egyptian president, was apparently decisive in ensuring his participation in the conference. Meanwhile, the Turkish representative decided to leave the conference after being excluded from a meeting. The conference in Palermo led to the first meeting between Haftar and al-Sarraj since May, where a modified road map of the UN plan was presented. According to the new timetable, the national conference would take place in early 2019, preferably on Libyan soil, while the elections would be held sometime between late March and late June. According to reports, members of the HoR close to Haftar called for the UN special envoy to be removed from office after Salamé said that parts of the HoR were resistant to holding elections and were obstructing the political process in Libya.

Gender, peace and security

The UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has a section (Women’s Empowerment Section) that aims to promote the participation of Libyan women in the formal delegations involved in peace efforts in the country, in line with UNSC Resolution 1325 and the mandate of the mission itself. The UN’s periodic reports on Libya and the activities of the UNSMIL provided information on some initiatives, such as female participation in dialogue and reconciliation activities and the creation of a forum of 14 women to review the draft Constitution from a gender perspective. However, throughout 2018, Libyan women criticised their exclusion from civic and public spaces, which has prevented integration of the narrative of female civil society activists into analysis on the root causes of the conflicts affecting the country.

Thus, for example, as part of the 39th meeting of the UN Human Rights Council, **the Libyan organisation Together We Build It drew attention to the frustrations over the effective inclusion of women in the consultation process promoted by the UN action plan for Libya** and made specific recommendations for their substantive inclusion. Likewise, a joint investigation conducted

by Cordaid, Human Security Collective and eight civil society organisations in Libya revealed the disconnect between the agenda discussed at the conference in Palermo and the Libyan population’s security concerns and need for justice, especially Libyan women. Their experiences have made it possible to draw conclusions on some issues that should have a much more central place in the negotiating agenda, such as strengthening the arms embargo, withdrawing the weapons of war, demobilising combatants and reforming the security sector, which places several different Libyan actors under civilian control. They also said that the need for better infrastructure, the prevention of sexual and gender violence and the struggle against impunity for crimes against women should also be priorities.

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 led 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 year 2018 ended with **relative expectations prior the reactivation of diplomatic channels to deal with the issue of Western Sahara, which at the end of the year led to talks in Geneva (Switzerland) between representatives of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front and delegations from Algeria and Mauritania as part of the process sponsored by the United Nations.** These meetings were considered the first step towards resuming the political dialogue on the future of the region after years of impasse, since the last direct talks between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front were held in March 2012, in Manhasset (USA). The actions launched to promote the negotiations took place amidst tension between the parties, which continued to trade

accusations during the year. Some of the sources of conflict were the issue of Guerguerat (the POLISARIO Front withdrew its representatives from the area in the first half of 2018) and differences in interpretation regarding implementation of the ceasefire.¹²

The direct talks in Geneva began to take shape following the appointment of Horst Köhler as the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy for Western Sahara in 2017. In October 2017, the German diplomat paid his first visit to the stakeholders and held meetings with other actors interested in resolving the dispute, such as the Group of Friends of Western Sahara. Considering that the existing atmosphere allowed him to act with "cautious optimism", in December 2017 the special envoy invited Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania to hold in-depth bilateral meetings. All the parties agreed to the proposal. Thus, throughout 2018 Köhler dedicated his time to furthering efforts to reactivate the negotiating process through new trips and meetings. In various statements, and also in its meetings with Köhler, Morocco insisted that the UN should be the only mediating party to the conflict and that it was opposed to the involvement of other organisations in the process, like the African Union.

In this context, the renewal of MINURSO's mandate in April gave rise to debates at the UN Security Council. **The United States promoted a modified resolution extending the mandate of the mission for only six months (and not one year, as had been regular practice), which was interpreted as a way to intensify the pressure on the parties to engage in direct negotiations** and end the persistent impasse. The decision was seen as a way to put pressure especially on Morocco, a supporter (with the support of France) of renewing the mandate for one year. Finally, the six-month suspended mandate was approved at the end of April (UN Security Council Resolution 2414) with 12 votes in favour and China, Russia and Ethiopia abstaining. MINURSO's mandate had already been shortened in the past (between 1998 and 2001, resolutions were passed that renewed its mandate for a period of between two and five months), which was also interpreted as a UN mechanism to exert pressure to the parties to resolve the conflict. However, Rabat did not want to give importance to the mission's abbreviated mandate and attributed it mainly to the United States' desire to review the costs of all the UN peacekeeping missions in the world. In fact, despite the shortening of MINURSO's mandate, some observers thought that the text of Resolution 2414 was more supportive of Moroccan interests, considering some of the terms used. The resolution demands progress towards a "realistic, viable and lasting" political solution, instead of a "fair, lasting and mutually acceptable" solution, as had been done in the past, including in the previous Resolution 2351 on Western Sahara that renewed MINURSO's mandate in April 2017. After the debates in the UN

Security Council, Köhler resumed his round of meetings with the main actors of the dispute, on his second trip to the region, between 23 June and 1 July. During this period, the senior official met in Rabouni with the secretary general of the POLISARIO Front, Brahim Ghali, and his negotiating team, who reiterated that as a gesture of good faith the organisation was permanently withdrawing its forces from Guerguerat.

Köhler also met with the Moroccan prime minister and foreign minister in Rabat, who insisted that Morocco's proposed autonomy in 2007 should be the basis for further negotiations. In respective meetings with senior officials in Algeria and Mauritania, both countries were willing to strengthen their role in the political process to seek a solution to the dispute, responding to the provisions of Resolution 2414, which calls for a greater contribution to the process by neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, Köhler held meetings with different significant actors to resolve the conflict. He then sent a formal invitation to Morocco, the POLISARIO Front, Algeria and Mauritania to discuss the steps to take for a peace process in Geneva in December. All the parties agreed to negotiations without preconditions and responded positively throughout October, a month in which a new UN Security Council Resolution (2440) was also approved, renewing MINURSO's mandate for another six months. Morocco welcomed the resolution recognising Algeria as an important actor in the process. Rabat has always sought to involve Algeria directly in the negotiations, a tendency that the POLISARIO Front has denounced as an attempt to delegitimise the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The Algerian government's position, meanwhile, has been to insist that it cannot be considered a "party" to the conflict and that it would not speak on the POLISARIO Front's behalf at the negotiating table. The king of Morocco insisted on this issue in his 9 November speech to mark the 43rd anniversary of the Green March, in which he stressed that his country was ready for direct and frank dialogue with Algeria to tackle the differences that have damaged relations between both nations in recent decades. The Algerian government reacted with relative scepticism, without giving an official response and appealing to the need to reinvigorate the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), an organisation created in 1989 and consisting of Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria and Morocco that is inactive due to the tension between the last two countries. Sources from the POLISARIO Front interpreted this Algerian response as a message to Morocco that the dialogue should be channelled into a space bringing together all the countries of the Maghreb.

Finally, the talks in Geneva took place on 5 and 6 December, with Morocco and the POLISARIO Front attending and with Algeria and Mauritania as observer countries. The Moroccan delegation was headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International

12. For further information on the tension around Western Sahara, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.

Cooperation Nasser Bourita and the POLISARIO Front was represented by Kathri Addouh. There was a woman in both delegations. Köhler stressed that the meeting was a first but important step towards reactivating the political negotiations and hailed the parties for upholding an attitude of mutual respect. No further details about what was said during the talks were disclosed. According to media reports, Köhler asked the parties for maximum discretion, since the objective in this first round of meetings was to define an action plan that would help to establish official negotiations and set up another meeting. At the end of the meetings in Geneva, the representatives of the parties made statements defending their traditional positions, but the negotiations were confirmed as ongoing and a new round of discussions was announced for the first quarter of 2019.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding the inclusion of the gender perspective in the talks, both resolutions on Western Sahara approved by the UN Security Council during 2018 (Resolutions 2414 and 2440) mentioned the need for the UN-backed negotiating process to have effective and significant female participation, calling for implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (and also the effective and significant participation of young people, in accordance with Resolution 2250 of 2015 on youth, peace and security). However, the UN Secretary-General's reports on the situation in Western Sahara in March and October 2018 made no reference to the participation of women in the resumption of political meetings. No mention was made of Resolution 1325 in these reports and references to women or gender were limited mainly to humanitarian aspects and to the possibility of increasing the proportion of women in MINURSO

In the December talks, one woman was confirmed in both the Moroccan delegation and the POLISARIO Front's delegation. Rabat sent Fatima Adli, described by the official Moroccan press as a community representative and member of the municipal council of Smara. Meanwhile, Fatma Mehdi, secretary general of the Union of Saharawi Women (UNMS), joined the POLISARIO Front's negotiating team. In civil society, **independent Sahrawi women recalled the impacts of the conflict on women and their role as peacemakers, calling for more active participation in the talks.** In a message addressed to Köhler and supported by international women's NGOs for peace, such as WILPF, these Sahrawi women asked both the UN and the countries participating in the dialogue to take the steps necessary to guarantee female involvement in the meetings, to organise parallel meetings between Sahrawi and Moroccan women and to move forward on multiple issues that can help to establish a lasting peace, including action to eradicate all types of violence against women.

Southern Africa

Mozambique	
Negotiating actors	Government, the RENAMO armed 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 insurgence 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. RENAMO's declaration of a truce in 2016 and the progress made in the peace process during 2017 caused a notable drop in armed actions, though sporadic clashes persist.

Sporadic activity was undertaken during the year by supporters of the ruling party, FRELIMO, and sympathisers of the main opposition party, RENAMO, as part of the campaign for the municipal elections held in October. Meanwhile, **steps continued to be taken to implement the peace agreement, despite the death of the historical leader of the rebellion, Afonso Dhlakama.** In February, President Filipe Nyusi announced that he would implement constitutional amendments allowing political parties victorious in provincial parliamentary elections to select the regional governor, for subsequent ratification by the country's president. In addition, Nyusi and Dhlakama met in mid-February 2018 in Namadjiwa to discuss the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of members of RENAMO and their incorporation into the state security forces. On 27 March, the three main parties –the ruling party (FRELIMO), the main opposition party (RENAMO), and the Democratic

Movement of Mozambique– agreed on a consensus document containing proposals for constitutional amendments to promote progress in decentralisation and other measures to underpin peace that should be discussed in Parliament. The way that governors were appointed had been a contentious issue and a subject of the negotiations. Finally, on 23 May, Parliament approved the decentralisation project, which also stipulated that parties that win local elections, and not the president, will choose the 10 provincial governors. On 3 May, Afonso Dhlakama died in his stronghold in the Gorongosa Mountains at the age of 65. Dhlakama had led the armed group since 1979, following the death of leader André Matsangaissa, and until the peace agreement was signed in 1992, when he transformed the armed group into a political party, though he did maintain part of its military wing. Several analysts said that his death could lead to a period of uncertainty in the party and affect the peace process because of his marked party leadership and influence as a unifier of the different political movements. There was also speculation that the government might back out of the process, since it had leaned towards militaristic tendencies to resolve the conflict in recent years. Former RENAMO General Ossufo Momade was elected interim leader on 5 May until the next party congress, when Dhlakama’s successor would be chosen. Momade said he would remain faithful to Dhlakama’s commitment to the peace process. President Nyusi made similar statements of commitment to the process. On 9 May an official ceremony was held in his memory that was attended by President Nyusi.

The death of the historical leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama, sowed uncertainty regarding implementation of the peace agreement in Mozambique

In June, the ruling party, FRELIMO, called on the opposition party RENAMO to commit to disarming its militants before the 10 October local elections as a precondition both for holding the October elections and the extraordinary session of Parliament to pass reforms to continue the process of decentralisation and enact electoral reforms ahead of the upcoming elections. On 11 July, President Felipe Nyusi and the leader of RENAMO, Ossufo Momade, released a joint statement announcing that RENAMO would disarm. Nyusi added that FRELIMO and RENAMO would sign a formal agreement to integrate RENAMO’s fighters into the state security forces (the police and the Mozambican Armed Forces). Parliament passed the electoral reforms on 20 July, in accordance with the agreement reached on decentralisation. The disarmament agreement, known as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security issues, reached on 6 August, establishes the steps for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants in the security forces and in society, as well as the creation of four working groups to implement the MoU: a Military Affairs Commission and three Joint Technical Groups. As a sign of how far the process has come, on 12 September the defence minister said that the DDR was progressing as planned.

Local elections, the cornerstone of the peace process, were finally held on 10 October. RENAMO had not participated in local elections in 10 years. The ruling party, FRELIMO, won in 44 of the 53 municipalities (having previously controlled 49) with 57% of the vote, while RENAMO won in eight municipalities with 36.5% of the vote. RENAMO claimed victory in another five municipalities. Various civil society organisations and RENAMO accused FRELIMO of buying votes and other irregularities in the recount. The US embassy announced that the elections had been “largely free and fair”, though during the campaign there were some altercations between supporters of the two main parties in Tete and the police used tear gas and rubber balls to break up a RENAMO demonstration in Zambezia province. President Nyusi launched the disarmament programme on 6 October. On 24 October, RENAMO announced that the peace talks were still active due to the alleged electoral fraud. On 14 November, the Constitutional Court validated the 10 October election results, except in one municipality, Marromeu (Sofala province), where FRELIMO won the recount on 22 November.

In mid-December, the government appointed three RENAMO generals to senior positions in the Mozambican Armed Forces and declared that measures such as these allowed progress towards a peace agreement. On the same day, the contact group for the negotiations met with the party’s interim leader, Ossufo Momade, and expressed its satisfaction with the government’s commitment to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process and said it was confident that the current negotiations will lead to a final peace agreement. The EU, which is part of that contact group, expressed itself in similar terms, repeating its support for the peace process. However, at the end of the year, during the commemoration of the second anniversary of the truce declared by RENAMO’s president, Alfonso Dhlakama, who began the current negotiating process, the opposition party’s spokesman accused the government of hindering the peace process and of not wanting to solve the conflict that has plagued the country for decades.

West Africa

Mali	
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
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.

Different initiatives were put forward to try to concretise and accelerate implementation of the 2015 peace agreement in Mali throughout 2018, but these efforts were affected by various factors, including the lack of will, reticence and divisions among actors committed to the agreement, recurring delays in the timetable, a general climate of persistent violence in the north and centre of the country and political tension linked to the upcoming presidential and legislative elections (the latter were finally postponed until 2019). Independent reports also agreed on the growing gap between the people of Mali and the parties that signed the agreement, and on the general population's insufficient appropriation of the agreement. Against this backdrop, the mechanisms established by the agreement continued to function during the year. Thus, during one of its regular sessions in January, the Agreement's Supervisory Committee approved a new timetable (agreed by the parties, with support from the UN mission in the country, MINUSMA) in order to speed up implementation of the agreement in three areas: decentralisation, defence and security and socio-economic development. This agreement led to the **adoption of a new road map in March that identified priority areas in the short and medium term for implementing the agreement and for paving the way for the presidential election in July.**

In the months that followed, some progress was made on implementing the agreement, such as the deployment of mixed military units composed of the Malian military, members of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform –the Operational Coordination Mechanism (MOC)– in Kidal and Timbuktu. However,

the general climate of the country was marked by the intensification of violence in northern and central Mali, including attacks by jihadist groups and inter-community clashes on the eve of the presidential election, which took place on 29 July. Actions by armed groups blocked voting in some places (in 644 of the 23,000 polling stations, according to official data from the first round). President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita declared himself the winner of the second round, in August, though the election was marred by violence mainly in the north and centre that affected low turnout, of around 34%. After the presidential election and the formation of the new Keita administration, and at the request of the UN, in October the parties that signed the peace agreement signed a new “Pact for Peace” as a way to renew their commitment to speeding up implementation of the agreement reached in Algeria in 2015. The government signed this pact with the head of the UN mission, while the CMA and the Platform signed an addendum separately on the same day. The new pact calls for a more inclusive process, repeats that armed groups must gradually vanish and give way to reformed military forces and stipulates that international mediation efforts can make binding decisions in disputes between the parties, in accordance with Article 52 of the Algiers Agreement.

By the end of the year, some measures had been taken regarding the accelerated DDR process –1,600 combatants became part of three mixed units that will be administered by the Malian Army– and the establishment of interim administrations in the Kidal, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions, but no progress was made in operationalising these administrations and there were disagreements over issues such as quotas to integrate land military forces and reform administrative divisions. Thus, some analysts highlighted that some of the difficulties in moving forward on these and other issues were linked to fragmentation within the CMA and the Platform, partly due to power struggles and government co-optation strategies that have pushed some “dissident” groups to the sidelines despite their influence in on the ground.¹³ Another controversial issue in late 2018 was the Law on National Understanding provided for in the 2015 agreement. In December, more than 50 organisations denounced the government-backed law, arguing that it could favour impunity. Parliament delayed voting on the law while waiting for more information from the authorities. Previously, analysts had warned that the proposed legislation, inspired by laws passed after the Algerian Civil War, offered no guarantees for genuine reconciliation and for providing the victims of the conflict with access to justice.¹⁴

Reports issued by independent bodies offered a critical assessment of the peace process in Mali in 2018. The Carter Center, designated as an independent observer of the implementation of the peace agreement in Mali in late 2017, began working in 2018 and published two

13. Philip Kleinfeld, *New violence eclipses Mali's plans for peace*, IRIN, 26 November 2018.

14. Andrew Lebobich, *Mali, Algeria and the uneasy search for peace*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 4 October 2018.

reports, in May and October.¹⁵ The US centre identified some of the main problems in implementing the 2015 agreement, including the parties' continuous failures to respect the established schedules; the government's limited commitment and lack of consistency; the passivity and lack of initiative of the CMA and the Platform; flaws in the work of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, especially with regard to supervising and coordinating the implementation process; overlapping responsibilities between bodies linked to implementing the agreement; the lack of strategic vision in some key documents; and shortcomings when considering budgetary issues. It also identified two external challenges to the agreement affecting progress: the crisis in central Mali and the impact of criminal economic activity. Meanwhile, an independent strategic review conducted by MINUSMA concluded that three years after the agreement, no significant progress had been observed on the ground and that in some areas there had been regression, as for example with regard to the state's presence in the north of the country (20% of subprefects deployed in 2017 compared to 36% in 2016). The investigation ascribed the problems to distrust among the parties that signed the agreement, unequal political will and insufficient appropriation of the agreement among the Malian population, but found that due to the lack of a viable alternative, the 2015 agreement was still a valid framework for involving the parties in the peace process. Both reports called for greater commitment and involvement from Malian and international actors to strengthen the process. Another committee report from a UN panel of experts released in September did not identify any groups or people deliberately obstructing the 2015 agreement, but did indicate individuals who indirectly threatened the pact for their involvement in acts of violence and smuggling and human trafficking activities.¹⁶

Finally, **even though monitoring elections is not part of the MINUSMA mandate, in the months prior to the presidential election the mission used its good offices** and met with representatives of the Malian political opposition, the government, the armed groups that signed the 2015 agreement and civil society representatives to stress the importance of holding a peaceful and inclusive election. The legislative elections scheduled for October were postponed for

November and then the Constitutional Court postponed them sine die and extended the MPs' term of office until June 2019. At the year's end, this issue remained a source of political tension in the country and a cause for opposition protests repressed by the government. Likewise, intercommunal clashes, especially in central Mali, resulted in some truce agreements and unilateral cease-fire declarations during the year.

Gender, peace and security

The exclusion of Malian women from the peace process continued in 2018, despite the demands of women's groups to ensure substantive participation in the process. Malian women were involved in some of the activities promoted by MINUSMA, such as an event in July on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325, when women from all regions of the country met with government and UN officials, and the workshop held in July that brought together 45 female representatives of the parties that signed the 2015 agreement and civil society representatives, promoted by UN Women, MINUSMA and the High Representative of the President for the Peace Process, which led to the creation of an independent consultative forum led by women to oversee implementation of the agreement. During the meeting, a series of **specific recommendations were also outlined to improve female participation in the peace process, a call was made for immediate talks with the parties that signed the agreement to improve the inclusion of women at all levels and the creation of a gender strategy was suggested for the peace agreement** that could integrate women's needs in the peace process. The participants demanded respect for both international and national commitments and recalled that since December 2015, Malian law requires that 30% of those in all political functions be women. Nevertheless, bodies as important as the Agreement Monitoring Committee were composed only of men. The strategic review on MINUSMA released in 2018 confirmed the need for a clear connection between the parties that signed the agreement and Malian society, including women, and stated that the adoption of the new "Pact for Peace" in October committed the parties that signed the 2015 agreement to a more inclusive process.

After the presidential election in Mali, the government and the armed actors that signed the Algiers Agreement of 2015 signed a "Pact for Peace" to renew their commitment to implementing the agreement

15. In November 2017, the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali asked the Carter Center to officiate as an independent observer of the process to implement it, appealing to Article 63 of the Agreement, which provided for the creation of this figure. According to this article, the observer's mission is to evaluate implementation of the agreement, identify obstacles, detect responsibility and make recommendations. The UN Security Council confirmed the Carter Center's designation to this position in its Resolution 2391 on Mali of December 2017.

16. United Nations Security Council, Letter dated 8 August 2018 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 August 2018.

3. Peace negotiations in America

- Four negotiating processes took place in the Americas (two in Colombia, one in Venezuela and one in Nicaragua), accounting for 8% of the negotiations that took place during 2018.
- Negotiations between the ELN and the Colombian government underwent enormous difficulties and were suspended and restarted at various times during the year, though they were scrapped indefinitely after the inauguration of President Iván Duque.
- The process to implement the peace agreement signed between the government of Colombia and the FARC progressed with various difficulties and was determined by electoral processes in the country.
- The Episcopal Conference's facilitation of talks between the government of Nicaragua and the opposition was unable to solve or deflect the most serious socio-political crisis to grip the country in recent decades.
- Given the impasse in negotiations between the Venezuelan government and the opposition, some European and Latin American countries were willing to form an international contact group to facilitate the dialogue.

This chapter analyses the main peace processes and negotiations in the Americas during 2018, including the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each context throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. There is also a map at the beginning of the chapter showing the countries in the Americas that hosted peace negotiations during 2018.

Table 3.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in America in 2018

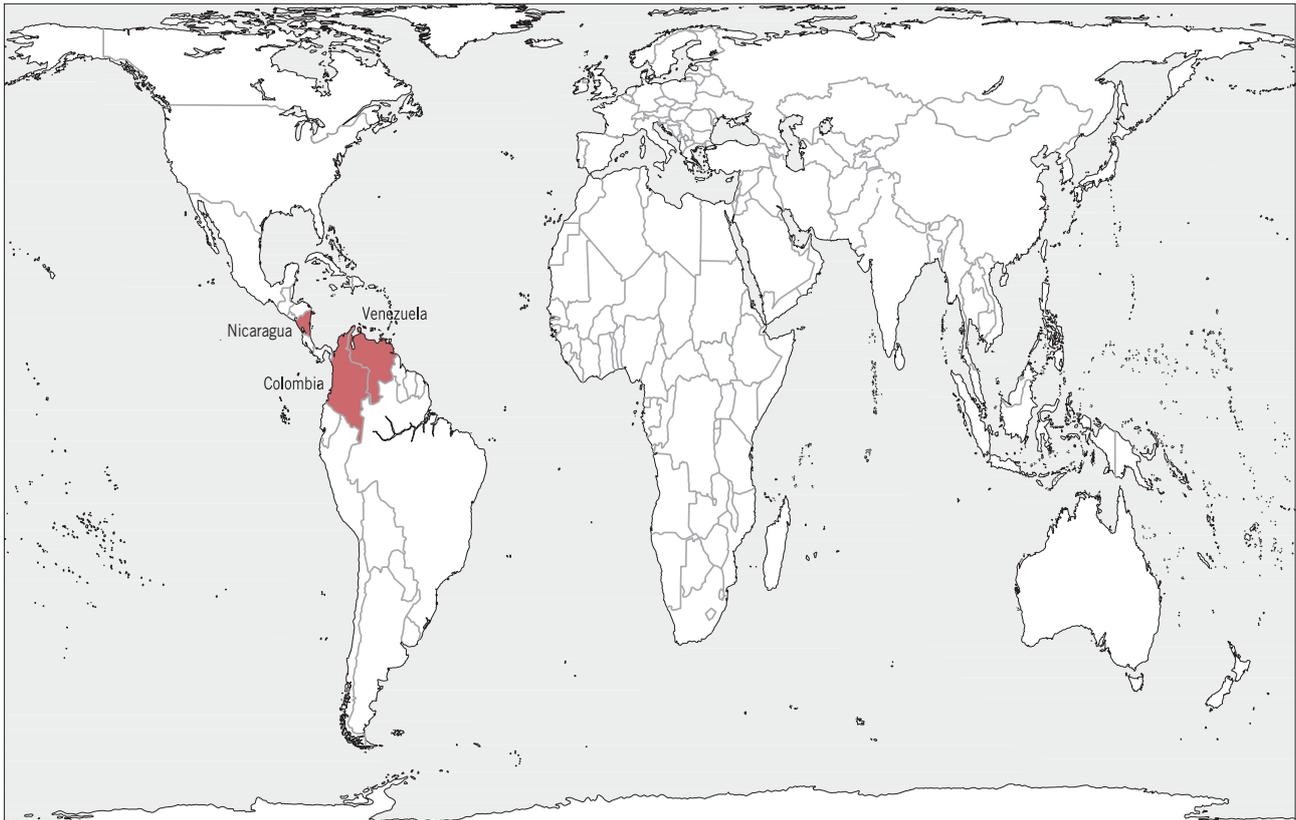
Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Colombia (FARC)	Government and FARC	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Norway), accompanying countries (Venezuela, Chile), UN
Colombia (ELN)	Government and ELN	Guarantor countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Norway, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile), accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy), Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (UN, Colombian Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)
Nicaragua	Government, political and social opposition	Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua
Venezuela	Government, opposition (MUD)	Dominican Republic Government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (former president of Spain) and accompanying countries (Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua and Bolivia)

3.1 Negotiations in 2018: regional trends

The Americas were the scene of four negotiating processes in 2018, one more than in the previous year. Colombia continued to host two peace processes, Venezuela hosted another and negotiations began in Nicaragua as a result of the serious political and human rights crisis that the country suffered during the year. One of the peace processes in Colombia was focused on implementation of the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the FARC two years after it was signed, while the other process featured negotiations between Bogotá and the ELN guerrilla group to put an end to the armed conflict. The negotiating processes in Venezuela and Nicaragua were aimed at resolving the political crises facing both countries.

Regarding the **actors** involved, there were notable differences between the negotiations that took place in Colombia and those in Venezuela and Nicaragua. The negotiations in Colombia were led by the government and by the ELN guerrilla group and the former FARC guerrilla organisation, which has transformed into a political party. Furthermore, in Colombia, various civil society actors tried to influence and contribute to the different negotiating processes. The process to implement the agreement with the FARC involved different mechanisms to consult with civil society, such as the High Level Special Body with Ethnic Peoples and the Special Body on Gender. In Nicaragua, the parties participating in the

Map 3.1. Peace negotiations in America 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in America in 2018

dialogue were the government and the opposition, which mainly consisted of student representatives and members of the private sector and civil society. Women’s organisations also gave their input regarding the dialogue. The participants in the negotiations in Venezuela were the government and the political opposition.

