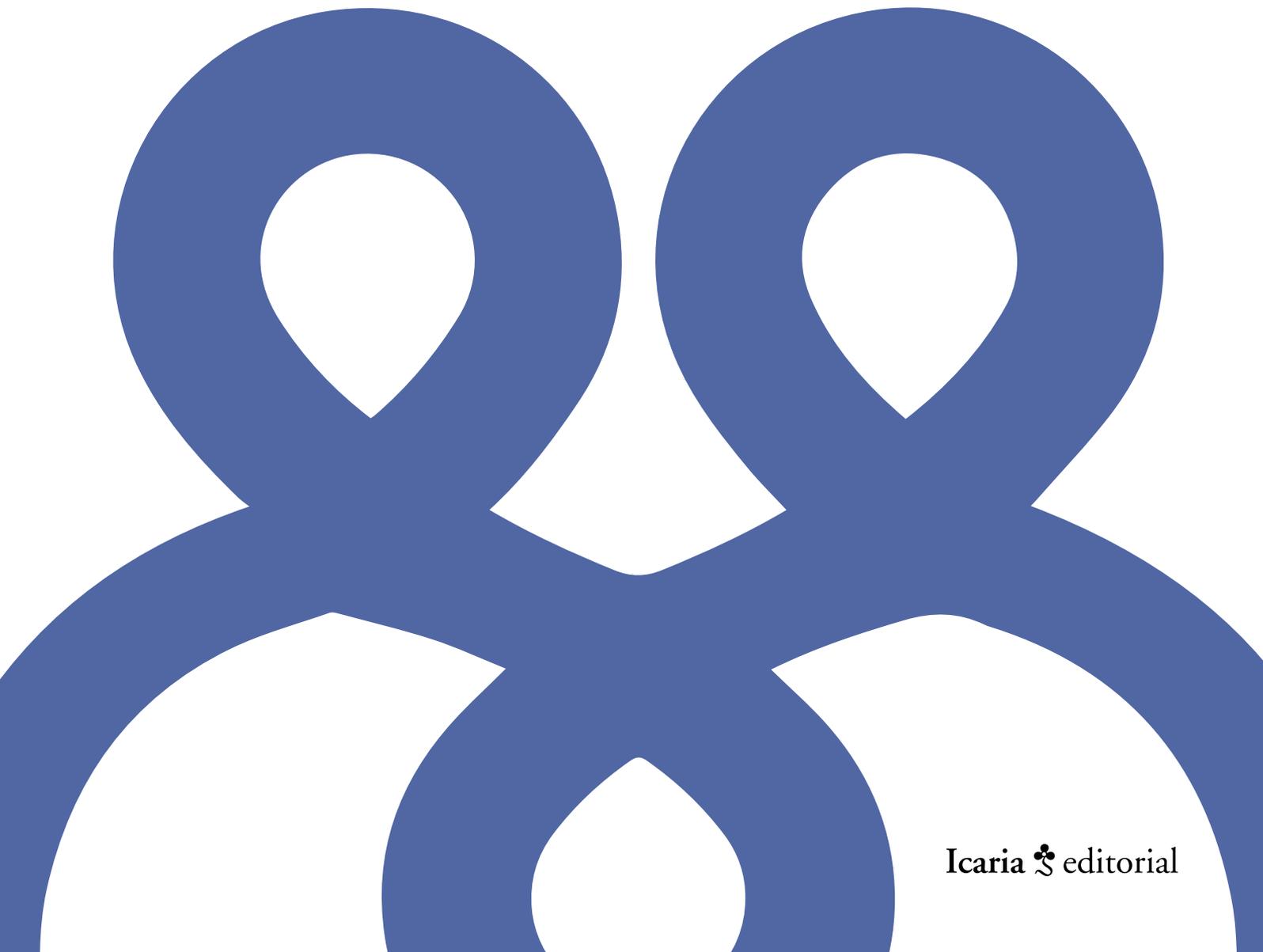


Yearbook on
Peace Processes

Vicenç Fisas

2016



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Culture of Peace

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Vicenç Fisas (ed.)

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CONTENTS

Introduction: definitions and categories	5
Usual stages in negotiation processes	8
Main conclusions of the year	9
Peace processes in 2015	13
Conflicts and peace processes at the end of 2015	21
Conflicts and peace processes in recent years	22
Analyses by country	27
Africa	29
a) West Africa	29
Mali	29
Senegal (Casamance)	38
b) Horn of Africa	43
Ethiopia (Ogaden)	43
Sudan (National Dialogue)	47
a) Darfur	52
b) South Kordofan and Blue Nile	59
South Sudan	63
Sudan-South Sudan	73
c) Great Lakes and Central Africa	78
Central African Republic	78
DR Congo (East)	86
d) Maghreb and North Africa	93
Libya	93
Western Sahara	103
Latin America	111
Colombia (ELN, FARC)	111
Asia and Pacific	148
a) Southern Asia	148
Afghanistan	148
India (Assam and Nagaland)	157
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	167
Pakistan (Balochistan)	173
b) Southeast Asia	178
Burma / Myanmar	178
Philippines (MILF, NPA, MNLF)	189
Thailand (South)	206
Europe	217
a) Southeast Europe	217
Cyprus	217
Kosovo	224
Moldova (Transnistria)	232
Turkey (PKK)	238
Ukraine	259
b) Caucasus	262
Armenia-Azerbaijan	262
Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)	268
Middle East	276
Israel-Palestine	276

Appendices	287
1. Processes analysed in the chapters of the yearbook, from 2006 to 2016.	289
2. Peace agreements and ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.	291 293
3. Facilitators in the conflicts analysed.	295
4. Women's participation in current peace processes.	297
5. Tell me what it was like... The mirrors of peace.	296
6. Conflicts, peace processes and UN Security Council resolutions.	297
7. Managing the past in some peace agreements.	302
8. Peace processes in recent years.	311
9. Websites of interest.	
 School for a Culture of Peace	

Introduction

This eleven edition of the **Yearbook on Peace Processes**¹ analyses conflicts in which negotiations are being held to reach a peace agreement, regardless of whether these negotiations are formalised, are in the exploratory phase, are faring well or, to the contrary, are stalled or in the midst of crisis. It also analyses some cases in which negotiations or explorations are partial; that is, they do not include all the armed groups present in the country (such as the case of India, for example). The majority of the negotiations refer to armed conflicts, but we also analyse quite a few contexts in which, despite the fact that there are no considerable armed clashes today, the parties have not reached a permanent agreement that would put an end to the hostilities and conflicts still pending. In that sense, the negotiations make sense in an effort to fend off the start or resurgence of new armed clashes.

The organisation of the analysis of each conflict follows a similar pattern in most cases: 1) a brief synopsis of the context of the conflict, with a small description of the armed groups and the main actors intervening in each conflict, 2) the background to the peace process, 3) the events that happened in 2014, 4) a table with the most significant events in the year as a summary, 5) a selection of websites where you can monitor the conflict and 6) a table illustrating the relationships among the primary and secondary actors in each conflict, highlighting the spaces of intermediation in each case.² At the start of every country, there is a small box with basic statistics on it³. The government armed forces are not included in the section of the box called "Armed actors".

It will be evident that the chapter on the Colombian process occupies many more pages than the rest of the processes analysed. This is because for many years the yearbook has also been published in Colombia, through the UNDP, due to the interest shown by various sectors in Colombia in learning about other international experiences, and because of the Yearbook author's commitment to the Colombian case.

The author of this yearbook has tried to stay within the bounds of mentioning new deeds, events, successes, failures or proposals in an attempt to limit personal opinions on these events to the extent possible.

MODALITIES OR STAGES IN PEACE PROCESSES

Informal indirect contacts
Formal indirect contacts
Informal direct contacts
Formal direct contacts
Informal explorations
Formal explorations
Informal dialogues
Formal dialogues
Formal negotiations
Formal peace process

¹ The yearbook expands on the information provided by the *Escola de Cultura de Pau* through its annual publication "Alerta 2016" (Icària Editorial, 2016), which is updated quarterly through the electronic publication "Barómetro" (<http://escolapau.uab.cat>).

² This "space of intermediation" includes not only the more formal "facilitators or mediators" (which are indicated by letter size or bold face), but also other institutions or individuals that have somehow intervened. Obviously, facilitation efforts that were not made public are not included, even if the author is aware of some of them.

³ The data income per capita and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) refer to 2014, and the source is the World Bank. GDP in PPA stand for the Gross Domestic Product per inhabitant in purchasing power parities /standards in Gross Domestic Income converted into international dollars and using purchasing power parity rates. The PPP method eliminates the effects of differences and changes in relative price levels, particularly non-tradables, and therefore provides a better overall measure of the real value of output produced by an economy compared to other economies.

By **peace processes** we mean all those efforts, especially political and diplomatic efforts, aimed at resolving armed conflicts or conflicts that are not currently in an armed phase, but which were in the past and still require negotiations to reach a satisfactory agreement between the parties. In some cases, peace processes aim to transform the root causes of the conflict through negotiations. By **negotiations** within peace processes we mean the stages of dialogue between at least two conflicting parties, in which they discuss their differences in an agreed-upon setting so as to put an end to violence and find a satisfactory solution to their demands. They are usually preceded by a prior exploratory phase, which enables the framework and methodology of the future negotiations to be defined. These negotiations may or may not be facilitated by third parties. When third parties do intervene in negotiations, it is to contribute to the dialogue between the opposing parties and to encourage a negotiated solution to the conflict, but not to impose solutions. In peace processes, negotiations can result in global or partial agreements, or in agreements related to the causes or consequences of the conflict, while elements of various types may be combined in the same agreement.

By **“ceasefire”** we mean the military decision to halt any combat or use of weapons during a specified period, while **“cessation of hostilities”** includes not only a ceasefire but also the commitment not to engage in kidnapping, harassment of the civilian population, threats, etc.

Depending on the ultimate goals sought and the methods adopted in the different phases of the negotiating process, the majority of peace processes can be categorised into one of these five categories or models, although some cases may combine two categories:

- a) Demobilisation and reinsertion;
- b) Sharing of political, military or economic power;
- c) Exchange (peace for democracy, peace for land, peace for withdrawal, peace for the recognition of rights, etc.);
- d) Formulas of self-government or **“intermediate political architectures”**;
- e) Territorial disputes.

The **model of peace process** is usually related to the kinds of demands presented and the actors' capacity to exert pressure or demand (level of symmetry between the military, political and social spheres), although mentors and facilitators, the weariness of the actors, support received and other less rational factors related to leaders' pathologies, imagined events or historical inertia also come into play. In some cases, though not many, especially if the process has lasted a long time, it might begin in one of the above categories (demobilisation and reinsertion, for example) and then the demands expand to situate the process in another more complex category. It is also important to recall that not all processes or their previous phases of exploration, dialogue and negotiation are undertaken with true sincerity, as it is common for them to be part of the actor's war strategy, either to win time, to internationalise and gain publicity, to rearm or for other reasons.

Finally, I wanted to note that what we commonly call a **“peace process”** is actually nothing other than a **“process to put an end to violence and armed struggle”**. The signing of a cessation of hostilities and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement are nothing other than the start of the true **“peace process”**, which is linked to stage called **“post-war rehabilitation”**. This stage is always fraught with difficulties, but it is where decisions are truly taken and policies are truly enacted which, if successful, will manage to overcome the violence (both structural and cultural) that will ultimately enable us to talk about truly having **“achieved peace”**. This yearbook, however, with the exception of a few appendices, shall limit itself to analysing the efforts made in the early stages of this long pathway, without which the final goal would be impossible to reach.

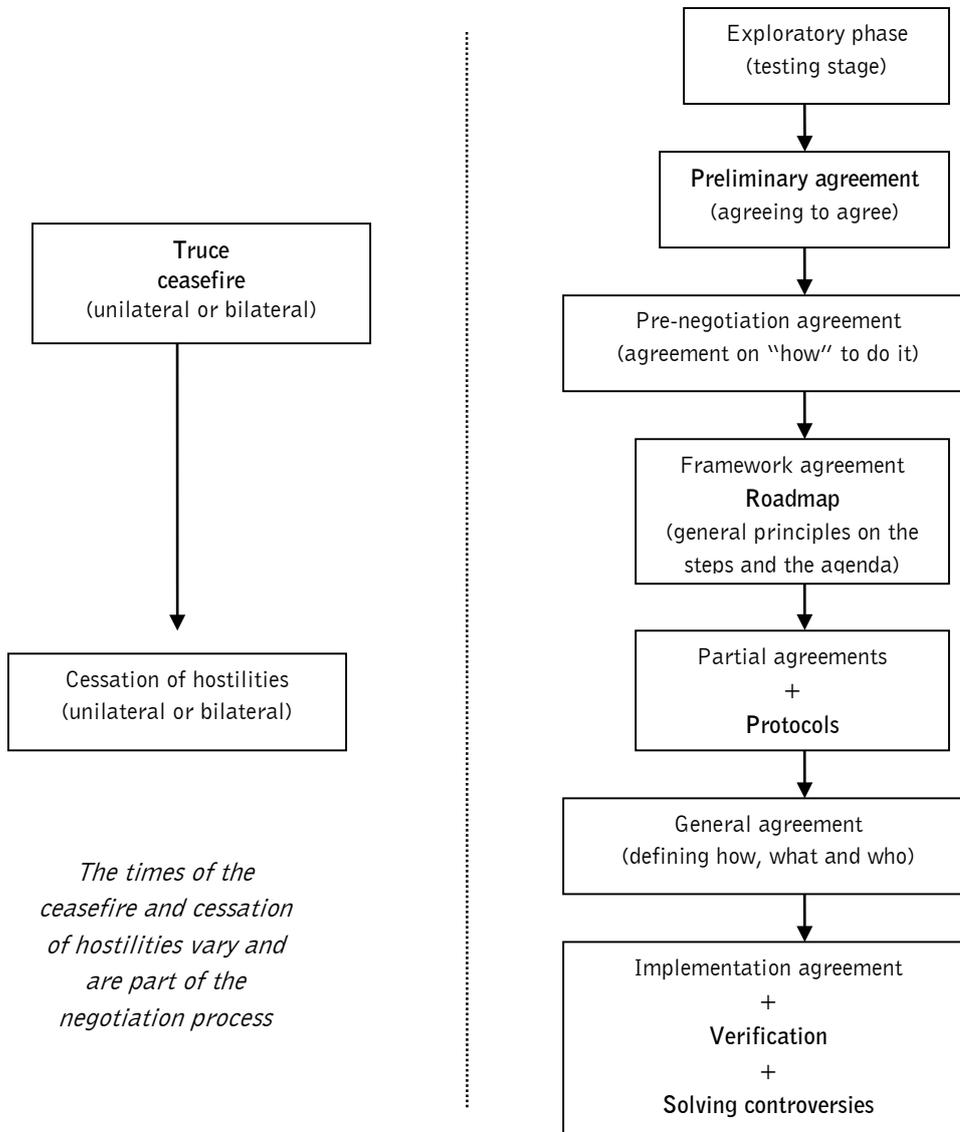
The main stages in a peace process

All peace processes require a huge time investment, and this is proven by the many years that must usually be spent for one to begin and bear fruit. Generally speaking, with very few exceptions, peace processes follow a pattern with more or less known phases in which the most time is spent on negotiations. They work with an initial exploratory or testing phase, also called pre-negotiation, in which the actors intervening in the process (explorers) calibrate the conviction of the parties, that is, whether they are truly convinced that they are going to launch a negotiation process in which they will have to give up something. This stage is decisive, since negotiations are often held without true conviction by one of the parties, either the government or the armed group. In this case, the negotiations are destined for failure. The exploratory phase is when the terms of complete and absolute security for the future negotiators are tested, since there is a history of murders or attacks against them and nobody dares to embark on talks without full guarantees of their safety. This safety must be established with very clearly defined rules. Likewise, certain guarantees are sought for compliance with the agreements reached in this early stage; in this case, timelines and methodologies to be followed are recommended; the pre-agenda or initial agenda is set; the terms of a tentative roadmap are agreed upon; and the conflictive aspects of the basic disagreement or fundamental incompatibilities (the meta-conflict) are clarified. In short, in this stage, the goal is to generate trust in the process itself: the role played by potential third parties is agreed upon, the imposition of plans (the very cornerstone of the negotiations) is discarded, and the adversary is recognised, giving him the legitimacy needed to engage in dialogue. Once this exploratory work has been completed, an "agreement on what must be agreed upon" is reached in order to then proceed to determining "how to do it". The sum of all these steps is what sometimes makes up the "roadmap" or initial framework of what must be done to ensure that the process fares well. The roadmap is nothing other than a working schema, often a diagram, in which the steps to follow, which will guide the process, are outlined.

Once the negotiations have started, the parties ascertain whether the interlocutors are valid, that is, whether they are the representatives of the primary actors with the capacity to take decisions. Third-ranked actors have no place at the negotiating table, so it is always necessary to start with an inclusive approach which gives a voice to the actors, even if they are unwanted, who are the keys to resolving the conflict. Although it is unquestionably more comfortable, it makes no sense to invite friendly actors to the negotiating table; rather the true adversaries must be invited. The reason for this negotiation is for the opposing parties to sit down to talk under the mindset of achieving mutual benefit through an "everyone wins, no one loses" or "I win, you win" scheme, thus discarding zero-sum approaches in which one party wins and the other loses.

If the negotiation proceeds satisfactorily, the issues on the substantive agenda can be discussed (the ones on the procedural agenda will have already been agreed upon). At that point, given the fact that trust will have been established, personal relationships will develop, which will make it easier to reach an agreement, or at least partial agreements, with their respective protocols, which in turn lead to the final agreement which outlines how it will be implemented and who will implement it. This finally leads us to implementation agreements, including the forms of verification and resolving any potential disagreements that might arise in the final stages.

Usual stages in negotiation processes



Main conclusions for 2015

- During the year, **three armed conflicts came to an end**: Sudan (Darfur) SLM-MM, Mali (CMA-Platform), Ethiopia (Tigray People's Democratic Movement, TPDM), and South Sudan.
- **In three conflicts there were exploratory steps** towards the opening of a formal negotiating process: Colombia (ELN), Pakistan (Balochistan), China (Tibet) and Syria.
- 15.4% of the negotiations went well or were resolved, 33.3% had difficulties, and 43.6% failed.
- In **70%** of the existing conflicts there was some form of contact, talks or negotiations.
- Of the **117 conflicts** analysed from the past **35 years**, **40.2%** ended with a peace agreement. Another 47.9% are still unresolved.
- Of the **61 conflicts** that ended over the same period, **77%** did so through a peace agreement, and **16.4%** through the military victory of one of the parties. The culture of negotiation is now a reality.
- Of the 61 conflicts that have now ended, around 32% lasted less than five years, and 53.2% less than 10 years. **The trend is towards conflicts being negotiated as early as possible.**
- Since the establishment of the Rome Statute of 1998, which established the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**, a total of 24 countries, 16 of which had signed that Statute, have had experiences of peace agreements with a total of 84 armed groups, of which 50 corresponded to countries that had signed the Rome Statute. The ICC has only intervened in one case among the countries that have signed a peace agreement (DR Congo-MLC), while an "ad hoc" tribunal, that for Sierra Leone, arrested three people from an armed group (RUF), bringing the total affected to 8 people from the armed groups from these two countries. In none of the other cases, without exception, have people demobilised after a peace agreement been subjected to convictions involving their entry into prison. The usual pattern is of amnesty for demobilised groups, and non-interference by the ICC.
- **81.2%** of the processes analysed included **the mediation of third parties.**
- The **35 women** listed in the tables of this Yearbook **represent 10.3%** of the total number of people cited with name and surname in the tables of actors (339). If one were to name all the post holders in the large number of organisations listed in the tables of actors, but in which the representative is not mentioned, this percentage would probably fall by more than half.
- Only **30%** of armed conflicts were considered worthy of a **Security Council resolution**. In the cases where there had been **exploration, talks or formal negotiations**, **34.4%** of them had been dealt with in some Security Council resolution.

Africa

- Negotiations were resumed, for the first time since October 2012, between the Government of **Ethiopia** and the **ONLF**, in Nairobi (Kenya).
- In **Libya**, the UN presented a six-point plan to the authorities in Tripoli and Tobruk. The plan included the formation of a transitional government that would lead the country until the adoption of a new constitution through a referendum and the holding of elections. In July, negotiations promoted by the UN resulted in the signing of a preliminary political agreement at Skhirat (Morocco), but it was not signed by the GNC, which believed that it was insufficiently clear about the responsibilities and the role to be played by the State Council. At year's end, the two governments existing in the country met directly, without

the mediation of the United Nations, although the leaders of the two governments did not attend.

- In early March the Government of **Mali** signed a proposal for a preliminary peace agreement developed as part of a mediation process led by Algeria and also with the participation of the UN, the AU, France, China and Russia. However, various armed groups of a jihadist nature were left out of the negotiations. On 15 May, the first peace and national reconciliation agreement was achieved.
- In **Mozambique** peace talks broke down. **Renamo** demanded the equal distribution of leadership posts in the security forces (police and army) before submitting the list of fighters in their militia for their integration into these bodies. The government, however, did not accept this distribution of power in the high command of the security forces, demanding the disarmament of the militia and their integration into the national security forces.
- Regarding the conflict in the **Central African Republic**, agreements were signed in Nairobi, with the mediation of Kenya, between former Séléka forces and the Anti-balaka militias, for a cease-fire, a cessation of hostilities, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and a general amnesty. An agreement was reached between the former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia to promote reconciliation in the country. Later, the Forum for National Reconciliation was held successfully and at the end of the year the presidential elections were held in a completely normal way.
- In the stalled process of **Western Sahara**, King Mohammed VI and the UN Secretary-General spoke by phone and reached an agreement on the way forward. Following Algeria's request, the Polisario Front leader, Abdelaziz, did not meet directly with the UN representative on his visit to refugee camps.
- Within the National Dialogue, the president of **Sudan** signed two decrees, including a two month ceasefire for the areas in conflict, as well as the offer of a general amnesty for the leaders of the rebel movements who took part in peace talks.
- In **Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile)**, an armed group, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), became the first African non-state actor to sign the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict. It also expressed interest in opening a negotiation process with two tracks of negotiation. At the end of the year there was a new attempt at informal talks, which were unsuccessful.
- In **South Sudan**, the peace agreement proposed by the IGAD-Plus was ratified by all parties to the conflict during August. The parties agreed to a permanent ceasefire and signed a transitional security agreement, according to which the government and the SPLA-IO rebels agreed the terms of the partial demilitarisation of the capital, Juba. At year's end, however, both sides continued to accuse each other of violating the ceasefire.

Latin America

- In **Colombia**, negotiations continued with the FARC. On two occasions, the FARC declared a unilateral ceasefire. The Government, for its part, gave the order to temporarily suspend the bombing of FARC camps, also twice. An agreement on mine clearance was achieved, and the two delegations announced that they had reached an agreement to launch a Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition once the Final Agreement had been signed. This commission would be an independent, impartial and extrajudicial body. On 23 September, President Santos and the leader of the FARC, "Timochoenko", met in Havana to announce the agreement to create a Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and for this it was decided to create a Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, as well as its own chambers of justice and a Court for Peace. The agreement included a commitment to clarify the problem of disappeared persons. On 15 December the complete text of the Agreement on the Victims of the

Conflict was published; its outlines had already been announced in September. The president and "Timochenko" also committed themselves to finalising the negotiations by 23 March 2016. The agreements reached so far make the peace process with the FARC one of the most advanced in the world. For its part, the talks with the **ELN** guerrilla organisation completed their exploratory phase, and a negotiating agenda was agreed with the Government for the beginning of 2016.

Asia

- Concerning **Afghanistan**, several meetings were held with the Taliban in different countries, with the help and coordination of a number of states: USA, Pakistan, China, Iran, Qatar and Norway. In December, the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, and the Pakistani president, Nawaz Sharif, agreed to resume peace talks once more.
- In **Burma**, the government reached a ceasefire agreement with eight armed groups — KNU, KNLA-PC, DKBA, Pa-O NLO, CNF, ALP, ABSDF, RCSS / SSA — out of the total of 21 insurgent actors in the country. In December, they took the first steps towards the process of political dialogue in the country. Some of the key areas of discussion would be constitutional reform, the issue of federalism and greater autonomy.
- In the **Philippines**, the **MILF** issued an official statement which stated that if the Congress finally passed a law that strayed substantially from the letter and spirit of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, adopted respectively in 2012 and 2014, MILF would end the handing in of weapons and the demobilisation of combatants, which had already begun symbolically in June. On the other hand, Manila considered that there was not sufficient time to achieve a comprehensive agreement with the **NDF** before the end of Aquino's mandate in mid 2016, but that it would be possible to achieve substantial progress in the negotiating agenda.
- In **India**, there was a first round of talks between the Indian government and the pro-negotiation faction of the armed opposition group in Assam, **ULFA**. The leader of ULFA Pro-Talks, Anup Kumar Chetia, imprisoned in Bangladesh from 1997 to 2005, then in exile in that country, was initially deported to India to participate in peace negotiations. In late December, Chetia was released.
- In addition, the Indian government and the Naga armed opposition group **NSCN-IM** reached a preliminary framework peace agreement. Both sides accepted the idea of "shared sovereignty" and coexistence.
- As for the dispute between **India and Pakistan** over Kashmir, the Pakistani Prime Minister proposed to the Government of India a new peace initiative for Kashmir, based on an indefinite truce, on the full demilitarisation of the territory and mutual withdrawal from the Siachen glacier. Subsequently, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, staged an informal meeting in which they exchanged ideas to restart peace talks.
- In **Pakistan**, the government and nationalist leaders from Balochistan recognised the importance of initiating a process of dialogue to resolve the Baloch conflict by political means. The government granted an amnesty to insurgents in Balochistan who abandoned their arms and renounced violence. The leader of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP), Bugti, in exile in Geneva, gave an interview to the BBC in which he announced that he supported a negotiated solution to the conflict and was giving up the demand for the independence of Balochistan. At year's end, the Government was trying to open talks with the Baloch leaders.
- In **Thailand (South)**, talks were held between the government and a platform known as the Majlis Syura Patani (Mara Patani, Consultative Council of Patani), which brings together six insurgent organisations: the BRN, GMIP, BIPP and three different factions of PULO. A series of informal meetings between both parties was started in Kuala Lumpur with the

Malaysian government in a mediating role. Mara Patani demanded the recognition of the Patani nation (and therefore their right to self-determination) and the presence of international mediators and observers in the peace talks.

Europe

- In **Cyprus**, the sides held a first joint meeting on 15 May, thus marking the formal resumption of the process. The leaders agreed to meet at least twice a month, to conduct negotiations personally, and to the implementation of confidence-building measures. At the end of the year, they decided to step up the pace of the talks.
- In **Georgia**, a Treaty on Alliance and Integration between Russia and South Ossetia was signed, bringing tension and difficulties to the negotiating climate. Abkhazia and Ossetia also repeated their refusal to guarantee the right of return, as well as the accusations of their governments to Georgia concerning the politicisation of the issue.
- In **Kosovo**, the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo signed an agreement in Brussels to integrate the judicial structures of northern Kosovo within the Kosovo judicial system. They also agreed to establish a hotline to deal with specific or unexpected issues. An agreement was signed between Serbia and Kosovo for the dismantling of the *de facto* Serb security force that had operated in Serb areas and its integration into the Kosovo Police. The parties agreed to a package of four important agreements, concerning energy, telecommunications, the Assembly of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo and the bridge that divides the city of Mitrovica.
- In **Turkey (Turkish Kurdistan)**, President Erdogan stated on several occasions between late March and April that his government would take no more steps towards peace if the PKK did not lay down its arms; he denied that an oversight committee was going to be created; and he denied the existence of a Kurdish question. With this, he abandoned the attempts made a few months before to open formal negotiations. As a result of the renewed fighting, the PKK ended its unilateral ceasefire in force since 2013, with an escalation of acts of violence.
- In **Ukraine**, Russia opened a bilateral diplomatic channel with the USA to address the Ukrainian crisis, which came on top of the spaces for dialogue under the umbrella of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia). New agreements were achieved both on a ceasefire and the withdrawal of weapons, leading to a reduction in violence, and commitments were made for the completion of an amnesty law and for a new constitutional status for the areas currently under rebel control.

Middle East

- Regarding the conflict between **Israel and Palestine**, Netanyahu said following his election victory that he was still in favour of the two-state solution, but that at the moment the conditions did not exist to reach this solution. The Israeli government rejected an initiative by France to revive negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians which included a timetable for Palestinian statehood.
- Numerous meetings were held to try to find an agreed political solution to the conflict in **Syria**, in which Russia could play a prominent role.

Peace processes in 2015

In this yearbook we analyse, in separate chapters, the situation in 35 contexts of negotiation or exploration, and we also comment, in another section, on events in 5 countries: Burundi, Mozambique, Syria, Sudan (East) and Yemen. There is also follow up of the agreements with the MILF and the MNLF (Philippines) and in Eastern Sudan, since there have been serious difficulties in their implementation. Overall, we comment on the situation in 42 cases.

Status of the negotiations at the end of 2015				
Going well (3)	In difficulties (13)	Going poorly (17)	In exploratory stages (3)	Resolved (3)
India (Nagaland) (NSCN-IM) India-Pakistan Cyprus	Senegal (MFDC) Sudan (National Dialogue) Sudan (Darfur) Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile (SPLM-N) CAR Colombia (FARC) India (Assam) (ULFA) Burma / Myanmar Philippines (MILF) Thailand (south) Kosovo Moldova (Transdnjestria) Ukraine (Donbass)	Mozambique Ethiopia (ONLF) Sudan – South Sudan Burundi DR Congo (FDLR) Libya Western Sahara Afghanistan (Taliban) India (Nagaland) (NSCN-K) Philippines (NDF) Philippines (MNLF) Turkey (PKK) Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh) Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) Israel-Palestine Yemen (Houthis)	Colombia (ELN) Pakistan (Balochistan) Syria	Sudan (Darfur) SLM-MM dissidents South Sudan Mali (CMA-Platform)

In 15.4% of cases, including those that ended successfully, the negotiations worked well; another 33.3% encountered difficulties and **43.6% were unsuccessful**. Thus the balance is very negative, despite the fact that in several countries negotiations were expected to resume in 2016. In the six years from 2008 to 2013, the average proportion of negotiations that ended badly at the end of the year was only 17.3%.

Other attempts at negotiation not covered in the following section of “countries”

Regarding the crisis in **Burundi**, through the month of June contacts were made to try to unblock the crisis faced by the country. The month began with the decision to postpone the local and legislative elections due to be held from 5 to 29 June. On 3 June an emergency summit of the

countries in the region was held at Dar es Salaam, to discuss the crisis in Burundi. From this a request was made to postpone the elections by at least one and a half months, a decision that was accepted by the Burundian government. Following that, contacts were made and there were mediation efforts by the UN, supported by the AU and by the regional organisations EAC and ICGLR. The UN replaced its official mediator, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Saïd Djinnit. He had been rejected by the political opposition, which believed he was biased in the process, and he resigned on 11 June. The new mediator, Senegalese national Abdoulaye Bathily, the UN Secretary-General's representative in Central Africa, arrived in Bujumbura on 23 June. Between 11 and 22 June the talks broke off completely because the main stumbling block was still there: the candidacy of President Pierre Nkurunziza for a third term in the elections due to take place on 15 July, according to the existing timetable. The government, which did not want to participate in the new round of negotiations, finally announced on 24 June that it would join the new round of talks promoted by the UN alongside opposition representatives Agathon Rwasa and Charles Nditije, civil society representative and human rights advocate Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa and the leaders of the different religions. The UN welcomed the government's announcement and expressed regret that for the time being the ruling CNDD-FDD party was not participating. The Government representative was the Interior Minister Edouard Ndiwamana. About 500 people were in detention as a result of the demonstrations and the alleged coup attempt. While the political opposition agreed to the holding of elections on 29 June, the international community wanted them to be postponed. At its twenty-fifth summit, held in Johannesburg on 14 and 15 June, the African Union decided to send a mission of human rights observers and military experts to monitor the quartering of militias and armed groups; this announcement was accepted by the Government.

Violence escalated in the country in December with a coordinated attack on three military bases by unidentified rebel groups on 11 December. The events prompted a reaction in the international community and pressure to force a political dialogue from the UN Security Council and the AU, which studied the different options on the table. On 17 December, the AU approved the creation of a peacekeeping mission, the AU Prevention and Protection Mission (MAPROBU), while President Pierre Nkurunziza threatened to attack the members of this mission if they violated the territorial integrity of the country. Moreover, on 28 December peace talks began in Entebbe (Uganda), mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni at the request of the regional organisation EAC, with the participation of representatives of the government and the ruling CNDD-FDD party, the political opposition and civil society, the National Council for the Respect of the Arusha Accord (CNARED, the main opposition platform) and representatives of the countries of the region and international organisations in order to promote a political dialogue. Four former Burundian presidents (Jean Baptiste Bagaza, Domitien Ndayizeye, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and Pierre Buyoya) participated in the meeting and will be part of the mediating team that aims to end the climate of violence rocking the country. However, the Burundian government delegate, CNDD-FDD Deputy Chairman Victor Burikukikiye, said that before initiating peace talks, issues such as who should participate in them had to be reviewed and insisted that those responsible for the coup d'état could not be involved. Museveni declared that the rival parties must not lay down conditions before the negotiations started. As of April, it is estimated that 400 people had been killed as a consequence of the violence.

Regarding the dispute in **China** over the region of **Tibet**, in March a senior Chinese government official in charge of ethnic and religious affairs stated that Beijing was open to discussing some relevant issues with the Dalai Lama, provided these did not include independence or requests for greater autonomy for Tibet. This was the first time since talks were broken off in 2010 that the government had mentioned a possible resumption of dialogue. The said government official urged the Dalai Lama to abandon his so called "middle way" strategy, which consists of explicitly renouncing Tibetan independence while looking to obtain greater powers in those issues that are important for the survival and promotion of a Tibetan identity in the regions traditionally inhabited by the Tibetan population, which go beyond the current Tibet Autonomous Region. Likewise, the Government urged the Dalai Lama not to continue instigating outbreaks of violence and self-immolations in Chinese territory. Furthermore, Beijing criticised statements by the Dalai

Lama that he did not wish to have a successor and that the Buddhist tradition of reincarnation should come to an end, considering them a double betrayal of his homeland and his faith. In this regard, the Chinese government declared that it must be the one to ratify and approve the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. Some analysts argued that the Chinese government wanted to control the reincarnation process for political ends.