In addition to the negotiating parties themselves, **third parties** were also involved in the different dialogue processes, and in some cases they were local and international stakeholders. In the peace negotiations between the government of Colombia and the ELN, third parties acted as guarantor countries—notably Ecuador (which abandoned the position during the year), Brazil, Norway, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile—and accompanying countries (Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy). A specific mechanism was set up by the UN, the Episcopal Conference of Colombia and the negotiating parties to verify the ceasefire agreement. The negotiations in Nicaragua were facilitated by the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua and the worsening political crisis in Venezuela had a direct impact on the involvement of external facilitating actors, causing some of them to withdraw. The Vatican, UNASUR and international

All the negotiating and dialogue processes in the Americas underwent major crises during 2018

figures like the former leaders of Spain (José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero), Panama (Martín Torrijos) and the Dominican Republic (Leonel Fernández) have facilitated the negotiations in recent years and several countries have accompanied them since late 2017 (Chile, Mexico and Paraguay, chosen by the opposition, and Nicaragua, Bolivia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, selected by the government).

Negotiators in both Venezuela and Nicaragua expressed their distrust of third parties. The Venezuelan opposition was critical of both Zapatero and UNASUR’s efforts, while Caracas criticised the performance of the OAS. The Nicaraguan government was mistrustful of the Episcopal Conference and other international players like the OAS and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which did try to influence the political crisis despite their lack of a facilitating role.

Each process focused on specific issues related to its particular aspects, but the parties generally disagreed about the negotiating agendas, causing great tension. In Nicaragua, no agreement was reached between the parties regarding the possible content of the agenda. Added to the violence and repression, this led to a deep crisis in the negotiations. In Venezuela, where dialogue also faced

many difficulties, there was forceful disagreement regarding the elections. Issues related to the political and economic situation in Venezuela were discussed during the Agreement on Democratic Coexistence, as was a possible Truth Commission, an institution that the Nicaraguan opposition had demanded. Elections were part of the discussions and differences between the parties in both Venezuela and Nicaragua. In Venezuela, this involved discussions about timing and electoral guarantees and in Nicaragua early elections were viewed as a possible way out of the crisis. In both cases, the opposition demanded support and observation for the elections. In Colombia, negotiations with the ELN focused on the possible achievement of a new ceasefire and the participation of civil society, one of the central lines of the negotiating process. In the process with the FARC, the content of the agreement made in Havana defined the agenda for implementation.

All the negotiating and dialogue processes in the Americas underwent major crises during 2018 and their development was quite negative. There were repeated suspensions and attempts by the facilitating actors to revive them failed. Reasons for these crises included the impact of the dynamics of violence experienced in different countries, as well as the enormous distrust between the parties, which determined and corrupted attempts at rapprochement. The process to implement the agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government did make progress, though amidst great difficulties and accusations of non-compliance. The conclusion of the ceasefire agreement and the change of government in Colombia prevented progress in the negotiations with the ELN.

Regarding the **gender, peace and security agenda**, it is important to highlight the active role played by women in some of the processes, especially in Colombia, where in addition to direct participation, gender agendas were defined in the dialogue and implementation processes and there was a specific gender architecture. Women's organisations were central players in promoting implementation of the peace agreement with the FARC and in dialogue with the ELN. In the agreement with the FARC, there was a Special Body on Gender to advise the CSIVI, the commission in charge of monitoring and verifying implementation of the peace agreement. Also notable was the gender work of other bodies in charge of verifying said implementation. Women were part of the negotiating delegations in the talks with the ELN and various initiatives were also promoted to strengthen the gender focus in the negotiating agendas. In Nicaragua, women were key players in the movement opposing the Sandinista government and submitted their demands regarding the National Dialogue, though a negotiating agenda addressing the demands of the women's movement could not be defined.

3.2. Case study analysis

Central America

Nicaragua	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

In April 2018, as a result of the government's attempt to reform the social security system, a series of protests broke out throughout the country that caused the death or disappearance of hundreds of people and plunged the country into the worst socio-political crisis in recent decades. Faced with domestic and international concern over the protests, a repressive crackdown by the state security forces and clashes between government supporters and opponents, in May the government began a National Dialogue with various opposition groups that was facilitated by the Catholic Church. Due to the lack of progress in the dialogue and the government's growing opposition to mediation by the Episcopal Conference, several international players like the United Nations and the Central American Integration System said they were willing to facilitate it, while others, such as the OAS and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, exerted pressure on the government to end the crisis and the many human rights violations it was committing.

Faced with the most serious political and social crisis in Nicaragua in recent decades, which broke out in mid-April and caused the death of hundreds of people throughout the year, **the government and several opposition groups agreed to establish a National Dialogue mediated by the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua (CEN), though no significant agreements had been reached between the parties by the end of the year.** Indeed, a few days after the start of the protests against the attempt by Daniel Ortega's government to reform the social security system, which led to the death of between 25 and 60 people, according to sources, the Catholic Church, through the CEN, offered to facilitate talks between the government and student representatives, as well as members of the private sector and civil society. The National Dialogue began in Managua on 16 May and a reduction in violence was initially agreed. However, the dialogue was suspended a few days later due to a lack of agreement about the design of the substantive agenda of the negotiations, for which the CEN proposed forming a mixed commission of six people (three from each side) to channel the topics on which the talks should pivot. However, amidst rising violence from the police and armed groups sympathetic to the government at the end of May, the CEN announced that it was withdrawing from the National Dialogue and condemned the violence employed by the ruling party. Nevertheless, the CEN resumed facilitating the dialogue in mid-June, but it collapsed again a few days later after the opposition accused the government of breaking its promise to

invite representatives of the EU, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate the dozens of deaths that occurred since the protests began in mid-April.

Tension between the government and the Catholic Church started to increase markedly in July, and in fact the sessions of the National Dialogue did not resume for the rest of the year. Though there had already been many reports of harassment of the clergy by pro-government supporters throughout 2018, **one of the main reasons for the CEN's withdrawal from the National Dialogue was the attack on a church in the town of Diriamba in early July by dozens of government supporters in which several members of the clergy were assaulted**, including two with significant roles mediating between the parties: Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes and Monsignor Silvio Báez. A few days after the attack, which was condemned by much of the international community, Daniel Ortega accused the Catholic Church of being part of a coup plot, referring in particular to statements made by the CEN suggesting that Ortega move the presidential election scheduled for 2021 to March 2019 and pledge not to stand for re-election for a fourth term. Faced with this impasse, the United Nations offered its support to complement the good offices carried out by the CEN and the government's main representative in the National Dialogue, Foreign Minister Denis Moncada, met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. In late July, Daniel Ortega was willing to resume negotiations with UN mediation and the participation of the Church, but in the end there were no more meetings between the parties or sessions of the National Dialogue.

Given this situation, the OAS created the Working Group on Nicaragua, made up of 12 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, USA, Guyana, Mexico, Panama and Peru), but the Nicaraguan government described it as interference and refused to cooperate with it or receive any visit from it in the months that followed. Ortega's government even called for OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro to resign on the grounds that the organisation was meddling in Nicaragua's internal affairs. The Working Group issued periodic reports on the situation in Nicaragua and asked Managua to readmit the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to the country, and specifically to cooperate with two of its main instruments: the Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua and the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts. In early September, the main opposition platform (Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy) called for the National Dialogue to resume. This was seconded by the Catholic Church, but Ortega said that the conditions to resume the National Dialogue were not being met and instead suggested talks at the community level.

Faced with the most serious political and social crisis in Nicaragua in recent decades, the government and several opposition groups established a National Dialogue, mediated by the Episcopal Conference

Faced with these obstacles to a negotiated solution to the crisis, in September the US government raised the conflict in Nicaragua for discussion in the UN Security Council, the Central American Integration System (SICA) announced that it was working for negotiations to resume and the EU announced that it would halt all cooperation with the national police. Later, in October, MERCOSUR also addressed the issue, calling for the release of hundreds of prisoners, and the OAS suggested that its Permanent Council could use the Inter-American Democratic Charter to restore democracy in Nicaragua.

South America

Colombia (FARC)	
Negotiating actors	Government, FARC
Third parties	Guarantor countries (Cuba, Norway), accompanying countries (Venezuela, Chile), UN
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.	

The process to implement the peace agreement between the government of Colombia and the former guerrilla movement FARC, which has since transformed into a party, moved ahead bumpily in a year marked by several elections and the formation of a new government that was highly critical of the agreement achieved in Havana in 2016. In the second year of implementation of the agreement, **some important progress was made, but the agencies in charge of verifying it warned of many obstacles in its path.** In its follow-up report on the fulfilment of the peace agreement, the Kroc Institute indicated that from the beginning of the implementation process until 31 May 2018, only 21% of the provisions of the agreement had been fully implemented, 9% had achieved an intermediate level of implementation, 31% had only reached a minimum level and 39% had not even started. The Kroc Institute's report noted that significant progress had been made in measures related to the termination of the conflict and the creation of verification mechanisms, but that

very important challenges remained in connection with security and protection guarantees, as the murders of human rights activists and former FARC members continued. It also described the process to reintegrate former combatants as being slow and fraught with problems and stated that important normative and institutional challenges persist, especially with regard to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), or the Special Transitional Districts of Peace, and other aspects.

Some of the most significant events of the peace process during the year were the various elections that took place in the country, leaving a political scene of players opposed to the peace agreement. In March, legislative elections were held in which the FARC party won no parliamentary representation beyond what was guaranteed by the peace agreement (five representatives in the Senate and five in the House). Right-wing parties won the legislative majority, raising great questions about the future of the peace process. In the presidential election, the right revalidated its result with the victory of Iván Duque, from the Democratic Centre Party, who took office in August with a speech saying that the peace agreement was being upheld, but that changes would be made in areas such as transitional justice and political participation. One of the important achievements was the start of the three-year mandate of the Truth Commission, chaired by Francisco De Roux, which must investigate serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; the collective responsibility of the state, the FARC-EP and paramilitary groups; the human and social impact of the conflict on society; and its impact on the exercise of politics and other aspects.

There were serious obstacles in the process to reintegrate former FARC combatants and in the FARC party's political participation. In April, the former commander Jesús Santrich was arrested on charges of drug trafficking, although the FARC alleged that it was a set-up. His arrest prevented his inauguration in Congress. As a result, FARC senior official and Senator-elect Iván Márquez was not sworn into office either, in protest against Santrich's arrest and the distortion of the peace process. Iván Márquez and five other former FARC commanders later went missing, leading to speculation that they may have joined the FARC's dissidents, since they had to appear before the JEP. In the end, Márquez did deliver the required information to the JEP, though he did not appear again in public.

Gender, peace and security

Women's organisations continued their activity in support of implementation of the gender approach, as did international and national institutions with a mandate in this area. The Special Body on Gender of the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement (CSIVI) issued its first report, which highlighted

its contributions to including a gender approach in the Implementation Framework Plan, territorial development plans and other areas of implementation and constant dialogue with several parties involved in the peace process. Alongside the body's work, the verification mechanisms of the agreement also submitted their evaluations of implementation of the gender approach. The Kroc Institute, UN Women, the Swedish Embassy in Colombia and the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) stated that only 4% of the agreement's 130 provisions identified as having a gender focus had been fully implemented and the implementation of 51% had not begun. Furthermore, 38% had only reached minimal levels of implementation and 7% had achieved an intermediate level. These figures clash with the overall levels of application of the agreement, since 22% of the provisions of the agreement have been fully implemented, compared to only 4% of the gender provisions. These institutions indicated that the points with a lower level of implementation are related to comprehensive rural reform, political participation and solving the problem of illicit drugs. Civil society also evaluated progress in implementation in different reports, such as those issued by the National Summit of Women and Peace and by the GPAZ Platform. These reports also described the obstacles and difficulties of including a gender approach in the implementation process.

Colombia (ELN)	
Negotiating actors	Government, 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, Colombian Episcopal Conference, Government, ELN)
Relevant agreements	"Heaven's Door" Agreement (1988)
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.

The peace process between the Colombian government and the ELN guerrilla group faced enormous difficulties throughout the year, interspersing periods of deadlock with phases of active negotiations

between both parties. The year 2018 began with the suspension of negotiations on 29 January prompted by the rise in violence after the agreed ceasefire ended on 9 January and was not renewed with a fresh agreement. Despite the government's statements that it would extend the ceasefire, the ELN said it preferred to negotiate a new agreement. The failure of these negotiations resulted in an uptick in violence and the aforementioned suspension. The ceasefire agreement was not renewed throughout the year, though there were cessations of hostilities during the various elections that took place. Prior to the suspension of the negotiations in January, the Colombian president at that time, Juan Manuel Santos, had ordered the return to Bogotá of the negotiators with the ELN who were in Quito to evaluate how the process was going. In February, the ELN announced a unilateral truce between 9 and 13 March for the legislative elections and called for the negotiations to resume. The government considered the truce a positive gesture, which led to **both parties announcing the resumption of negotiations just after the elections, following a two-month suspension.**

This announcement was welcomed by the guarantor countries supporting the negotiating process (Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Norway and Venezuela). After the announcement that the negotiations would resume, the parties agreed on a new timetable, setting 18 May as the deadline for the fifth round, nine days before the presidential election. The central themes agreed for this new round were a new ceasefire and the participation of Colombian society in the process. However, the negotiations hit a new stumbling block in April after Ecuador announced that it was going to stop being a guarantor and therefore would no longer host the negotiations. Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno's announcement came amidst a serious border crisis between both countries as a result of several kidnappings carried out by a FARC guerrilla dissident group. Ecuador's withdrawal did not cause a breakdown in the negotiations, as the Colombian government and the ELN agreed to transfer them to Havana as the new venue for the process.

In this new location, the process was resumed in May to start the fifth round of negotiations for the initial purpose of achieving a new ceasefire before the presidential election on 27 May. Although this objective was not met, a temporary suspension of the talks was agreed when the election was held. The central issues that the negotiating delegations addressed during the fifth round, which took place between 30 May and 12 June, were the bilateral ceasefire, for which a technical committee was created, with members of the police participating, and the design of a participatory process for civil society. The sixth round of negotiations began in July, the last under the presidency of Juan Manuel

Santos, after Democratic Centre Party candidate Iván Duque won the presidential election with a campaign focused on his opposition to the peace agreement with the FARC. Duque's victory led the ELN and the outgoing government to seek common ground, but this did not result in a ceasefire agreement. **In August, Duque's new government announced that it would withdraw from the negotiations, pending a final decision on whether or not to continue with the process.** Later, in an attempt at rapprochement with the government, the ELN freed six people that it had kidnapped, two of them civilians. Meanwhile,

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez offered to host the negotiations in the future. In September, the government took another step in blocking the process, discharging all members of its negotiating delegation and the technical ceasefire table from their duties and refusing to recognise Venezuela as a guarantor country. In response, the ELN said that it did not accept the conditions laid down by Duque's government to continue the talks, including an end to the kidnappings, to the attacks against the population and to the hostilities. The

ELN said it would honour the commitments made with the previous government and urged a bilateral ceasefire to de-escalate the conflict. Bogotá held to its demands and questioned the armed group's desire to reach a peace agreement. However, in December the ELN announced a 12-day Christmas truce (between 23 December and 3 January) and called for the peace negotiations to continue. President Duque responded to the ELN's statement by saying that the only way to build trust was to release the hostages and end criminal activity. Thus, the year ended with serious disagreement between the parties and the peace process in a situation of maximum fragility due to the growing distance between the government and the ELN.

Gender, peace and security

The women's movement for peace in Colombia made several calls for the parties not to abandon the negotiating process and to maintain the ceasefire agreement without a time limit. The National Summit of Women and Peace argued publicly in this regard. Women's organisations also participated in several initiatives linked to the negotiations. In February, representatives of 36 civil society organisations, including women's organisations, met with both President Santos and Pablo Beltrán, the head of the ELN delegation, with proposals to de-escalate the conflict and reach a bilateral ceasefire. A workshop on the gender perspective was held with the negotiating delegations in May, facilitated by the National Summit of Women and Peace and the Women's Gathering for Peace (Juntanza de Mujeres por la Paz).

Venezuela	
Negotiating actors	Government, political and social opposition
Third parties	Government of the Dominican Republic, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (former president of Spain) and accompanying countries (Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua and Bolivia)
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

Faced with the worsening political and social crisis that Venezuela experienced after the death in 2013 of President Hugo Chávez, the leader of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution, his successor Nicolás Maduro's narrow victory in the presidential election of April 2013 and the protests staged in the early months of 2014, which caused the death of around 40 people, in March 2014 the government said it was willing to accept talks with the opposition facilitated by UNASUR or the Vatican, but categorically rejected any mediation by the OAS. Shortly after Pope Francis called for dialogue and a group of UNASUR foreign ministers visited Venezuela and held many meetings, preliminary talks began between Caracas and the opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) in April 2014, to which the Secretary of State of the Vatican, the former Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela, as well as the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, were invited as witnesses in good faith. Although the talks were interrupted in May 2014 due to developments in the political situation, both UNASUR and the Vatican continued to facilitate through Apostolic Nuncio Aldo Giordano. In May 2016, shortly after a visit to Venezuela by the former leaders of Spain (Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero), Panama (Martín Torrijos) and the Dominican Republic (Leonel Fernández) at the request of UNASUR, the Venezuelan government and opposition met in the Dominican Republic with the three aforementioned ex-leaders and UNASUR representatives. After a meeting between Maduro and Pope Francis in October, both parties met again in Venezuela under the auspices of the Pope's new special envoy, Emil Paul Tscherrig. In late 2017, both sides decided to resume the talks in the Dominican Republic starting in December, accompanied by several countries chosen by both parties (Chile, Mexico and Paraguay by the opposition and Nicaragua, Bolivia and San Vicente and the Grenadines by the government). Although some agreements were reached during the several rounds of negotiations that took place between December 2017 and February 2018, Maduro's unilateral call for a presidential election for 2018 brought them to a standstill and caused the withdrawal of several of the accompanying countries designated by the opposition to facilitate them.

There was no progress or even talks between the government and the opposition in 2018 following the suspension early in the year of the negotiations that both sides had started in the final quarter of 2017 in the Dominican Republic. By the end of 2018, however, new options for resuming the talks seemed to be emerging due to the willingness of several European and Latin American countries to form a new international contact group to facilitate them. At the end of January, the Constituent Assembly, controlled almost exclusively by the ruling party and not recognised by the opposition and much of the international community, voted in favour of holding the presidential election

before 30 April, against the opposition's wishes. Following Caracas' announcement of this decision, the governments of Mexico and Chile indefinitely terminated their participation in the negotiations in support of the dialogue, believing that the presidential election would not be able to meet international democratic standards. Also in late January, the Supreme Court ordered the National Electoral Council to block the registration of the opposition alliance Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), and consequently its participation in the election, as well as to require other large opposition parties to provide a certain number of signatures in order to register. Despite these decisions by the Constituent Assembly and the Supreme Court, in the days that followed both parties met bilaterally with former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, who has been facilitating dialogue in recent years, and gathered in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) to carry out the sixth round of negotiations and, eventually, to sign the Agreement of Democratic Coexistence. However, the negotiations were scrapped in early February after the Electoral Council announced that the aforementioned election would take place on 22 April (it normally takes place in December). After the opposition refused to sign the agreement and a request was made to extend the round of negotiations in order to come up with a counter-offer, the government delegation withdrew from the negotiations, accusing the opposition of not complying with what had previously been agreed in the exploratory meetings in Venezuela. The opposition accused the government of holding the election unilaterally and without addressing any of its demands, such as delaying it beyond April, securing international election observers led by the United Nations, allowing the participation of political organisations like the MUD, Voluntad Popular and Primero Justicia and changing the composition of the National Electoral Council, which it views as biased.

A few days after the formal negotiations were suspended, described as an "indefinite recess" by the president of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, the Lima Group voiced its firm opposition to the government's announcement of the presidential election and called for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. The US government proposed an oil embargo against Venezuela, while the government of Peru even withdrew its invitation to Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to attend the Summit of the Americas in Lima in mid-April. Nevertheless, in late February several meetings were still held between the government and several minor parties that had shown their willingness to participate in the presidential election in April, which led Caracas to postpone the election until 20 May and to authorise international observers. Notably, the candidate of one of the main MUD parties, Avanzada Progresista, broke with the MUD's unity of action by deciding to run in the presidential election.

After the abrupt breakdown in the negotiations in early February, both sides failed to resume formal negotiations for the rest of the year. Contributing factors included

the growing polarisation caused by the holding of the aforementioned presidential elections, which Nicolás Maduro won handily, most of the opposition boycotted and the international community condemned almost unanimously for its lack of democratic guarantees; the growing political, economic and humanitarian crisis; the attempted assassination of Maduro in August; the institutional clash between the opposition-controlled National Assembly and the Constituent National Assembly, which was created unilaterally by the ruling party; the call made by several countries, supported by the opposition, for the International Criminal Court to investigate Nicolás Maduro for crimes against humanity; and the Venezuelan government's increasing isolation. However, in the last quarter of the year, new possibilities for resuming dialogue seemed to open up after the EU said it was willing to create and lead an international contact group to facilitate meetings between the parties. The EU proposal, which emerged at the initiative of Spain, Portugal and Italy and was still being discussed at the end of the year, envisaged including Latin American countries in the contact group and was compatible with upholding EU sanctions on certain Venezuelan government officials. This new initiative could be a response in part to several opposition leaders' calls in the second half of the year for a negotiated political solution to the conflict with fresh international support, or to signs of the parties' fatigue or distrust of the international actors who had facilitated the dialogue thus far. Also notable is the institutional crisis suffered by UNASUR during the year, as half of its members cancelled their membership in the organisation due to disagreements over its operations. Furthermore,

Zapatero's efforts at facilitation were rejected by most of members of the opposition-majority National Assembly, which considered it biased towards the government.

Gender, peace and security

There is no public record that the negotiations between the government and the opposition addressed issues related to the women, peace and security agenda or that there was a significant presence of women in the delegations of both parties or in the structures and mechanisms to facilitate the dialogue in 2018. However, it is important to highlight the important role that the president of the Constituent National Assembly, Delcy Rodríguez, is playing in the dialogue process. Among other tasks, she attended the negotiations that took place at the beginning of the year in the Dominican Republic. Outside the strictly formal and institutional scope of the negotiations, the "Las Mujeres Proponen" ("Women Propose") National Convention was held in Caracas in March, an event organised by 165 women's organisations (including Aliadas en Cadena, the Venezuelan Observatory of Human Rights for Women and Voces Vitales Venezuela), in which more than 500 women met in the US Embassy to create an agenda of proposals to influence public policy and to address the challenges and difficulties faced by women and girls in matters such as political participation, education and health. This convention was preceded by five previous meetings in several Venezuelan cities that addressed the role of women's organisations and civil society in gender equality and equity policies, in addition to other issues.

4. Peace negotiations in Asia

- There were 11 negotiating processes in Asia in 2018, accounting for over one fifth of the total number of cases worldwide.
- Asia was the continent with the highest percentage of cases in which there was direct negotiations without third-party participation.
- Significant progress was made in the process in Afghanistan and the year ended with the government's appointment of a negotiating team after several direct meetings had taken place between the US government and Taliban representatives in Qatar.
- In the Indian state of Nagaland, the armed group NSCN-K rejoined the ceasefire agreement, which also opened the door to its resumption of the peace negotiations.
- In the Philippines, the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law paved the way for the full implementation of the 2014 peace process and to the demobilisation of tens of thousands of MILF combatants.
- In Myanmar, two armed opposition groups joined the 2015 ceasefire agreement, which still did not include the main armed groups.
- The Korean peninsula experienced a substantial fall in tension after the historic summits that Kim Jong-un held separately with the presidents of the United States and South Korea.
- The Tibetan government-in-exile stated that there had been exploratory talks with the Chinese government to resume the negotiations, interrupted since 2010.

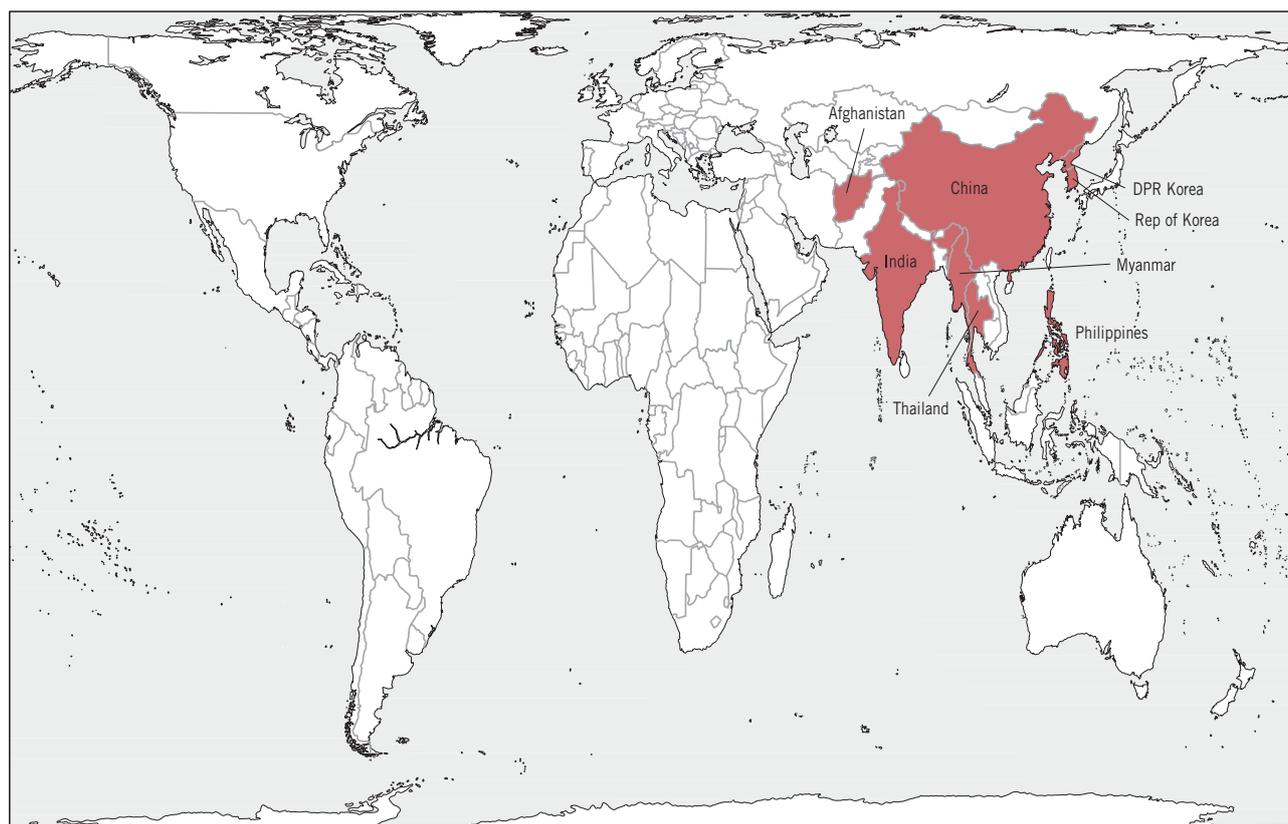
This chapter analyses the main peace processes and negotiations in Asia during 2018, including the general characteristics and trends of the negotiations and the development of each context throughout the year, including references to the gender, peace and security agenda. There is also a map at the beginning of the chapter showing the countries in Asia that hosted peace negotiations during 2018.