The Government of **Ethiopia** confirmed in mid-September that the rebel leader Mola Asgedom, who had taken refuge in Eritrea, had surrendered to the Ethiopian authorities along with about 800 fighters from the armed group, the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM). Mola went from Eritrea to Sudan, and his fighters crossed the border into Ethiopia. The TPDM began a rebellion in 2001 to try to democratise the country, although its activity was limited. Ethiopia had previously referred to the armed group as a puppet of Eritrea, although Mola himself stated that the group had been in contact with Addis Ababa for more than a year. The Eritrean authorities did not comment on the news. This desertion came after the news of the formation on 7 September of an opposition coalition called "Salvation of Ethiopia Through Democracy", made up of the TPDM, Arbegnoch Ginbot 7 for Unity and Democratic Movement (AGUDM), the Afar People's Liberation Movement (APLM) and the Amhara Democratic Force Movement (ADFM); Mola had been named vice president of this coalition. Eritrea and Ethiopia repeatedly accuse each other of supporting armed opposition groups seeking to overthrow the other's government, a legacy of the war between them in the late 1990s and whose resolution is still blocked over the village of Badme, occupied by Ethiopia despite a decision in 2002 by the Hague-based boundary commission that returned it to Eritrean control.

In **Mozambique**, the third quarter started well in terms of progress in the peace negotiations between RENAMO and FRELIMO, but gradually doubts and tensions concerning the implementation of points of agreement led to the breakdown of the negotiating process in August. After having had 111 rounds of dialogue over a period of more than two years, the Government, headed by the FRELIMO party led by Nyusi Filipe, and the opposition party RENAMO (the former armed group) led by Afonso Dhlakama announced during July, through the Government representative in the negotiations, Agriculture Minister Jose Pacheco, and the representative of the RENAMO delegation, Saimone Macuiana, the start of negotiations on the fourth and final item on the dialogue agenda, focused on economic aspects and the distribution of resources in the country. Dinis Sengulane, a retired Anglican bishop who acted as spokesperson for the mediation team, said the start of discussions on the fourth point meant that the process was working. However, during that month tensions re-emerged on other agenda items that had not yet been resolved. Point three, concerning the separation between political parties and the state, and on which both parties had signed a declaration of principles, became blocked again, because RENAMO insisted that the agreement reached should become law with parliamentary approval. For its part, point two, which dealt with issues related to defence and security, continued without any progress being made. RENAMO demanded the equal sharing of top security posts (police and army), before it would submit the list of its militia fighters for their integration into the security forces. The government, meanwhile, rejected this sharing of power in the high command of the security forces, demanding the disarming of the militia and their integration into the national security forces. RENAMO in turn continued to demand that the government implement a policy of provincial autonomy that would allow them the control of the six northern and central provinces that the party claimed to have won in the last elections, in 2014 (Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambezia, Nampula and Niassa). In this regard, at a meeting of demobilised RENAMO fighters, held on 21 and 22 August in the city of Quelimane, the party again threatened the government that it would take over the provinces it was demanding by force. Adding to the disagreements on these negotiating points came the tensions generated by the series of mutual accusations of having violated the ceasefire provided for in the Peace Agreement of 5 September 2014. In this climate, the RENAMO leader announced the suspension of peace talks. Filipe Nyusi, the Mozambican president, offered Dhlakama to host a bilateral meeting to try to put the peace negotiations back on track. RENAMO initially dismissed this possibility, arguing that it was not a priority, while accusing the government of having weakened the peace agreement with the decision to cancel the

international observation mission, the EMOCHM. At the end of the year, given what they considered to be a failure by the five Mozambicans who were acting as mediators, who they accused of lacking experience, RENAMO called for external mediation, suggesting the South African president, Jacob Zuma, or someone linked to the Catholic Church.

With regard to **Syria** and the efforts to find a negotiated solution and bring an end to hostilities, in late January Russia hosted a meeting between representatives of the opposition and the Syrian government in Moscow. Although they were the first meetings since the failure of the UN-led negotiations in early 2014 (the process known as “Geneva II”), the meeting was held amid low expectations due to the refusal to participate of important opposition groups such as the Syrian National Coalition, the largest dissident conglomerate. The opposition coalition did not view Russia as a neutral party for hosting talks, given the relationship between Moscow and the Damascus regime. In this context, the government of Bashar al-Assad also reduced the level of its representation at the meeting. Nonetheless, the Russian efforts had the backing of the US. This attitude was interpreted as a sign that Washington might accept an approach that did not necessarily require Bashar al-Assad to step down immediately, as it had been demanding until then. According to some analysts, the military stalemate in the conflict, the rise of ISIS and the war’s repercussions on the population may have led the US government to consider the possibility of gradual change. During the first quarter, the UN Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, also maintained contacts with Damascus and opposition forces to try to halt fighting in Aleppo as a preliminary step towards promoting other ceasefire initiatives in the rest of the country. In February, the diplomat announced that the Syrian government was ready to declare a partial truce and to stop air strikes in the city for a period of six weeks. However, armed opposition groups maintained their reservations about the regime’s strategy, and maintained their refusal to respond to Staffan de Mistura’s proposal until the end of the period.

In April, Russia tried to facilitate contacts between the government and the opposition, but only low-level opposition delegates attended the meeting in Moscow, which did not bring significant results. The UN Special Envoy, meanwhile, launched a series of consultations with multiple Syrian actors. Staffan de Mistura invited members of human rights groups, women’s organisations, and representatives of the government and opposition to Geneva in order to identify their different positions with a view to negotiations. The diplomat chose to hold individual, low profile, meetings, in contrast with the Geneva II process of early 2014 that got a lot of media coverage but failed to make any progress. Although more than thirty armed groups refused to participate, de Mistura continued along that line and he managed to meet in Istanbul with a dozen delegates from militias, as well as visiting the authorities in Damascus in mid-June and making contacts with regional and international powers to deal with the Syrian crisis. According to information that reached the press, the UN Special Envoy aimed to present a report in July in which he would try to firm up and put into operation the agreements reached in 2012, known as the Geneva Communiqué, which drew up a plan for a transition in Syria.

In the third quarter, various reports highlighted the different diplomatic efforts while some limited ceasefire agreements were signed during the period, but overall there was no progress in the search for a political solution to end the armed conflict. Following a consultation process with numerous actors involved in the conflict in Syria, the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura put a new proposal for dealing with the crisis before the Security Council, which approved it in mid-August. Analysts highlighted that having discovered during the consultation process that given the context of the conflict a broad and comprehensive agreement on a political transition for Syria was not a realistic goal, de Mistura now proposed to focus on more specific aspects that could pave the way for an agreement in the future. The plan consisted in deepening the consultation process through the creation of thematic groups to deal with key issues (political and constitutional issues, military and security affairs, public institutions, reconstruction and development). The aim was to “operationalise” the 2012 Geneva Communiqué — which was approved at the first international conference on Syria and at that time laid down a roadmap for transition in the country — and make progress on a framework document on the basis of

contributions from the Syrian population. During the quarter there were reports in July of de Mistura's meetings with regime officials in Damascus and with sections of the opposition in Jordan and Turkey; in August of trips by Syrian officials to Oman for the purpose of negotiations; and in September a joint declaration of some armed Syrian opposition groups in which they accepted the Geneva Communiqué as a basis for discussing the political future of the country. According to reports, the statement was signed on 15 September by almost thirty armed factions, including the Free Syrian Army, Ahrar al-Sham and the Islam Army, among others, after a two-day meeting held in Turkey. The meeting was not attended by groups like al-Nusra Front, ISIS or YPG that have an important role in the overall conflict. In their declaration, these groups reiterated some of the key demands of the Syrian opposition — among them that Bashar al-Assad should stand down and that the security apparatus should be dissolved — and were critical of the proposal for working groups presented by de Mistura. During the period some reports also highlighted the involvement of some external actors who aimed to facilitate ceasefire agreements in some areas of Syria. According to press reports, in August Turkey and Iran facilitated negotiations between Hezbollah and the Syrian armed opposition group Ahrar al-Sham for a ceasefire in the Zabadani area, bordering Lebanon, where heavy fighting was going on. Although at that time it was reported that agreement had been reached to halt hostilities in this town and in Fuua and Kafraya, in the northwest, clashes resumed in September. At the end of the quarter a ceasefire was announced once again.

In October, the internationalisation of the war in Syria became more evident given the direct involvement of Russia in bombings in the country and a more open presence of Iranian forces in the fighting. In this context, Iranian support for the Bashar al-Assad regime became more explicit with forces on the ground. Towards the end of the month, the Russian-Syrian alliance was demonstrated in a visit by Bashar al-Assad to Moscow, his first trip abroad since 2011. Shortly afterwards there were reports of the revival of contacts between international and regional powers to try to find a political solution to the crisis, with the news that the US had lifted its veto on the participation of Iran. In the first half of December, Saudi Arabia brought together the Syrian opposition that was considered to be "moderate". Iran warned that the meeting in Riyadh could derail the international talks to end the civil war. About one hundred people attended the event, which had the support of the USA.

The progress achieved in the peace process in the **eastern region of Sudan** — best known in the form of the ESPA (Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement) signed between the Government and the rebels of the Eastern Front (EF) on 16 October 2006 — specifically with the demobilisation and reintegration of combatants, gave way to differences during the third quarter between the Government and the group of ex combatants. In late September, the Commissioner-General of the Office of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration stated that the phase of demobilisation of former combatants in the Red Sea state had ended, achieving the registration of 900 people in the program. However, the chairman of the Eastern Front Ex-Combatants Committee of the Red Sea state, Omar Hashem El Khalifa, rejected these declarations, expressing dissatisfaction with the process of reintegration of ex combatants into the armed forces and public administration. The ex combatants group denied that the demobilisation process had concluded, and demanded an investigation into the list of 900 people allegedly demobilised, claiming that many of the names on the list were false. At the same time, there was a demand for an inventory of program funds earmarked for the demobilisation of combatants of the Eastern Front.

In **Yemen**, during the first quarter, the worsening of the conflict confirmed the collapse of the peace agreement reached in September 2014, which had attempted to respond to the deep political crisis in the country. At the beginning of the year the Houthis finally took control of the capital and forced the resignation of the government, the prime minister and the president, in part because of disagreements about the nature of the federal formula that had to be enshrined by the new Yemeni Constitution. Initially, President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi seemed to accede to the demands of the Houthis —who had kidnapped a senior presidential adviser— but the president ended up resigning and was placed under house arrest. In late January the Houthis

released the presidential adviser in a measure they presented as a good will gesture aimed at overcoming the crisis. Later they decided to dissolve Parliament and form a six member presidential council. These acts were rejected by the UN Security Council, which unanimously passed a resolution demanding a Houthi withdrawal from the Yemeni capital and from the state institutions. Despite all this, several preliminary agreements were announced between rival factions in the country to form a transitional council, a move that was described by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen Jamal Benomar as a step in the right direction. However, the flight of Hadi, who moved to Aden, and the President's accusations that the Houthis had perpetrated a coup, put this agreement into question. Hadi insisted on his authority and explicitly called for outside intervention to curb the Houthis. A coalition of countries led by Saudi Arabia responded to his call and started a military operation at the end of the quarter. The escalating violence and increasing regional dimension of the conflict have further complicated the prospects for a negotiated solution.

Given the serious escalation of violence and the deterioration of the conflict, the UN Special Envoy Jamal Benomar resigned his post in April after more than four years of attempts to facilitate a political transition in the country and in the midst of criticisms from the Gulf states. He was succeeded by the Mauritanian diplomat Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who throughout the second quarter tried to instigate negotiations between the parties. After several weeks of activity, in June the new special envoy managed to get representatives of both the Houthis and the government of the ousted President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi to travel to Geneva to attempt negotiations. The parties ruled out establishing direct dialogue and insisted on a series of conditions before negotiating. On the one hand, Hadi's delegates demanded that the Houthis recognise the president's authority and retreat from the areas that they had under their control. On the other, the Houthis ruled out dialogue and a truce unless the Saudi-led coalition's air strikes ended first. Thus, the contacts ended without results and the Special Envoy to Yemen insisted that any new attempt at dialogue had to be preceded by a ceasefire. In this regard it is noteworthy that during the second quarter there was only a humanitarian truce of five days; at the end of this agreed period there was a resumption of hostilities. It is also worth mentioning that Saudi Arabia also tried to promote a meeting between Yemeni actors with the supposed objective of finding a political way out of the crisis, but the Houthis refused to participate on the basis that Riyadh led the military coalition that had been carrying out attacks against the armed group since late March. Another four-point proposal to deal with the crisis presented by Iran — considered an ally of the Houthis — did not get much response either. During the period, press reports also spoke of a meeting in Oman between the Houthis and US representatives to address the crisis and negotiate the release of American citizens who were being held by the armed group. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, also discussed the crisis in Yemen with his Iranian counterpart in parallel with the negotiations over Teheran's nuclear program. In this context, and following the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, during the second half of June delegations of the government in exile and of the Houthis travelled to Geneva. Representatives of the two parties refused to hold a face to face meeting, so Ould Cheikh Ahmed was forced to act as an intermediary between the two delegations. The delegates of the government in exile insisted that the Houthis withdraw from territory they had taken under their control and protested that the group's delegation more than doubled the 10 representatives agreed. The Houthis, meanwhile, demanded an end to air strikes before agreeing a ceasefire. The UN Special Envoy considered that the declaration of a ceasefire should be a condition for any new round of negotiations and stressed that efforts would be stepped up to achieve a truce.

During the third quarter, the various attempts to implement a truce in Yemen were frustrated. The hopes for a ceasefire during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, did not prosper. Nor did a unilateral ceasefire which was decreed by Riyadh in late July so as to facilitate humanitarian access; it was preceded by an escalation of violence and severe clashes occurred almost immediately after it was announced. During August, the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, held meetings in Egypt with representatives of the Arab League and of the GPC party of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh; he held meetings in Oman and Riyadh; while in New York he reported to the Security Council on the situation in Yemen. During August

it emerged that the Houthis had for the first time offered some significant concessions, including withdrawal from the cities under their control, in line with the provisions of resolution 2216 adopted by the UN Security Council in April. However, the deadlock in the negotiations continued. In early September it was announced that the Hadi government, the GPC and the Houthis had all agreed to participate in peace talks, but two days later the Hadi administration declined to participate, arguing that the Houthis should publicly commit themselves to the unconditional implementation of Resolution 2216. Thus, at the end of the quarter the situation remained blocked. Diplomatic contacts did however bring results in September in terms of the release of three citizens of Saudi Arabia, two from the USA and one Briton, who were being held by Houthi forces. Press reports described the move as a good will gesture by the armed group ahead of the peace talks that the UN Special Envoy was attempting to promote.

A new round of negotiations between the contending parties, held in Switzerland as of 15 December, failed to make progress towards an agreed solution and was overshadowed by the continuing violence in the country, despite the initial ceasefire declaration. This was the first time that the parties had sat down at the same table to talk, but at a political level the Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi government and the Houthi forces maintained their differences. The Yemeni president, who since March had received the military support of an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, insisted that the provisions of UN resolution 2216 should be applied, while the Houthis — in alliance with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh — reiterated their demands for a change in government. To this was added disagreement over a possible prisoner exchange and the repeated violations of the ceasefire which, in principle, should have been maintained for a week as a sign of goodwill between the parties while the negotiations were being held. On 20 December, the UN reported that there had been numerous violations of the ceasefire since its inception and Saudi Arabia officially decreed the end of the truce in early 2016. According to media calculations, more than 80 people, mostly soldiers and guards, have died in Saudi territory along the border with Yemen since hostilities began in March 2015, while another 6,000 have died in Yemen, according to UN figures. Both sides were accused of war crimes, and according to human rights groups, the Riyadh-led coalition was responsible for the largest number of civilian casualties in the conflict. In the days before the talks in Switzerland, other violent incidents had put into question the prospects of dialogue. Taking advantage of the context of instability, in early December the ISIS subsidiary in Yemen claimed an attack in which the governor of Aden, Jaafar Mohamed Saad, and 10 of his companions were killed.