Table 4.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2018

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Afghanistan	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, UN
China (Tibet)	China, Tibetan government-in-exile	--
DPR Korea – Republic of Korea	North Korea, South Korea	--
DPR Korea – USA	North Korea, USA	--
India (Assam)	Government, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-P, NDFB-RD	--
India (Nagaland)	Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/GDRN/NA	--
Myanmar	Government, armed signatory groups of the cease fire agreement (NCA): DKBA, RCSS/SSA-South, CNF, KNU, KNLAPC, ALP, PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP, LDU; armed groups not part of the NCA: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDAA	--
Philippines (MILF)	Government, MILF	Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third Party Monitoring Team, International Monitoring Team
Philippines (MNLF)	Government, MNLF (faction led by Nur Misuari)	--
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.

Map 4.1. Peace negotiations in Asia 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Asia in 2018

4.1 Negotiations in 2018: regional trends

Eleven negotiating processes were reported in **Asia** in 2018, accounting for over one fifth of the total worldwide and a notable increase over the previous year, when there were eight. The three new peace processes in 2018 involve China (Tibet), due to the resumption of exploratory talks between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives after they were cancelled for nearly a decade; North Korea and South Korea, which convened three presidential summits and many meetings at the highest political and military level; and North Korea and the United States, whose presidents held a historic summit in Singapore and pledged to embark on an era of new relations between both countries. Although some of the negotiations in Asia were linked to active armed conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, the Philippines (NDF), Myanmar and Thailand (south), most took place amidst socio-political tension, as in China (Tibet), North Korea and South Korea, North Korea and the United States, India (Assam) and India (Nagaland), or involved armed groups that were no longer actively fighting against the government, such as the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines. Almost half of the negotiations in Asia took place in Southeast Asia, while the other half was split evenly between South Asia and East Asia. In Central Asia, no negotiating process was reported.

The governments of the countries where the peace process took place were always included as **main actors**

in the negotiations. In some cases this was at the highest level, such as with the leaders of North Korea, South Korea, the United States and Myanmar, while in others it occurred through government mechanisms and institutions specifically created for peace negotiations, such as in Afghanistan (through the High Peace Council), the Philippines (through the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Processes) and Myanmar (through the Peace Commission). Most negotiations also included armed opposition groups, some negotiating directly with the government (such as the MILF and the MNLF in the Philippines, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and the NSCN-IM in India) and others through political organisations representing them (like in the Philippines, where since the mid-1980s the government has been negotiating with the National Democratic Front (NDF), an organisation bringing together different communist organisations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, whose armed wing is the NPA). In several cases, the negotiations took place between the government and umbrella organisations that grouped together and represented several armed groups, such as Mara Patani in Thailand, which unites five armed groups; the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) in Nagaland, which represents six insurgent organisations; and the UNFC and the Northern Alliance in Myanmar, which represents armed organisations that have not

signed the national ceasefire agreement. There were three specific cases in which the negotiations did not involve armed groups or their political representatives: North Korea and South Korea; North Korea and the United States; and China (Tibet). In the first two, the negotiations mainly consisted of presidential summits preceded by several meetings to build trust between the parties and, later, to address the content and format of the summits; as well as many meetings after the summits (some sporadic, others more scheduled and frequent; some on a technical level, others on a high political or military level) to organise and implement the commitments made during the presidential summits. Regarding the process in China (Tibet), Beijing has made it clear on several occasions that it does not recognise the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), commonly known as the Tibetan government-in-exile, so in the previous nine rounds of negotiations conducted until early 2010, the Chinese government negotiated directly with special envoys of the Dalai Lama, including his own brother.

In some cases the format of the negotiations was relatively straightforward, such as the presidential summits between North Korea and South Korea and North Korea and the United States and cases in which there were direct negotiations between the government and insurgent organisations, either directly (the MILF and MNLF in the Philippines) or through umbrella organisations (Mara Patani in southern Thailand). In other peace processes, however, the negotiations were more complex, either because of the fragmentation of insurgent groups or because of the multiplicity and juxtaposition of negotiating formats and processes. In Myanmar, for example, the signatories of the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) negotiated with the government as part of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, but the government also negotiated directly with the UNFC (alliance of groups that have not signed the NCA) and with some of the groups that made up that coalition (in fact, some of them, like the NMSP and the LDU, joined the NCA in 2018, while others, such as the KNPP, still did not join despite holding mostly continuous dialogue with the government). Meanwhile, Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with several groups that had not signed the NCA, represented by the Northern Alliance, to sign bilateral agreements with them and thereby make it easier for them to sign the NCA. In India (Nagaland), the government negotiated directly and bilaterally with some of the main armed groups in the region, like the NSCN-IM and an NSCN-K faction that had abandoned the ceasefire agreement of 2015, but also with the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), which represent several Naga insurgent groups. In Afghanistan, meetings were held between the Afghan government and Taliban militias, as well as between the US government and the Taliban (with several meetings in Qatar during 2018), but key conflict resolution

Asia was the continent with the highest percentage of cases with direct negotiations without third-party involvement

issues were also addressed at the same time in broader formats with greater international exposure, such as the international conference held in Geneva in November, the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation, in which the Afghan government met with several governments and international organisations, and the “Moscow format”, which brought together the Afghan government, the US Embassy (as an observer) and the governments of China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Nearly two thirds of the negotiations studied in Asia did not include **third-party** involvement, making it the continent with the highest percentage of direct and bilateral negotiations between the parties. In fact, the only cases where the peace process was facilitated or mediated by third parties were Afghanistan, the Philippines (MILF), the Philippines (NDF) and Thailand (south). The high degree of internationalisation of the peace processes in Mindanao and Afghanistan should be noted. In the Philippines (MILF), in addition to

official mediation by the government of Malaysia, the peace process enjoys three other international support structures: the International Monitoring Team, in which the EU participates with countries like Malaysia, Libya, Brunei Darussalam, Japan and Norway; the Third Party Monitoring Team, which oversees implementation of the agreements signed between the MILF and the Philippine government; and the

International Contact Group, formed by 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). Despite the transformation of the government and the MILF’s negotiating panels into peace accord implementation panels, the functions of this dialogue support structure have been reformulated and somewhat diluted. In Afghanistan, notable third parties were the UN, with its mandate to facilitate dialogue through UNAMA, and Qatar, a country where a Taliban insurgency office was opened a few years ago and which hosted several meetings between the Taliban and the US government in 2018. Other spaces of intermediation that illustrate the international community’s interest and intervention in Afghanistan are the Kabul Process, the “Moscow format” and the international conference on Afghanistan co-organised by the Afghan government and UNAMA in Geneva in November 2018, with the participation of many governments and international organisations.

Consistent with the limited role of third parties in peace processes, Asia was also the part of the world where **intergovernmental bodies** participated the least in mediating and facilitating dialogue and in observing and verifying implementation of agreements and cessations of hostilities. In fact, only the United Nations pursued any of those activities in Afghanistan, through UNAMA. The EU was indirectly involved in the

peace process in Mindanao through the International Monitoring Team, which oversees the ceasefire between the government and the MILF. Another organisation that has historically played an important role in Mindanao is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), first by internationalising and legitimising the cause of the Moro people, then by facilitating the dialogue that led to the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the government and the MNLF, recognised by the OIC as the legitimate representative of the Moro people. The OIC later facilitated negotiations between the MNLF and the government on full implementation of the aforementioned agreement in the Tripartite Review Process. Finally, it sponsored cooperation between the MNLF and the MILF and promoted the harmonisation and convergence of the separate negotiating processes with the state. However, given the integration of the major factions of the MNLF in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and, therefore, their de facto acceptance of the negotiating process and the peace agreement between the government and the MILF, the faction led by Nur Misuari is the only one still demanding full implementation of the 1996 agreement, so lately the OIC has been having a less proactive role than in previous years.

The **negotiating agendas** of almost all the peace processes focused on issues related to self-determination, independence, autonomy, territorial and constitutional recognition and recognition of the identities of various national minorities, such as the Moro people in the Philippines, the Patani people in southern Thailand, the Tibetan people in China, several national minorities in some of the ethnic states of Myanmar and the state of Assam in India, as well as the Naga people in the Indian state of Nagaland. The agenda of the negotiations in Afghanistan and with the NDF in the Philippines was linked more to structural and systemic reforms in political, social and religious spheres. Another recurrent issue in several negotiating processes were ceasefires, truces and cessations of hostilities. The Burmese government stepped up its efforts to get the armed groups that did not sign the 2015 nationwide ceasefire agreement to adhere to it or to sign bilateral agreements, achieving this in some cases (such as with the NMSP and the LDU). In Afghanistan, state security forces and the Taliban insurgency agreed to the first ceasefire since the US invasion of the country in 2001. In Thailand, the government and Mara Patani agreed to establish safety zones, also known as limited ceasefires, in some districts of the three border provinces. This has been the main item on the substantive agenda of the negotiations between the parties in recent years. In the Philippines, the NDF's refusal to sign a ceasefire before the government committed to certain political and economic reforms and agreed to comply with some of its demands, such as the release of people it considers covered by the immunity agreement of signed between the parties, became one of the primary obstacles to the negotiations. In Nagaland, one of the breakthroughs of

Asia was also the part of the world where intergovernmental bodies participated the least in mediating and facilitating dialogue

the year was getting the armed group NSCN-K to return to the ceasefire agreement that it had abandoned in 2015.

Regarding the **evolution of the peace negotiations**, no final, global or structural agreement was achieved during the year, but progress was made in about half the processes we analysed. In the Korean peninsula, most analysts noted the summit that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un convened with US President Donald Trump and his three meetings with South Korean President Moe Jae-in. The joint statements signed by all three governments and the additional statements issued during the year by all three top leaders seem to suggest that significant progress was made in the denuclearisation and stabilisation of the Korean peninsula in 2018. Although details of the format, content and evolution of the discreet exploratory talks between the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives were not disclosed, there also seems to be reason for hoping that the dialogue between both sides will resume after being moribund for almost a decade. Meanwhile, in Mindanao, the approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law by Congress and the president after several years

of legislative procedure may also herald a historic turning point in the peace process and support implementation of the 2014 peace agreement and the demobilisation of tens of thousands of MILF fighters. The Afghanistan peace process also enjoyed very significant progress, as the government offered unconditional peace negotiations and the first ceasefire between the Afghan Armed Forces and Taliban militias was carried out since 2001. The US government seemed committed to dialogue, even holding several meetings with Taliban representatives in Qatar. In other cases, even though the peace process might not have developed in line with expectations as a whole, some positive steps were still taken. In Myanmar, for example, even though the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong failed to move towards the signing of a peace agreement with the many armed groups participating in it, two new groups did join the 2015 nationwide ceasefire agreement and negotiations to join the Panglong conference moved ahead with several other groups that had not signed the agreement. There were also some positive developments in the process in the Indian state of Nagaland, such as when a faction of the NSCN-K joined peace talks with the government, reversing its previous decision to withdraw from the ceasefire agreement, and when the NNPG platform, which represents six Naga insurgent groups, decided to resume negotiations with the government following demonstrations by an insistent Naga civil society.

Finally, with regard to the **gender perspective**, none of the peace negotiations in Asia addressed the women, peace and security agenda specifically or directly and there was no significant female presence in the peace negotiations. However, some headway was made in this regard compared to previous years. In Myanmar, for

example, there was an increase in the participation of women in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong compared to previous sessions, although the percentage of female participants (17%) was still far below the 30% demanded by women’s organisations. In this regard, it should also be noted that the agenda of the conference included topics such as female participation and discrimination and legislation to end gender violence. In Afghanistan, President Ashraf Ghani said that the 12-person team formed to carry out negotiations with the Taliban would be composed of men and women, while some statements or gestures by the Taliban movement during the year suggested that it may be softening its stance on women’s rights. The female deputy governor of the southern Thai province of Narathiwat, one of those affected by the armed conflict, urged the government to include more women in the negotiations with Mara Patani. In addition to the progress regarding greater female participation in peace negotiations, many women’s organisations played an important role in advocacy and pressure for starting, continuing or resuming dialogue in various contexts, involving demonstrations, carrying out outreach projects and submitting proposals to the negotiating parties.

4.2. Case study analysis

East Asia

China (Tibet)	
Negotiating actors	China, Tibetan government-in-exile
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	--

Summary:

The negotiating process between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama began in 1979, following a meeting in Beijing between Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Thondup, in which Xiaoping reportedly opened the possibility of discussing all subjects except the independence of Tibet. In the years that followed, various confidence-building measures were carried out between the parties, such as the recognition of mistakes and the promise of far-reaching reforms by Beijing, authorisation for the Tibetan government-in-exile (located in northern India since 1959) to conduct four missions in Tibet between 1979 and 1980 to learn about the situation first-hand, and even the start of exploratory talks in Beijing in 1982 and 1984. However, no negotiating process materialised between the parties in the second half of the 1980s. This was due to several issues, such as Beijing’s refusal to engage in political negotiations over the conflict and to discuss some of the Tibetan proposals on the status of Tibet, which were specified in the Five-Point Peace Plan for Tibet (1987), the Strasbourg Proposal (1988) and the Guidelines for Tibet’s Future Policy and Basic Features of Its Constitution (1991). After a visit by Gyalo Thondup to Beijing in 1992 and a visit by a Tibetan delegation in 1993, the negotiations between both sides were interrupted for almost a decade, which almost coincided with the period when Jiang Zemin was president of China. From 2002 to early 2010, nine rounds of negotiations took place between the Chinese government and representatives of the

Dalai Lama (Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen), in which the Tibetan party proposed the Middle Way (whereby the Tibetans would give up on independence and Beijing would grant genuine autonomy to the regions historically inhabited by the Tibetan population) and in which rapprochement was hindered by many issues, such as the concept of Greater Tibet, Beijing’s accusations that the Dalai Lama wanted to destabilise Tibet and dismember China and the Chinese government’s insistence that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times.

Expectations rose throughout the year regarding a possible resumption of Sino-Tibetan negotiations, which were interrupted in 2010 after the head of the Tibetan government-in-exile (officially called the Central Tibetan Administration, or CTA) acknowledged in April that despite the lack of any official communication with the Chinese government, exploratory talks between both sides had resumed. In fact, CTA leader Lobsang Sangay publicly declared that unofficial exploratory meetings had begun and that envoys from Beijing had on several occasions travelled to India (seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile), although he also appealed to realism, recalling that the nine rounds of talks that took place until 2010 produced no tangible results and that China had not altered its original stance. Regarding the Tibetan position, Lobsang Sangay once again declared that he was willing to renounce Tibet’s independence and focus negotiations on Beijing granting genuine autonomy to the region. The president of the CTA acknowledged his willingness to engage in possible talks with the Chinese government, but also noted that since it does not recognise the Tibetan government-in-exile, the meetings would be held between envoys of the Dalai Lama and Beijing. Later, in October, a prominent member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, Youdon Aukatsang, confirmed the exploratory meetings between both parties and hoped that they would lead to the resumption of more formal negotiations as soon as possible. Youdon Aukatsang recalled that the Tibetan Parliament had unanimously approved the Middle Way, consisting of renouncing independence and demanding genuine autonomy for Chinese regions historically inhabited by a Tibetan majority, and noted that some of the items that could be on the substantive negotiating agenda would be internal security, the status of Tibetan as the main language of the region and the withdrawal of illegal settlements of non-Tibetan populations in China.

Gender, peace and security

There is no evidence that any woman is participating in the exploratory talks that the Chinese government and Tibetan representatives restarted in 2018, nor that the women, peace and security agenda was included in the issues to be addressed. In August 2018, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) sent the Central Tibetan Administration its report of recommendations on gender equity and women’s empowerment, after having held consultations with around 30 women from different fields in June. Some of the recommendations in the document, which sought to

review and strengthen the women’s empowerment policy developed by the CTA for the first time in 2008 and revised in February 2017, included: to conduct annual or biannual reviews of the aforementioned gender equity policy, to adopt a gender-based and human rights-based approach, to develop an action plan to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and to create institutional infrastructure with a clear mandate gender equity and women’s empowerment issues and to equip the current Office of Women’s Empowerment with enough human resources to incorporate a gender perspective in all the CTA’s policies and programmes. According to this, in 2017, 45% of the people working in the CTA were women, with that percentage reaching 48% in the Department of Education and 60% in the Department of Health.

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

Summary:

Although the high points of the negotiations between North Korea and South Korea were the presidential summits held in the 21st century (2000, 2007 and 2018), there have been attempts at rapprochement to move forward on the path of reunification and cooperation since the 1970s. Thus, in 1972, both countries signed the North-South Korea Joint Statement, outlining some measures for reunification and reducing the arms race, among other issues. In late 1991, both countries signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation; a few weeks later, they signed the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The former, which was achieved after five rounds of negotiations begun in September 1990 between the prime ministers of both countries, was considered a historic agreement and a turning point in the relationship between both countries by much of the international community, as it included commitments to mutual non-aggression, respect for the political and economic systems of each country, peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and the promotion of measures for the reunification of both countries. However, the measures included in the agreement were not fully implemented, partly because of the tensions generated by the North Korean weapons programme. In 1994, former US President Jimmy Carter exercised his good offices between the leaders of both countries to contain the crisis generated by the progress made in the programme and Pyongyang’s decision not to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to abandon the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the 21st century, under a policy of rapprochement with North Korea (called the Sun Policy) promoted by Kim Dae-jun and continued by his successor, Roh Moon-hyun, in 2000 and 2007 Pyongyang hosted the first two presidential summits since the end of the Korean War, in which both countries again pledged to boost cooperation to move towards greater stability and the eventual reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Alongside the start of negotiations between North Korea and the US, during the year North Korea and South Korea engaged in the closest rapprochement in recent decades, with the historic organisation of three summits between

the leaders of both countries and the implementation of many agreements and confidence-building measures.

Following North Korean leader Kim Jong-un’s offer of immediate and unconditional talks with South Korea during his usual New Year’s address and South Korea’s announcement that it was postponing its annual joint military exercises with the US, both countries held several rounds of talks in which they reached several agreements, including parading under the same banner and competing jointly in various athletic events during the Winter Olympic Games that took place in February in the South Korean city of Pyeongchang and establishing a military communication line to facilitate the logistics of the talks. For the Winter Olympic Games, several joint cultural and athletic activities were held between the delegations of both countries, including a reception at the presidential palace hosted by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, where the North Korean delegation led Kim Jong-un’s sister, Kim Yo-jong, and Kim Yong-nam, the head of state and the highest-ranking North Korean dignitary ever to visit South Korea, invited South Korean President Moon Jae-in to a presidential summit in North Korea, though without specifying the date. In early March, a few days after this reception, Kim Jong-un received several South Korean special envoys in Pyongyang to discuss inter-Korean relations and preparations for the aforementioned summit (the date of 27 April was agreed), as well as to probe the potential beginnings of talks between North Korea and the US regarding the denuclearisation of North Korea. Subsequently, these special envoys met with US President Donald Trump, who expressed his willingness to meet with Kim Jong-un in May, and travelled to Japan and China to obtain support from both governments for both tracks of negotiations that were being discussed (North Korea-South Korea and North Korea-USA). Pyongyang’s willingness to participate in both negotiating processes was confirmed during a trip by Kim Jong-un to China at the end of the month (the first of the three that he made to that country early in the year), during Kim Jong-un’s reception of a delegation of South Korean musicians and politicians in Pyongyang in early April and in the North Korean government’s decision to suspend intercontinental ballistic missile tests and to close the Punggye-ri nuclear testing facility, as reported by the state news agency KNCA.

In these circumstances, **the summit between both presidents took place in South Korea on 27 April, making Kim Jong-un the first North Korean leader to set foot on South Korean soil. In the joint declaration to end the summit, both leaders mentioned its historical nature and committed, among other things, to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula,** the organisation of another presidential summit in North Korea at the end of the year, regular telephone communication, the organisation of meetings of families separated by the Korean War, the improvement of transport and communications between both countries and the end of propaganda on the border. There was another meeting between both leaders in the border

town of Panmunjom in late May. This secret meeting was held at the request of Kim Jong-un during a crisis in the talks between North Korea and the US and a few days after Moon Jae-in met in Washington with Donald Trump.

In the following three months, the first high-level military talks were held since 2007 and many agreements were achieved to implement the road map agreed by both countries in late April, including the restoration of cross-border communication, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the shared border, the gradual reduction of troops in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), the operationalisation of a 2004 agreement to prevent clashes in the Yellow (or East) Sea and the restoration of lines of military communication. Some confidence-building measures were also carried out, such as meetings of families separated by the Korean War and the joint parade and formation of combined teams during the Asian Games held in Indonesia in late August. In this atmosphere of cooperation between both countries, a liaison office was opened in mid-September in the North Korean border city of Kaesong to facilitate communication and cooperation between them. A few days later, between 18 and 20 September, a new summit was held between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang, where they discussed topics such as peace and the economic integration and denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. Regarding this last point, although North Korea was not yet in a position to provide a timetable on its denuclearisation or an inventory of its nuclear arsenal, Kim Jong-un said he was willing to permanently deactivate the country's largest nuclear reactor in Yongbyon and to authorise international supervision as some nuclear test and missile launch facilities were being dismantled. At the summit in Pyongyang, both leaders also pledged to reopen the roads and railroads linking both countries by the end of the year and to reactivate tourist trips to Mount Kumgang (in North Korea) and reopen the Kaesong industrial complex, a symbol of cooperation between the two countries in the past.

Gender, peace and security

There is no public record that the negotiations between both governments in 2018, including the three presidential summits, included any issues related to the women, peace and security agenda, despite the fact that there were several women's organisations that demonstrated and engaged in political advocacy throughout the year to guarantee female participation in the peace process between both countries and the inclusion of a gender perspective in the negotiations. In this regard, three women's organisations (Women Cross DMZ, Women Peace Walk and Nobel Women's Initiative) issued a joint statement calling for the full

North and South Korea experienced the closest rapprochement in recent decades during the year, with the historic organisation of three summits between the leaders of both countries

and equal participation of women in the negotiating process between the two countries, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325. In this sense, some analysts have highlighted the role played by Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un's sister, who was the only woman among the six delegates who participated in the inter-Korean presidential summit that took place in late April. Months earlier, Kim Yo-jong had also led the North Korean delegation that travelled to South Korea for the Winter Olympic Games that took place in February in the South Korean city of Pyeongchang. Kim Yo-jong was also the person who handed the letter to South Korean President Moon Jae-in inviting him to a presidential summit in North Korea, which is viewed as the beginning of the dialogue between both countries at the highest level and culminated with the three summits held during year.

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

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

to a moratorium on ballistic and nuclear tests, the tension between both countries rose after Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011 and the North Korean weapons programme intensified.

The rapprochement between the United States and North Korea culminated in the historic summit between the two countries' respective leaders, Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un, in Singapore in mid-June, which addressed the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and other issues. During a reception at the presidential palace hosted by President Moon Jae-in to mark North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics in the South Korean city of Pyeongchang in February, a North Korean delegation said that it was willing to start talks with the USA. A few days later, Kim Jong-un met with several South Korean emissaries in Pyongyang to discuss the contents and conditions of such talks and said he was ready to meet directly with Donald Trump. These same emissaries travelled to Washington and obtained Trump's promise to meet with Kim Jong-un in May. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo travelled to Pyongyang to discuss the details of the presidential summit at the end of March and again in early May. At around the same time, Kim Jong-un travelled to Beijing for the second time in a few weeks to discuss China's position on the denuclearisation of North Korea. Despite all these meetings, relations between Pyongyang and Washington soured in May, especially after the US and South Korea conducted joint military exercises, Washington questioned Pyongyang's willingness to denuclearise and the North Korean government accused the United States of seeking its unilateral disarmament and of not engaging in sincere dialogue. Thus, Donald Trump cancelled the summit with Kim Jong-un at the end of the month, but the next day the White House said it was working with a scenario in which the summit could take place. In fact, at the end of May, Mike Pompeo met in New York with North Korean delegates to continue preparations for it.

Finally, **on 12 June, the summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un took place in Singapore, in which both committed to the start of new relations between the two countries, to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, to repatriation of the remains of the US soldiers who died during the Korean War (1950-53) and to the United States' offer of security guarantees to North Korea** (in fact, at a press conference after the summit, Donald Trump contemplated the possibility of suspending the annual military exercises carried out in the Korean peninsula). In the weeks following the summit, many diplomatic meetings were held to follow up on the joint Singapore Statement, such as Kim Jong-un's official trip to China in mid-June and Mike Pompeo's trip to Pyongyang to early July, and some of the commitments made in the statement, such as the repatriation of the remains of US soldiers, were put into practice at the end of July. Many ministerial and

technical meetings were still held during the rest of the year to implement the joint Singapore Statement and to prepare for a second presidential summit scheduled for early 2019; Mike Pompeo travelled to Pyongyang on several occasions, for example. In addition, both sides made gestures to help the talks to continue. For example, the United States suspended joint military exercises with South Korea scheduled for December and North Korea conducted a military parade that did not include any intercontinental ballistic missiles able to transport nuclear warheads or other offensive heavy military equipment in early September. However, **there were several sources of tension in the second half of the year, with the United States and North Korea trading accusations.** Although neither party had set preconditions for holding the second presidential summit, which according to Trump could take place in January or February 2019, the US administration accused Pyongyang of failing to provide a timetable for denuclearisation or an inventory of its nuclear arsenal, to take specific steps supporting the assumption that they have initiated any type of disarmament and to authorise that any such measure may be subject to international

During the historic summit between Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump in Singapore, both leaders committed to the start of new relations and the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula

inspection. As an example of the rising tension experienced in the second half of the year, a meeting in New York between Mike Pompeo and North Korean chief negotiator Kim Yong Chol was cancelled in November after a North Korean think tank revealed that Pyongyang was considering resuming its nuclear activities if there was no relaxation of the sanctions that the United Nations and several countries have imposed on North Korea for its nuclear and ballistic tests. In that vein, South Korean President Moon Jae- travelled to Europe in mid-October to meet with leaders from

different countries to seek support for relaxing the current sanctions imposed on North Korea. However, in line with the US position, several countries supported keeping the sanctions in place until North Korea takes concrete steps towards denuclearisation. In the second half of the year, North Korea raised its tone against the US for its overly-aggressive policy in pursuit of its nuclear disarmament. In mid-December, a few days after the US Treasury Department announced new sanctions against three North Korean senior government officials due to the human rights situation in North Korea, one of them considered the regime's second in command, the North Korean state news agency KCNA reported that the new sanctions imposed by Washington could forever block the path of denuclearisation that the country had undertaken since the presidential summit in June and provoke the worst crisis in relations between the US and South Korea in recent years.

Gender, peace and security

A few weeks before the summit between North Korea and the US, at a time of diplomatic tensions that were about

to lead to the cancellation of the summit, Women Cross DMZ and Women's Peace Walk, bringing together more than 30 women's organisations, and the Nobel Women's Initiative, led by Mairead Maguire, organised a trip to the Korean peninsula by an international delegation of more than 30 female academics and activists from various countries. The delegation organised the International Women's Peace Symposium, held meetings with representatives of the South Korean government and civil society and crossed the Unification Bridge in the Demilitarised Zone together with more than 1,000 women on the same day in late May that the leaders of North Korea and South Korea met a few kilometres away in Panmunjom. To mark the visit, the aforementioned women's organisations issued a statement requesting that some demands be taken into account during the summit between North Korea and the US, such as the replacement of the 1953 armistice with a peace treaty; the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, appealing not only to North Korea but also to other nuclear states; the conversion of the Demilitarised Zone into a Peace Park, which would involve the removal of more than one million mines in the region; the reunification of families separated by war; and the reduction of both countries' military budgets and an end to their arms race.

The peace process progressed noticeably throughout the year: the first ceasefire was agreed since the invasion of the country in 2001 and direct meetings were held between the US government and Taliban representatives

the Afghan government, the Taliban and the US government), meetings were held and statements were made throughout the year that reflected remarkable progress compared to previous years. **Several facts stood out especially: all the parties' willingness to engage in dialogue without conditions, the first ceasefire between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban insurgency since the US invasion of the country in 2001 and the addition of the United States to the dialogue as the Taliban have requested and as a prelude to an intra-Afghan dialogue as demanded by the government.**

The year began with **President Ashraf Ghani's offer of unconditional peace negotiations, including measures such as a ceasefire and prisoner exchanges.** Kabul would recognise the Taliban as a political organisation in exchange for recognition as a legitimate government. This proposal was offered as part of the Kabul Process, which brings the Afghan government together with international governments. It also came amidst serious violence and intense clashes and attacks, as well as the realisation that

the presence of actors like ISIS was pushing all parties to search for a negotiated solution. Diplomatic players like the former head of UNAMA, Kai Eide, pointed out that this was a good opportunity since the proposal did not include pre-conditions or ultimatums, adding that initial talks with the US followed by an intra-Afghan dialogue between the government and the Taliban could be an effective roadmap, with Washington's involvement in the process being a "small price" to pay.

The Taliban did not respond to Ghani's offer, but in June the **president announced a ceasefire between 17 and 19 of that month, coinciding with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, to celebrate the end of Ramadan. The Taliban responded to the announcement two days later with a promise to cease all attacks against Afghan forces for three days**, though attacks against international forces were still allowed. The Afghan government indicated that it was willing to discuss the existence, role and future of the international military forces and the US State Department supported this by saying that it was prepared to support, facilitate and participate in the discussion. The ceasefire was very important, as it was the first since the 2001 invasion. Moreover, its observance indicated the extent of the Taliban leadership's control over its members. Some media outlets stated that during the days that the ceasefire was effective, members of the Afghan Armed Forces and Taliban insurgents fraternised in different parts of the country, even taking pictures together. In addition, Washington indicated that it had asked Pakistan for support to facilitate direct negotiations between Afghanistan and the Taliban insurgency and that multiple paths to promote peace in the country were being pursued. In July several media outlets reported that US government representatives had met with Taliban representatives at least twice

South Asia

Afghanistan	
Negotiating actors	Government, Taliban insurgents, USA
Third parties	Pakistan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, 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.

The peace process in Afghanistan progressed noticeably throughout 2018 and, although formal talks were not initiated between the different actors involved (mainly

in the previous three months. The meetings allegedly took place in Qatar with the collaboration of Pakistan, which had guaranteed the travel of Taliban members to the country. These meetings verified that the Trump administration had instructed its diplomats to initiate direct talks with the Taliban, in a significant change in its policy of seeking a military victory in the Asian country. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also acknowledged that there would be no preconditions for dialogue and that all issues could be discussed, including the US military and NATO presence in Afghanistan. However, the breakdown of the ceasefire and the resumed fighting revealed the obstacles to the process, as the Taliban did not accept the government's proposal to extend the ceasefire for three months.

The US government took further steps to strengthen the process and appointed Zalmay Khalilzad, a diplomat of Afghan origin and former ambassador to the country, to be the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation. Khalilzad made several trips to Qatar where he **met with Taliban representatives. There was also a meeting in the United Arab Emirates in mid-December.** He called for both parties to form negotiating teams. In November, the Taliban were optimistic about the negotiating process with the United States. Although President Ghani supported direct US involvement in the negotiations, Khalilzad's meetings with the Taliban were a source of tension between both governments, since they were conducted without informing the Afghan government, which learned of them from the media. However, despite the tension following the first meetings between the US and the Taliban, during the international conference on Afghanistan in Geneva in late November, Ashraf Ghani announced that he had formed a 12-person team to negotiate with the Taliban led by Abdul Salam Rahimi, who is very close to Ghani. The president said that as a result of a possible peace agreement, he wanted the Taliban to be included in a democratic and inclusive society. However, after the meeting in the United Arab Emirates in December, the Taliban refused to meet with the government, saying that their position had not changed.

Alongside the process between the Taliban and the United States, Russia tried to maintain an active position and made an attempt to bring all the actors together in August, but both the Afghan government and the US rejected the invitation to participate in a forum to be held in Moscow with the Taliban and several international governments in September. However, in November the Russian government achieved its goal with a meeting that included a Taliban delegation and became known as the "Moscow format". The Afghan government delegated its participation in the High Peace Council and an observer from the US Embassy also attended. The meeting was attended by representatives of the governments of China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. India, an ally of the Afghan government, sent two former diplomats unofficially. Although no real progress was

made, the mere fact that the meeting was held at all was considered a success, especially for Russian diplomacy.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding the gender dimension in the peace process in Afghanistan, President Ashraf Ghani said that the 12-person team formed to conduct negotiations with the Taliban would be composed of men and women. In preceding months, Ghani had publicly stated that women should be part of any process with the Taliban, recognising the growing role they are playing in Afghan society, where they are occupying more and more public positions. The Taliban may also be softening its position on women, as evidenced by different events that happened throughout the year. During the June truce, different photographs emerged of Taliban fighters with a civilians, including women, and even female media professionals. In July, the media reported a meeting in Qatar between Taliban leaders and a US delegation led by diplomat Alice G. Wells. Also, during the meeting in Moscow in November, Taliban representatives agreed to give interviews to female journalists. At the same meeting, Habiba Sarabi, a member of the High Peace Council and the only woman in attendance, asked the Taliban when they planned to add a woman to the talks. The Taliban delegation responded that they were willing to recognise the rights of women in Islam, education, work and property, and that the only requirement was that they wear a veil.

India (Nagaland)	
Negotiating actors	Government, NSCN-IM, NNPG: GPRN/ NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), NNC, FGN, NSCN(R), NPGN (Non-Accord) and NNC/ GDRN/NA
Third parties	--
Relevant agreements	Framework agreement (2015)

Summary:

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

The year 2018 ended without the signing of the expected peace agreement, even though the leading actors, and especially the Indian government, insisted that the

process was nearing its end, as in previous years. However, **significant progress was achieved in the second half of the year, when the armed opposition group NSCN-K rejoined the ceasefire agreement that it abandoned in 2015.** The year had begun with a shaky political situation due to the boycott of the legislative elections staged by several Naga civil society organisations, which called for postponing them until a solution to the conflict could be achieved through the peace negotiations. Although the political parties initially followed through with the boycott, including the Hindu nationalist party BJP, which currently controls the Indian government, they finally desisted and presented their candidates for the elections. Neiphiu Rio was elected the new chief minister of Nagaland, having already held the office on previous occasions. The main obstacle to the negotiations continued to be the issue of the integration of all the Naga territories and the definition of the status of the Naga population in the states adjacent to Nagaland. For the first time since the signing of the 2015 framework agreement, which should serve as the basis for any future final agreement, part of its secret contents were leaked, revealing that it provided for a solution whereby Nagaland would remain in the Indian federation with a special status and the territorial boundaries of the states would not be modified. The tension over the issue of the border states with Nagaland was palpable in August, when a meeting scheduled between the Indian government and the armed group NSCN-IM in the state of Arunachal Pradesh was cancelled due to protests by different parts of society there. The NSCN-IM also stated that the integration of all areas inhabited by the Naga population was an essential part of the negotiations. Before this meeting was cancelled, in June, the talks had also run into serious difficulties when the six armed groups making up the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) abandoned the negotiations with the government following the security forces' raid of the home of one of their leaders who was in Delhi to participate in the talks. The NNPG resumed negotiations a few days later, citing the interest of the Naga people and urged on by civil society organisations. Civil society groups stressed the importance of the ceasefire and urged all parties to renew their commitment to it.

In the middle of the year, it emerged that the armed group NSCN-K was splitting and that a faction led by Khango Konyak was considering joining the talks with the government. One faction consisted mainly of Naga from India, while the other faction was primarily composed of Naga from Myanmar. The announcement was made by the group's spokesman, Isak Sumi, after Burmese Naga leader Yung Aung assumed control of the armed group, displacing Khango Konyak, in what some analysts described as a manoeuvre orchestrated by the Indian government to get the Indian Naga faction to join the process. **Finally, in December, the NSCN-K faction**

A women's organisation, the Naga Mothers Association, played a central role in ensuring that the armed group NSCN-K rejoined the ceasefire agreement after abandoning it in 2015

led by Khango Konyak and Isak Sumi decided to resume the ceasefire and join the agreement. In response to this decision, Indian government negotiator R. N. Ravi pointed out that the government had never ended the ceasefire and welcomed the armed group to the peace process, noting that New Delhi was committed to finding a global solution instead of various isolated agreements. The historical leader of the NSCN-IM, Khole Konyak, died in December and remarkably his funeral was attended by the Indian government's chief negotiator, R. N. Ravi, and many Naga political figures.

Gender, peace and security

Regarding the gender dimension of this peace process, **a women's organisation, the Naga Mothers Association (NMA), played a central role in ensuring that the NSCN-K rejoined the ceasefire agreement.** This organisation led parallel talks with the armed group for this purpose and several of its representatives have met at least three times with leaders of the armed group in Myanmar since 2015, until reaching the decision to resume the ceasefire. The last meeting took place in January at the armed organisation's headquarters. The NMA also met several times with representatives of the Indian government to demand an end to the ban on the NSCN-K. An NMA advisor noted that issues such as gender justice and the inclusion of women in the peace negotiations had also been discussed at meetings with the NSCN-K leaders. The NMA has played a crucial role in rapprochement between the parties to the conflict on several occasions in recent decades and has been one of the most active civil society organisations in promoting a negotiated solution to the armed conflict.

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, NMSP, LDU; armed groups not part of the: UWSP, NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, KNPP, NSCN-K, KIA, AA, TNLA, MNDA
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 take 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 reported no significant progress and remained at an impasse, while armed clashes continued in several parts of the country. Despite holding the third session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which had been preceded by two sessions in 2016 and 2017, the Burmese government and the insurgent groups made no headway towards achieving a peace agreement. The Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong began in 2016 to promote a negotiating process between the government and ethnic insurgent groups, with clear reference to the historic Panglong Conference of 1947. The difficulties in getting most of the insurgent organisations to stick to the ceasefire agreement and the Burmese military's control of the peace process, which was accused of pushing a strategy to divide the insurgents and undermine an inclusive peace agreement, were some of the main obstacles to a negotiated solution to the armed conflict gripping country.

The year began with the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by two insurgent groups that until then had remained outside it. After a meeting with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, General Min Aung Hlaing, in February the armed groups **New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU)** officially signed the agreement that was originally signed by eight groups in 2015. These two armed groups had previously been part of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), a platform for insurgent organisations that have not signed the NCA, which raised many questions about its future. It also revealed the divisions and difficulties of a highly fragmented and complex negotiating process, with parallel and interlinked processes between insurgent groups that have signed the NCA and the groups that have not signed it but are in talks with the government's Peace Commission. The UNFC stressed that the lack of agreement between all the groups and the government was due to problems related to the terminology used in a possible agreement. The main problem hinges on the description of the nation, since the UNFC proposes speaking of “the establishment of the Nation of a Federal Democratic Union”, whereas the military representatives in the negotiations advocate the formula “Nation of Democratic and Federal Union”. Despite the fact that there have been at least seven meetings, no agreement was reached for all the insurgent

groups. Meanwhile, the government also maintained active dialogue with the KNPP and both sides took joint steps aimed at signing the NCA, although the bilateral ceasefire agreement was broken in October.

The third session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong finally took place in July. It was postponed several times for various reasons, including because the national dialogues that were supposed to take place in Shan State and Rakhine State prior to the conference had not been held. The insurgent groups said that the Burmese Armed Forces had prevented public discussions before the talks and the military said that these discussions were not a requirement for the national dialogues. Given the situation, at a meeting of the Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting, in which the NMSP and the LDU also participated, the Burmese government and the insurgents jointly decided to postpone the conference. Furthermore, the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST), comprising leaders of armed groups that have signed the NCA, formed two teams to hold informal talks with the government on political and security issues. **The ten armed groups that signed the NCA participated in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong. The Northern Alliance coalition was also invited to attend, but without the possibility of speaking. The Northern Alliance coalition consists of the Arakan Army (AA), Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), groups that held meetings with Aung San Suu Kyi and were offered opportunities to sign bilateral agreements enabling negotiations for signing the NCA, which they rejected,** though they did express their willingness to continue the dialogue. The clashes between groups that have not signed the NCA and the Burmese Armed Forces were intense at various times of the year. During the conference, the Burmese Armed Forces presented themselves as the representatives of the people of Myanmar, demonstrating their control of the country and the weakness of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. The conference ended with no notable progress and with Aung San Suu Kyi calling for a strategy for peace that would enable them to agree on a framework for political dialogue, demonstrating the erratic nature of the process in recent years. However, in the final months of the year, the KNU and RCSS announced that they were temporarily withdrawing from the peace negotiations.

In September, the government convened a meeting involving over 40 actors related to the peace process, including experts, observers, former negotiators and ethnic political party representatives. In October, a meeting was held between the state counsellor, the chief of the Armed Forces and the ten armed opposition groups that signed the NCA in order to thaw the process. During the meeting, the military insisted that the armed groups demonstrate their commitment to non-secession. Groups that had not signed the NCA were not invited to the meeting, which ended with no progress other than agreement on a calendar for future negotiations.

Gender, peace and security

With regard to the gender dimension in the peace process, **there was an increase in female participation in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong compared to previous editions. Women accounted for 17% of the delegates**, though this is still far from the 30% required by different women's organisations. The Agenda included topics such as women's participation and discrimination and legislation to end gender violence. Organisations such as the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process continued with their advocacy work to promote the participation of women in the peace process and the women, peace and security agenda.

After several years of procedure, Congress finally passed the Bangsamoro Organic Law, considered the cornerstone for implementing the 2014 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF

Philippines (MILF)	
Negotiating actors	Government, MILF
Third parties	Malaysia, International Contact Group, Third-Party 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), Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (2018)

Summary:

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

Both the Philippine government and the MILF stated that President Rodrigo Duterte's ratification of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARM) in July is a historic milestone for the peace process in Mindanao, as it paves the way for implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2014, the replacement of the Autonomous Region

in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with a new political structure with greater powers, resources and geographic scope and the disarmament and demobilisation of the 30,000 to 40,000 fighters that the MILF claims to have. In the first half of July, a bicameral committee worked intensively to harmonise the versions of the OLBARM, also known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law and formerly as the Bangsamoro Basic Law, drafted by the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, which submitted a draft law in mid-2017 that was later ratified by the government. Given the difficulties in reconciling and the differences between the various drafts, and faced with the possibility that the final draft approved by Congress might not include essential aspects of the 2014 peace agreement, the MILF said several times during the first half

of the year that it would not disarm or demobilise within the expected timeframe if the final approved law did not respect the letter and spirit of the peace agreement. It also warned of the risk that its combatants' and the general population's growing frustrations over the slow pace of the peace process could end up strengthening the argument of armed groups in the region that oppose the peace negotiations, boosting their recruitment. In any case, the MILF considered the law finally signed by Duterte to be sufficiently respectful of the peace agreement and it was hailed and supported by several international organisations and many governments.

In the second half of the year, the peace process focused on the partial demobilisation of MILF troops and, especially, on the organisation of the referendum that will take place in January and February 2019 in those areas that will eventually be part of the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

A few days after the ratification of the OLBARM, MILF leader Ebrahim Murad guaranteed the complete demobilisation of the group, which according to some media sources had about 12,000 fighters, but which the group's main leaders claimed to have between 30,000 and 40,000 fighters. Murad also said that six of the largest MILF camps in Mindanao were already being turned into what he called "productive civilian communities" to help to reintegrate former MILF ex-combatants into civilian life. According to the peace agreement, 30% of the MILF's fighters will begin their disarmament and demobilisation following approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law; another 35% after the plebiscite is held and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority is appointed and the remaining 35% after the election of a new government in the autonomous region. In early December, the Commission on Elections declared that the referendum to ratify the OLBARM will finally be held on two dates: 21 January for regions that are currently part of the ARMM (and that will automatically go on to form part of the BARMM), in addition to the cities of Isabela (in the province of Basilan, which is

already part of the ARMM) and Cotabato (in the province of Maguindanao, which is also part of the ARMM); and on 6 February for regions that would eventually join the new region, specifically six cities in the province of Lanao del Norte and 39 municipalities (barangays) belonging to six cities in the province of North Cotabato. Areas adjacent to the Bangsamoro region whose municipal government requests their inclusion or in which 10% of registered voters request their participation in the referendum will also vote in it. According to the Commission on Elections, the decision to hold a second vote in February was partially motivated to buy more time to resolve roughly 100 requests to participate in the referendum received from municipalities adjacent to the new autonomous region. According to Manila, 2.8 million people had registered by mid-December, a figure clearly higher than initially expected and one that could rise depending on the response to the municipal requests to participate in the plebiscite. More than 150,000 ex-MILF combatants are also registered. Their participation in the vote was made easier by lowering some of the requirements for identification. In the final months of the year there were many displays of support for ratifying the OLBARMM in the plebiscite, including by the governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (the body that will be replaced by the BARMM), by most of the MNLF (including some close collaborators of the group's founder, Nur Misuari, who opposes it) and by many governments and international organisations that have been willing to cooperate to organise the referendum. Finally, in November the leader of the MILF paid a historic visit to the headquarters of the Philippine Army and the head of the Armed Forces visited one of the MILF's main camps.

Gender, peace and security

During the year, several women's organisations, such as the Bangsamoro Women Organisation, urged both houses of Congress to approve the OLBARMM, presenting proposals and participating in public hearings and discussions organised by the Senate and House of Representatives committees responsible for processing the law. Notable in this regard was the celebration in March of the second Bangsamoro Women's Economic and Development Summit, jointly organised by the OPAPP, the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women and the Commission on Elections to contribute to the discussion on the OLBARMM. At the summit, which is estimated to have been attended by some 500 women, Maisara Dandamun-Latiph, one of the members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, the body responsible for the first draft of the OLBARMM, guaranteed the **creation of a Bangsamoro Women's Commission to promote the rights of women in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao**. She also assured that 50% of those who will work in the regional government will be women and that a certain number of positions will be reserved for women both in the interim government

that will govern the new region until 2022 and in the Bangsamoro Council of Leaders, a consultative body that will advise government action in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. One of the bodies co-organising the event, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women, has a regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security between 2017 and 2019 that provides for the empowerment and participation of women in all public spheres, among other issues.

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

Summary:

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

Although both sides were about to resume formal peace negotiations in Oslo in late June, the government finally called them off, which sparked a rise in armed hostilities and worsened relations between them during the second half of the year. After several months of deadlock in the peace negotiations, in February representatives of the government of Norway, which is in charge of facilitating the dialogue, travelled to the Philippines to explore the possibilities of resuming the peace talks. In March, a group of more than 60 congressmen from different parties signed a joint statement urging the government to resume the peace talks, while some of the most influential civil society organisations, such as Sulong CARHRIHL and the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform, also urged both sides to continue with the peace talks. Shortly after these calls were made,

NPA founder Jose Maria Sison also publicly stated that the NDF was willing to resume the talks, adding that they could start whenever President Rodrigo Duterte wanted. As a result, in April Duterte announced his intention to resume the talks and established a 60-day timetable for re-establishing them, warning that this was probably the government's last attempt to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict and stressing the importance of reaching a cessation of hostilities agreement in the course of the negotiations. After these statements, both the secretary of national defence and the chief of the Philippines Armed Forces urged the NPA/CPP/NDF to end their extortion and not to raise a coalition government again. Duterte also said that he wanted the peace negotiations to take place in the Philippines and not abroad. In this regard, he invited the main leaders of the NDF, especially Sison, to return to the Philippines, guaranteeing them safe conduct during the two-month timetable. The NDF's first reaction to the government's offer of dialogue was very positive, and it accepted Manila's challenge to shorten the timetable for the negotiations, with Sison declaring that this time both sides were determined to agree on a road map that would conclude an agreement before the end of 2018. However, both members of the NDF and Sison expressed reservations about travelling to the Philippines and declared their outright refusal to hold peace talks in the Philippines instead of a neutral place, as the parties had previously agreed.

In any case, during the informal and exploratory talks that took place in early May, both sides agreed to resume negotiations in Oslo by late June or early July, with the commitment to address issues such as an amnesty for certain prisoners and rural development reforms. The NDF also acknowledged having agreed to a cessation of hostilities in mid-June as a confidence-building measure for formal negotiations to resume. However, the day before the start of the cessation of hostilities, Sison said that it would be postponed for a week to give the government time to specify the release of NDF political advisors. The following day, the presidential advisor on the peace process, Jesus Dureza, said that Duterte had ordered the postponement of the negotiations for three months to allow time for consultations within the government on the meaning and scope of the reforms that should be discussed at the negotiating table. Manila also suspended the informal talks during that period of time, but kept communication open. Shortly after this announcement, the Department of Justice ordered the arrest of the NDF advisors that had been released to participate in the negotiations. In late June, Jose Maria Sison declared that the NDF would no longer negotiate with any government headed by Duterte and even called for his overthrow. However, Duterte quickly retorted that only the NDF's National Council could make the decision not to negotiate again with the government. Amidst these mutual accusations, the secretary of national defence and Duterte said that some of the main reasons why the government decided to cancel the negotiations were the opposition parties' lack of sincerity regarding the

cessation of hostilities, noting that on previous occasions they had used it tactically, to regroup and strengthen, and their insistence on forming a coalition government. This last accusation was denied categorically by the NDF.

In the second half of the year, the military confrontation heated up between the Philippine Armed Forces and the NPA, as did the tension between the government and the NDF.

In July, Sison said he was willing to resume talks if the government removed the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines from its list of terrorist organisations, if it respected the agreements signed since 1992 and if it invalidated the presidential proclamation issued in November 2017 that ended negotiations with the NDF. Duterte again offered security guarantees to Sison if he agreed to return to the Philippines to hold direct talks, but Sison rejected the offer outright. Given the circumstances, Manila announced that from then on it would hold peace talks with regional units of the NPA. The NDF categorically rejected this new approach by the government as a counterinsurgency strategy that only sought to achieve the demobilisation and surrender of its combatants and sow division between the leadership of the NDF (which has resided in Utrecht for decades) and the NPA fighters on the ground. In November, the head of the NDF's negotiating team, Fidel Agcaoli, refused to travel to the Philippines for security reasons shortly after Duterte cancelled the meeting planned with him and instead offered to meet with two cabinet ministers. In December, the government declared that the president had lost all hope of resuming talks with the NDF for the rest of his term and that he no longer had any interest in talking directly with Jose Maria Sison. In fact, at the request of the Philippine Armed Forces, Duterte said that he had no intention of ordering the suspension of hostilities that both the Philippine Army and the NPA usually observe for the Christmas holidays. Nevertheless, in early January 2019, Duterte said that he was willing to reopen the door to negotiations, though he demanded several conditions from the NDF and was especially reluctant to resume the talks with Sison, Fidel Agcaoli or Luis Jalandoni (the former head of the government's negotiating team). The secretary of national defence quickly seconded Duterte's claims, demanding that the negotiations take place in the Philippines and not abroad. Sison blasted Duterte's government and rejected the possibility that it can determine who represents or negotiates on behalf of the NDF, but also publicly announced the NDF's predisposition to dialogue. Agcaoli also urged a discreet meeting between both sides, facilitated by Norway, to explore the possibilities of resuming negotiations.

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 an agreement was reached in February on establishing a security zone in the southern part of the country, the central issue in the negotiations between the government and MARA Patani for the previous two years, **the peace negotiations remained virtually at an impasse since April. Not even the appointment of a new facilitator by Malaysia, the naming of a new negotiator by the government and the addition of three new groups to the MARA Patani negotiating team could thaw the frozen peace process.** Then, about two years after reaching a framework agreement on the need to establish security zones (or geographically located cessation of hostilities), in mid-February the parties announced an agreement to establish a pilot security zone in a district still to be determined. According to both parties, the security zone was not only linked to the fall or cessation of levels of violence, but also required addressing other issues such as drug trafficking, crime and the promotion of development projects in the region. Both parties also agreed on the creation of a “safe house” or coordination centre for the security zone where civil society should play an important role. In early March, a few days after this announcement, a delegation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation visited the southern part of the country after meeting with the government and expressing support for the negotiating process. However, tensions rose in March due to the difficulties that both sides’ technical teams seemed to find in fulfilling the commitments of the agreement on security zones disclosed in February, but above all due to MARA Patani’s criticism of the combatant reintegration programme led by the Burmese Armed Forces, which according to them was significantly weakening the armed groups in the south because thousands of combatants were receiving benefits from the programme. Shortly thereafter, in

mid-April, the leader of the military junta, Prayuth Chan-ocha, announced that by the end of the month the aforementioned security zone would be established in Cho-airong District (Narathiwat Province). According to several analysts, Prayuth’s unilateral announcement provoked the anger of MARA Patani, which expected a much more formal and ceremonious announcement to signify the importance of the agreement.

There were no new rounds of negotiations or significant progress in the peace process for the rest of the year, although there were important developments regarding the people involved in it. In August, the new Malaysian government led by Mahatir Mohamad (the former prime minister, from 1981 to 2003) **appointed Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor, the former inspector general of the police, to be the new facilitator of the negotiations.** In October, a few days before Mahatir Mohamad made an official trip to Thailand, Bangkok announced it was replacing the head of the negotiating team, General Aksara Kerdpol, with retired General Udomchai Thammasaroraj, until then commander of the Fourth Region in the southern part of the country. Shortly thereafter, the umbrella organisation MARA Patani announced that it had admitted three new insurgent groups, though without revealing their names, and claimed to have changed its name to Mara Patani Plus. According to some analysts, these changes in the structure of the negotiations and mediation could have helped to restart the dialogue, but the prospects receded after MARA Patani announced that it would make no new demands of the Thai government until there is a new elected government after the general elections, which are expected to be held in the first quarter of 2019. Moreover, despite the fact that the new facilitator met several times with some prominent BRN military leaders, the group again refused to participate in negotiations with the current military junta, calling for the international community’s active participation in facilitating dialogue and bilateral negotiations with the government. This last aspect is consistent with analyses finding that MARA Patani has no real control or influence over the BRN’s armed cells.

Gender, peace and security

The vice governor of Narathiwat, Patimoh Sadiyamu, called on the government to include more women in the peace negotiations with MARA Patani. In the same vein, an academic called for the creation of women’s coalitions to better influence the negotiations. Peace Agenda of Women (PAOW) is a coalition of women that has supported the progress of the negotiations, but some groups of women have not joined the platform and others have been critical of its excessive emphasis on establishing security zones in the south and its inability to shed light on some poorly known sides of the conflict, such as the use of torture, extrajudicial killings, censorship and harassment of persons suspected of belonging to the independence movement.

5. Peace negotiations in Europe

- In 2018, 14% of the peace processes in the world (7 of the 49) were in Europe.
- Some progress was made in 2018, such as the agreements on confidence-building measures in Moldova, the establishment of a direct line of communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the unilateral and definitive dissolution of the Basque group ETA.
- The peace process in Georgia ran into new difficulties, with the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia withdrawing from the incident prevention mechanisms, although the mechanism on South Ossetia resumed in December.
- Negotiations in Ukraine continued at a standstill, while relations between Ukraine and Russia deteriorated due to escalating military tension in the Azov Sea.
- The South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network was formally established to promote women's participation in peace processes in the region.
- Georgia and Moldova approved action plans on Resolution 1325. It was Georgia's third plan and Moldova's first, with the latter mostly focused on defence and security.