Conflicts that have ended in recent years		
2000	Burundi, Sierra Leone	2
2001		0
2002	Angola	1
2003	DR Congo, India (BLTF-BLT, DHD)	3
2004		0
2005	Indonesia (Aceh), Northern Ireland, Sudan (South), India (NLFT), Iraq (Kurdistan)	5
2006	Sudan (East), Sudan (Darfur - SLA Minawi), Nepal (CPN), Israel-Lebanon	4
2007	Ivory Coast	1
2008	Mali (ADC), Benin-Burkina Faso, Burundi (FNL), CAR (various), Kenya, Colombia (ERG), Sri Lanka (TMVP), Georgia-Russia, Lebanon	9
2009	Mali (ATNM), Niger, Chad (National Movement), Central African Republic (FDPC, MNSP), DR Congo (CNDP), Somalia (ARS), India (DHD-J), Myanmar (KNU - KNLA Peace Council), Thailand- Cambodia	10
2010	Nigeria (MEND), Niger (MNJ), Chad (UFCD faction, UFR; UFDD, CDR, UFDD/F), Ethiopia (UWSLF, ONLF faction), Eritrea-Djibouti, Somalia (ASWJ), Sudan (JRM, SLA-FREES), India (KNF, KNLF, KCP-MC Lallumba faction), Myanmar (SSA-N)	17
2011	Sudan (LJM), Chad (FPR), Central African Republic (CPJP), DR Congo (FRF), India (UPDS), Myanmar (NDAA, KHB), Spain (ETA)	8
2012	CAR (CPJP), India (DHD, APA, AANLA, STF, BCF, ACMA, KLA/KLO, HPC, IKDA, KRA), Nepal (SKTMMM), Myanmar (KNPP)	14
2013	Sudan (JEM-Bashar), South Sudan (SSLA), India (UPPK, faction KCP-MC)	4
2014	South Sudan (SSDM-Cobra faction), Mozambique, Philippines (MILF)	3
2015	Sudan (Darfur) SLM-MM dissidents, South Sudan, Mali (CMA- Platform)	3

CONFLICTS AND PEACE PROCESSES AT THE END OF 2015			
Conflicts and peace processes ending with a peace agreement		Sudan (Darfur) SLM-MM dissidents, South Sudan, Mali (CMA- Platform)	3
Armed conflicts underway	With a consolidated peace process	Sudan (Darfur), CAR, Colombia (FARC), Burma / Myanmar	4
	With interruptions in the process	Mali, Ethiopia (ONLF), Sudan (Kordofan-Blue Nile), Libya, DRC (East), Afghanistan, Philippines (NDF), India (Assam), Pakistan (Balochistan), Thailand (South), Turkey (PKK), Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, Yemen (Houthis).	14
	Without formal negotiations	Algeria (AQMI), Nigeria (Boko Haram), Somalia (al-Shabaab), Colombia (ELN), Philippines (Abu Sayyaf), India (Jammu and Kashmir), India (CPI-M), Pakistan, China (East Turkestan), Russia (Dagestan), Egypt (Sinai), Iraq, Syria, Yemen (AQPA).	14
	Subtotal		35
Former unresolved armed conflicts that still require negotiation	With a consolidated peace process	Senegal (MFDC), Sudan (National Dialogue), India (NSCN-IM), India-Pakistan, Philippines (MILF), Cyprus, Kosovo, Moldova (Transdnistria), Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia (Abkhazia y South Ossetia)	11
	With interruptions in the process	Mozambique, Sudan-South Sudan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Burundi, Western Sahara, Philippines (MNLF),	6
	Without formal negotiations	India (Nagaland-NSCN-K), China (Tibet)	2
	Subtotal		19
TOTAL	Ended		3
	With a consolidated peace process		15
	With interruptions in the process		20
	Without negotiations in recent years		16
	TOTAL		54

Notes:

-This table is a snapshot taken at year's end, regardless of the evolution over the course of the year.

-“With a consolidated peace process” means that the parties have agreed a negotiating methodology, the possible mediation, the timing and the format, regardless of whether the negotiations are going well or poorly, a matter that is recorded in the table on page 13.

-“With interruptions in the process” means that the peace process has had long interruptions, or found itself temporarily interrupted at the end of the year.

-“Without formal negotiations” includes cases where there are exploratory talks which have not reached a formal stage by the end of the year.

Conflicts and peace processes in recent years

Most of the armed conflicts analyzed in this 2016 Yearbook began in the period spanning from the 1970s to the 1990s. Over the years several armed conflicts have come to an end, either with the signing of a final peace agreement (regardless of its value) or by reaching a provisional cessation of armed hostilities. In any case, if we look at most of the conflicts from the 1980s and the fact that some are still underway, we can draw some initial conclusions regarding the way these conflicts were managed from the perspective that thirty years of history provides. It should be noted that some of these conflicts have moved from an armed phase to an unarmed phase, although this section considers them all.

Of the 117 conflicts in the following table, **40.2% ended through a peace agreement**. Those that **have not been resolved and remain active account for 47.9% of the total**. What is most significant is that **only 8.5% of these conflicts have come to an end through a military victory by one of the sides**; in other words, the vast majority of conflicts are resolved only through negotiations — not through military victory — and through opening some kind of process leading to the signing of a final agreement. This fact does not diminish the concern about the high number of unsolved conflicts.

As for the conflicts that ended during the last thirty-five years (61), 47 ended through a peace agreement (77%), 4 with no formal peace agreement (6.6%) and 10 with a military victory (16.4%), which confirms again that negotiation is the best path for resolving conflicts.

Conflicts underway since the 1980s and their resolution up until 2015

Countries	Period (*)	Resolution
Afghanistan	89-...	Unresolved
Angola – FLEC	75-...	Unresolved
Angola – UNITA	75-02	Peace agreement
Algeria	91-...	Unresolved
Armenia-Azerbaijan	91-...	Unresolved
Burma / Myanmar – CNF	88-	Unresolved
Burma / Myanmar – KNU	48-...	Unresolved
Burma / Myanmar (MNDAA)	09-...	Unresolved
Burma / Myanmar – Shan	59-...	Unresolved
Burundi	93-05	Peace agreement
Burundi (FNL)	91-06	Peace agreement
Burundi (FNL)	11-13	Peace agreement
Colombia (M-19)	74-90	Peace agreement
Colombia (EPL)	67-91	Peace agreement
Colombia (MAQL)	84-91	Peace agreement
Colombia (CRS)	91-94	Peace agreement
Colombia – ELN	64-...	Unresolved
Colombia – FARC	64-...	Unresolved
Congo (Ninjas)	98-07	Peace agreement
Congo, DR (Inter-Congolese dialogue)	97-03	Peace agreement
Congo, DR (Kivus and Ituri)	96-...	Unresolved
Congo, DR (M23)	12-13	Military victory
Ivory Coast	02-07	Peace agreement
Ivory Coast	11	Military victory
Croatia	92-95	Peace agreement
Chad	99-11	Peace agreement
China (East Turkestan)	14-...	Unresolved
Cyprus	74-...	Unresolved

Egypt (Sinai)	14-...	Unresolved
El Salvador	80-91	Peace agreement
Eritrea-Djibouti	08-10	Peace agreement
Spain (ETA)	68-11	Ended without negotiation
Ethiopia (OLF)	73-...	Unresolved
Ethiopia (ONLF faction)	84-10	Peace agreement
Ethiopia (ONLF)	84-...	Unresolved
Ethiopia (TPDM)	01-15	Peace agreement
Ethiopia -Eritrea	98-00	Peace agreement
Philippines (Abu Sayyaf)	90's-...	Unresolved
Philippines – MILF	78-14	Peace agreement
Philippines – MNLF	70-...	Unresolved
Philippines – NPA	69-...	Unresolved
Georgia (Abkhazia)	93-...	Unresolved
Georgia (South Ossetia)	90-...	Unresolved
Guatemala – URNG	82-94	Peace agreement
Guinea-Bissau	98-99	Peace agreement
India (CPI-M)	80-...	Unresolved
India (Assam) – BLTF-BLT	92-03	Peace agreement
India (Assam) –DHD	95-03	Peace agreement
India (Assam) – ULFA	89-...	Unresolved
India (Assam) – NDFB	92-...	Unresolved
India (Jammu and Kashmir)	89-...	Unresolved
India (Manipur)	03-...	Unresolved
India (Nagaland) – NSCN-IM	80-	Unresolved
India (Punjab)	81-93	Military victory
India (Tripura) – NLFT	89-05	Peace agreement
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	90-...	Unresolved
Indonesia (Aceh)	76-05	Peace agreement
Indonesia (Western Papua)	65-...	Unresolved
Indonesia (East Timor)	75-99	Peace agreement
Iraq (PJAIC)	05-...	Unresolved
Iraq	03-...	Unresolved
Iraq-Kuwait	91	Military victory
Iraq (Kurdistan)	91-05	Peace agreement
Northern Ireland – IRA	69-05	Peace agreement
Israel-Palestine	64-...	Unresolved
Kosovo	98-10	Ended without peace agreement
Lebanon	89-90	Peace agreement
Lebanon - Israel	06	Peace agreement
Lebanon – Fatah al-Islam	07	Military victory
Liberia	89-96	Peace agreement
Libya	11-...	Unresolved
Mali	90-09	Peace agreement
Mali (CMA-Platform)	12-15	Peace agreement
Mali (North)	12-...	Unresolved
Mozambique- RENAMO	77-92	Peace agreement
Nepal – CPN	96-06	Peace agreement
Niger - MNJ	07-...	Unresolved
Nigeria (Delta) - MEND	05-10	Peace agreement
Nigeria (Boko Haram)	11-...	Unresolved
Pakistan (Balochistan)	05-...	Unresolved
Pakistan (Northwest Frontier)	01-...	Unresolved
Peru – Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)	70-99	Military victory
Central African Republic (CPJP)	09-12	Peace agreement
Central African Republic	06-...	Unresolved

Central African Republic (Séléka, anti-balaka)	12-...	Unresolved
DR Congo (East)	98-...	Unresolved
DR Congo – M23	13	Military victory
Rwanda – FPR	94	Military victory
Rwanda (FDLR)	97-...	Unresolved
Russia (Chechnya)	94-13	Ended without agreement
Russia (Dagestan)	10-...	Unresolved
Russia-Georgia	08	Peace agreement
Russia (Ingushetia)	08-13	Ended without agreement
Russia (Kabardino-Balkaria)	11-...	Unresolved
Western Sahara	75-...	Unresolved
Senegal (Casamance)	82-...	Unresolved
Sierra Leone	91-00	Peace agreement
Syria	11-...	Unresolved
Somalia	89-...	Unresolved
Sri Lanka – LTTE	72-09	Military victory
South Africa	61-93	Peace agreement
Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile)	11-...	Unresolved
Sudan (SLA)	03-06	Peace agreement
Sudan (Darfur) (SLM-MM)	14-15	Peace agreement
Sudan – SPLA	83-05	Peace agreement
Sudan (JEM-Ibrahim)	03-...	Unresolved
Sudan (JEM-Bashar)	03-13	Peace agreement
Sudan – East	05-06	Peace agreement
Sudan – South Sudan	09-12	Peace agreement
South Sudan	09-15	Peace agreement
Thailand (South)	04-...	Unresolved
Tajikistan	92-97	Peace agreement
Turkey – PKK	84-...	Unresolved
Ukraine	14-...	Unresolved
Uganda – LRA	86-...	Unresolved
Yemen North-South	94	Military victory
Yemen (AQPA)	09-...	Unresolved
Yemen (Houthis)	04-	Unresolved

Status of armed conflicts studied		
	Number	Percentage
Ended with peace agreement	47	40.2 %
Currently being resolved	4	3.4 %
Military victory	10	8.5 %
Unresolved	56	47.9 %
TOTAL	117	100

Conflicts ended		
	Number	Percentage
By peace agreement	47	76.7 %
Without peace agreement	4	6.7 %
By military victory	10	16.6 %
TOTAL	61	100 %

Duration of conflicts that ended by a peace agreement			
Years	Number	%	
1-4	15	31.9	
5-9	10	21.3	
10-14	8	17.0	
15-19	5	10.6	
20-24	3	6.4	
25-29	3	6.4	
30-34	1	2.1	
35-39	2	4.2	

53.2% of the conflicts ended in less than 10 years, while 12.7% lasted more than 25 years.

Analyses by countries

AFRICA

a) Western Africa

MALI (Tuareg)

Context of the conflict

Independent from France since 1960, Mali has witnessed several rebellions by its Tuareg people, nomads who make up around 10% of the population, mostly live in the north of the country and are politically, economically and socially different from the peoples of the south. In 1916, the Tuareg staged a major revolt that was crushed by France. The conflict was compounded by natural events such as the harsh droughts in 1972 and 1983, which especially affected the north of the country, but also by the attempt to build a unified, single-party country after independence, resulting in the first internal clashes in the early 1960s that were aggravated by the traditional sub-development of the north. Gold mining in the country has not improved the living conditions of the local population. Mali, the third-largest gold producer in Africa, which exports 94% of its production, does not have the means to control production of the precious metal or the impact of the environmental pollution caused by mining operations. Mali and Niger possess some of the largest uranium reserves in the world; most of these deposits are in the conflict zone and in the border region between the two countries. In the territory of Agadez in northern Niger, near the border between Mali and Niger, the French company Areva controls the exploitation of the uranium mines of Arlit and Akouta through two subsidiaries.

<p>Population: 15,8 million inhabitants; less than 100,000 in Kidal</p> <p>Surface area: 1,240,000 km²; region of Kidal: 151,400 km²</p> <p>GDP PPA: 25,769 billion USD</p> <p>Per capita income: 650 USD</p> <p>HDI: 179 (of 188)</p> <p>Deaths due to the conflict: 2,500 (since 1990)</p> <p>Armed groups: MNLA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM, France, HCUA, MAA</p> <p>Facilitators: Switzerland, Burkina Faso, ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, Algeria</p>
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In the 1980s, the north of Mali was influenced by the expansionist policies of Libya, a country where, like Algeria, many Tuareg took refuge in the 1970s, receiving military instruction at the time. However, the most significant clashes between the Tuareg and the Malian government took place between 1990 and 1996, which in the end claimed the lives of more than 2,500 people, was muddled by incursions into Mali by the al-Qaeda-linked Algerian Islamist group GSPC and led to the deployment of US and French anti-terrorism units in the Sahel in 2004.

The rebellion began in June 1990, with the rise of the Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA) (Tuareg movement created in Libya in 1988) and the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA), which in 1991 reached an agreement with the government in Tamanrasset (Algeria) that was hotly contested in the south. This agreement stipulated that the populations of the three regions of northern Mali would freely manage their local and regional affairs through their representatives. In April 1992, a national pact was signed between the government and the political movements of the north grouped together as the United Movements and Fronts of Azawad (MFUA) that gave a certain degree of autonomy to these regions, though key parties to the conflict did not participate in the agreement, so the banditry and criminality rife in the region could not be stopped. The agreement did not receive the necessary funding, and the MPA split along clan lines and began a period of infighting, making the conflict worse. The rebels divided into four groups: the aforementioned MPA and the FIAA, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MLPA) and the Revolutionary Liberation Army of Azawad (ARLA). In 1994 the MPGK was created, a militia composed of members of the Songhai ethnic group, which received arms from Songhai communities living in Nigeria and Ghana. The Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC)

appeared in 2006 and the **National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)** was formed in 2011. Other armed parties to the current conflict include the group **Ansar Dine**, led by Iyad Ag Ghali, the **Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA)**, led by Alghabas Ag Intalla, and the groups **MUJAO, AQMI, the HCUA (High Council for the Unity of Azawad)**, created in May 2013 when it broke away from the jihadist group Ansar Dine, and the **MAA (Arab Movement of Azawad)**, created in early 2012. In the last year several armed groups have proclaimed the independence of Azawad (the name the Tuaregs use to designate northern Mali).

Background to the peace process

During the second quarter of 2006, there was a minor conflict in the region of Kidal in the north, one of the poorest parts of the country, when hundreds of Tuareg banded together under the name **Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC)** assaulted some military bases, captured arms and vehicles and headed for the mountains bordering Algeria, the country that mediated the group's first negotiations with the Malian government, which resulted in the Algiers Accords, signed in July, and the "Agreements on peace, security and development of the region of Kidal", the implementation of which provides for disarming the 3,000-man-strong group. However, the first delivery of arms did not take place until March 2007. After a year of sporadic clashes, the government and the ADC reached a cessation of hostilities agreement in late July 2008 through Algerian mediation. The first meeting in Mali took place in November 2008 (until then they had always been held in Algeria). At the meeting, ADC representatives and Malian ministers sought calming measures that would allow for the disarmament of the Tuareg group to continue.

In mid-2007, part of the ADC split off under the name **Alliance Touareg Niger Mali (ATNM)** or "23 May", led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, who announced an alliance with the Tuareg of Niger. Through the mediation of the Gaddafi Foundation, in April 2008 the ATNM reached a cessation of hostilities agreement with the government of Mali and also signed the 2006 Algiers Accords, for which the government proposed investing in the region of Kidal. However, the group did not begin to disarm, which prompted the Malian President to call for peace and the disarmament of all Tuareg groups. In 2009, Ag Bahanga asked to resume negotiations with the government after the Malian Army attacked the ATNM's main training base in January, causing it to flee to Libya. Faced with the Malian's government's insistence on ending the Tuareg rebellion by force, Ag Bahanga requested intermediation from Algeria, the country that is still the chief mediator of the conflict. In July, representatives of the ATNM and ADC met with the government to resume talks under Algerian mediation. However, it was Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi that announced that Mali and Niger had reached a peace agreement with their respective insurgencies in October, praising Ag Bahanga's attendance of the ceremony celebrated by the official announcement. The Malian authorities launched a campaign to encourage Tuareg combatants to lay down their arms two weeks after signing the new peace agreement. The governor of the region of Kidal, the stronghold of armed Tuareg groups, stressed the need to make people aware that carrying arms did not promote security, but actually made it worse. Furthermore, the director of the Northern Mali Development Agency, Mohamed Ag Mahmud, said that fighting against the propagation of arms was also key to stopping drug trafficking taking place in the region. Meanwhile, representatives of the communities of northern Mali, specifically Arabs, Fula, Tuareg and Songhai, met for the first time in ten years in Kidal to sign a peace and reconciliation agreement. One of the decisions adopted at the meeting was to create a permanent structure for dialogue among communities that came together on various occasions throughout 2009. In August, the pro-government militia Ganda Koy announced that it would transform into a development association. This step would allow it to benefit from social integration projects and credit offered as part of the peace agreement signed with armed Tuareg groups in 2006. In this vein, in July the government sent 1.3 million CFA to the Northern Development Agency to begin the socioeconomic reinsertion programme written into the agreement's framework of effective application.

In early January 2010, the leaders of the political wing of the Tuareg ADC met in Algeria to evaluate the implementation of peace agreements reached in 2006 in which the government pledged to develop northern Mali and especially the Tuareg community. Its spokesman, Hama Sid Ahmed, highlighted that the deterioration of the road security situation in northern Mali resulting from the activity of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) made this meeting necessary so they could agree on a joint strategy for dealing with the group. Faced with the government's ineffectiveness in addressing the activity of AQIM, an organisation they have accused of being complicit with the Malian authorities, in October the Tuareg of the ATNM decided to reorganise to pacify the northern region, sorry that the call made by the ADC in January had been ineffective.

The armed Tuareg rebellion that began in January 2012 sprang from the destabilisation of the central government, which resulted from a military coup that overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré in March and led to the growing control of the northern part of the country by rebel forces that in April proclaimed the independence of Azawad (name that the Tuareg give to the northern area of Mali). The armed conflict was characterised by the growing strength of jihadist armed groups (**Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM**) that ended up displacing Tuareg insurgents to control the area. Alongside these developments, throughout the crisis initiatives were implemented by different regional and international stakeholders, including ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, to re-establish institutional order and restore the territorial integrity of Mali.

The regional organization ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States, CEDEAO in its French acronym) decided to intervene to bring about the return to constitutional order and launched a mediation process led by the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré. Compaoré's mediation and the sanctions levelled against Mali by ECOWAS were instrumental in the April 6 agreement with the leader of the Military Junta, Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, to return power to the civilians and smooth the way for the departure of ousted President Touré. At the same time, after the MNLA lost control of the north to the jihadists it toned down its demands and in October decided to drop the declaration of independence.

With the help of African troops the French army launched a military campaign in early 2013 and regained partial control of the north of the country, despite the advance of Islamist armed groups. In this context, a faction split off from the armed group Ansar Dine and announced itself as the Islamic Movement of Azawad (IMA). In a statement the group said that it rejected all forms of extremism and terrorism and was ready for dialogue. This faction, led by Alghabass Ag Intalla and with only Malian citizens in its ranks, denied any links with AQIM or MUJWA. The group proposed to the French and Malian authorities a cessation of hostilities in the areas under their control in Kidal and Menaka with the purpose of discussing an inclusive political agreement. Ag Intalla was the representative of Ansar Dine during the mediation attempts and contacts that took place between the Malian government and the group in Burkina Faso in 2012.

Three weeks after the start of the French offensive, the armed group MNLA, which had offered to help Paris in its fight against the radical Islamists, announced that it had regained control of the areas of Kidal and Tessalit, the two main towns in the north. The Tuareg movement announced that it would not accept the presence of Malian troops in the area, that it would not hand over its weapons because they were needed to maintain its ability to react against any retaliation by the Malian Army against the Tuareg people, and that it was in favour of sending a UN peacekeeping mission to the area. The AU special envoy to Mali, the Burundian Pierre Buyoya, had contact meetings with members of the MNLA in Ouagadougou in early March, while at the end of the month leaders of the group received the special UN representative in Mali, David Gressly, in Kidal.

During the second quarter of 2013, after a series of contacts and the implementation of initiatives for reconciliation, the Government of Mali and the Tuaregs of the MNLA armed group signed a peace agreement that would make it possible to hold elections in the country in late July. In the early part of the quarter discussions focused on establishing a dialogue and reconciliation

commission, led by former Defence Minister Mohamed Salia Sokona. According to press reports, MNLA cadres also began a training course in Italy in negotiation techniques, with funding from Switzerland.

Following the initial contacts with the MNLA it became clear that one of the Government's first objectives was to re-establish the central Administration in Kidal (the region that the Tuareg had gained control over beginning in February after the withdrawal of Islamist armed groups from the area) and hold elections. In June, after two weeks of negotiations in Ouagadougou with the mediation of the president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, and delegates from the EU and the UN, a deal was reached that included an immediate ceasefire between the parties, allowed Malian troops to return to Kidal and made holding elections possible. The agreement between the authorities and the Tuareg groups made it possible to hold elections that took place as scheduled and that led to the triumph of Ibrahim Boubakar Keita in the second round runoff in August. The pact also culminated in the deployment of military forces in the region of Kidal and the return of the MNLA militia to their bases nearby, after an agreement reached in early July by a joint committee with the participation of the Malian army, Tuareg groups, representatives of Operation Serval, led by France, and the regional organization ECOWAS. Nevertheless, following violent clashes between the Malian military and Tuareg fighters in September, the MNLA and two other Tuareg groups announced their withdrawal from the peace process saying that the authorities had not fulfilled their commitments, including the release of prisoners. In recent years, Switzerland has provided discreet mediation between the Government and the MNLA. In early October, however, three rebel groups, including the MNLA, returned to the negotiating table and demanded disarmament, the cantonment of combatants and the release of prisoners. The EU, meanwhile, pledged 615 million euros to support the peace process and development in Mali.

At the beginning of 2014, Algeria intervened in the dispute and was able to organize a meeting between representatives of armed groups and the Malian administration. However, the MAA and the MNLA decided not to attend the meetings of a bilateral committee on northern Mali, arguing that Algeria had invited the "wrong" pro-government MAA representatives. Nevertheless, an agreement for the cantonment of the rebels was reached during talks in mid-February between the Government and armed groups from the north. In March the dialogue was once again jeopardized because groups such as the MNLA and the MAA refused to participate in the working groups co-organized by MINUSMA and the Ministry of Reconciliation. These groups argued that the Malian authorities were not meeting their commitments to release prisoners and allow freedom of movement for the armed rebels under the Ouagadougou Agreement. The National Assembly overwhelmingly passed a motion to create a 15-member Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission with a three-year mandate to clarify the crimes that occurred in the 2012-2013 crisis.

Given the situation the external mediation efforts focused on securing a ceasefire, which was signed by the parties in late May after the insurgent organizations were able to gain ground. The truce was signed by the Government and three Tuareg groups, the MNLA, the HCUA and the MMA, at the request of the head of the UN mission in Mali, Albert Koenders, and the chairman of the AU and president of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz. During the second half of the year four rounds of contacts were held (July, September, October and November) as part of a dual process between the Government and two coalitions of armed groups in the north: first, the Coordination group – that brings together the MNLA, MAA and HCUA- and, second, the Platform –including the Coordination of Patriotic Movements and Forces for Resistance (CMFPR), the Coalition of the People for Azawad (CPA) and a faction of the MAA. Beginning with the second round of contacts new organizations began joining these umbrella groups, including the Imghad Tuareg Self-Defence Group and Allies (GATIA), a pro-government militia that began its activities in northern Mali in 2014.

In mid-June, the MNLA, the HCUA and the MAA agreed to start peace talks with the Government and signed the "Declaration of Algiers". In the agreement the Tuareg organizations pledged to engage in dialogue in exchange for the release of prisoners and better conditions for

the return of refugees. The radical Islamists did not take part in the process. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and two other rebel groups that wished to negotiate with the Government announced that they would abandon their demands for independence. Representatives of the Tuareg community said that a federal system could be a possible solution to the conflict, while the president of Mali proposed regionalism and decentralization.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, the constant violence in northern Mali and the disagreements between authorities and the leading organisations involved in the peace talks being promoted led to a stoppage in the process. After the fifth round of contacts, in early March the government agreed to a proposed peace agreement written as part of a mediation process led by Algeria in which the UN, the AU, Algeria, France, China and Russia also participated. The agreement was supported by several minor factions, but the leading armed opposition organisations participating in the talks under the umbrella of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) asked for more time to check the agreement with their grassroots membership, and in mid-March they announced their rejection of the proposal. The CMA – which encompasses pro-autonomy groups like the MNLA, the HCUA, the Arab Movement of Azawad and the Coalition for the Azawad Movement – expressed their scepticism over the proposal, which they believed had several basic flaws. Within this context, in mid-March the CMA informed the mediators that the proposed agreement did not consider the legitimate aspirations of the Azawad people, but that it was a sound foundation for discussion and that the organisation was still committed to searching for a solution through dialogue. Pro-autonomy organisations called for recognition of Azawad as a political, legal and regional entity and they demanded recognition of and compensation for the government's actions in the region since 1963. As reported in the press, the so-called "Algiers document" suggested giving the north greater powers, creating a regional security force and launching a special development plan. Other sources claimed that the proposed agreement included the establishment of regional assemblies and a transfer of 30% of the state budget to local governments after 2018. It is important to mention that the proposed agreement also sparked criticism among Malian political opposition sectors, such as the PDS, which believed that the required consultations on substantive issues had not been made and warned that the agreement threatened the country's unity and stability.

The second quarter began with the peace process stalled, since the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), the most important rebel coalition opposed to the government in the northern region, continued to reject the terms of the so-called Algiers Agreement because it still failed to recognise the region of Azawad as a political, legal and regional entity unto itself. However, after several mediation efforts spearheaded by Algeria and by Mongi Hamdi, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Mali and head of MINUSMA, on the 15th of May the first National Peace and Reconciliation agreement was reached in Bamako, the capital of Mali, backed by the representatives of the government of Mali, the northern political-military movements which were participating in the Platform coalition and the international mediation team led by Algeria, as well as by two member groups of the CMA (the Coordination for the People of Azawad [CPA] and the Coordination of Patriotic Resistance Movements and Forces [CM-FPR]). The signing of the agreement led to a second meeting, held in Algiers on the 25th of May, where the mechanisms to pave the way for a ceasefire in northern Mali were established, as well as the monitoring procedures for it. Ramtane Lamamra, the Minister of State, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Algeria, reported that at least three agreements on the cessation of hostilities had been reached, and he stressed the importance of the parties' commitment to respect the conditions they had agreed upon and to contribute to isolating the armed groups operating in the north. The agreement was applauded by Germany and Canada, two countries which played an active role in the international mediation team.

With regard to the absence of the CMA among the supporters of the agreement, Mongi Hamdi stated the vital importance of the rebel coalition ratifying and adhering to the agreement in order to consolidate the peace and reconciliation process. The negotiations continued and the CMA pledged to keep participating in the talks. In early June, a preliminary agreement on a ceasefire and political guarantees was reached with the government of Mali, which paved the way for adherence to the National Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. This came after a process of internal consultations in which the CMA sent a delegation to the Mbera Malian refugee camp in Mauritania to explain why it was adhering to the agreement. On the 20th of June, the CMA was definitely signed. The agreement, which was now backed by all the Arab and Touareg groups after the adhesion of the CMA, suggested giving the northern part of Mali more competences and creating a regional security force and development plan, although the national debate on the political identity of the Azawad region was still underway. Different actors and mediators in the peace process viewed the CMA's adhesion as a huge step towards the consolidation of peace and stability in northern Mali, just as countries like Turkey, France, the United Kingdom and the United States stressed the importance of the mediating role played by Algeria. Three days after the agreement was signed, Mongi Hamdi travelled to New York to try to get the UN Security Council's support of expanding the MINUSMA mandate in the country, which was slated to end on the 30th of June. At a meeting held on the 29th of June, the Security Council unanimously approved extending the mandate for one year, until June 2016, with a maximum of 11,240 authorised troops, which included for the first time at least 40 military observers to keep watch over and supervise the ceasefire recently agreed to in the country, on the request of the government of France. The Security Council congratulated the parties for the peace agreement reached and described it as a "historical opportunity" to achieve peace in Mali, while it also condemned the violations of the ceasefire agreed to and threatened the parties that it would implement sanctions. The Council urged the government of Mali, the Platform and the CMA to respect the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, as well as to preserve the ceasefire agreement reached on the 23rd of May 2014, the cessation of hostilities agreement reached on the 5th of June 2015, and the declarations of the cessation of hostilities signed on the 19th of February 2015 and the 24th of July 2014. Although the National Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is a huge step towards peace and stability in the Azawad region, it did not signal the end of violence in the country, since different Jihadist armed groups operating in the region, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine, Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA) and Al-Mourabitoun, refused to join the negotiations and continued to wage armed operations. Under the peace agreement, including the improvement of relations between the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the coalition of armed groups called Platform, after the bilateral talks held by them in Anefis (Kidal region), several reconciliation meetings were also held within and between communities, and the members of the Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation were appointed.

The peace agreement reached by all parties on the 20th of June underwent its most dire episode on record on the 15th of August, when combatants from the pro-government GATIA (Imghad and Allies Touareg Self-Defence Group) militia and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) violated the ceasefire and clashed for days over control of the city of Anefif, located in the north of the Kidal region. GATIA wrested control of the city, snatching it from the CMA and causing almost 20 deaths. Later, the UN peace mission in the country, MINUSMA, established a 20-kilometre security zone around the city of Kidal in an effort to restore peace. The CMA accused GATIA of breaking the peace agreement because Anefif was under the CMA's control before the agreement was signed, and the armistice agreement the parties had reached stipulated that no party could make a move to capture new territories. In reaction to the attack, the CMA withdrew from the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee and announced its suspension. The incident, which was joined by other minor clashes in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu during the same quarter, sounded the warning bells for the incipient peace process and required the mediation of the AU and MINUSMA. Finally, the Platform, the group to which the GATIA militia belongs, agreed to withdraw from Anefif and abandoned the city on the 7th of September. On the 28th of September, the CMA once again gained control of the city of Anefif and announced its return to the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee, thus reactivating the process. In parallel, the peace

agreement began to make headway in other areas. On the 20th of June, the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee was launched, presided over by Algeria. The purpose of the Committee is to define the rules of procedure and to establish the deadlines of the provisions of the agreement. On the 21st and 22nd of July, at its third meeting, the Committee adopted its internal rules (mandate, purposes and organs) and included France, Nigeria and the United States as the official members of the mediation team. On the 21st of July, it was also agreed that Algeria would co-preside over the four thematic sub-committees called for in the Peace Agreement: Defence and Security (along with MINUSMA); Political Institutions (with the AU); Justice, Reconciliation and Humanitarian Issues (along with ECOWAS); and Economic Development and Culture (with the EU). The parties from Mali still had to appoint the vice presidents of the four sub-committees. On the 16th of September, with the goal of overseeing and supervising the ceasefire, MINUSMA reported on the deployment of the first 13 military observers of the 40 approved by the UN Security Council, with the goal of having all the observers operating on the ground by the end of October to verify compliance with the ceasefire and prevent violations of it. On 27 and 28 September, a CMA delegation held meetings with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and the leaders of the Platform in Bamako. Following these meetings, the CMA announced that it would order its combatants to refrain from using force against Government troops and the Platform's fighters. Finally, despite the signing of the agreement and the headway made in implementing the mechanisms, the security situation in northern Mali was still volatile not only because of the clashes between the CMA and the Platform, which constituted violations of the ceasefire, but also because attacks were still being perpetrated by the Jihadist groups which were excluded from the peace agreement, whose main targets were the Malian defence and security forces and MINUSMA. In late September, the parties endorsed the work plan and the roadmap of the subcommittee on political and institutional issues. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to establish a working group, chaired by the High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, to resolve the issue of the participation in its meetings of the armed groups that didn't belong to the CMA and Platform coalitions, namely the Coalition for the People of Azawad (CPA-Ousmane), the Coordinator of the Movements and Fronts Patriotic Resistance II (CMFPR-II), the Popular Front of Azawad (FPA) and the Popular Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MPSA), which, while waiting for the issue of the composition of the Committee to be resolved, had been attending their meetings as guests.

In October, more than 1,000 people hit the streets of the capital to protest the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and ask that it withdraw from the country. This mission had been under criticism since August for unilaterally creating a security zone around the city of Kidal in the north of the country. However, mid-month all the armed groups and tribal factions from northern Mali which were members of the CMA or the Platform (pro-government) signed a series of agreements which may allow the implementation of the Algiers agreement to move forward. According to these agreements, some of the combatants on both sides may return to the region of Kidal, without flags and in a non-partisan fashion. The Ifoghas and Imghad clans pledged to resolve their differences peacefully, following their customs. Likewise, the Arab Machzouf and Limhar tribes reconciled after two years of fighting.

On 2 November, the CMFPR-II and the FPA announced their merger with the CMA. On 7 November, the People's Alliance for Peace and National Unity joined the Platform. The meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Agreement held on 19 and 20 November, and suspended as a result of the terrorist attack on 20 November on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, was marked by the frustration expressed by the CMA and the Platform due to the slow progress in the Government's implementation of the peace agreement. The CMA and Platform issued a joint statement deploring the lack of inclusiveness and the inaction of the government, particularly with regard to the delay in the establishment of a provisional administration for the northern regions, the integration of citizens from the north into public institutions, the provision of humanitarian assistance to the northern regions and the release of those detained for reasons related to the conflict. On disarmament, on 19 November, the CMA and the Platform had each submitted proposals of 12 sites for cantonment. Subsequently, the mixed teams made up of the United Nations, the Mali Armed Forces, the CMA and Platform evaluated three sites from the

CMA and seven from the Platform, based on a number of technical criteria such as the necessary support and environmental impact. On 19 November and 12 December, the Technical Security Commission approved five sites of the CMA and six of the Platform.