This chapter studies the main peace processes in Europe during 2018. 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 in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the start of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in Europe that were the scenario of peace processes during 2018.

Table 5.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2018

Peace processes and negotiations	Negotiating actors	Third parties
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Armenia, Azerbaijan	OSCE Minsk Group (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; Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom (guarantee countries)
Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ¹	OSCE, EU and UN; USA, Russia ²
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 and the Permanent Social Forum, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Ukraine (east)	Ukraine; representatives of the self-proclaimed popular republics of Donetsk and Luhansk; Russia ³	OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ⁵)

5.1. Negotiations in 2018: regional trends

Seven peace processes were identified in **Europe** in 2018, the same number as in 2017. These account for 14% of the 49 total peace processes worldwide in 2018. Only one of these seven peace processes referred to an active armed

conflict: the war in Ukraine, which began in 2014. The other active armed conflict in Europe, which has pitted the Turkish government against the Kurdish armed group PKK since 1984, continued without negotiations since the

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

last peace talks ended unsuccessfully in 2015, although several political and social actors in Turkey continued to carry out peace initiatives at various levels. The rest of the active processes address past armed conflicts or socio-political crises and, with the exception of Spain (Basque Country), all still occurred amidst socio-political crises, with different levels of intensity (high-intensity socio-political crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh and low-intensity crisis in Georgia in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in Moldova and in Serbia-Kosovo).⁶ **Geographically, 57% of the peace processes (four cases) took place in ex-Soviet countries.** Three of these four cases took place in the South Caucasus region, while the fourth dealt with Eastern Europe (Ukraine). The atypical multilateral dialogue process on the Basque issue was the only active process in Western Europe.

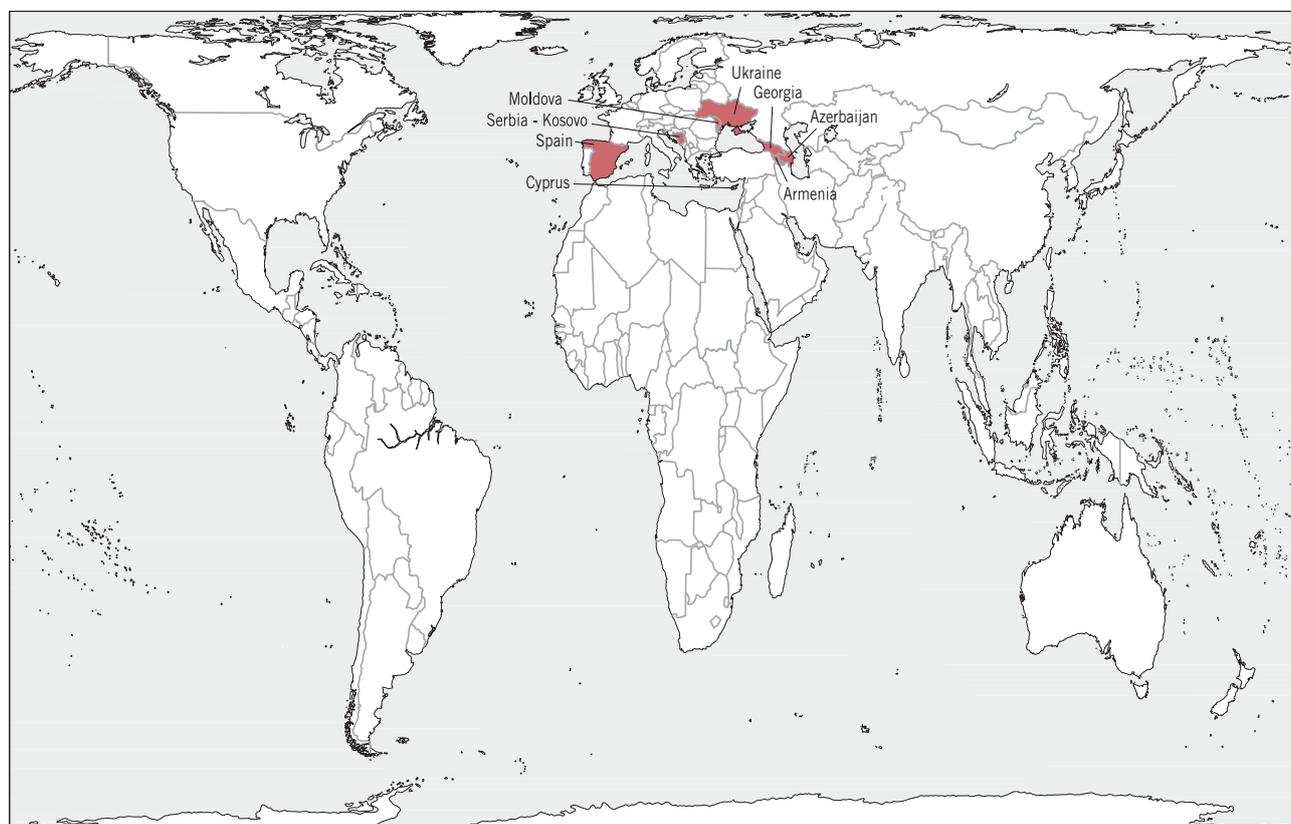
The governments of the states in which the conflicts occurred were negotiating parties in all the peace processes in Europe, except for Spain (Basque Country). The 2018 elections in Cyprus (the presidential election in the Republic of Cyprus and the legislative elections in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), Azerbaijan (presidential), Armenia (legislative) and Georgia (presidential) did not entail drastic changes in the peace processes in which these countries participated. In the legislative elections in the Turkish part of Cyprus, the Turkish Republican Party, which

All negotiating processes in Europe were supported by external third parties

finished second in the elections and supports unification of the island, formed a government with three other parties. In Armenia, after the so-called Velvet Revolution, whose massive protests forced the government to resign and led to new elections, the new prime minister upheld the Armenian governments' historical position in the dispute, while calling for the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh to join the peace process as negotiators. However, the year ended with the same format of direct negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan intact, mediated by the OSCE, and a secondary role for the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, who consult with the mediators.

Moreover, Europe continued to stand out for having third parties in the negotiations taking place there. **All the peace processes involved external parties performing mediation and facilitation tasks. There were international third parties in all the processes, and in the Basque Country there was a combination of local and international facilitators.** Some mediators and facilitators carried out their work through specific structures, such as the OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the US) in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, and the International Contact Group (ICG) and Social Forum in the Basque Country. Besides, most of the mediators and facilitators were intergovernmental organisations. The OSCE was a mediator or co-mediator in four of the seven peace processes in Europe:

Map 5.1. Peace negotiations in Europe 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in Europe in 2018

6. For further information about the development of these tensions, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on Conflicts, Human Rights and Peacebuilding*. Icaria, 2019.

Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Moldova (Transnistria) and Ukraine (east). The EU was the main facilitator of the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, a co-mediator in Georgia, an observer in Moldova and an “interested party” in the Cyprus peace process. The UN was the mediator of the long-running process in Cyprus and a co-mediator of the Georgian peace process. Through various functions, it also supported the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, facilitated by the EU. Some states maintained a prominent role as third parties, such as France and Germany in the so-called Normandy format of the peace process in Ukraine, in which Ukraine and Russia also participate.

Europe was the scene of a historic breakthrough in 2018: the unilateral, definitive and effective dissolution of ETA

There were hardly any changes in relation to third parties in 2018, although in the Basque Country, where ETA announced its dissolution in May, the ICG ended its role after considering that much of its mandate had been completed. In Cyprus, faced with the failure of the peace process in 2017, the UN Secretary-General sent a special envoy, Jane Holl Lute, to explore the prospects for restarting the process. The UN is the main mediator on the island. In addition, Ayse Cihan Sultanoglu was appointed to be the UN representative to the Geneva International Discussions (GID) in 2018. This is the first time that a woman has held the position of co-chief mediator in the peace process in Georgia.

The formal negotiating processes in Europe continued to be characterised by largely non-inclusive formats, with only the parties to the conflict and the mediators involved in the negotiating tables. However, in some cases there were mechanisms of dialogue and consultation with civil society actors, although these were mostly non-institutionalised, with the exception of Georgia. Regular consultations took place in 2018 between Georgian government representatives and the local population, including women. However, despite the lack of institutional mechanisms, various kinds of civil society actors promoted and participated in peacebuilding initiatives in all processes, although their capacity to influence formal negotiations was limited.

The issues on the **negotiating agendas** were diverse and the details on the various elements and status of discussions of each round were not always public. The substantive issues of many of the conflicts and processes, mostly the **status of the various territories in dispute**, remained missing or deadlocked. In Ukraine, for example, there was no progress regarding the status of Donetsk and Luhansk or the holding of elections under international supervision and Ukrainian legislation, which are provided for in the Minsk agreements. To implement them, Ukraine demands compliance with the security clauses of the agreements, including the withdrawal of weapons and foreign forces and restored control of the border with Russia. Regarding status, the issue of establishing an association of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo (a **decentralisation mechanism** included in the 2013 agreements) was on the agenda

The peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mostly by the lack of gender architectures

of the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, but it remained a source of disagreement and was not settled in 2018. Serbia and Kosovo also addressed the issue of a final agreement. Some statements by politicians and media outlets pointed out that negotiations on a final agreement could include the possibility of partition (both Serbian-majority areas of Kosovo and Albanian-majority parts of Serbia). In the Cyprus process, where rounds of meetings were held to explore the basis for resuming negotiations in 2018, the UN raised the need for new ideas for a new phase in the future. Media reports indicated that in the rounds of meetings the parties addressed issues such as alternative formats to a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation status, which has been proposed as a solution to the conflict for decades.

Other items on the agendas of the peace processes in Europe included issues related to **security**, including **incident prevention** in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The possibility of a UN peacekeeping mission in Ukraine continued to be addressed in 2018, though no agreement was achieved. The working group on security in the Geneva International Discussions (GID) of the Georgian peace process continued to address the issue of **the non-use of force**, though the parties could not come to an agreement. In the peace process in the Basque Country, the **dissolution of ETA** in May met the demands made by local political and social players and international facilitators for clarity and definitive nature of the dissolution. The processes also addressed some **human rights and transitional justice** issues, such as **victims and memory** as part of the Social Forum in the Basque Country, with some problems still unsolved. The **situation of the displaced population and its right to return**, among other human rights and humanitarian issues, continued to divide the parties to the conflict in Georgia and led to Abkhazia and South Ossetia to abandon the working group on humanitarian issues. Another item on the agenda in Moldova (Transnistria) was the discussion of **confidence-building measures**, which led to various agreements.

Regarding the **development** of the processes, important progress was made in Moldova (Transnistria) and Spain (Basque Country), although with difficulties and pending challenges in both cases, while the rest of the processes remained at an impasse and/or with serious problems. In Moldova, the reboost to the process since 2016 resulted in new agreements on confidence-building measures and progress in their implementation in 2018, although not in all the areas planned and with wide-ranging interpretations of the future course of the process and of the opportunities to move forward on the most substantive issue: political status. **There was a new milestone in the Basque Country: the unilateral, definitive and effective dissolution of ETA, after the progress made in previous years towards the end of armed activity (2011) and disarmament (2017) as part of a peacebuilding process without direct participation of**

the state, which is an important innovation in the global scope of peace processes. Even so, the question of victims and memory remained pending challenges, as did the situation of the prisoners. In contrast, the peace processes in Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Serbia-Kosovo and Ukraine (east) faced severe difficulties. Among them, the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia decided to abandon the incident prevention response mechanism (IPRM), though South Ossetia agreed to rejoin it at the end of the year. Disagreements between Serbia and Kosovo became glaring throughout the year, despite talk of a possible final agreement. In Ukraine, the peace process remained deadlocked, with serious difficulties in moving forward on substantive issues and with new developments that added uncertainty about its future direction. These developments included the Law of Reintegration, which authorises the Ukrainian president to impose martial law and to regain disputed areas by military means, as well as a general atmosphere of serious military tension between Ukraine and Russia in the Azov Sea. In relation to Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), despite the problems and general deadlock, the parties agreed on a direct communication mechanism to help to prevent incidents at the end of the year.

Regarding the gender perspective, the peace processes in Europe continued to be characterised mostly by the lack of female participation and gender mechanisms or architectures. Only in Cyprus was there a gender mechanism in the negotiating process, the gender equality committee, although it remained blocked for most of the year. None of the peace processes had mechanisms for the participation of women active in civil society at the formal negotiating level and only in Georgia did one of the parties establish indirect mechanisms. Specifically, the Georgian government maintained its practice of holding several consultations per year between Georgian government representatives in the negotiations and representatives of civil society and the population affected by the conflict, including women, with the support of UN Women. The rest of the cases lacked institutionalised mechanisms of direct or indirect participation. **Some of the peace processes included women in prominent roles, such as in Moldova (Transdnistria), where the chief negotiator was Cristina Lesnic,** and in Serbia-Kosovo, where the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, played the EU's role as facilitator. However, the inclusion of women in the negotiating or facilitating teams did not necessarily entail the adoption of a gender perspective in designing the process or in the negotiating agenda. It should also be noted that the main intergovernmental organisations acting as third parties in Europe, the OSCE and the EU, provided no data on the gender dimension of third parties.

Women active in civil society carried out peacebuilding initiatives and established mechanisms and raised demands for female participation in the peace processes. Developments in 2018 included the **official establishment of the South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network**, the sharing of experiences between women from Cyprus and Northern Ireland and the participation of women from

Serbia and Kosovo in spaces for dialogue to promote confidence-building, reconciliation and other aspects. Regarding the national action plans for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the Georgian government approved its third action plan, which maintains the mechanisms for consulting with women's organisations and women affected by the conflict. The Moldovan government approved its first action plan on Resolution 1325, focused mainly on security and defence.

5.2. Case study analysis

Eastern Europe

Moldova (Transdnistria)	
Negotiating actors	Moldovan government, self-proclaimed Republic of Transdnistria
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 Transdnistria (The Moscow Agreement) (1997)

Summary:

Transdnistria 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 Transdnistria over a possible unification between the independent Moldova and Romania, which have both historical and cultural links. Transdnistria 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 Transdnistria has fluctuated between proposals for a confederalist model that would give the area broad powers and demands full independence. Other points of friction in the negotiations include cultural and socio-economic issues and Russian military presence in Transdnistria. 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. Geostategic international disputes also hover over this unresolved conflict, which has deteriorated due to the war in Ukraine.

The peace process made fresh progress in 2018 in various parts of the confidence-building package that has been its focus since its re-launch in 2016, although several areas of the bloc remained pending agreement and implementation. Following the milestone of the signing of the Vienna Protocol in November 2017, in the opening months of 2018 the parties to the conflict moved forward on implementing three of the

five issues agreed upon in that protocol, and which, in turn, form part of the eight major confidence-building measures under discussion in the process: the reopening of the Gura Bicului-Bychok bridge, which connects both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River; Moldova's official certification and subsequent recognition of Transnistrian university diplomas, without Moldova's recognition of Shevchenko State University; and guarantees for the operation of Latin alphabet schools administered by Moldova, but located in Transnistria.⁷ Despite the initial impasse, in April an agreement was also finally reached on another pending issue: the registration of Transnistrian vehicle license plates so that they can travel internationally. In April an agreement was reached on a mechanism allowing it, in September two offices were opened in Transnistria for registering license plates with staff from the Moldovan public administration and Transnistrian institutions and in October vehicles could start circulating with neutral license plates.

In line with the headway made in the early months of the year, the new round of the 5+2 negotiating format held in Rome on 29 and 30 May confirmed that the parties were genuinely committed to making progress in the process, according to the head of the OSCE mission in Moldova and the OSCE mediator in the process, Michael Scanlan. In that round, the parties agreed to the Rome Protocol,⁸ in which they pledged to finalise all aspects of the package of eight measures before the end of 2018. The OSCE Special Representative for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Franco Frattini, said that 2018 could be a historic year for the peace process.

New achievements were made in the second half of the year. For example, in August the agreement giving Moldovan farmers access to Dubasari farmland began to be implemented. Two pending subjects related to cooperation in criminal cases and telecommunications presented more obstacles. The head of the OSCE mission, Claus Neukirch, stressed in November that the telephone issue was in its end stage. Neukirch pointed to headway made by focusing the approach on small steps. However, he said that the parties were not yet ready to address the final status issue. Some analysts cited the Moldovan government's concerns about the possibility of a telecommunications agreement because of the risks that the Transnistria Sheriff conglomerate (owned by the leader of Transnistria, Vadim Krasnoselsky) will extend its economic power to Moldovan territory.⁹ According to the same analysis, the prospect of legislative elections in Moldova in February 2019 offered little incentive to the Moldovan government to move forward on issues that may reduce votes among the Moldovan electorate.¹⁰ Moldovan President Igor Dodon and the

Moldova and Transnistria made progress on new agreements and on implementing technical confidence-building measures in 2018

leader of Transnistria, Vadim Krasnoselsky, met in December and addressed telecommunications and other subjects. The head of the Moldovan negotiating team, Vice Prime Minister for Reintegration Cristina Lesnic, said in December that Transnistria would introduce issues relating to security and status into the negotiations in 2019, stating that it had the support of some actors of the 5+2 format, which would have been reflected in the Ministerial Council of the OSCE.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process continued without mechanisms for women's participation at the formal level. However, some progress was made during the year. **Moldova adopted its first national action plan on women, peace and security in March**, which covers the period from 2018 to 2021. This is the result of dialogue in previous years between institutional and civil society representatives. **However, the action plan has no associated specific budget and is almost entirely focused on security and defence, with only one of the eight objectives referring to women's participation in peacebuilding** and in peacekeeping missions. In August, representatives of various Moldovan ministries and civil society, including Transnistrian civil society, as well as international actors, participated in a conference to design new steps and implementation strategies, designed by the local organisation Gender-Centru, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, the State Office for Reintegration, the Foreign Policy Association and the Austrian Development Agency.

Ukraine	
Negotiating actors	Ukraine; representatives of the self-proclaimed popular republics of Donetsk and Luhansk; Russia ¹¹
Third parties	OSCE (in the Trilateral Contact Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹²); Germany and France (in the Normandy Group, where Ukraine and Russia also participate ¹³)
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)

7. The remaining five measures that complete the eight-point package are: fixed and mobile telephone communication between Moldova and Transnistria, registration of Transnistrian vehicle licence plates, freedom of movement for the population on both sides of the conflict line, access to farmland in the Dubasari district and termination of criminal cases against public office holders of the parties to the conflict.

8. *Protocol of the official meeting of the permanent conference for political questions in the framework of the negotiating process on the Transnistrian settlement*, 29-30 May 2018.

9. De Waal, Thomas, "Moldova's Conflict: Unfreezing, In a Good Way?," Carnegie Europe, 6th March 2018.

10. Ibid.

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

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

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, a brief, non-renewed truce and a pact (Minsk Protocol) including a bilateral ceasefire supervised by the OSCE, 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, the departure of President Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia), when there were also some attempts at negotiation between the government and the opposition.

The peace process remained at a standstill on the substantive issues, while discussions continued, though no agreements were made, on a possible UN peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine. All this occurred amidst increased military tension in the Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait, which added uncertainty to the peace process. Regarding the substantive issues, in October the Ukrainian Parliament approved extending the special status law for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which it had initially passed in 2014, until December 2019. However, its implementation remained subject to the other parts of the 2015 Minsk agreements (elections in the eastern regions under Ukrainian electoral legislation), as well as the disarmament and withdrawal of Russian forces. In previous discussions about this law in 2018, some politicians questioned whether it was worth renewing, given that it had become less important in light of the new Law of Reintegration, enacted at its first reading in 2017 and definitively in January 2018, then ratified by the president in February. The Law of Reintegration depicts Russia as an aggressor in the conflict and considers it responsible for the physical, financial and moral damage caused to the Ukrainian state and its population; describes the eastern areas as occupied territory; authorises the president to impose martial law and to regain the disputed areas by military means; expands the powers of the Ukrainian Army; and assigns criminal responsibility to people who have been linked to the Donetsk and Luhansk administrations. The Russian government described the law as preparation for a new war. Thus, the new legislative framework added uncertainty to the parties' position on resolving the conflict.

Several meetings were held during the year in the Normandy format of the peace process (Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France), in addition to a meeting in May without Russia,

but overall the process remained deadlocked. At the June meeting in the Normandy format, Russia insisted on the need to implement the special status law through the Stenmeier formula (parallel implementation of security and political aspects, including elections in the eastern areas, and the establishment of a special status for areas under rebel control). Meanwhile, negotiations continued regarding the possibility of establishing a UN peacekeeping mission once Russia agreed to study that option. These negotiations began in 2017. At the end of the year, however, no agreement had yet been reached.

Ceasefires were achieved at various times of the year through agreements in the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) and with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. Truces were agreed upon and entered into force in early and late March, coinciding with Orthodox Easter; in early July, to facilitate the agricultural harvest; in late August, to reduce violence at the start of the school year; and in late December. However, the ceasefires were repeatedly broken, highlighting the fragility of the security situation and the constant risks for the peace process. According to the OSCE, the armed actors in the conflict zone continually deployed heavy weapons, tanks, mortars, artillery and multiple rocket launch systems in the areas forbidden by the Minsk agreements and deployed forces very close to each other. Also in 2018, the peace process was affected by rising military tension in the Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait. In the second half of the year, there was an increase in mutual accusations of provocation in the Azov Sea and complaints of Russians searching international ships heading for Ukrainian ports. Russia's capture of three Ukrainian vessels and crew in November triggered the tension. Ukraine responded by enforcing martial law and restricting men of Russian nationality from entering the country. The rise in regional tension added uncertainty to the future of the peace process.

The Law of Reintegration, approved by the Ukrainian Parliament in 2018, authorises the imposition of martial law and recovery of the disputed areas by military means

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process in Ukraine continued to be characterised by the lack of participation by women and civil society in its various levels, including the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. As part of the 37th session of the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review of Ukraine, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) issued a statement recalling that Ukraine had committed to support the effective participation of civil society in implementing the women, peace and security agenda. WILPF also denounced the impact of austerity measures on the women, peace and security agenda in 2018, as it did in 2017, and urged a change in the agenda of economic reforms.

Furthermore, women from civil society and government representatives from Ukraine and Moldova travelled to Georgia in May to learn about Georgia's experiences and

lessons related to the women, peace and security agenda and implementation of the national action plans. As part of the visit, they were able to meet with Georgian women active in civil society and others with institutional positions. The initiative was organised by UN Women. Meanwhile, women's organisations and activists continued to carry out peacebuilding initiatives in various spheres, including dialogues between women from different backgrounds and humanitarian assistance. A report by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security published in 2018 highlighted the role of women in peacebuilding in Ukraine¹⁴ and the promotion of the national action plan to mobilise women, although it also pointed to its limitations, such as the shortage of funds associated with it. In addition, UN Women and the Ukrainian government reached an agreement in 2018 that raises the status of the UN Women mission to that of a country office, which will further assist cooperation on gender equality issues.

Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a mechanism of direct communication to prevent incidents in late 2018

establish a direct communication mechanism to help to prevent incidents at the end of the year. The main challenges faced by the negotiating process during the year were the change of government in Armenia as a result of the massive anti-government protests, the security situation and pending commitments on incident prevention mechanisms and expanding the team of observers of the Office of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. Peaceful mass protests between April and early May against the continuation in power of president Serzh Sargsyan as new prime minister led to Sargsyan's resignation and replacement by one of the main protest leaders, Nikol Pashinyan. A member of the opposition Civil Contract party, Pashinyan became prime minister in May. The early elections in December resulted in victory for the Pashinyan-led My Step alliance with more than 70% of the vote, while Sargsyan's Republican Party failed to get enough votes to enter the House. However, the elections had low turnout (48.6%), in contrast to the high levels of mobilisation during the so-called Velvet Revolution, a name given to the April and May protests. Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the new prime minister publicly upheld Armenia's historic position of defending the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh and of refusing to return territories adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, although progress towards the end of the year fuelled expectations about the possibility of positive developments. Notable is the appointment of new Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanian, who analysts consider a reputable negotiator for his role as the main negotiator with the EU despite the failed association agreement.¹⁵ In a new development, Pashinyan supported the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities' direct participation in the negotiation process, aspiring to raise their status in the current format, in which they are consulted but not directly negotiating. However, the year ended without changes in the negotiating format.

Russia and the Caucasus

Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	
Negotiating actors	Government of Armenia, Government of Azerbaijan
Third parties	OSCE Minsk Group (Co-chaired by Russia, France and USA; 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 cease-fire 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 cease-fire have increased the alert warning in a context of an arms race a bellicose rhetoric and a regional scenario of geostrategic tensions.

The negotiating process on Nagorno-Karabakh made no headway during 2018, though the parties did agree to

There were no serious escalations of violence, but there was another year of continuous ceasefire violations, which caused at least 15 deaths in 2018 and mutual accusations of provocation and drone attacks. The co-mediators of the OSCE Minsk Group called for confidence-building measures to reduce the tension along the contact line at various times of the year and also urged compliance with the ceasefire and the removal of heavy weaponry. The co-mediators also sought to clarify various statements and security incidents in separate and joint meetings with the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers outside the UN General Assembly. The Armenian and Azerbaijani governments failed to reach agreement on the commitments made in 2016 and 2017 for the expansion of the Office of the Special Representative of the OSCE, a measure designed to strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring the security situation. Meanwhile, regarding

14. Warren, Roslyn; Applebaum, Anna; Fuhrman, Holly and Mawby, Briana, *Women's Peacebuilding Strategies Amidst Conflict Lessons from Myanmar and Ukraine*, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2018.
 15. De Waal, Thomas, *Armenia's Revolution and the Karabakh Conflict*, Carnegie Europe, 22 May 2018.

the previous commitment to achieve an incident prevention mechanism, Armenia and Azerbaijan reached an agreement in late September to create a direct communication channel between both countries' Ministries of Defence during an informal meeting at the summit of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The mechanism began operations in October and was followed by a drop in levels of violence, as voiced by the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities. The co-mediators of the OSCE welcomed this development during a trip in which they held separate meetings with Pashinyan in Yerevan and with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku and sat down with the de-facto authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan then met in December as part of the OSCE Ministerial Council. Both agreed to move forward on a negotiated settlement to the conflict. The mediating team held several meetings with various leaders throughout the year, including a joint meeting with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels in July, the first since Armenia's change of government.

The South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network adopted its Memorandum of Understanding and an action plan to promote the participation of women in peace process in 2018

called "Women for Peace", aimed at promoting a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As part of a meeting with women from various parts of Russia in Moscow in July, Hakobyan said that regardless of how the conflict started, the important thing is human lives, including the cost in human lives of young people, so she urged politicians on both sides of the conflict to solve the dispute. With a background in the media, Hakobyan said that young soldiers on both sides of the conflict faced the same experiences of fear and anxiety. The Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform issued a statement in September welcoming Hakobyan's initiative and calling on Armenian and Azerbaijani women to join all peace-friendly initiatives.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh continued in a format without any women or gender experts involved, neither in the negotiating teams nor in direct participation formats or consultations. The negotiating agenda still lacked a gender perspective. Despite their formal exclusion, women from different spheres took steps to defend female participation. **Created in late 2017, the South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network (NWMSC) adopted its Memorandum of Understanding in Turkey in September 2018**, when it was signed by a dozen female peace activists. As a result, the network was formally established and it developed an action plan. Initially launched by the International Centre on Conflicts and Negotiation (ICCN), a member of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), the network brings together women from conflict areas in the southern Caucasus, through principles of democracy, mutual trust and others, and aims to promote female participation at different levels of the peace process, including formal diplomacy.

Moreover, both Armenia and Azerbaijan remained without an action plan for Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The process to prepare an action plan in Azerbaijan, a project involving the State Committee for Family, Women and Children, as well as civil society experts on gender and children, remained deadlocked. On the other hand, **Anna Hakobyan, a journalist and the wife of new Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, launched a public campaign**

Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)	
Negotiating actors	Georgia, representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia ¹⁶
Third parties	OSCE, EU and UN; USA Russia ¹⁷
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 territory not disputed by Georgia, 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. Thus, 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

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

issues) and under its aegis one Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism 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 ran into new difficulties in a year marking the 10th anniversary of the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, which led to Moscow formally recognising the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the beginning of the Geneva International Discussions (GID). The negotiations suffered a reversal when **Abkhaz and South Ossetian authorities abandoned the Incidents Prevention Response Mechanism (IPRM)**, forums of dialogue between Georgian and Abkhaz representatives on one hand and Georgian and Ossetian representatives on the other hand that are integrated into the structure of the multi-level peace process and focus on technical and security issues. Abkhazia and South Ossetia abandoned the IPRM in June and September, respectively, in protest of what they considered Georgia's political persecution against Abkhaz and Ossetian citizens and public officials. The controversy arose from the decision of the Georgian Parliament and government to impose sanctions and draw up a list of Abkhaz and South Ossetian suspects of crimes against the Georgian population following the death of a Georgian citizen from South Ossetia in South Ossetian police custody in February. The breakdown of the IPRM was a new setback for a peace process that was already affected by background difficulties. In the October round of the GID, the IPRM was one of the main items on the agenda and the co-mediators urged the parties to the conflict to resume it. According to the Russian government, all parties supported the need to take steps to restore the IPRM. However, **the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia stated that they would only resume their participation in the IPRM if issues that they considered unacceptable were withdrawn from the agenda.**

The October round revealed disagreement and unresolved issues. While the security situation remained mostly calm and the parties to the conflict applied de facto non-use of force, **no joint commitment of the non-use of force could be committed to writing.** This is one of the main issues pending in the GID. The GID co-mediators also said that **the situation of the displaced and refugee population remained unresolved, as both sides continue to dispute it.** There were also still challenges regarding the rights and needs of the population affected by the conflict. In the December round of the GID (the 46th), both sides held to their opposing positions, with Georgia complaining about the installation of barriers and lack of investigation into two deaths. Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia

Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia abandoned the Incident Prevention Response Mechanism in 2018 in a new setback for the peace process with Georgia

Ayse Cihan Sultanoglu was appointed the UN representative in the Geneva International Discussions in 2018, the first time that a woman holds the position of chief co-mediator in the peace process in Georgia

criticised the cooperation between NATO and Georgia. Both actors abandoned the working group on humanitarian issues during their session on displaced people. In a breakthrough, South Ossetia agreed to resume the IPRM in this round and it was restarted in mid-December.

Meanwhile, in April 2018 the Georgian government announced a new legislative initiative aimed at improving the situation of the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and promoting rapprochement under the name "A Step for a Better Future". The plan envisages boosting trade between both sides of the conflict line, providing products from both regions with better access to Georgia and international markets by simplifying procedures. In November, the government presented the financial programme to support those exchanges. The initiative also plans for measures in other areas, such as access to public services, through a neutral personal identification mechanism with respect to the status of the regions, as well as better educational opportunities for Abkhaz and Ossetian people in Georgia and abroad. However, the Abkhaz and South Ossetian authorities criticised the initiative.

Gender, peace and security

Some progress was made during the year on the participation of women and the integration of a gender perspective in the peace process. The Georgian government approved the third national action plan (NAP) for implementing the resolutions of the UN Security Council on women, peace and security (2018-2020). The new NAP established the promotion of female participation in peacebuilding as a government priority. The NAP planned to strengthen the mechanisms of periodic dialogue already in place between the governmental representatives of the GID and the IPRM and the civil society, including women's organisations and activists, and to guarantee inclusion of women's needs and priorities in the negotiating agenda. The NAP raised the target of transferring 70% of the recommendations made by women to the negotiations, the same threshold that according to the NAP document was achieved in 2017. The government also planned to boost support for women's organisations involved in civic diplomacy initiatives. The NAP also commits the government to establish a mechanism for periodic dialogue (involving at least three meetings per year) that will ensure the inclusion of displaced women and young people in policy development, especially in the definition of their status and the development of reforms related to sustenance and resettlement. It also commits to the creation of another mechanism of dialogue to ensure the inclusion of women and young people affected by the conflict in the development of specific programmes in locations adjacent

to the administrative boundary line. These commitments take after the recommendations from the evaluation of the NAP 2016-2017 by the Georgian organisation Women's Information Centre and the Office of the Ombudsman.

During 2018, consultations continued between government representatives participating in the GID and the IPRM with the population, including women's organisations and women affected by the conflict. These mechanisms of consultation were started by UN Women in 2013 to promote women's participation in the peace process. Later institutionalised, they became directly organised with the government, targeting women but also other parts of the population. Held after the 44th round of the GID in March, the July meeting focused on how to enhance female participation in the GID and IPRM. The Women's Information Centre called for women's rights organisations to meet with the new UN co-mediator in the GID, **Ayse Cihan Sultanoglu, the first woman to hold the position on the teams of chief co-mediators.** In a step forward, **the December round of the GID included a session on women, peace and security.** In consultations in August, women residing in Perevi and in other locations near the administrative separation line spoke of the difficulties related to their lack of access to public transport, the shortage of drinking water, the loss of property, the separation of members of families on both sides of the line and the lack of economic opportunities.

Meanwhile, the **South Caucasus Women Mediators' Network (NWMSC), which was created in late 2017 and involved women from Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, adopted its Memorandum of Understanding in Turkey in September 2018,** formally establishing the network. It was signed by a dozen women peace activists, and they developed a plan of action. Initially promoted by the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), a member of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), which together with the EU Mission in Georgia (EUMM) supported the event in Turkey, the network aims to promote women's participation in different levels of the peace process, including formal diplomacy.

The UN launched meetings with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in 2018 to evaluate the possibility of restarting the negotiating process, deadlocked since 2017

South-east Europe

Cyprus	
Negotiating actors	Republic of Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Third parties	UN; EU (observer in the Geneva International Conference); Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom (guarantor countries)
Relevant agreements	13 February agreement (2004)
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 peace process in Cyprus remained at an impasse, without the possibility of resuming it since the negotiations were called off in July 2017, and amidst a rise in regional tension regarding the exploitation of fossil fuels on the coasts off Cyprus. Both parts of the island started the year off with elections. Incumbent Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades held on to power in the February presidential election, while a coalition led by the Turkish Republican Party, which supports unifying the island, formed a new Turkish Cypriot government after legislative elections in January, as the ruling Party of National Unity did not achieve a majority of the vote in elections marked by the debate on relations with Turkey and other issues. One year after the conclusion without agreement of the historic Cyprus Conference of 2017, **the United Nations consulted with the parties to evaluate whether or not conditions were ripe for restarting the negotiating process.** The Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Elizabeth Spehar, held meetings with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci in July as a previous step to a round of in-depth meetings between the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for Cyprus, Jane Holl Lute, and the parties and guarantor powers between July and September. UN Secretary-General António Guterres met with the leaders of the island on the margins of the UN General Assembly in late September. Based on all this, in his October report to the UN Security Council, **Guterres expressed his conviction that the prospects for a solution to the conflict were still good.** At the same time, while highlighting the six-point framework for dialogue (security, guarantees, territory, ownership, equal treatment and power sharing) used at the talks in Crans-Montana (Switzerland) in 2017 as a framework recognised by both sides, he said that new ideas will be needed, in addition to in-depth preparation and a certain sense of urgency for a new negotiating

phase. In that sense, some media outlets pointed out that the meeting between Guterres and the two leaders of the island in New York **had addressed issues such as alternative formats to a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, like a confederation, a decentralised federation** or something else entirely. In October, the two leaders of the island held a meeting in Nicosia under the auspices of Spehar where they shared their ideas about the way forward. In a joint statement after the meeting, both leaders announced the upcoming opening of two new border crossings in Lefka/Aplici and Deryneia/Derinya in November and spoke of their willingness to hold new meetings with UN special envoy. In December, Lute held new rounds of meetings separately with Anastasiades and Akinci, as well as with the Turkish foreign ministry, in order to establish the terms of reference for restarting the talks. Meanwhile, despite some partial progress, such as the opening of border crossings, **the technical committees of the peace process remained operational, although they mostly lacked momentum and their levels of activity were unequal**, as indicated by the UN Secretary-General in his October report.

The gender committee of the peace process on Cyprus remained largely inactive during 2018, while women's organisations demanded greater participation in the negotiating process

Gender, peace and security

Various peace initiatives for women in Cyprus in the second half of the year sought to reinvigorate and strengthen the role of women in the island's deadlocked peace process. The Cyprus Women's Lobby organised a meeting in Cyprus in July with about 30 women from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, with support from the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Commonwealth Women Mediators Network, the international organisation Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the UN mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The meeting aimed to address the current situation, needs and demands, identify peacebuilding opportunities and design strategies. The priorities included expanding the focus of action and moving the discussions out of the capital in order to broaden the social base and the participation of women in peacebuilding. There were also several meetings in September between women of the island from different backgrounds and two of the founders of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (a women's political party of the two communities in conflict in Northern Ireland that participated in the peace negotiations leading to the Good Friday peace agreement of 1998). Organised by the PRIO Cyprus Centre and the Irish Embassy in Cyprus, with the support of the UN mission of good offices and the UNFICYP, the meeting served to share experiences and lessons learned in order to boost female participation in the Cyprus peace process.

Regarding the formal negotiation process, **the technical committee on gender equality, one of the technical committees that make up the formal structure of the negotiations, remained mostly at a standstill during the**

year, in line with the peace process as a whole. Even so, the UN Secretary-General's October report highlighted the participation of several people from the gender committee in a meeting in September to mark the visit of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. At the international level, and more specifically in connection with the UNFICYP, civil society organisations grouped under the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in July asked the UN Security Council to recognise the role of women in the Cypriot peace process when it renews the UNFICYP mandate and to include a provision urging greater female participation. The United Nations actors in Cyprus were also asked to support the full inclusion of women in the process and the integration of the gender perspective in the process and the results. UN Security Council Resolution 2430 of 26 July 2018 –S/RES/2430 (2018)–, which renews the UNFICYP mandate, included a new appeal to the Secretary-General to increase the number of women in UNFICYP and guarantee the substantive participation of women in all aspects of its operations. As in previous resolutions, the text also reiterates the importance of the substantive participation of civil society and women in particular in all phases of the peace process, but also and for the first time adds the need to revitalise the gender committee and address the UN Secretary-General's proposal for a socio-economic impact assessment that takes the gender perspective into account.

Serbia – Kosovo	
Negotiating actors	Government of Serbia, Government of 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 negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo experienced moments of deadlock and difficulty, including in connection with the still-pending association of Serbian majority municipalities and a final agreement to normalise relations, in a year that marked the tenth anniversary of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. The

negotiating process facilitated by the EU developed erratically in 2018. The assassination in January in North Mitrovica of Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic, leader of the Civic Initiative and candidate for mayor in the local elections of 2017, prompted Serbia to cancel the technical-level talks planned for mid-January. Also in January, the Kosovo government appointed Chief of Staff Avni Arif to be the new head of the negotiating team, replacing Minister for Dialogue Edita Tahiri, who left office in 2017 after the Kosovar opposition's motion of censure against the government. During her time in office, she had promoted spaces of dialogue and civic diplomacy between Serbian and Albanian women in Kosovo on her own personal initiative. Technical negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo resumed in late February and continued throughout the year. Political negotiations facilitated by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, resumed in March after being shut down since August 2017. At the March meeting in Brussels, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi addressed the status of the agreements reached thus far, as well as the development of a framework agreement for normalising relations. **The agreements pending implementation included the creation of an association of Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo**, one of the key aspects of the 2013 agreement on the principles for normalising relations. Given the lack of progress, the Kosovo Serb representatives in the Kosovar coalition government warned that they would take unilateral steps to establish the association of municipalities starting in April. The Kosovar government finally announced the resumption of work for creating the statute of the association of municipalities in April and established a four-month deadline for its conclusion. The announcement sidelined the Serbian unilateral plans. However, Vučić complained of a breach after the date for submitting the first draft of the statute expired. The Serbian authorities denounced related breaches at other times of the year. In December, following a meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council

The negotiating process between Serbia and Kosovo experienced difficulties during 2018 while the association of Serbian municipalities had not yet been created in northern Kosovo

between the EU and Kosovo, the EU stressed the need to implement the association of municipalities without delay.

One of the main aspects of the negotiating process during the year was the issue of an agreement for normalising relations. **Negotiations on a final agreement were accompanied by political controversy over the possibility that it might include a territorial exchange.** Kosovar leaders argued that municipalities with a Kosovo Albanian majority in southern Serbia should be able to become absorbed by Kosovo. The option of Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities integrating into Serbia was also discussed. International diplomats and governments expressed opinions both supporting and rejecting a possible territorial exchange. The German government was opposed, pointing to the risks of the idea spreading to other countries with territorial conflicts. In August, US National Security Advisor John Bolton said that the US would not oppose any territorial change if it was agreed between both parties. The negotiating process deteriorated in the final months of the year, alongside rising tension between both sides, leading the Serbian president to cancel a joint meeting with Kosovo and the EU scheduled for September. The Serbian and Kosovar leaders met again in November, in a worsening atmosphere. Vučić announced an end to the talks with Kosovo until it withdraws various measures, including the rise in customs duties introduced in response to Serbia's obstruction of recognition of Kosovo. The EU urged Kosovo to withdraw the customs duties. Tensions rose against at the end of the year when the Kosovar Parliament passed legislation to transform the security forces into the Kosovar Army. The UN and the EU expressed concern and NATO regretted the decision.

Gender, peace and security

The negotiating process continued without mechanisms of participation for Kosovar or Serbian women or civil society, although during the year women's organisations joined forces with international actors to carry out activities to promote women's participation and trust-building initiatives. Women from Kosovo and Serbia continued to participate in dialogue initiatives as part of a project that promotes reconciliation by building trust and dialogue between women and human rights activists, implemented by the Women's Association for Human Rights (Mitrovica, Kosovo) and the Udruženje Žena Peščanik women's association (Krusevac, Serbia) with support from Sweden and the Swedish NGO Kvinna till Kvinna. As part of this process, 50 women met in Krusevac in March. Meetings were also held in Vrnjacka Banja (Serbia).

Meanwhile, female politicians and civil society representatives from Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania gathered in Istanbul in November at a meeting organised by the Regional Women's Lobby for Justice, Peace and Security

in South East Europe, with support from UN Women. **The participants criticised the underrepresentation of women in the peace and governance processes in the region.**

Western Europe

Spain (Basque Country)	
Negotiating actors	ETA, Basque Country political and social actors
Third parties	International Contact Group (GIC), Social Forum to Promote the Peace Process and Permanent Social Forum, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Relevant agreements	--

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 in subsequent years took new steps towards unilateral disarmament (2017), with the involvement of civil society, and ETA's final dissolution in 2018.

A historic milestone was achieved in the Basque Country with the unilateral dissolution of ETA, preceded in previous years by other crucial measures such as disarmament (2017) and the definitive cessation of armed activity (2011). In any case, the process continued to face substantive challenges on the subjects of victims

and prisoners. **ETA announced its definitive dissolution on 3 May, which involved dismantling all its structures** and ending all its non-armed activity, thereby finalising the cessation of armed activity in 2011. According to the group itself, around 3,000 members participated in the process that resulted in the decision to dissolve, with 93% voting in support. **ETA's dissolution was confirmed by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**, an international organisation that has played a discreet facilitating role in the last 15 years and that received and published ETA's statement from its headquarters in Geneva. The announcement put an end to the 60-year-old ETA organisation, responsible for 853 deaths, according to the count kept by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior. Prior to its dissolution statement, ETA issued another statement in April acknowledging the damage caused by its armed activity and its direct responsibility for the pain. It also asked for forgiveness, though only from part of the victims.

Nearly seven years after the Aiete Declaration (2011), which urged ETA to end the violence, **international figures presented the Arnaga Declaration, in which they celebrated the dissolution of ETA.** The signatories said that now the challenge of reconciliation lies ahead. They called for more efforts to recognise and assist victims and pointed to the need for honesty with the past and generosity to address the wounds and rebuild a shared community. They also indicated that the issue of prisoners and escapees must still be resolved. This was expressed during an international event in the French town of Cambo on 4 May, organised by the International Contact Group, the Permanent Social Forum and the Bake Bidea organisation, where the announcement of dissolution took place. The event was attended by leaders of the political parties PNV, EH Bildu, Elkarrekin Podemos and others, with the support of local authorities, but there was no institutional representative from the Basque, Navarran, Spanish or French governments. In his official reaction to the end of ETA, the head of the Spanish government at the time, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, affirmed that there would be no impunity for the group. His spokesman said there would be no changes in prison policy. **Moreover, the presidents of the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre, Iñigo Urkullu and Uxue Barkos, made a joint institutional appearance** celebrating the unilateral, effective and definitive dissolution of ETA as a result of institutional and social demand. However, they also regretted the lack of an ethical and critical look at the consequences of its activity and recognition of the damage caused to all victims. As such, they presented a battery of short and medium-term proposals for the new post-ETA period, including in the short term a critical reflection on the past shared by all political forces, as well as their agreement to adapt prison policy to the new context. In the medium term, they proposed to consolidate a plural shared memory based on the clarification of human rights violations, to advocate public policies for recognition and reparations for victims of terrorism, violence and human rights violations and to promote education and culture for coexistence. One of the commitments made involved the creation of a working group on prison policy between the governments of the Basque Country, Navarre and Spain.

The change of government in Spain after a motion of censure (31 May to 1 June) generated expectations about the future of the country's prison policy. The agreement of the PNV and PSE-EE coalition government in the Basque Country in 2016 already included moving prisoners closer to the Basque Country to facilitate the process of normalisation and coexistence. In June, the new head of the government, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, defended a review of the prison policy before Congress to adapt it to the current context with empathy for the victims. **During the year, there were several cases of individual prisoners being moved closer in compliance with the law.** However, most ETA prisoners remained in a first-degree situation and complained that their requests for passage to the second degree were blocked. Incoming Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska held meetings with victim associations during the year, which had demanded transparency and information.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of the Parliament of the Basque Country's Committee on Memory and Coexistence remained active. Created in 2011 and reactivated in 2017, the committee focused that year on victims of violence. In 2018, it addressed memory and prison policy with the participation of all groups, except the PP. The Social Forum submitted its proposals for reintegrating prisoners, the result of a process of work and discussion, including through the fourth Social Forum, held between 2017 and 2018, through rounds of meetings with political and social actors. **The Forum called for adapting the prison policy to the new context, as well as for triangulating agreements between the Basque and Navarre governments, the prisoner collective and civil society,** without compensation or privileges. The Social Forum also approved the battery of proposals submitted by the Basque and Navarre presidents, as well as the agreements adopted in the Basque and Navarran parliaments and in the general assemblies of Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Álava, without the PP's support, in demand for changes to prison policy. In October, the Forum also organised the fifth Social Forum, focused on victims, mechanisms of truth and reparations.

The unilateral and definitive dissolution of ETA took place in 2018, while peacebuilding in the Basque Country continued to face challenges on the subjects of victims and prison policy

Furthermore, after ETA announced its dissolution, the bishops of Navarre, the Basque Country and Bayonne (France) asked for forgiveness for the Church's complicity, ambiguity and omissions.

Gender, peace and security

Created in 2017, the Social Forum's gender group tackled the reintegration of prisoners, escapees and deportees in 2018.

It raised the need for a study on the needs and conditions for such reintegration and indicated the lack of quantitative and qualitative gender information.¹⁸ Participants in the gender group pointed out that 40 of the 300 prisoners are women (12 in France and 28 in

Spain), while the number of women among the 100 who have fled or been deported to third countries is unknown. According to the information available, they said that female prisoners are farther from their places of attachment than male prisoners, and that they face higher levels of isolation in prisons than men. Based on the information available, they also said that female prisoners' levels of job placement are lower and in more precarious conditions than male prisoners. In San Sebastián, the Social Forum organised a day in November to hear the testimonies of women

who suffered torture and to present the conclusions of the Report on Torture (1940-2014) from a gender perspective, prepared by the Basque Institute of Criminology of the University of the Basque Country, commissioned by the Basque Government and published in 2017. Seventeen per cent (17%) of the 4,113 reported cases of torture were suffered by women. According to the conclusions of the report, female prisoners reported torture practices to a greater extent, such as sexual violence (including physical and verbal violence), humiliation, pushing, hair-pulling and others. The event raised the need to make progress in recognition and reparation from a gender perspective. It was part of the Forum's work on victims, which held non-public and public meetings with victims of various acts of violence throughout the year.

18. Dañobeitia Ceballos, Olatz, Mendia Azkue, Irantzu, *Construyendo la verdad de las mujeres vascas. Pasos hacia una paz no patriarcal*, Revista Marea, June 2018.

6. Peace negotiations in the Middle East

- The Middle East was the scene of five negotiating processes that accounted for 10% of the total cases studied in 2018.
- The regional and international dimension of the conflicts and socio-political crises that were subject to negotiation and the influence of external actors in several of the disputes were key factors shaping the progress of the processes.
- The United Nations played a prominent role as a third party in most of the negotiations in the region, especially through its special envoys for the various contexts.
- The process to implement the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme was affected by the US decision to withdraw from the deal reached in 2015.
- After months of deadlock in meetings, the disputing parties in Yemen held a round of talks in December and reached an agreement on several key issues.
- Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians remained at an impasse and contact between the parties was limited to trying to establish a ceasefire amidst the escalation of violence reported during the year.
- The intra-Palestinian reconciliation process remained blocked, in a context of intensified tensions between Hamas and Fatah.
- Several negotiating plans for Syria involved various local, regional and international actors, though they had limited impact on the dynamics of violence.

This chapter studies the main peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East during 2018. 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 in relation to the gender, peace and security agenda. At the start of the chapter there is a map identifying the countries in the Middle East that were the scenario of negotiations during 2018.

Table 6.1. Summary of peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2018

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 (AP)	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman
Palestine	Hamas, Fatah	Egypt, Qatar
Syria	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, International Syria Support Group (ISSG)
Yemen	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/ Ansarallah	UN, Kuwait, Oman

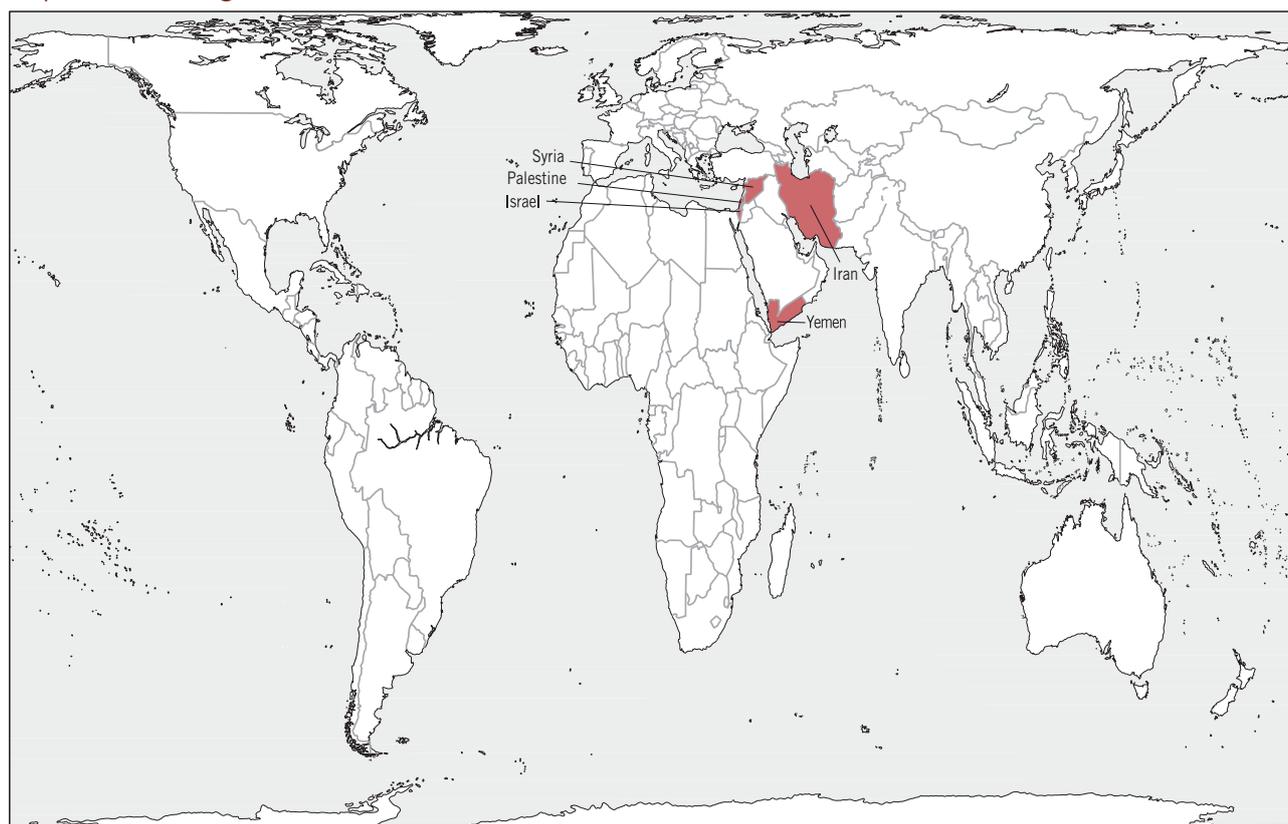
6.1. Peace negotiations in 2018: Regional trends

This section analyses five negotiating processes that took place in the Middle East during 2018, the same number as the previous year and accounting for 10% of the total peace processes studied worldwide. Three of these negotiations were linked to armed conflicts in Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen. The other two processes were related to crisis situations, namely the conflict between the Palestinian groups Hamas and

Fatah and the tension surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme, which led to the signing of an internationally validated agreement in 2015. Except for the intra-Palestinian dispute, which is internal, the rest of the cases were international (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and tension over the Iranian nuclear programme) or internationalised internal (the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen).¹ Two of the cases took place in the Gulf

1. For further information about the armed conflicts and socio-political crises around the world, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.

Map 6.1. Peace negotiations in the Middle East 2018



■ Countries with peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East in 2018

subregion (Yemen and the one involving Iran) and three in the Mashreq (Israel-Palestine, Palestine and Syria).