In mid-December, the Mali Government again declared 10 days of state of emergency — later extended until 31 March — due to threats of new attacks by jihadist groups in the country. In another vein, the Tunisian Mongi Hamdi, head of the MINUSMA and one of the main mediators in the peace agreement in Algiers, announced that his mission would end on 14 January 2016, and that his successor would be the former foreign minister of Chad, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, who was responsible for AMISOM in 2012-2014. In mid-December, the MINUSMA had 10,638 troops and 1,055 police officers.

Most significant events of the year

- In early March the government signed a proposal for a preliminary peace agreement drawn up within the framework of a facilitation process led by Algeria and which also involved the UN, the AU, France, China and Russia.
- On 15 May, the first Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement was achieved. Various “jihadist” type armed groups that operated in the area, such as AQIM, Ansar Dine, MUYAO or Mourabitoun, did not form part of the negotiations.
- Mediation by the African Union and MINUSMA.
- The Monitoring Committee of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was launched, including France, Nigeria and the USA as official members of the mediation.
- In October, all armed groups and tribal factions in northern Mali who were part of the CMA or of the pro-government Platform signed a series of agreements that could allow the unblocking of the implementation of the Algiers Agreement.

Causes of crises during the year

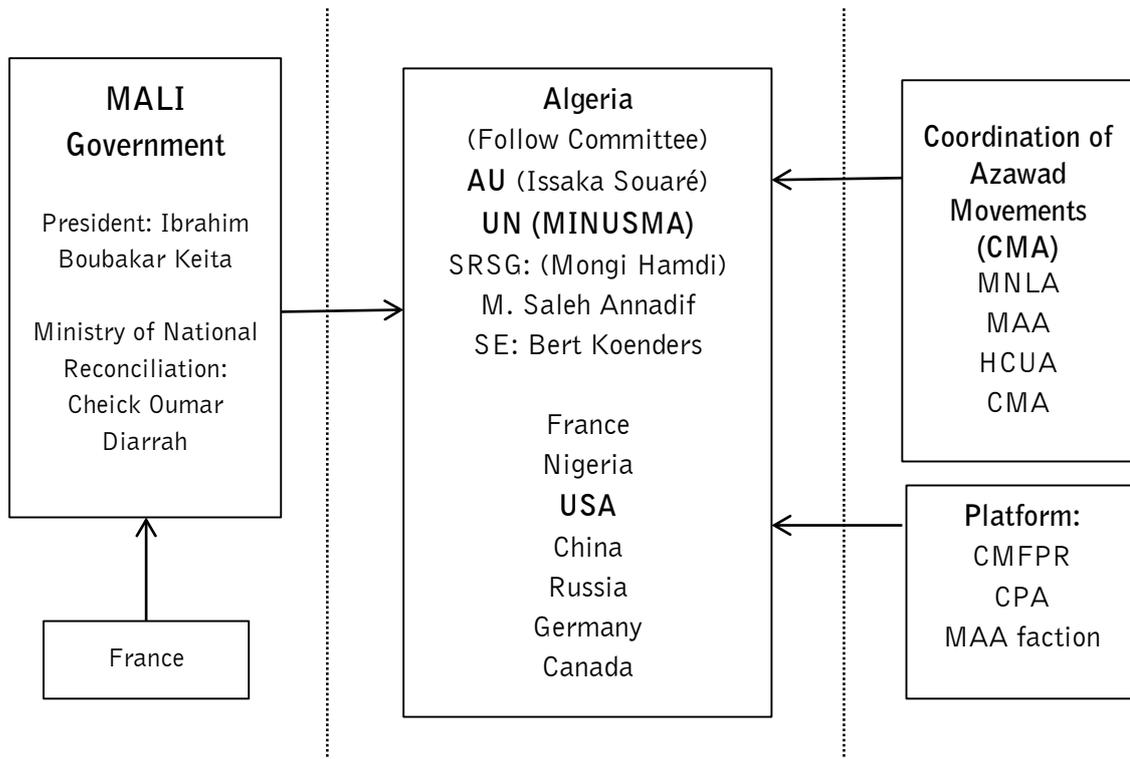
- Disagreements between the authorities and the principal organisations involved in the peace talks.
- Initial rejection of the peace proposal.
- Lack of recognition of the Azawad region as a distinct political, legal and territorial entity.
- The violations that occurred of the agreed cease-fire.
- Different armed jihadist groups remained outside the negotiations.
- Combatants of the pro-government militia GATIA and of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) broke the ceasefire.
- Threats of new attacks by jihadist groups in the country.
- Slow progress in the Government’s implementation of the peace agreement.

Websites of interest

- AlertNet (www.alertnet.org)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- SIPRI (www.sipri.org)
- Temoust (www.temoust.org)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)
- www.kidal.info
- www.lerepublicain.net.ml
- www.malikounda.com

- www.maliweb.net

Main parties involved in the process



Space of intermediation

SENEGAL (Casamance)

Context of the conflict

Discovered in 1445, Casamance became the first Portuguese colony. It was transferred to French control in 1908 as part of what was then the Federation of Mali, and remained so until Senegal's independence in 1960. Since 1982, the MFDC (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) has been waging an armed rebellion through its military wing, **Atika**, to achieve independence for Casamance, a region in the south of the country which is virtually separated from the rest of the country by Gambia. Casamance is also the only place in Senegal where an area of tropical jungle remains, with large trees, rivers and wildlife. With 3.5 million inhabitants, Casamance

is one of the most important tourist hubs in Senegal, and therefore, tourists have been the target of MFDC actions on several occasions. Offshore the subsoil in this region is rich in oil, while the region is also relatively rich in rice and cashews. The rebellion is led chiefly by people from the Diola ethnic group, a minority compared to the majority Wolofs running the government. The Diola are also present in Guinea Bissau and Gambia, which explains the support that the independence movement receives from these two countries, depending on the situation and the makeup of the dissidences within the MFDC. The Diola, a farming people, founded a kingdom called Gabu in the early 18th century. They feel economically and politically marginalised by the central power, which looks down on the other minorities, and are unfavourable to the colonisation of people from the north of the country. The main languages in Casamance are Diola and Portuguese Creole. The USA and France support Dakar in its bid to defeat the MFDC. The conflict has become regionalised and is affecting Guinea-Bissau and Gambia, triggering the exodus of thousands of people. The historical leader of the MFDC was Abbot August Diamacaoune, who died in 2007. Diamacaoune offered ceasefire proposals several times (1992, 1995 and 1998), but the peace talks between the MFDC and the government were postponed repeatedly for various reasons (clashes, disagreement about the venue or facilitators, etc.). The Church has played an extremely important role in this region, which has very particular social and religious structures. The conflict has caused around 5,000 deaths. The MFDC has representatives in Switzerland, Portugal, France and Gambia. Both of the factions currently keeping the conflict alive, the Northern Front (led by Salif Sadio) and the Southern Front (led by Cesar Atoute Badiate), earn a living from the illegal trade in cashews and other natural products, giving a more economic than political dimension to the resolution of the conflict. The conflict went through two negotiation phases: the first at the beginning of the 21st century, and the second in 2012, with the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio, with headquarters in Rome. In recent years the proliferation of government initiatives has been a problem, especially those led by Robert Sagna (Mayor of Ziguinchor for 24 years), the Boubacar Diouf group, which has been involved in the release of several hostages, and the group led by Amsa tou Sow Sidibé, current advisor to the President on Human Rights and Peace.

Population: Senegal (14,5 million), Casamance (3,5 million)
Area: Senegal: 197,000 km ² ; Casamance: 32,350 km ²
HDI Senegal: 170 (of 188)
GDP PPA Senegal: 33,798 million USD
Per capita income: 1,050 USD
Deaths due to the conflict: 5,000
Displaced persons: between 10,000 and 40,000
Armed actors: factions of the MFDC
Facilitators: Community of Sant'Egidio

Background to the peace process

The first peace initiatives date back to 1990 when the first contact with the Community of Sant'Egidio was made, and 1991, when the government first undertook a reconciliation measure and released many prisoners. Likewise, a first ceasefire was declared at that time. The first splinter within the MFDC between Sidi Badji's Northern Front and Diamacaoune's Southern Front came in 1992. In 1999, there was a historical encounter in the capital of Gambia between the president of Senegal, A. Diouf, and Abbot Diamacaoune, the leader of the MFDC, launching what

was called the "Banjul process", which culminated in a ceasefire. Elections were held in January 2000 with A. Wade declared the winner. He changed the negotiation strategy by eliminating Gambia's mediation and assigning the entire responsibility to a ministerial team. In 2001, the MFDC reached an initial peace agreement with the government of Senegal, although Diamacoune recognised that he did not have control over several dissident sectors. In late December 2004, the government and the MFDC finally signed a general peace agreement in the town of Ziguinchor, which theoretically put an end to 22 years of conflict. The MFDC gave up its claims for independence and focused more on developing Casamance. The agreement was signed by the Minister of the Interior and the founder of the MFDC, A. Diamacoune, and it stipulated an end to the use of violence, amnesty for members of the group and their voluntary integration into the country's security forces, the start of a demining process, the return of thousands of displaced persons and refugees, and the reconstruction of the region of Casamance. However, the agreement was only partial, since both factions of the group remained active.

In February 2011, the National Conference presented the president of Senegal with a peace plan for Casamance. The proposal included two phases: the creation of a national contact group and the launch of a national commission to supervise the negotiations. The National Conference is a forum for debate in which representatives from the different political parties and civil society took part in an attempt to respond to what are considered questions of state and offering proposals to resolve them. In December, the secretary-general of the MFDC, Jean-Marie François Biagui, announced that during the meeting held in Casamance, his movement's intention was to become a political party and proposed that a federal system be developed in Senegal, thus giving up his pretensions for independence.

In early 2012, President Abdoulaye Wade said that he had requested the intermediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio to establish dialogue with the MFDC faction led by Salif Sadio, considered the most belligerent. In April, the MFDC welcomed the decision of new President Macky Sall to involve Gambia and Guinea-Bissau in the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Casamance. In June, Salif Sadio proposed a negotiated exit to the crisis in Casamance through the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio. The positive signs of a possible establishment of talks between the government and the armed group in Casamance, the MFDC, were confirmed with the official announcement that negotiations would take place between the parties over the course of the third quarter. Meetings were held between the parties in Guinea-Bissau in July. A month and a half later, Senegalese Prime Minister Abdoul Mbaye confirmed the establishment of discreet negotiations with the MFDC, which would be extended to other stakeholders interested in the crisis in the future. Notably, in September, two rival factions of the MFDC led by Ousmane Niantang Diatta and César Atoute Badiate entered a reunification agreement. In mid-October, a government delegation met with an MFDC delegation in Rome to discuss a peace agreement. The meeting took place in the Community of Sant'Egidio. Alongside the talks in Rome, the Archbishop of Dakar was ordered by President Macky Sall to maintain contacts with César Atoute Badiate, the military leader of an MFDC faction. The Gambian President also joined the process and, together with the former Mayor of Ziguinchor, promoted a meeting between representatives of the Sadio and Badiate factions to find common ground.

In 2013, the Community of Sant'Egidio continued behind the scenes with the negotiations, but some media organizations warned that the organization was focusing its efforts on the northern front of the MFDC, the most operational one led by Salif Sadio. This annoyed the leaders of the southern front, Ousmane Niantang Diatta and Cesar Atoute Badiate. Although it had in recent times been less confrontational, the southern front retained a strong military capability, especially after its reunification since it was believed to have 80% of its fighting forces and they were well armed.

Earlier in the year the representatives of the southern front had reaffirmed their willingness to make peace and bring together all the guerrillas groups. On January 18 an important meeting, facilitated by the NGO Mon ku Mon from Guinea-Bissau, was held between six members of the Northern Front and six members of the Southern Front in Guinea-Bissau. An ad hoc committee

was formed to take the message to the whole armed group. Moreover, on February 22 Salif Sadio secretly met with the Senegalese President Macky Sall in Dakar. The meeting was organized discretely by the former mayor of Ziguinchor and the director of the mediation group for lasting peace in Casamance, Robert Sagna. The President of Gambia, Yaya Jammeh, also played an important role. Sall and Sadio discussed the rumour that weapons from Casamance were present in northern Mali. Other peace initiatives launched by civil society organizations in the region continued, such as, for example, the inauguration of the Peace House by a youth group in Ziguinchor, the capital of Casamance. In May Cardinal Theodore Adrien Sarr had a discreet meeting with MFDC leader César Atoute Badiatte. Meanwhile, former minister and former mayor of the capital of Casamance, Robert Sagna, also met with several military leaders of the MFDC's northern front who are supporters of Badiatte.

In September a meeting took place between MFDC leader Caesar Badiate and Robert Sagna in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. U.S. diplomat James Bullington also participated in the peace process discussions. In June the president of the United States said that his government was committed to supporting the efforts to achieve lasting peace in Casamance. In this context the U.S. adviser to Casamance, Sue Ford Patrick, completed a three days visit to Gambia in September to discuss the Casamance conflict with government officials of the country and with non-governmental organizations, according to a press release from the American Embassy in Banjul. It should be noted that in July the Gambian President Yahya Jammeh announced he would not intervene to resolve the conflict in Casamance unless he was specifically asked by Senegal to do so. The president of Gambia also said he was willing to help Senegal provided Dakar change its attitude towards Banjul. In early November a second meeting was held in Rome between the Community of Sant'Egidio and S. Sadio's faction of the MFDC. In December the organization Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), with support from the World Bank and the EU, organized a conference for women in Senegal and neighbouring countries to promote peace in Casamance.

In the first months of 2014, contacts continued between the Senegalese government and the MFDC. The Catholic community of Sant'Egidio, which is mediating in the dispute, confirmed in February that a government delegation and representatives of the MFDC faction led by Salif Sadio had met in Rome and signed an agreement on confidence building measures. This included a written statement from Macky Sall's government that no arrest warrant had been issued for Sadio, the military leader of the most radical faction of the MFDC and considered in some quarters to be an obstacle to the unification of the various factions of the armed group. It was reported that Sall's government had also agreed to guarantee the free movement of Sadio and his subordinates as part of the negotiations. Sadio ordered his fighters to observe a unilateral ceasefire as part of the commitments. President Sall made his first visit to Casamance from March 17 to 19. The president also announced a 35 million euro development plan for the region through the Casamance Development Pole Project (PPDC), on the understanding that negotiations should be accompanied by economic measures.

Following a meeting with the U.S. special adviser for Casamance, Mark Boulware, the leader of one of the major factions of the MFDC, César Atoute Badiate, considered a moderate figure in the organization, rejected Sall's idea of a "peace of the brave", but reiterated his willingness to participate in talks. Badiate called on the authorities in Dakar to hold frank and sincere negotiations and suggested that the talks be held in the U.S. During the first quarter some voices - including the Bishop of Ziguinchor - warned that too many intermediaries were involved in the conflict in Casamance. In April presidential advisor Amsatou Sow Sidibé proposed the creation of a Space for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation (EDVR). An MFDC spokesperson, however, criticized Sow Sidibé for launching initiatives on her own, without consulting with the armed group. Spokespeople from the Community of Sant'Egidio, which was acting as a facilitator of the talks, reported that representatives from both sides had met again for three days in Rome in July. In November the Senegalese President, Macky Sall, visited the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome and was received by its founder, Andrea Riccardi, president Marco Impagliazzo, vice

president Kpakilé Felemou, Father Angelo Romano and the head of the Department of International Relations, Mauro Garofalo.

The peace process in 2015

In the second quarter of the year, the MFDC addressed President Macky Sall to ask for a lasting return to peace in the region and to condemn the interlocutors whom the state had chosen, as well as the absence of a clear roadmap in the negotiations. Abdoulayé Baldé, the mayor of Zinguichor, questioned the need to appoint the US ambassador as part of the peace process. The US ambassador in Senegal, Mark Boulware, was asked to encourage and help the different actors pursue the peace negotiations. A statement issued by the United States embassy clarified that the ambassador, who also held the post of special advisor for Casamance, had recently rejoined the embassy after the end of his mission in November, but that under no circumstances would he serve as the mediator in the process.

Most significant events of the year

- The MFDC addressed itself to President Macky Sall to demand a return to lasting peace in the region and denounced the spokespeople chosen by the central government, as well as the absence of a clear road map for the negotiations.