In all cases in the Middle East region, the governments of the countries where conflict and/or socio-political tension took place were one of the negotiating parties, talking (in some cases indirectly) with actors of various kinds. In Yemen, for example, the process involved the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi with the armed group known as the Houthis or Ansarallah. In Syria, members of the government of Bashar Assad and representatives of some parts of the political opposition and of the armed groups operating in the country participated in both in the Geneva process promoted by the UN and in the Astana process sponsored by Russia. During 2018, the Damascus government was also involved in direct negotiations with some actors in the Syrian conflict, such as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), led by Kurdish forces backed by the US. In Israel-Palestine, the interests of the parties continued to be represented by the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian Authority, led by Mahmoud Abbas, although, in keeping with the trend in recent years, no direct meetings were held and key issues of the dispute were not addressed. In fact, the (indirect) contacts with the greatest impact on the dynamics of the conflict in 2018 were between the Israeli government and Hamas and centred on a ceasefire agreement amidst

Peace processes and negotiations in the Middle East accounted for 10% of all cases worldwide and were linked to three armed conflicts and two crisis scenarios

intensifying violence. Furthermore, as in recent years, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas participated in a separate negotiating process to overcome the intra-Palestinian crisis that has dragged on since 2006. This process has thus far been unsuccessful and the parties have failed to form a unity government. The negotiations over the Iranian nuclear programme involved the Tehran government and another set of countries that signed the 2015 agreement (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—China, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom and France—plus Germany). Together with the EU and the UN, these countries have continued to be involved in the implementation process. Several of them took steps to prevent the US from withdrawing from the agreement in 2018. Later, after Washington's announcement that it was backing out of the agreement, they worked to guarantee its continuity.

The regional and international dimension of the conflicts and socio-political crises subject to negotiations and the influence of external actors on several of the disputes were key elements that continued to shape how the processes evolved in the Middle East. A good example of this was the impact of US policies on various contexts in the region. This was the case with Iran, as the Trump administration decided to withdraw from the 2015 agreement, which had been achieved after a decade of negotiations, and reimpose sanctions on

Iran, raising tension between it and the United States. Washington's policies also influenced the prospects for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Several decisions made by the US administration during the year were rejected by the Palestinian population and its leaders, including the transfer of the US embassy to Jerusalem and a halt to funding for the UNRWA. These events strengthened perceptions of the Trump administration's partiality in favour of Israel, in addition to its announced intention to present an "ultimate plan" to resolve the dispute. At the end of the year, the US announcement that it would withdraw its troops from Syria also appeared as something that could have possible repercussions on the dynamics of the conflict and on the future of the negotiations.

The situation in Syria also illustrated the impact of other external actors in the course of the negotiations. Russia and Iran, allies of Damascus, and Turkey, which has supported opposition groups, continued to promote the Astana process, a parallel path to the UN-led Geneva process, and project their interests into the conflict. The influence of these countries in the conflict was evident in the direct agreement between Russia and Turkey to create a demilitarised zone to prevent clashes between armed groups and the forces of the Assad regime in Idlib governorate. The influence of regional powers also became apparent in Yemen. Representatives of the Hadi government and the Houthis participated in the end-of-year talks in Stockholm, but the UN said that meetings also had been held with Iran and Saudi Arabia. According to experts' analysis, any political solution to the conflict will require the consent of the governments of these countries, especially Riyadh, which has led the military campaign against the Houthis.

Third parties participated in all the negotiating processes in the Middle East.

As mentioned earlier, the region offers examples of negotiating processes in which third countries are aligned with one of the contending parties and try to play a role as a third-party mediator or facilitator of a negotiated solution to the conflict at the same time. Some countries in the Middle East also officiated as third parties in processes in the region, such as Egypt (in the Israel-Palestine and intra-Palestinian disputes), Oman (in Yemen and Israel-Palestine) and Kuwait (in Yemen). Other countries of the region officiated as mediators or facilitators in negotiations outside the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in the Horn of Africa and in Afghanistan.² The role played by the United Nations in the different negotiating processes in the Middle East should also be stressed. **The UN was involved as a third party in four of the five**

The United Nations was involved in four of the five cases in the region, especially through the activity of its special envoys

The negotiations in the Middle East reported many problems and/or persistent deadlock and only the process in Yemen justified some positive expectations after an agreement was signed in Stockholm in December

cases analysed through various formats, although during 2018 the activity of the special envoys appointed to facilitate an end to the different conflicts was especially prominent. In Israel-Palestine, the UN special envoy for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, played a leading role along with Egypt in efforts to establish a truce between Israel and Hamas. In Yemen, new UN special envoy Martin Griffiths' many efforts led to a round of meetings and an agreement in Stockholm, thereby breaking the impasse in the negotiations since 2016. The UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, who resigned at the end of the year after more than four years in office, continued his attempts to pave the way for political negotiations on the country's future in 2018, although the Geneva process was eclipsed for the Astana talks sponsored by Moscow. The UN's involvement in regional negotiating processes also included its participation in other formats, such as the Quartet on the Middle East for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations) and by monitoring implementation of the commitments made as part of the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme.

Regarding the **negotiating agenda in the different processes**, we must bear in mind that the issues under discussion do not always enter the realm of public opinion. Based on this consideration, none of the cases analysed in the Middle East in 2018 addressed the substantive issues of the conflicts. **The most recurrent theme in the negotiating processes in the region during the year was the search for agreements related to ceasefires, truces and cessations of hostilities.** There

were attempts to curb the dynamics of violence through these types of agreements in Israel-Palestine, Syria and Yemen throughout 2018. The rest of the items on the agenda were more varied, depending on the unique characteristics of each context. Regarding Iran, in addition to the central issue of nuclear non-proliferation, a share of the attention fell on some Iranian activities that were cause for concern, and not only for the United States, such as arms transfers to armed actors in several countries in the region. In the intra-Palestinian dispute, the focus of the talks was reportedly on issues such as control of the Gaza Strip and the lifting of sanctions against it. In Syria, the different negotiating processes addressed different issues. One of the lines of discussion in the Astana process was the establishment of the constitutional committee, though no significant progress was made during the year. Some parties to the conflict addressed general aspects related to security, such as Assad's government and the SDF, or led to specific

2. See the chapters on Africa and Asia in this publication.

agreements for exchanging bodies, releasing prisoners and evacuating combatants and civilians. Prisoner exchanges, the withdrawal of combatants and access to humanitarian aid were items on the negotiating agendas in both Syria and Yemen.

The outlook was not encouraging for the general trend of negotiations in the region during 2018 and the peace process in Yemen was the only one that justified certain positive expectations at the end of the year. The first direct meetings between the parties since 2016 not only led to an agreement in December on relevant issues to curb violence and facilitate access to humanitarian aid to Yemen, but also in the parties' promise to avoid actions that could lead to escalation and to continue the meetings. Nevertheless, the parties and the UN stressed that the agreement cannot yet be considered part of political negotiations to resolve the conflict and experts warned of different aspects that may affect its fragility, including the action of actors that have not played a leading role in the dialogue. **The other cases in the region reported several difficulties and/or persistent deadlock.** In the dispute between Hamas and Fatah, for example, despite the expectations created in late 2017 by the signing of a new reconciliation agreement, during 2018 the previous dynamics of distrust re-emerged, along with problems in implementing what was agreed. The chronic impasse in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine was maintained and prospects for 2019 were not very encouraging, considering the US position and the pre-electoral climate in Israel. In Syria, the few agreements made between some actors were not enough to produce a significant impact on the dynamics of the conflict and failed to address key issues, while the Damascus regime seems increasingly certain of imposing its positions with military force. Regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, while Tehran reaffirmed its commitment to the deal, the impact of the United States' withdrawal and the re-imposition of sanctions gave rise to questions about the future of the agreement at the end of the year.

Finally, regarding the gender dimension of peace processes in the Middle East, **the cases analysed illustrated the problems and obstacles that women face in participating in formal negotiations, but they also showed initiatives to denounce marginalisation and try to achieve a greater presence in negotiations.** For example, a group of Yemeni women sent a letter to the new UN special envoy to highlight the gender impacts of the conflict, demand effective female participation at all levels of the peace process and raise issues that from their point of view should be prioritised to address the situation in the country. At forums such as the UN Security Council, Palestinian women also gave visibility to the impacts of the conflict, the Israeli occupation and the exclusion of women in key political processes, including intra-Palestinian reconciliation. Throughout the year, Syrian women also participated in spaces to

present their views of the conflict. The Syrian Women Advisory Board remained active in 2018. Additionally, the office of the new UN special envoy for Yemen promoted the creation of the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group in 2018. This technical group did not participate in the Stockholm meetings, but was in Sweden during the talks and maintained contact with the delegations of the parties to the conflict.

6.2 Case study analysis

Mashreq

Israel-Palestine	
Negotiating actors	Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority (AP)
Third parties	Quartet for the Middle East (USA, Russia, UN, EU), France, Egypt, Russia, Oman
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)

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. Meanwhile, after periods of escalating violence, truce and cessation of hostilities agreements have been reached between the Israeli government and Palestinian armed actors.

Following the trend in recent years, **negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government remained deadlocked and the general atmosphere between the parties deteriorated as a result of various factors. These included the largest escalation of violence since 2014, which killed 170 Palestinians and injured more than 6,000 in 2018, some steps taken during the year by the US government and by Israel and persistent intra-Palestinian division.**³ Thus, over the course of the year, debates over the real prospects for a peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overlapped with the Trump administration's

3. For further information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the crisis between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine, see Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.

proposal of more concrete steps aimed at getting Israeli and Palestinian actors to agree to a ceasefire.

Regarding the prospects for a peace plan for the conflict, the Palestinian government of Mahmoud Abbas continued to reject any possible US proposal and insisted that it would not participate in initiatives mediated by Washington, given its partiality to and open support for Israeli interests. After recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, the Trump administration made another set of decisions in 2018 that were rejected by the Palestinian population and its leaders, as well as various actors of the international community. The US transferred its embassy to Jerusalem in May amidst the harsh Israeli campaign against Palestinian protests over the Nakba, which had already killed 55 Palestinians and wounded over 1,200. Months later, in September, it formally suspended its funding to the UN agency for the Palestinian refugee population, UNRWA, which provides assistance to more than five million refugees in the Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The United States had been the main donor to UNRWA, providing 300 million USD, and had previously cut another 200 million USD in bilateral aid to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Palestinian representatives and analysts considered the decision hostile and intended to undermine one of the key Palestinian demands in the peace negotiations: the return of the refugees. Other controversial moves made by the Trump administration during the year were its decision to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council, alleging that it was prejudiced against Israel; the closure of the PLO mission and the expulsion of its ambassador in Washington; and the shuttering of its diplomatic mission to serve the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, demoting the consulate to a unit inside the US embassy to Israel. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat described this move as proof that the United States had fully adopted the Israeli narrative regarding Jerusalem, the settlements and the refugees, making it its own.

In this context, expectations remained afloat throughout 2018 regarding the US proposal to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which Trump has announced as the “ultimate deal” and “the deal of the century” and which will be drafted by his son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Palestinian leaders repeated during the year that the US peace proposal was not intended to offer a fair and sustainable solution, but to legitimise the Israeli occupation and complained that the team drafting the proposal was clearly pro-Israeli. In addition to Kushner, this team includes Ambassador David Friedman, who is also openly supportive of Israeli settlements, and Jason Greenblatt, Trump’s special envoy for the Middle East. In fact, the Kushner team paid a visit to the region in June to prepare the ground for their plan and met with Israeli, Egyptian and Jordanian representatives, but

not Palestinians. Given this situation, the Palestinian authorities took steps intended to internationalise the dispute, such as their proposal to hold an international peace conference, which was rejected by the US, and their request for an investigation into Israel’s war crimes, crimes against humanity and apartheid in the International Criminal Court.

It should be noted that the Israeli side also had retractors to the US plan. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he saw no urgency in presenting the plan and, according to reports, he would not be interested in any process that could mean that his government might have to make some kind of concession in 2019, an election year. Some members of his cabinet agreed, with Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked publicly declaring that she considered the US peace plan a “waste of time” because the differences between Palestinians and Israelis were too great. Given this context, during 2018 the Israeli government took steps that widened the gulf between both sides, such as enacting a law that declared Israel a Jewish state in the middle of the year and that led to mass protests by Israeli Arabs, who account for 17.5% of the population of the country. In September, Trump announced that the plan would be revealed in two or four months, but media outlets later reported that it could be delayed until February or even until March or April 2019. According to reports, one event that may have influenced the delay in the planned timetable was the assassination of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, since Kushner wanted Saudi Prince Mohammad bin Salman to be one of the backers of his initiative.

Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians remained deadlocked in 2018 and the Trump administration continued to delay presenting its plan to address the conflict

Faced with this impasse in the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis, other international actors decided to get involved or showed their willingness to intervene as facilitators. Thus, towards the end of the year it emerged that Oman had shared some ideas with Israelis and Palestinians to resume the negotiations, though without acting as a mediator. Mahmoud Abbas travelled to Oman in late October and met with the Omani leader, Sultan Qaboos. Days later, Sultan Qaboos received Netanyahu in the first visit to the country by an Israeli prime minister since 1996. French President Emmanuel Macron also expressed his intention to make a plan of his own for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the US continued to delay before revealing its plan. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also expressed his willingness to mediate the dispute, arguing that regional stability will not be possible until the conflict is resolved. Egypt also said it was ready to mediate between Israel and Palestinian actors, though in 2018 its efforts were mainly focused on reducing violence given the significant rise in hostilities.

Regarding ceasefire agreements, it should be noted that Egypt and the UN special coordinator for the Middle

East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, were involved in efforts to stop clashes between Israel and Hamas. In a context of persistent intra-Palestinian rivalry, the Abbas government was opposed to any agreement between Israel and Hamas before the Palestinian Authority regained control over the Gaza Strip. The Abbas government even threatened to intensify pressure on Gaza.⁴ After a meeting in early November with the Egyptian president, Abbas agreed to the initial implementation of a ceasefire. Hamas contained protests at the separation barrier with Israel in Gaza, while Israel lifted its naval blockade on the Gaza Strip and allowed the delivery of fuel and money to pay Palestinian officials financed by Qatar. After new incidents of violence, this truce was resumed in the middle of the month and led to the resignation of Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman in protest of what he considered a surrender. Other intermittent ceasefires were reported throughout the year, such as in May or October, between Israel and Islamic Jihad. In December, media outlets reported that Netanyahu had sent messages to Abbas and Hamas warning that Israel would not observe any ceasefire in Gaza if attacks against Israeli interests in the West Bank were orchestrated in parallel.

Gender, peace and security

During the annual debate on the UN's gender, peace and security agenda, Randa Siniora, the director of the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), became the first Palestinian activist to address the UN Security Council, where she criticised the impacts of the conflict and the exclusion of Palestinian women from the peace talks. Siniora highlighted the consequences of the Israeli occupation and its discriminatory policies and the resulting humanitarian crisis from a gender perspective and warned that escalating violence in the conflict also had an impact on violence against women in the home. She also warned that despite Palestinian women's key grassroots work on human rights and peacebuilding, their representation in political decision-making positions remained very limited. She also denounced the exclusion of the concerns of Palestinian women in key political processes, including the construction of the Palestinian state and intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

Palestine	
Negotiating actors	Hamas, Fatah
Third parties	Egypt, Qatar
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. Successive agreements have been announced between both parties since, but they have not been implemented.

The disagreements between Hamas and Fatah and the serious difficulties in making headway in the process of intra-Palestinian reconciliation became clear once again throughout 2018. **Tensions between both groups intensified significantly and by the end of the year a new agreement had not been reached, despite the many rounds of meetings that Egypt had held with the parties** in its role as mediator of the dispute. The intra-Palestinian conflict has also significantly shaped the initiatives aimed at establishing a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas amidst the greatest escalation of violence in the region since 2014.⁶

The last agreement between Hamas and Fatah, signed in October 2017, was supposed to be implemented in 2018. Among other issues, it stipulated that the Abbas government would assume full control of the Gaza Strip at the beginning of February. However, 2017 ended with both sides trading accusations of violating the provisions of the agreement. The Abbas government upheld its sanctions against the Gaza Strip even though Hamas had dismantled the committee it had created to administer the territory in September 2017. Hamas reported that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was subjecting the population of Gaza to collective punishment by reducing electricity subsidies, reducing the salaries of public employees and limiting the entry of medicine into the Gaza Strip, which is affected by a serious humanitarian crisis. Tension between the parties escalated in March following a bomb attack against Prime Minister Rami al-Hamdallah during a visit to Gaza. The Abbas government accused Hamas of being behind the assassination attempt and the Islamist group blamed its counterpart for the attack, describing it as an attempt to avoid implementing the October agreement. Direct contact between both sides was blocked and the PA intensified the sanctions against Gaza. Some analysts suggested that Abbas' strategy was aimed at pushing Gaza to an extreme situation that could spark a rebellion against Hamas.

As on previous occasions, Egypt tried to mediate between the parties and held several meetings with delegations of both factions, separately, in July. Egypt submitted a plan that included a timetable for implementing the

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

intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, forming a unity government and immediately lifting all the Palestinian Authority's sanctions on Gaza. According to media reports, Washington consented to the Egyptian plan. Hamas approved the plan in mid-July, but Fatah did not. The Abbas government imposed tougher conditions for an agreement, including regaining total control of Gaza in political and security terms. The negotiations continued this way in the following months. Media outlets reported that relations between Egypt and the PA government were strained by Abbas' misgivings about Cairo's role in the peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that the US was devising and for not sufficiently considering Fatah's interests in Gaza. In this context, as Egypt and Nickolay Mladenov, the UN special envoy for the Middle East peace process, were trying to promote a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian president condemned any possible truce, insisting that any agreement of this kind should be made with the PA government. Thus, in mid-August, Abbas refused to meet with Egyptian delegates, although a Fatah delegation travelled to Cairo days later.

Intra-Palestinian divisions persisted during 2018 and affected both the prospects for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah and a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel

By September, it became clear that Egypt had aligned itself with the position of the Abbas government by delivering a speech that stressed the need to prioritise intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the PA's effective control of Gaza before a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. According to media reports, the change in the Egyptian approach could be due to threats by Abbas to degrade his relations with Israel by suspending cooperation in security and halting financial transfers to the Gaza Strip. Hamas then claimed that Fatah was imposing conditions that made reconciliation impossible, but meetings mediated by Egypt continued. In early November, the Palestinian president travelled to the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh to meet with Egyptian leader Abdel Fatah al-Sisi in the first meeting between the two in 10 months. Following the meeting, Abbas agreed to the initial implementation of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, but remained publicly critical of the Islamist group, which he accused of blocking the establishment of a Palestinian state. In late November, Hamas and Fatah delegations held meetings again in Cairo with Egyptian representatives (consecutively, with no direct meetings involving both groups) and assessed a new proposal from the al-Sisi government. Hamas approved of the proposal again, while the Fatah delegation left Egypt after giving preliminary approval, subject to Abbas' confirmation. According to reports, the new plan would be based on the Cairo Agreement of 2011 and would still have to define several issues pending consultations and agreements between both Palestinian factions. Media outlets reported that the proposal includes three phases:

first, a three-month transitional period in which Hamas would hand over administrative control of Gaza to the PA in exchange for lifting all the sanctions imposed on the public employees of the Gaza Strip; second, elections for the presidency and for the Palestinian Legislative Council; and third, the formation of a national unity government including all Palestinian factions. It also emerged that Egypt had sent a letter to the Fatah leadership warning that if there was no progress in the reconciliation process, it would abandon its role as mediator. In December, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said he was willing to meet with Abbas anywhere to discuss how to end the intra-Palestinian division.

Gender, peace and security

During the year, **Palestinian women gave visibility to their marginalisation in the process of intra-Palestinian reconciliation.**

In October 2018, the director of the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), Randa Siniora, became the first Palestinian activist to speak before the UN Security Council, where she addressed the impacts of the Israeli occupation on women, but also the exclusion of women from key political processes, such as national reconciliation. Siniora explained that only 5% of the key positions are held by women, including in the PA, and that the 30-member internal reconciliation team only includes four women. In this context, Siniora demanded that the PA implement the national action plan provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and called for significant female representation in intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts.

Syria	
Negotiating actors	Government, sectors of the political and armed opposition
Third parties	UN, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran, International Syria Support Group (ISSG)
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

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

(2012), Lakhdar Brahimi (2012-2014) and Staffan de Mistura (2014-2018). 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.

The complexity of the Syrian conflict and the many actors involved were reflected in the scope of negotiations to address it. **UN-backed efforts continued in 2018 as part of the Geneva process and alongside the Astana process, a parallel initiative promoted mainly by Russia (an ally of the Syrian government),** but that also involves Iran and Turkey. Additionally, some direct communication channels were activated between other actors involved in the armed conflict in Syria, with some agreements being sought. In addition to this variety of channels, which evolved in different ways, some of the most significant agreements of the year, such as the one regarding the Ghouta area in September, were managed and negotiated mainly by foreign countries (Russia and Turkey), rather than by Syrian actors, reflecting the significant regional and international dimension of the conflict.

At the beginning of the year, meetings were held as part of the Geneva process and the Astana process. On 25 and 26 January, delegations from the Assad government and the Syrian opposition met in Vienna (Austria) with the team of the UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. In the ninth round of meetings of the Geneva process (which, however, were not held directly between the parties), formulas for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015), which conceived a political transition for Syria, were unsuccessfully discussed again. Days later, starting on 30 January, the tenth round of the Astana process took place in Sochi (Russia), which also included the participation of opposition delegations and the Syrian government, as well as Russia, Turkey and Iran. The meeting was also attended by representatives of Jordan and Staffan de Mistura, who throughout the year insisted on the role that the UN should be playing to promote a political solution for Syria. At the time, but also over the course of 2018, analysts noted the greater relevance of the Astana process, partly because it is a better reflection of the balance of forces in the field, and partly because of the Assad regime's resistance to any kind of concessions given his expectations of imposing himself by military means.

The joint statement following the Sochi meeting supported 12 principles developed as part of the Geneva process and also reflected an agreement to create a committee to submit a proposal for constitutional reform to contribute to a political agreement, under the auspices of the UN, and in accordance with the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. This constitutional committee would be composed of representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition, as well as experts, members of civil society, independent figures,

tribal leaders and women, and it would also properly represent the ethnic and tribal groups of Syria. It was decided that the terms of reference, powers, rules of procedure and criteria for the selection of its members would be carried out as part of the Geneva process. The creation of a committee of this nature had been one of Staffan de Mistura's working issues as part of the Geneva process, so during 2018 the diplomat held several meetings to try to make progress in its formation. However, no headway had been made by the year's end.

Another key milestone in the first half of 2018 was the unanimous approval of a new United Nations Security Council resolution that demanded that all parties cease hostilities and immediately halt the fighting for at least 30 days to allow access to humanitarian aid, among other issues. UN Security Council Resolution 2401 was passed on 24 February amidst intensified violence in various parts of Syria and especially in the area of East Ghouta (a rebel stronghold). Despite the UN's appeal, the violence did not stop and instead intensified. In less than 10 days, between 18 and 27 February, the Assad regime's air campaign killed more than 580 civilians. In this context, Russia proposed the implementation of five-hour local truces in East Ghouta starting on 27 February to allow civilians to leave. Three large armed groups operating in the region (Jaysh al-Islam, Rahman Corps and Ahrar al-Sham) pledged to respect Resolution 2401 and to expel members of other groups linked to al-Nusra Front and al-Qaeda. The regime suspended its attacks for one day, but in practice its offensive in the area was resumed by air and land in the days that followed. Since Resolution 2401 was passed, Staffan de Mistura has exerted diplomatic efforts to promote its implementation together with the Geneva-based International Syria Support Group's Humanitarian Access Task Force, led by its co-chair, Jan Egeland, and co-directed by Russia and the USA. Although there was a drop in violence in some areas, there was no cessation of hostilities and violence persisted in the following months. In fact, some of the so-called "de-escalation zones", according to the agreements in the Astana process in 2017, became scenes of heavy fighting.

Based on specific agreements between the disputing parties, a total of 130,000 internally displaced persons left the besieged area of East Ghouta in March, with bodies exchanged and prisoners released by armed groups. However, hostilities intensified again in April during the regime's final campaign on East Ghouta, which again included the use of chemical weapons on Douma. The armed group Jaysh al-Islam then agreed to a deal to release captives and evacuate fighters and civilians to areas under Turkish control in the north of the country. In the following months diplomatic activity was maintained in different formats, including the Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region in Brussels (April) and Staffan de Mistura's meetings with significant actors, including the members of the Small Group of the Global Coalition (France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States) and with the members of the Astana

process. Meanwhile, Russia, Turkey and Iran also met again in Astana in May, and in Sochi in July, where they addressed issues such as the conditions for launching the constitutional committee, the release of prisoners, the return of displaced people and refugees and other topics

However, the agreement with the greatest impact on the dynamics of the conflict did not occur until the second half of the year as a result of a deal between Russia and Turkey. In the face of growing violence in Idlib governorate, one of the “de-escalation zones” that Iran, Russia and Turkey created—in theory—as guarantors, **on 17 September Ankara and Moscow announced the establishment of a demilitarised area to prevent clashes between armed opposition groups and the Assad regime.** The agreement provided for the withdrawal of heavy weapons and “radical terrorist groups” from a 20-kilometre strip and a halt to air strikes in the area. The agreement was announced by the Russian and Turkish presidents after a bilateral meeting in Sochi. Two weeks earlier, a trilateral meeting with Iran in Tehran had led to a public confrontation over the possibilities of a ceasefire in Idlib. Following the agreement on the demilitarised zone, there was a drop in hostilities in the region, although some armed actors, such as Hei’at Tahrir al-Sham, rejected the possibility of disarming. The demilitarised zone agreement was upheld at the end of the year, though incidents between the parties began to multiply in October. At a meeting in Istanbul at the end of that month, the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Turkey issued a joint statement stressing the importance of implementing confidence-building measures to support the viability of the political process and a long-lasting ceasefire.

In this context, in October Staffan de Mistura announced his decision to leave office after more than four years. After the announcement, he paid a new visit to Syria to discuss the regime’s disagreements with the constitutional committee and other issues. The UN special envoy specifically asked Russia, Turkey and European countries to pressure the Syrian regime to stop blocking the formation of the committee. The UN Secretary-General appointed Norwegian diplomat Geir Pedersen to be his successor

There were other meetings, approaches and agreements between various actors involved in the Syrian conflict throughout the year. For example, some channels of direct dialogue were activated between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—led by Kurdish groups, and supported by the US— and the Assad government. A high-level delegation met in Damascus with representatives of the regime in July and in August there were meetings in which issues related to security and the provision of services were reportedly discussed. However, the dialogue was stalled by differences between the parties

regarding decentralisation and local autonomy issues. Additionally, discussions were reported between Turkey and the United States to form a working group to resolve differences, particularly in relation to the area around Manbij, following Turkish threats to take the town after seizing control of the Kurdish Afrin area in March. Meanwhile, there were also attempts to arrange truces via mediation between armed opposition actors, such as those between Hei’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Jabhat Tahrir al-Sham (JTS), which were unsuccessful. Damascus, Israel and the United Nations also reached an agreement to reopen the Quneitra crossing, in the Golan Heights, and to facilitate the peacekeeping operations of the UN mission (UNDOF) that has overseen the area since a demilitarised zone was established in 1974. UNDOF’s activities have been directly affected by how the conflict has evolved in recent years, leading to its withdrawal in 2014, when al-Qaeda-like groups penetrated the area. UNDOF finally returned in July 2018, after Syrian troops regained control of the Quneitra crossing following a Russian-backed agreement with armed groups. Finally, at the end of the year, the United States’ announcement that it would withdraw its troops from Syria looked like it could have repercussions on the dynamics of the conflict and on the future of the negotiations.

Throughout 2018, the Astana and Geneva processes continued to try to address the Syrian conflict, in addition to other direct meetings and negotiations between various actors involved in the conflict

Gender, peace and security

Syrian women participated in various initiatives throughout the year to give visibility to the importance of their participation in peace negotiations and other arenas of political decision-making. In April, during the Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, which was held in Brussels, organised by the UN and the EU and attended by representatives of more than 85 countries and organisations, a parallel event took place in which 10 Syrian women presented their different perspectives on the conflict. This event was supported by UN Women, the EU and various NGOs (Kvinna till Kvinna, WILPF, CARE, OXFAM and others) and one of its main messages for political decision-makers was that there can be no peace without the participation of women. In June, about 200 Syrian women of different political leanings currently residing in Syria and abroad as a result of the conflict gathered in Beirut (Lebanon) to discuss ways to promote women’s rights in the country. The event was part of an initiative supported by UN Women to develop a common framework for the women’s movement in Syria and also served as a space to identify priorities in the political, legislative, economic, social and security spheres. Created by around 30 Syrian women in Paris in October 2017, the Syrian Women’s Political Movement continued its work to act as a new opposition political movement. Its vision embraces the establishment of a democratic and pluralist state based on equality between men and women that has a

Constitution with a gender perspective, eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The movement says that these changes cannot be carried out as long as Assad and other high officials of the regime remain in power. The movement, whose base is currently expanding inside and outside Syria, intends to bring a feminist vision to the peace process and to a future transition. This new platform demands 30% female representation in all areas of political decision-making and, specifically, in the delegations and negotiations that aim to define the future of Syria. At the end of 2017, Syrian women accounted for 15% of the members of the government and opposition delegations in negotiations in Geneva.

In his diplomatic efforts with different actors important to the development of the Syrian conflict, Staffan de Mistura said that the constitutional committee had to be inclusive, credible and balanced with at least 30% female representation. After he announced his resignation, some praised his efforts to promote a more inclusive peace process, with greater participation of women and young people.

The Gulf

Iran (nuclear programme)	
Negotiating actors	Iran, G5+1 (USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia and China plus Germany) ³ , 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 favoured 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.

The implementation of the agreement on the nuclear programme signed in 2015, after over a decade of negotiations, was questioned during the year after the US government decided to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Trump administration made the decision in May and reimposed the sanctions on Iran, stoking bilateral tension and prompting other countries involved in the agreement to guarantee its continuity. Washington's decision came despite the fact that all the quarterly reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued since the agreement was signed, including those published in 2018, confirmed that Iran was complying with the commitments made as part of the agreement.

In the early months of the year, the US tried to convince other countries that had signed the nuclear agreement, especially in Europe (the United Kingdom, Germany and France), of the need to make amendments to the agreement to guarantee inspections of Iran's military sites and penalise its ballistic missile programme, among other issues. However, the leaders of these countries tried to persuade the Trump administration of the importance of keeping the agreement. Indeed, Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel approached the issue directly with the US president during their visits to the White House in April. Iran was also active in the diplomatic field. In January, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his British, French and German counterparts and with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, who confirmed Europe's firm commitment to the agreement.

In April, the US and the three European countries that signed the agreement held a new round of talks to try to respond to Trump's apprehensions about it without breaking it. By then, US pressure had already intensified through an ultimatum and mutual threats between Tehran and Washington increased. Finally, the US decided to formally withdraw from the agreement on 8 May. UN Secretary-General António Guterres regretted the decision, saying that the JCPOA had been a great achievement for nuclear non-proliferation and regional and international peace and security. After Washington's announcement, the Iranian government sent a letter to Guterres confirming that it would continue to respect the agreement. The UN Secretary-General welcomed the decision, but also said that the Iranian authorities would need to consider several countries' concerns about activities that may contravene the restrictive measures established by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which unanimously endorsed and appropriated the JCPOA in 2015. In his reports to the UN Security Council in June and December, Guterres detailed some of the concerning matters, including allegations of weapon deliveries to the Houthis in the conflict in Yemen, armed groups in Bahrain and armed groups in the Gaza Strip. Although in some of these cases the

3. After the United States withdrew from the agreement in 2018, this group of countries was renamed the P4+1 by the media.

UN investigation found that the weapons were Iranian, it was unable to determine that the transfers had been made after January 2016, which would contravene the provisions of Resolution 2231. Israel also blasted Iran at the UN for its use of certain weapons in Syria and for missile tests that may violate Resolution 2231

After the Trump administration decided to back out of the deal, several analysts warned of the greater possibilities of a confrontation between Washington and Tehran. In the months that followed, the US and Iran raised the tone of their threats and made displays of force that only aggravated the hostile atmosphere. The US government reinstated the pre-agreement sanctions and also announced new penalties for over 700 Iranian individuals throughout the year. Iran warned in June that it was taking preparatory steps to increase its uranium enrichment capacity should the agreement collapse. It also warned that its forces could close the strategic Strait of Hormuz if oil exports were blocked and conducted massive military exercises in the Persian Gulf in August, including ballistic missile tests. Tehran also decided to take the case to the International Court of Justice, which ruled in its favour regarding humanitarian sanctions in October. According to specialised agencies, US sanctions could have a very severe impact on the Iranian economy. **Alongside this dynamic of growing tension, other countries that had signed the agreement promoted several initiatives to try to guarantee its continuity.** The E3 (United Kingdom, France and Germany) and Mogherini regretted Trump's announcement of US withdrawal from the deal when he made it in May. Experts of the so-called P4 + 1 (previously the P5 + 1, and now composed of the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China plus Germany) held a technical meeting in Tehran in June and a ministerial meeting in Vienna in July and expressed support for its implementation. Notably, the EU was particularly concerned about the possible consequences of Washington's decision on European investments in Iran.

The US withdrew from the nuclear pact on Iran in May, calling the future of the agreement into question and encouraging an escalation of tension

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. Despite these initiatives, the meetings were unsuccessful and the talks have been at an impasse since mid-2016. It was not until late 2018 that meetings between the parties resumed, arousing cautious expectations about the possibilities of a political solution to the conflict. The hostilities have significantly worsened the security and humanitarian situation in the country.

In late 2018, some expectations were raised about the possibilities of a negotiated solution to the armed conflict in Yemen, after months of frustrated attempts to hold a round of talks between the government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Houthis/Ansarallah at the request of the UN. These **meetings between the parties, the first since the breakdown of negotiating efforts in 2016, took place in December in Sweden, led to agreements on several key issues** and were considered a sign of commitment to a political solution to the conflict, which would continue to be the subject of debate between both sides. The meetings took place in an international context increasingly concerned about how the conflict in Yemen was developing, considering the intensification of violence during the year, the aggravation of the humanitarian crisis, the risk of famine for 14 million people in the country and greater misgivings regarding the policies of Saudi Arabia, the leader of the armed coalition supporting the Hadi government, in addition to other factors.

Efforts to resume the negotiations began after a new UN special envoy was appointed in early 2018. Martin Griffiths, a British diplomat and former executive director of the European Institute of Peace, took office in March and began holding a series of meetings with local and regional actors in order to present a new framework for resuming the negotiations. He exerted these efforts amidst intense hostilities on different fronts and growing tension and alarm over predictions of increased fighting over the strategic port of Al Hudaydah, which was held by the Houthis and is the entry point for 80% of the goods to the country. **Griffiths said his priority was to avoid an open battle in Al Hudaydah due to the severe political and humanitarian consequences that could have and quickly resume the talks.** In July, the UN special envoy for Yemen presented the Hadi government, the Houthis and the international coalition led by Saudi Arabia with a plan that included UN supervision of Al Hudaydah and two other ports north of the city; a phased drawdown of the Houthi forces and the withdrawal of the forces supported by the United Arab Emirates from Al Hudaydah; and the reopening of the airport in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, among other measures. Both sides proposed changes and, after a series of meetings, Griffiths announced the holding of "consultations" in early September in Geneva. Given the impasse in the negotiations since 2016, the special envoy opted

Yemen	
Negotiating actors	Government of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Houthis/Ansarallah
Third parties	UN, Kuwait, Oman
Relevant agreements	Stockholm Agreement (2018)

Summary:

The source 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

for this approach instead of convening “peace talks” directly. His idea was that these consultations would provide an opportunity for the parties to discuss a framework for the negotiations and agree on some appropriate confidence-building measures. Notably, some specific humanitarian agreements had been reached in the previous months, such as the deal to allow the UN to conduct vaccinations against cholera with the cooperation of the Houthis and the United Arab Emirates in Al Hudaydah.

However, amidst mutual recriminations, these consultations in Geneva never took place. The meeting was cancelled after the Houthis announced that they would not travel to the Swiss city because of problems in agreeing on the conditions of the trip. The Houthi delegation intended to fly from Sana’a on a plane from Oman to the capital of that country, Muscat, transporting a group of wounded Houthis, but there was no agreement on the details of the procedure with the Saudi-led coalition, which controls the airspace. There was also no agreement on guarantees that the Houthi leaders participating in the consultations would be able to return to Yemen. This impasse led to a new intensification of hostilities around Al Hudaydah, but did not shut down the diplomatic channels. In the weeks that followed, Griffiths stepped up efforts to bring the parties to the table to talk and explicitly asked senior US officials to support the peace process in meetings with them in October by pressuring the Saudi-led coalition. At the time, Riyadh was already under fire for the impact of its war tactics on the Yemeni civilian population and for the news of the brutal murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

In late October, senior US officials proposed establishing a ceasefire, with some conditions and nuances. This message was not completely in tune with Griffiths’ approach, which did not connect the start of the consultations with a ceasefire to prevent the process from getting derailed. Some significant measures were announced in the weeks that followed, however. The Saudi-led coalition claimed that it had begun a “pause” in its offensive. Days later, the Houthis reported that the missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE had ceased and said they were ready for a wider truce. At the same time, the United States discouraged the submission of a resolution to the UN Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The text demanded an end to the fighting around the port of Al Hudaydah and the establishment of a two-week deadline for the Houthis and the Saudi-led military coalition to remove all barriers hindering the entry of humanitarian aid. The United States and other countries such as China, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia argued that it was prudent to hold off on submitting the resolution while awaiting the results of the consultations promoted by the UN. It emerged that Saudi Arabia and the UAE had conducted a vigorous lobbying campaign at the time, threatening to boycott

the talks in Stockholm because they did not want a UN resolution limiting their opportunities for military action. The consultations were still preceded by other significant events, including an agreement with Saudi Arabia to evacuate injured Houthi combatants from Sana’a to Muscat as a confidence-building measure. Given the problems that had prevented the consultations from being held in September, the UN special envoy decided to accompany the Houthi delegation on its trip to Sweden in a plane chartered by Kuwait, one of the mediating countries. A day earlier, a group of 50 wounded Houthis was transferred to Oman

Finally, the consultations in Sweden took place between 6 and 13 December at Johannesburg Castle in the town of Rimbo, outside Stockholm. The parties’ delegations sat face-to-face in the opening session, but did not have direct contact on the other days. Griffiths’ team was in charge of contrasting the positions on the different topics with both groups. During the event’s closing ceremony, the leaders of both delegations, the Hadi government’s foreign minister, Khaled al-Yamani, and Mohamed Abdelsalam, on behalf of the Houthis, publicly joined hands in the company of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, which was considered a sign of the progress made during the consultations.

The process concluded with the Stockholm Agreement, which addressed three key issues. First, it established an immediate ceasefire in the strategic port city of Al Hudaydah and in the ports of Salif and Ras Issa. The combatants had to withdraw outside the city and port limits within two weeks, a ceasefire would be observed throughout the province, a coordination committee headed by the UN would be created to supervise the withdrawal and demining of the area and the UN would strengthen its presence in the area. Secondly, a mechanism was created for a massive prisoner exchange involving some 15,000 captives that was supposed to take place on 20 January 2019. Finally, a memorandum of understanding was signed on the city of Ta’iz, which considered the establishment of a joint committee involving both sides, the United Nations and a civil society representative. The parties also pledged to avoid any action, escalation or decisions that could affect the prospects of implementing the agreement. Although no agreements were announced, it emerged that during the meetings proposals were also made to reopen the Sana’a airport. Both sides also came closer to agreement on the creation of “humanitarian corridors” and local ceasefires to enable the delivery of aid. **The UN Secretary-General also confirmed that there had been meetings with Iran and Saudi Arabia and other regional actors, which did not participate directly in the consultations,** and described their role as “constructive” in creating conditions for the agreement. According to the Stockholm Agreement, the consultations will continue in January 2019 at a site to be agreed upon by the parties. By late 2018 the agreement had begun to be implemented, although problems of access for humanitarian aid persisted and both sides accused each other of violating the ceasefire.

Several analysts cited the challenges to any potential political solution to the Yemeni conflict. Some experts called attention to Griffiths' approach, which in addition to favouring "consultations", chose to focus the agenda first on confidence-building measures with a smaller format of actors involved in the meetings. This approach also carries the notable risk of simplifying a very complex conflict and the exclusion of other relevant actors in the short term (such as the Southern secessionist groups) may be a destabilising factor. It was also suggested that any political solution will require the consent of foreign actors, including the United Arab Emirates, Iran and especially Saudi Arabia. Other voices stressed the importance and need to involve other actors, including Yemeni women, in the negotiating process. Griffiths argued that the armed conflict between Houthis, the Hadi government and the Saudi-led coalition must first be halted and that it will be possible to start a peace process with the participation of other groups afterwards. The UN special envoy also defended the extra Track II diplomacy efforts alongside the official negotiations as a key factor for peacebuilding in Yemen and has held meetings with various Yemeni actors since the beginning of his time in office.

Gender, peace and security

During 2018, a group of Yemeni women promoted a series of initiatives to articulate their proposals for transforming the conflict and making their voices heard in formal spaces. Created in 2015 with the help of UN Women, the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security, which represents a diverse group of Yemeni women committed to ending violence in their country and convinced of the need to play a greater role in the negotiations, held meetings in Amman (Jordan) in February to plan response strategies in the different scenarios planned for Yemen. Another dozen Yemeni women participated in a working group led by UN Women, together with women from Syria and Iraq, to discuss how to promote peace in their respective countries. In March, **a total of 145 women, including more than 100 female Yemeni leaders, Nobel peace laureates and representatives of international organisations, sent a letter to the newly appointed UN special envoy asking him to take advantage of the opportunity to support the effective participation of Yemeni women in peacebuilding.**

The letter presented an overview of the current situation of women in Yemen, denouncing the significant rise in

gender violence after the conflict broke out in March 2015 and warning that there were 2,447 documented cases of women killed or injured between then until July 2017. It also stated that 76% of the more than two million internally displaced persons were women or minors and that child marriage had increased by 66% as a resource for many families facing poverty, given the severe economic deterioration in the country and other issues. The letter then asserted that despite the situation, Yemeni women had been unflagging in their efforts to achieve peace, especially at the community level, on issues such as local truces, the reintegration of child combatants and humanitarian aid management. The group of Yemeni women complained about the exclusion of women from initiatives promoted to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict in recent years and recommended prioritising roughly a dozen issues, including an immediate cessation of hostilities; the end of the siege of Ta'iz; the resumption of the peace negotiations and mechanisms to put an end to child recruitment, find a fair solution to the question of southern Yemen, pay public officials, release detainees, ensure the functioning of health and education services and support transitional justice with a gender approach. They also demanded support for effective female participation by adding gender experts to the delegations, holding regular consultations with leaders of women's organisations across the country and ensuring at least 30% female representation at all levels of the peace process, among other measures.

In this context, **the UN special envoy's office promoted the formation of the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group**, in line with the international gender, peace and security agenda and with the results of the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen (2015), which demanded a minimum of 30% female participation in public positions and in negotiating delegations. Composed of eight women, the group reportedly aims to represent a variety of voices under the principles of neutrality, independence and professionalism. It is not intended to be a delegation for the negotiating process, but a group collaborating directly with the Gender, Peace and Security Unit of the special envoy's office to assist in the development of Griffiths' strategy to address the conflict. The Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group worked with Griffiths' office during the consultations in Sweden, an opportunity that its members took to meet with both delegations.

The year 2018 ended with certain expectations in Yemen, following the agreement reached in Stockholm that established a ceasefire in the strategic port of Al Hudaydah

Annex 1. Summary of armed conflicts in 2018¹

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		=
Cameroon (Ambazonia/ North West and South West) -2018-	Internationalised internal	Government of Cameroon, self-proclaimed Interim Government of Ambazonia, the armed groups ADF, SCACUF, SOCADEF and SCDF and dozens of smaller militias	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
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 militias, armed opposition group ADF, MONUSCO	1
	System, Resources		=
DRC (Kasai) -2017-	Internal	Government, various ethnic militias (Bana Mura, Kamwina Nsapu)	2
	Government, Identity		↓
Ethiopia (Ogaden) -2007-	Internationalised internal	Government, ONLF, OLF, pro-government militias (“Liyu Police”)	1
	Self-government, Identity		END
Lake Chad Region (Boko Haram) - 2011-	Internationalised internal	Boko Haram (BH), MNJTF regional force (Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad)	3
	System		=

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.
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 2018 with those that of 2017. The escalation of violence symbol (↑) indicates that the general situation in 2018 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
África			
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, Bengazi Defence Brigades(BDB), ISIS, AQIM, among other armed groups; USA, France, UK, Egypt, UAE, and other countries	3
	Government, Resources, System		=
Mali -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	3
	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, USA, 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, SPLM-FD, SSLA, SSDM/A, SSDM-CF, SSNLM, REMNASA, NAS, SSUF (Paul Malong), SSDA, communal militias (SSPPF, TFN, White Army, Shilluk Agwelek), Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), Sudan, Uganda, UNMISS	3
	Government		↓
Sudan (Darfur) -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, PDF pro-government militias, RSF paramilitary unit, pro-government militias <i>janjaweed</i> , Sudan Revolutionary Front armed coalition (SRF, composed of JEM, SLA-AW, SLA-MM and SPLM-N), several SLA factions, 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	1
	Self-government, Resources, Identity		↓
Western Sahel Region -2018-	International	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, G5-Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), Joint Task Force for Liptako-Gourma Region (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), MINUSMA, France (Operation Barkhane), USA, Group of Support for Islam and Muslims (GSIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Macina Liberation Front, Ansaroul Islam, other jihadist groups	1
	System, Resources, Identity		↑
America			
Colombia -1964-	Internationalised internal	Government, ELN, FARC (dissidents), EPL, 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 Con-ference	2
	Self-government, Identity		↑
Myanmar -1948-	Internationalised internal	Government, armed groups (Ceasefire signatories: ABSDF, ALP, CNF, DKBA, KNU, KNU/KNLA-PC, PNLO, RCSS, NMSP, LDU; Non-signatories: KIA, NDAA, MNDAA, SSPP/SSA, TNLA, AA, UWSA, ARSA, KNPP)	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Pakistan -2001-	Internationalised internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, Taliban militias, international militias, USA	2
	System		↓
Pakistan (Balochistan) -2005-	Internal	Government, Armed Forces, intelligence services, BLA, BRP, BRA, BLF and BLT, civil society, LeJ, TTP, Afghan Taliban (Quetta Shura)	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↓
Philippines (Mindanao) -1991-	Internationalised internal	Government, Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Islamic State of Lanao/ Maute Group, Ansarul Khilafah Mindanao, factions of MILF and MNLF	2
	Self-government, System, Identity		↓

Conflict -beginning-	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Asia			
Philippines (NPA) -1969--	Internal	Government, NPA	1
	System		↑
Thailand (south) -2004-	Internal	Government, separatist armed opposition groups	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Europe			
Turkey (southeast) -1984-	Internationalised internal	Government, PKK, TAK, ISIS	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Ukraine (east) -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 Hassam), Israel	2
	System		↓
Iraq -2003-	Internationalised internal	Government, Iraqi and Kurdish (peshmerga) military and security forces, 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-	International	Israeli government, settler militias, PA, Fatah (AI Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), Hamas (Ezzedin al-Qassam Brigades), Islamic Jihad, FPLP, FDLP, Popular Resistance Committees, Salafists groups, Ahfad al-Sahaba knaf Bayt al-Maqdis (branch of ISIS)	2
	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
	System, Government, Self-government, Identity		=
Yemen (AQAP) - 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 2018¹

Conflict ² -beginning-	Type ³	Main parties	Intensity ⁴
			Trend ⁵
Africa			
Angola (Cabinda)	Internal	Government, armed group FLEC-FAC, Cabinda Forum for Dialogue	2
	Self-government, Resources		↓
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, the LRA, the former Central African armed coalition Séléka	1
	Resources		↓
Chad	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		↑
Congo, Rep. of	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↓
Côte d'Ivoire	Internationalised internal	Government, militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries, UNOCI	2
	Government, Identity, Resources		=
Djibouti	Internal	Government, armed 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, Rwanda, armed groups FDLR and M23 (former CNDP)	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	International	Eritrea, Ethiopia	1
	Territory		↓

1. Table from Escola de Cultura de Pau, *Alert 2019! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2019.
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. This report classifies and analyses socio-political crises using two criteria: on the one hand, the causes or clashes of interests and, on the other hand, the convergence between the scenario of conflict and the actors involved. The following causes can be distinguished: demands for self-determination and self-government (Self-government) or identity aspirations (Identity); opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state (System) or the internal or international policies of a government (Government), which in both cases produces a struggle to take or erode power; or struggle for the control of resources (Resources) or territory (Territory). Regarding the second type, the socio-political crises may be of an internal, internationalised internal or international nature. As such, an internal socio-political crisis involves actors from the state itself who operate exclusively within its territory. Secondly, internationalised internal socio-political crises are defined as those in which at least one of the main actors is foreign and/or the crisis spills over into the territory of neighbouring countries. Thirdly, international socio-political crises are defined as those that involve conflict between state or non-state actors of two or more countries.
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 2018 with 2017, using the ↑ symbol to indicate that the general situation during 2018 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	Internationalised internal	Transitional government, Armed Forces, opposition political parties, international drug trafficking networks	1
	Government		=
Kenya	Internationalised internal	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 – 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, RENAMO militias, islamist armed group al-Shabaab	2
	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 (Niger Delta)	Internal	Government, armed groups MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF, NDV, NDA, NDGJM, IWF, REWL, PANDEF, Joint Revolutionary Council, militias from the Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ogoni communities, private security groups	2
	Identity, Resources		=
Rwanda	Internationalised internal	Government, Rwandan armed group FDLR, political opposition, dissident factions of the governing party (RPF), Rwandan diaspora in other African countries and in the West	1
	Government, Identity		=
Senegal (Casamance)	Internal	Government, armed group MFDC and its various factions	1
	Self-government		↑
Somalia (Somaliland-Puntland)	Internal	Republic of Somaliland, autonomous region of Puntland, Khatumo State	2
	Territory		↑
Sudan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑
Sudan – South Sudan	International	Sudan, South Sudan	1
	Resources, Identity		=
Togo	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	2
	Government		↑

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

Socio-political crisis	Type	Main parties	Intensity
			Trend
Africa			
Tunisia	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed groups, including the Uqba bin Nafi Battalion and the 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	Gobierno, 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.	3
	System, Government		↑
Nicaragua	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	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	2
	Self-government, Identity, System		↑
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(IKS), 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	2
	Self-government, Identity		↓
India (Nagaland)	Internal	Government, armed groups NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN (K-K), NSCN-R, NNC, ZUF	1
	Identity, Self-government		↓

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	2
	Self-government, Identity, Resources		↑
Korea, DPR – Rep. of Korea	International	DPR Korea, Rep. of Korea	1
	System		↓
Korea, DPR – USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea ⁷	International	DPR Korea, USA, Japan, Rep. of Korea, China, Russia	1
	Government		↓
Kyrgyzstan	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, regional armed groups, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	1
	System, Government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↓
Lao, PDR	Internationalised internal	Government, political and armed organisations of Hmong origin	1
	System, Identity		↑
Pakistan	Internal	Government, political and social opposition, armed opposition (Taliban militias, political party militias), Armed Forces, secret services	2
	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	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		↑
Armenia – Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	International	Armenia, Azerbaijan, self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh	2
	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	Cyprus, self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Greece, Turkey	1
	Self-government, Identity, Territory		↑
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity, Government		=
Georgia (South Ossetia)	Internationalised internal	Georgia, self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		=

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 (Transnistria)	Internationalised internal	Moldova, self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria, Russia	1
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Russia (Dagestan)	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Republic of Dagestan, armed opposition groups (Caucasus Emirate and ISIS)	2
	System		↓
Russia (Chechnya)	Internal	Federal Russian government, government of the Chechen Republic, armed opposition groups	2
	System, Government, Identity		=
Serbia – Kosovo	International ⁸	Serbian community in Kosovo, UNMIK, KFOR, EULEX	2
	Self-government, Identity, Government		↑
Turkey	Internationalised internal	Government, political and social opposition, ISIS, Fetullah Gülen organization	2
	Government, System		=
Middle East			
Bahrain	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government, Identity		↓
Egypt	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	3
	Government		=
Iran	Internal	Government, political and social opposition	1
	Government		=
Iran (northwest)	Internationalised internal	Government, armed group PJAK and PDKI, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)	3
	Self-government, Identity		↓
Iran (Sistan and Balochistan)	Internationalised internal	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)	Internationalised internal	Government, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Turkey, Iran, PKK	1
	Self-government, Identity, Resources, Territory		↓
Israel – Syria – Lebanon	International	Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah (party and militia)	3
	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	2
	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		=
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 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios is a yearbook that analyses peace processes and negotiations that took place in the world during 2018. 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 2019. 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.

Why must we keep peace talks in focus? Despite the difficulties involved, we have to find the best ways out of festering armed conflicts. We must see and explore alternative pathways for reform and reconciliation. We need to know the missing pieces that would make a peace process more inclusive for men and women, young and old. We need to learn what worked, and how compromises and consensus were found – or not. Contexts may vary, actors may be many. Escola de Cultura de Pau's annual review of peace talks takes us to the different nooks and crannies where spaces for resolution and transformation were found. In this new edition of the yearbook, the Escola de Cultura de Pau has kept this focus on one of humanity's most vulnerable yet valuable endeavours.

Miriam Coronel Ferrer

Philippine government signatory to the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, member of the UN Standby Mediation Team

As the nature of armed conflicts is constantly evolving, peace processes must adjust to changes. The yearbook *Peace talks in focus 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios* is an essential tool for understanding trends in the evolution of peace processes.

Kristian Herbolzheimer

Director of the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP)

It is the persistent endeavors on the part of armed actors, domestic and international supporters that help to move peace processes forward. While slowdowns and stalemates are often expected, peace processes when successful deliver peace and stability. The yearbook *Peace Talks in Focus 2019. Report on Trends and Scenarios* by the Escola de Cultura de Pau provides a comprehensive overview of ongoing peace processes by highlighting the negotiating parties, involved international actors, and the negotiation phases –all full of events. The yearbook provides the global and regional trends along with case studies by highlighting the roles of key local and domestic stakeholders whose roles are often not discussed in the mainstream policy and academic debates. The mediators and negotiators, peace researchers, and students all will find this resource very useful for the in-depth information and comparative insights on the universe of peace processes currently progressing around the world.

Madhav Joshi

Research Associate Professor and Associate Director of Peace Accords Matrix (PAM), Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame.

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