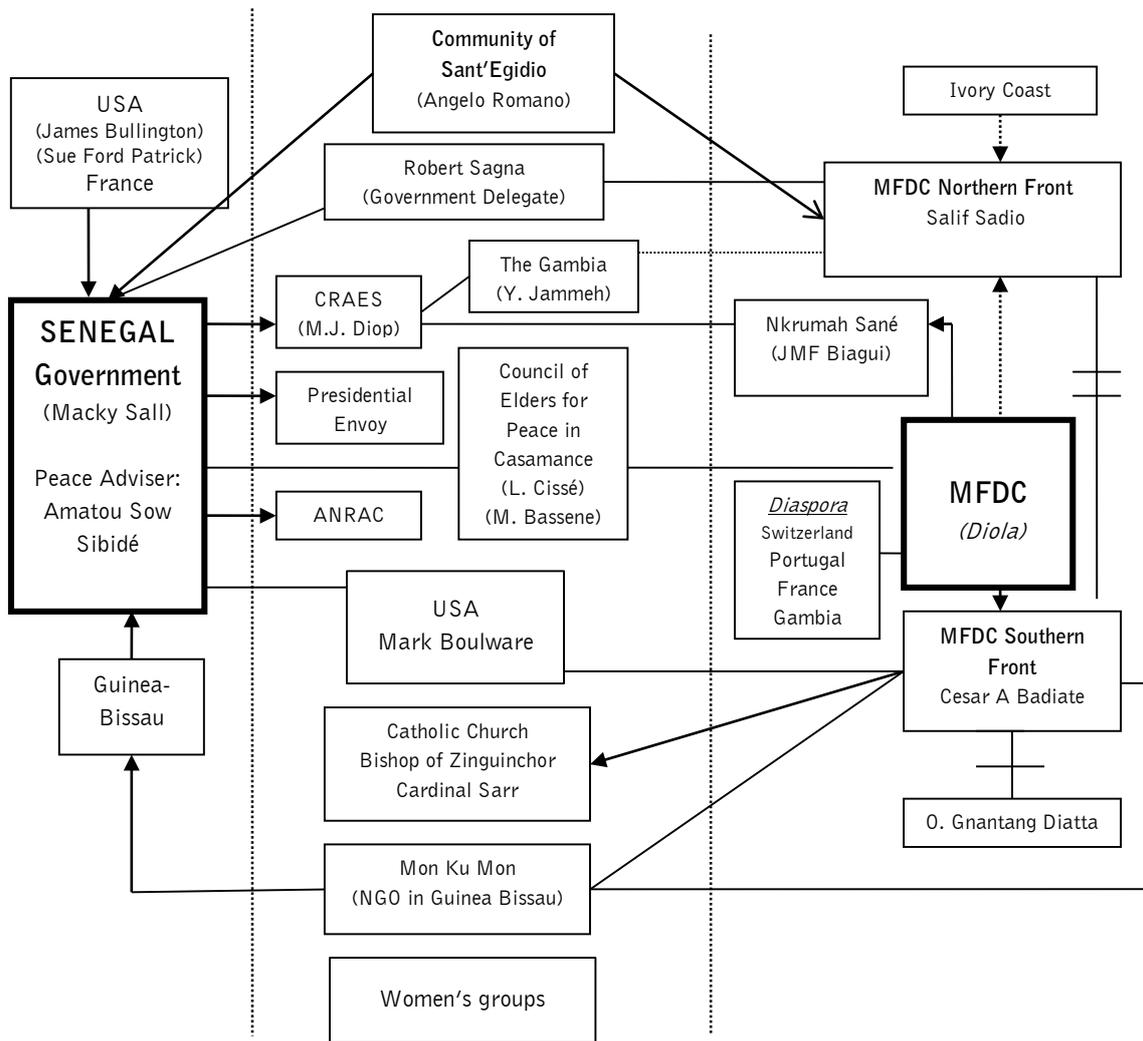
Causes of crises during the year

- Absence of a clear roadmap in the negotiations.
- Questioning of the need to name the US ambassador within the peace process.

Websites of interest

- Africa Time (www.africatime.com/senegal)
- Afrol News (www.afrol.com)
- Comunnunity of Sant' Egidio (www.santegidio.org)
- Government (www.gouv.sn)
- Le Soleil (www.lesoleil.sn)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Rewni (www.rewni.com)
- www.homeviewsenegal.sn
- www.rfi.fr/tag/casamance

Main parties involved in the process



Space of intermediation

b) Horn of Africa

ETHIOPIA (Ogaden)

Context of the conflict

The region of Ogaden is part of what is called the Somali Region in Ethiopia. It covers an area of around 200,000 km², and is divided between Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as part of Kenya and Djibouti. The region was annexed to Ethiopia in the late 19th century. In the late 1970s there were military clashes between Ethiopia and Somalia for control of this region, and this culminated in 1978 with the Somali regime seriously debilitated. The Ogadeni/Somali population practices a tolerant form of Islam. Ethiopia adopted a federal system in 1995, but the government has acted as if it didn't exist. Ogaden is an area rich in gas; this was discovered in 1970 but is still not exploited. China, through the Chinese company POLY-GCL Petroleum Investments Limited, is very interested in the exploitation of this resource, and is willing to invest 4,000 million dollars in the construction of a pipeline to transport the gas to Djibouti.

Population: Ethiopia (96,5 million); Ogaden (4,3 million)
Area: Ethiopia (1,104,000 km ²); Ogaden (179,000 km ²)
HDI Ethiopia: 173 (out of 188)
GDP PPA Ethiopia: 145,015 million USD
Per capita income Ethiopia: 550 USD
Displaced persons: 650,000
Deaths due to the conflict: + than 1,000 in 2007
Armed actors: UWSLF, ONLF
Facilitators: Kenya

Since 1984 the **Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)** has been fighting for the independence or autonomy of the region of Ogaden, a desert area bordering on Somalia. The ONLF was part of the transition government from 1991 to 1995, after the Communist regime, but thereafter it withdrew from government to fight for the independence of what it views as the Ogadeni people. It has a major diaspora in the United States (with numerous pro-peace civil organisations), Switzerland, Canada and the Netherlands. It calls for the independence of the Ogadeni/Somali people, an ethnic group 27 million people strong. In 1994 the ONLF called for a referendum on self-rule in Ogaden, an initiative which met with a large-scale military attack by the Ethiopian government. Given this situation, the "elders" in the region called on the government to take up talks to resolve the conflict. In 2007 the ONLF launched attacks against Chinese oil and natural gas facilities (China Petroleum Chemical Corporation) operating in the region of Ogaden, an area where the Malaysian company Petronas also has facilities.

The **Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF)** is a rebel group that fought in eastern Ethiopia to create an independent state. It played an important role in the 1977-78 Ogaden war.

Background to the peace process

Kenya is the only country in the region that has conducted facilitation work with the ONLF. In late 1998, the government and the ONLF held secret meetings to find a solution, but the meetings ended when the ONLF asked that another organisation participate in the negotiations as a witness. The government also killed one of the negotiators and captured another, who died in prison. In 2007, the ONLF issued a call for international mediation which would help to open up negotiations with the Ethiopian government. In October 2010, part of the ONLF reached a peace agreement with the government which put an end to the armed struggle that it had been waging in the region of Ogaden for decades. The agreement stipulated an amnesty for the imprisoned members of the group and the conversion of the group into a political party. However, a part of the ONLF led by Mohamen Omar Osman kept up the armed struggle, and both factions considered themselves to be the main core of the ONLF, accusing the other part of being insignificant.

In April 2010, the armed group United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF), a wing of the former Al-Itihaad Al-Islami (AIAI) which operated in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, agreed to turn its weapons in to the Ethiopian government and return to legal status after decades of guerrilla warfare. The WSLF signed a peace agreement with the Ethiopian government in Addis Ababa on the 29th of July. Amnesty had previously been granted to the members of the group, and the agreement signalled the launch of development projects in the Ogaden region.

During the third quarter of 2012, contacts took place between the government of Ethiopia and the armed opposition group active in the Ogaden region, the ONLF. Both parties met in Nairobi, Kenya in early September for preliminary talks in which they agreed on a negotiating framework to put an end to the 28-year-old insurgency. In October, the peace talks stalled. According to the Foreign Secretary of the ONLF, Abdirahman Mahdi, the talks ran aground when the government demanded that the ONLF recognise the Ethiopian Constitution. Mahdi said that they had been fighting with Ethiopia since 1984 and that the current Constitution only dated to 1994, so they could not force the group to recognise it.

In late June of 2013, the ONLF's Executive Committee held its plenary session in Istanbul (Turkey). In July, meetings were held with Western diplomats to speak about political and human rights issues. The ONLF expressed its willingness to solve the conflict through dialogue. In August, an International Crisis Group report recommended that Kenya act as a guarantor and that technical support be channelled through the IGAD. In October, the ONLF met in Nairobi with members of the Ogaden community. In late October, a former US Ambassador to Ethiopia said that US policy was aimed at promoting a peace process and stabilising the region.

In the second quarter 2014, ONLF sources confirmed that two members of the ONLF kidnapped on January 26 in Nairobi were in the Kenyan capital to participate in the third round of talks between representatives of the Ethiopian government and the ONLF, with mediation by the Government of Kenya. These same sources told the BBC service in Somalia that it believed that Ethiopia was behind the detention, which several analysts confirmed was highly likely. However, since the detention of the two leaders of the armed group, no new information has become available with regard to their whereabouts or in connection with the peace negotiations, which seemed to have come to a halt, at least officially given the secrecy that enshrouds these contacts. The ONLF called on the international community to condemn Ethiopia for its attitude, which was boycotting the peace talks. Various analysts suggested that this incident would not affect relations between Ethiopia and Kenya, but it could affect the ONLF's perception of Kenya as a neutral sponsor for these negotiations.

The peace process in 2015

In February, the negotiations between the government of Ethiopia and the ONLF resumed in Nairobi (Kenya) for the first time since October 2012. However, the regional president of Ogaden, Abdi Mohamud Omar, set the precondition that the ONLF had to accept the Ethiopian constitution. Representing Ethiopia was the Minister of Defence, Siraj Fergassa, and the head of the country's intelligence services, Getachew Assefa, while representing the ONLF were its head of foreign relations, Abdirrahman Mahdi, and its secretary, Mohamed Abdi Yasin. Both parties agreed on the majority of principles to establish the talks. Since then, there have been no reports of plans for a third round of contacts, although some rumours about the peace process did circulate. One of the actors who served as one of the major roadblocks in the peace process, the president of the region of Ogaden, Abdi Mohamud Omar, asked the ONLF to unconditionally accept the constitution of the country as a prerequisite for launching the peace process. Numerous analysts pointed to the president of the region and several generals as the major obstacles to peace in Ogaden. In March, rumours spread that the Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn had asked for the influence of the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to mediate in the conflict. Erdogan visited Ethiopia in February and pledged major investments in the country. Ethiopia and

Djibouti recently signed an agreement to build an oil pipeline that would connect Ogaden, a region rich in hydrocarbons, with the port of Djibouti, for a total cost of 4 billion dollars, 3 billion of which will be invested in Djibouti.

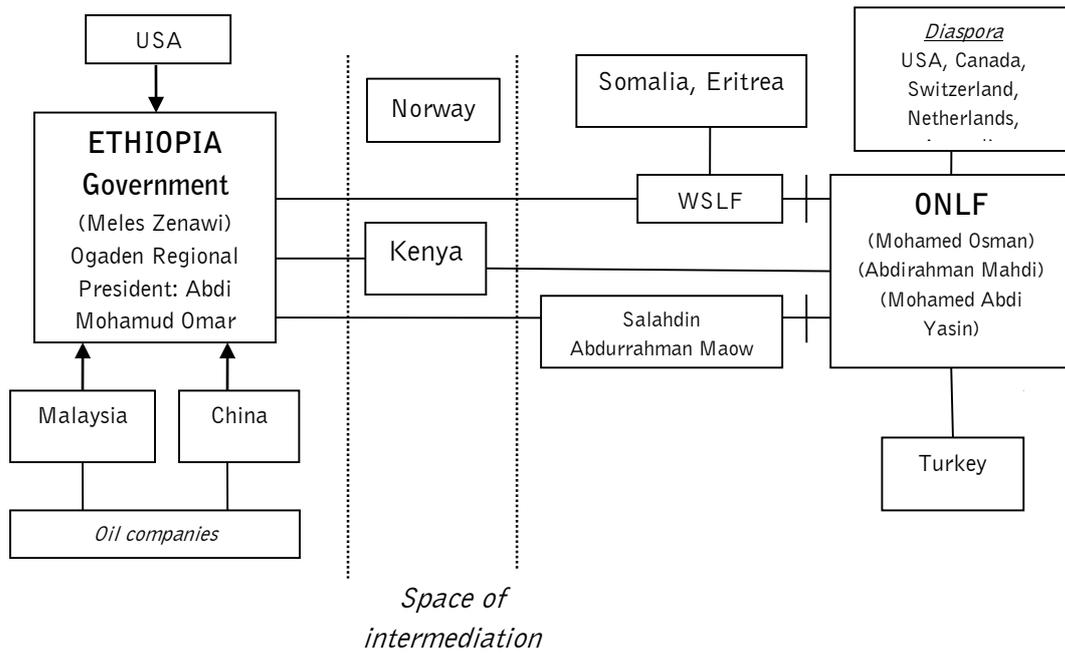
Furthermore, in early June the ONLF issued a press release reporting on the release of two ONLF representatives, Sulub Ahmed and Ali Hussein, in the border town of Moyale. They had been kidnapped in Nairobi in January 2014 by the government of Ethiopia and transferred to that country. According to independent sources, the Ethiopian government also freed both delegates after numerous diplomatic efforts by the government of Kenya and members of the international community. The ONLF celebrated their release and the return of both delegates to Nairobi as a positive step that might contribute to unblocking progress in the peace talks. However, in late June the armed group rejected the accusations of the possible arrest in Asmara of rebellious members of the insurgency with the leadership of the ONLF. In declarations to the BBC, Khalid Omar stated that their arrest along with other fellow ONLF members came because the issue of changing the group's leadership had arisen, and he stated that they had been released thanks to the intercession of Asmara. The BBC contacted one of the ONLF's spokesmen based in Australia, Abdikader Adani Hirmoge, by telephone, and he rejected the accusation and stated that it was groundless. He further confirmed that the ONLF central committee is the only body that can decide how and where a change or succession in the group's leadership can take place. He also stressed that the group has had six leaders since it was founded in 1984 and that the organisation is one of the most democratic on the continent. The spokesman claimed that the peace process between the ONLF and Ethiopia was underway and that the third round of negotiations were awaiting agreement upon a date. Finally, the spokesman noted that Khalid Omar and others had been expelled from the armed group because they had not fulfilled their obligations in the insurgency.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations were resumed for the first time since October 2012 between the Government of Ethiopia and the ONLF, in Nairobi (Kenya). • The president of Turkey visited Ethiopia in February and promised major investments in the country.

Causes of crises during the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disputes over the renewal of the leadership of the group.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AlertNet (www.alertnet.org) • All Africa.com (allafrica.com) • Etioipan News Agency (www.ena.gov.et) • International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) • Ogaden Human Rights Committee (www.ogadenrights.org) • Ogaden News (222.ogadennews.com) • Ogaden News Agency (www.ogadennet.com) • Ogaden Online (www.ogaden.com) • Ogaden Today Press (www.ogantoday.com) • Ogaden Voices for Peace (www.ogadenvoice.org) • ONLF (onlf.org) • Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)

Main parties involved in the process



SUDAN (National Dialogue)

Context of the conflict

Independent since 1956, several conflicts have overlapped in Sudan in recent years. First, the conflict in the south that began in 1983. It came to an end with peace agreements signed in January 2005, which led to South Sudan's independence in 2011, although some tensions persist. Second, the conflict that took place in the western region of Darfur, which began in early 2003 and has declined in intensity but has not been concluded. Third, a smaller conflict in the east of the country, which erupted in 2005 and ended in late 2006, and, finally, the dispute that has affected the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile since 2011. Several of these conflicts are analyzed in other sections. This section looks at recent attempts to establish a national dialogue between the different regions of modern day Sudan that are in conflict. Since 1989, the country is under the authoritative rule of Omar al-Bashir, who rose to power in a military coup. In 2014 the first attempts were made to combine the various negotiations that existed in the country.

<p>Population: 38,7 millions Area: 1,886,068 km² GDP PPA: 154,414 millions USD Per capita income: 1,710 USD HDI: 167 (of 188) Facilitators: AU, Troika (USA, UK, Norway), Germany</p>
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The proposal for 2014

In late January the Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir called for a "national dialogue", both in his name and his party's, to address the political and economic problems that will allow the country to deal with poverty, war and political instability. He announced that the dialogue would have four goals: to achieve peace, protect constitutional rights, reinvigorate the economy and restore the national identity. He also stated that the proposal did not exclude anyone and that, after 25 years of rule it was time for reforms. From the outset the former South African President Thabo Mbeki and the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) were involved in the proposal to promote peace negotiations and democratic transformation. Initially, the proposal was rejected by some of the opposition parties, who complained that some of their leaders had been arrested and that the Government had refused to delay the elections originally scheduled for April 2015. It did however receive initial support from the National Umma Party (NUP). The 7 + 7 Committee, which included equal numbers of opposition and governmental political parties, subsequently met to discuss the proposal. In May, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-MM), Minni Minnawi, criticized the Government for not wanting a national transitional government. Other parties such as the NUP, led by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, who was arrested on May 17 and the Reform Now Movement (NRM), led by Ghazi Salah al-Din al-Attabani, suspended their participation in the national dialogue, in addition to the opposition alliance National Consensus Force (NFC) and the Sudan Revolutionary Front guerrillas (SRF), which operated in the regions of Darfur and South Kordofan. At the end of that month the EU Delegation and Ambassador of Norway in Sudan released a statement offering to provide technical support for the dialogue, especially for constitutional reform and the establishment of confidence-building measures among the stakeholders.

Members of the SRF and the NUP met in Paris on August 8 and signed the "Paris Declaration", which was rejected by the governing NCP party. On September 4 an 8-point Agreement for National Dialogue and Constitutional Process was signed in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) by the presidents of the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), the observer of the AU, Thabo M. Mbeki, and representatives of the 7+7 Committee. The agreement included the following points:

- 1 – Comprehensive political settlement is the ideal option to resolve Sudan's problems.
- 2 - Stopping the war, reaching cessation of hostilities and dealing with the humanitarian situation should be priorities for confidence-building.

- 3 - Ensuring freedoms and basic human rights, the release of political and sentenced detainees should be priorities for confidence building.
- 4 - The beginning of the dialogue and the constitutional process should start once an agreement has been reached on the procedures.
- 5 - All participants in the dialogue and the constitutional process should be free to express their views and positions.
- 6 - The dialogues should be conducted in accordance with the agreed timeframes.
- 7 - The necessary guarantees should exist to conduct and implement the constitutional dialogue process.
- 8 - The inclusiveness and participation of all stakeholders should be guaranteed to obtain a national consensus.

On September 18 the members of the Troika on Sudan (made up of the United States, United Kingdom and Norway) issued a joint statement on the Sudan Dialogue, in which they reiterated their support for the mediation architecture that facilitates both resolution of conflict and a comprehensive process of national dialogue under the following principles:

- There is no military solution to the conflicts in Sudan.
- A compartmentalized and regional approach to peacemaking cannot yield a solution to grievances that are national in character.
- A sustainable peace and genuinely representative political system can best be achieved through a comprehensive national dialogue that addresses fundamental issues of governance, political inclusiveness, resource-sharing, identity, and social equality at a national level.
- A comprehensive dialogue should be broadly inclusive and include civil society representatives.
- A comprehensive dialogue can succeed only in an environment that permits the meaningful participation of the country's diverse constituents, free from any restrictions to the right to assembly or the right to freedom of expression.
- The dialogue might best serve Sudan by upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, yielding an inclusive and participatory governance arrangement and, if an agreement is reached, to hold elections.

Following a meeting held by the Berghof Foundation, Germany announced in early October that it would cooperate with the Sudanese stakeholders to facilitate a peace process in the country with the goal of achieving peace. Berghof organized a meeting in Berlin with the various leaders of the armed groups that make up the SRF coalition and they made a pledge to participate in any political process leading the country to peace. The German Foreign Ministry said it was willing to facilitate those goals. During the seminar the SRF said that it was necessary to bring together the armed groups, political parties and civil society organizations. The Berghof Foundation announced that it was willing to contribute to this goal. After the seminar in Berlin, the SRF announced plans to form a strategic alliance with the umbrella group of opposition parties, the National Consensus Forces (NCF), and other opposition parties. In parallel, several opposition parties accused the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of deliberately delaying the national dialogue until after the April 2015 elections, when the process would be restarted. The opposition parties demanded the elections be delayed until the process of national dialogue had been finished. However, the Government rejected these accusations and underlined its commitment to the process, which it said should not exceed three months. The co-spokesperson for the 7+7 Committee, which is another name used for the national dialogue committee, said that the head of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), Thabo Mbeki, would travel shortly to Khartoum to make sure that the dialogue would offer all of the guarantees required by the armed groups. A government delegation and the armed groups from the two Areas (Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) and Darfur were supposed to have met in separate encounters between October 12 and 16 to discuss a ceasefire, but this was finally suspended because Khartoum asked to postpone the meeting to celebrate the national convention of the NCP ruling party. During its fourth convention, held on October 23, President Omar al-Bashir said he was committed to national dialogue and stated that positive developments would occur, such as the presence of opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi, from the PCP, who had decided to participate in the dialogue

and called for the unity of the Sudanese. Several analysts said the slow progress of the dialogue, the Government's desire to implement confidence-building measures with the opposition and its refusal to postpone the elections seemed to be government ploys to divide the opposition and ensured that it remained in power.

In early November a delegation of the AUHIP (African Union) visited Khartoum to prepare an inclusive meeting in Addis Ababa. Halfway through the month the Troika held the negotiations between the Government of Sudan with the SPLM-North and the SRF Darfur, and recalled the key issues that the AU for Peace and Security Council on Sudan had identified in September, namely a simultaneous cessation of hostilities throughout the country, the preparation of a meeting with all political parties, the need for confidence-building measures, and humanitarian assistance.

The peace process in 2015

In January, the opposition PCP party, led by Kamal Omer, stated that the armed group SLA-AW had expressed its intention to participate in the dialogue process which was being facilitated by the AUHIP as long as it was offered certain guarantees; however, a spokesman for the SLA-AW denied both this report and negated the existence of this meeting. Kamal Omer, in turn, was a member of the 7+7 Committee, which was charged with organising the National Dialogue. In November 2014, the SLA-AW refused to participate in the round of negotiation facilitated by the AUHIP between the government and a joint delegation made up of the Darfur-based armed groups JEM and SLA-MM. In late February, representatives from the opposition in Sudan (SRF, NUP, NCF) and civil society met in Berlin to discuss the peace process in the country. The meeting was organised by the Berghof Foundation and the German Institute of International and Security Affairs (SWP) with the support of the German chancellery. Both the SRF and the NUP announced that they would participate in the preparatory meetings for the National Dialogue to be held in Addis Ababa. In April, the governments of the Troika (United Kingdom, United States and Norway) expressed their dismay at the delay in the National Dialogue and the failure to meet the conditions needed to hold elections. The Sudanese government also rejected the AU's invitation to hold a preparatory meeting with the different political actors that are supposed to participate in this Dialogue. Days later, the Sudanese government expressed its willingness to continue the Dialogue after the elections and the composition of a new Parliament.

The president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, stated his intention to step up the launch of the talks with all the armed movements of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and on the 22nd of September he signed two presidential decrees. The decrees included a two-month ceasefire in the areas of conflict and offered a general amnesty for the leaders of the rebel movements which were participating in the peace talks. The day prior to the issuance of both decrees, the Sudanese president had expressed his intention for the conflicts in the three regions to end before the close of the year, thus concluding a conflict that got underway in 2001 in Darfur and in 2011 in the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile with the SPLA-N rebels. The National Congress stated that the 19th of October was the date set for the beginning of the National Dialogue talks. The Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), a coalition of armed movements which encompasses groups from Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, expressed its doubts about the real motives behind the decrees that had been issued. The leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-AW) and co-vice president of the SRF, Abdel Wahid al Nur, reminded al-Bashir's government that instead of issuing this kind of decrees, the government should be implementing the UN Security Council resolutions and disarming the Janjaweed militias. At a meeting held with the Troika (USA, UK and Norway), the SRF reported that it would participate in the National Dialogue and stated its intention to sign a six-month cessation of hostilities truce in the regions of Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur. In early October, the president of Chad met in Paris with the leaders of the three armed groups from Darfur (Jibril Ibrahim from the JEM, Abdel Wahid El Nur and Minni Minawi, the leaders of two factions of the SLM) and asked them to participate in the National Dialogue.

Most significant events of the year

- The president of Sudan signed two decrees, which included a two month ceasefire in the areas of conflict, as well as the offer of a general amnesty for the leaders of the rebel movements that took part in the peace talks.
- The Chadian president met in Paris with the leaders of the three armed groups from Darfur: Jibril Ibrahim (JEM), Abdel Wahid El Nur, and Minni Minnawi (from two factions of the SLM), and urged them to participate in the National Dialogue.

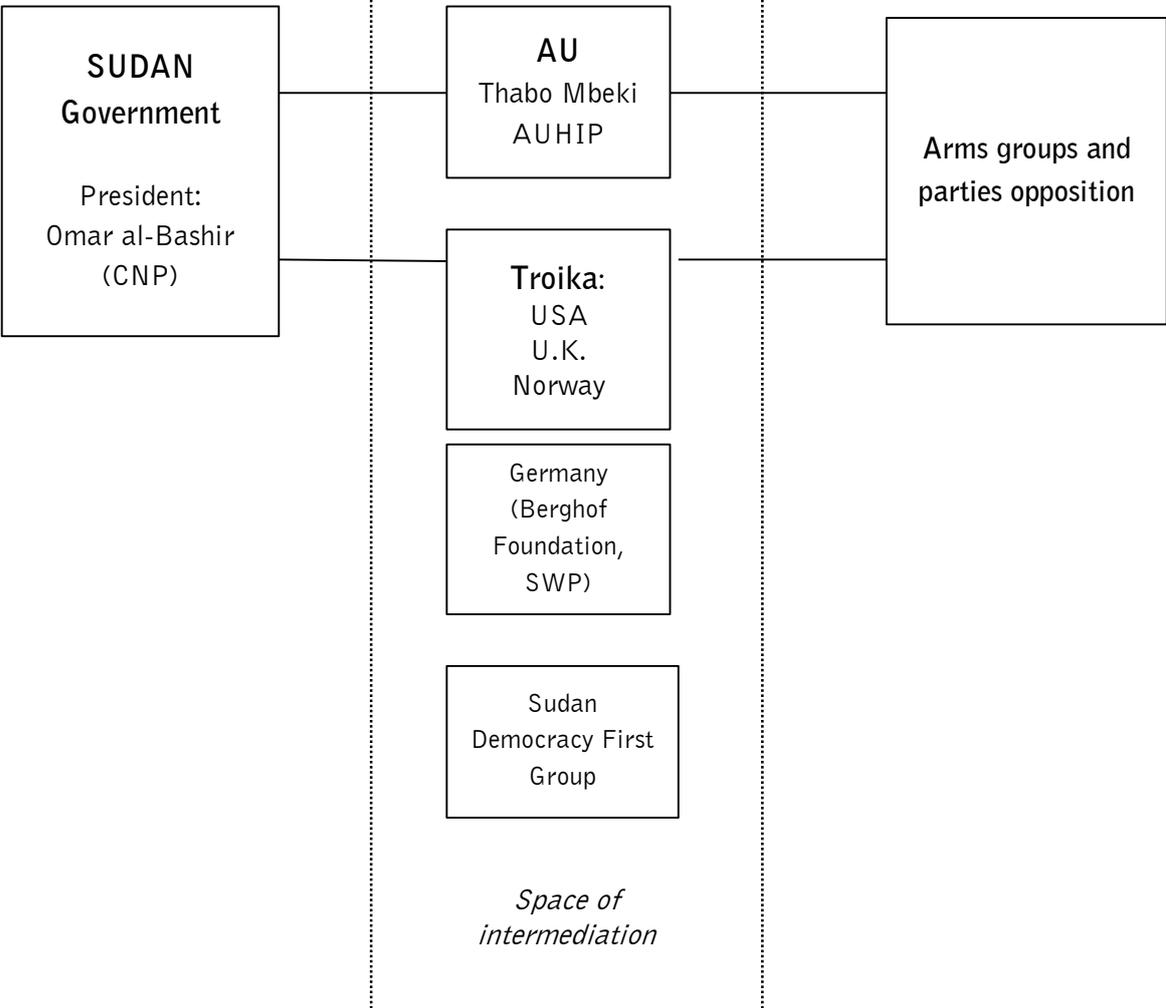
Causes of crises during the year

- Delay in holding the National Dialogue.

Websites of interest

- African Union (www.africa-union.org)
- African Union High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP)
- (www.peaceau.org/en/article/progress-report-of-the-african-union-high-level-implementation-panel-for-sudan-and-south-sudan)
- Sudan Democracy First Group (www.democracyfirstgroup.org)
- Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)

Main parties involved in the process



a) (Darfur)

Context of the conflict

Several different conflicts have been superimposed in Sudan in recent years. The first of these, in the south of the country, began in 1982 and ended with the peace agreements signed in January 2005, despite some persisting tension. The second, located in the western region of Darfur, began in early 2003. This conflict has only intensified over the years and is the situation analysed in this chapter. In addition, there is a third, lesser conflict in the east of the country, which erupted in 2005 and ended in late 2006.

Population: 7,5 millions
Area: 503,180 km ²
Deaths due to the conflict: 300,000
Armed actors: JEM (Ibrahim), JEM (Bashar), LJM, SLA, SLM
Facilitators: AU, Chad, Berghof Foundation

In February 2003, while talks between the government and the SPLA were progressing in the south of the country, a new armed group arose in the Darfur region. Known as the **SLA**, it would subsequently split into many factions. After months of confrontation with the government, both parties agreed to a ceasefire in September. However, there were many violations of this agreement. The government of Chad offered to mediate in the conflict. In October, a new armed group called the **JEM** emerged in the region. This group initially refused to negotiate with the government and criticised the Chadian mediation. The group went through several splits, which affected the negotiating process in Doha (Qatar). Ultimately, the **JEM (Bashar)** and the **JEM led by Gibril Ibrahim** were the only groups left at the table. In February 2010 the **Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)** was formed. It was a small group that brought together the **Sudan Liberation Revolutionary Force (SLRF)**, known as the Tripoli Group, and the Addis Ababa Group. This group signed a peace agreement with the Government in 2011. In December 2011 an alliance was created of the various groups opposed to the Sudanese government, **JEM (Gibril Ibrahim)**, **SLM (al-Nur)**, **SLM (Minnawi)** and **SPL**. It was named the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), which initially had the support of the **SPLM-N**.

Background to the peace process

In February 2004, the SLA and the JEM attended a meeting in Geneva under the auspices of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. The aim of this meeting was to guarantee humanitarian access to the affected people. In April 2004, a temporary ceasefire agreement was reached in Chad, and both armed groups demanded an end to the region's marginalisation and its inclusion in the peace process that the government was carrying out with the SPLA in the south of the country. This agreement led to the creation of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). In May 2005, under the auspices of Muammar al-Gaddafi, both parties signed a ceasefire agreement in Libya, which would facilitate the supply of humanitarian aid to the region. Subsequently, in mid-June, the government and the two armed groups met in Abuja (Nigeria) to begin a new round of direct contacts (after a six month break), with mediation from the AU under the leadership of its special envoy, S. Ahmed Salim. Towards the end of July, the SLA and the JEM signed an agreement in Tripoli (Libya) pledging to end the confrontations between the two groups, to release prisoners and to restore trust and coordination. On the 5th of May 2006, the Sudanese government and the majority faction of the SLA led by M.A. Minnawi signed a peace agreement in Abuja (Nigeria) under the auspices of the AU. Minnawi was appointed chairman of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority and Senior Assistant to the President of the Republic.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1769 dated the 31st of July 2007 authorised the establishment of a hybrid operation run jointly by the African Union and the United Nations in Darfur (UNAMID) which was authorised to take any measures needed to support the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, as well as to protect its staff and civilians, without prejudice to the responsibilities incumbent upon the government of Sudan. In 2008, the

JEM expressed its willingness to discuss the peace proposal for Darfur promoted by Qatar, and it stated that it would send a delegation to Doha to hold consultations with Qatari leaders. In the second half of February 2010, the Sudanese government and the JEM signed a ceasefire agreement facilitated by the president of Chad, and they presented a framework for a future peace agreement. In June, the JEM accused the government of having violated the ceasefire agreement by bombarding its positions in northern Darfur. The surge in skirmishes and military operations in Darfur during the month of May led the armed group to withdraw from the negotiations, as it deemed that the agreements reached with the government had been violated by the renewed outbreaks of violence. In December 2010 the SLM (Minnawi) withdrew from Darfur Peace Agreement and returned to the armed struggle. In March 2011, the government signed a ceasefire agreement with the coalition of armed groups Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), an umbrella organisation for small factions led by El-Tijani El-Sissi (a member of the Fur ethnic group and former governor of the region) in Qatar. In July, two rebel groups from Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Army-FREES (SLA-FREES) and the Justice and Reform Movement (JRM), signed a peace agreement mediated by a reconciliation committee of local leaders and native administrators, with UNAMID as the observer. On the 27th of April, the mediators gave to the armed groups LJM and JEM a draft peace agreement with six points for their consideration. While the LJM stated that it was in favour of the agreement, the JEM expressed reluctance and asked to discuss several aspects with government representatives. The main points of contention referred to the section on human rights and freedoms, as well as to the administration of Darfur and the vice presidential posts offered within the central government. The government and the alliance of armed groups LJM signed a peace agreement in Doha (Qatar) in July with the goal of putting an end to the armed conflict in Darfur. In September, a new JEM faction, Democratic Change Forces, headed by the vice president of the group and the leader of the forces in Kordofan, Mohamed Bahr Ali Hamdein, announced its intention to reach a peace agreement with the government as part of the Doha process. At the end of the year, the top JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim, died during an attack by the Sudanese army.

A split occurred in the armed group JEM in the third quarter of 2012. The new faction, led by commander Bakheit Abdallah Abdel-Karim ("Dabajo"), indicated its willingness to negotiate with the Sudanese government and appointed Mohamed Bashar to be the new leader of the armed group JEM-Bashar. In October, representatives of the government and the dissident JEM faction signed a cessation of hostilities agreement and announced that they would sit down for peace talks.

In 2013 negotiations between JEM-Bashar and the Sudanese government continued in Doha (Qatar) during the entire first quarter. In January an agreement was reached regarding the agenda for the negotiation, at the beginning of February a ceasefire was signed and talks began on issues such as power and wealth sharing, compensation and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, justice and reconciliation, and final security provisions based on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). In late March several pacts were signed and the process concluded in an official ceremony on April 6 in Doha. JEM-Bashar agreed that some of its fighters would join the Sudanese army and the rest would be demobilized. In addition, JEM members would be present in the national government, in the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) and in the executive and legislative bodies of the five states of Darfur. The two sides also agreed to create three new bodies: one to deal with nomads and pastoralist affairs, a social care fund, and a credit bank for small businesses. On April 6, during the donor conference for Darfur, the negotiations between JEM-Bashar and the Government were sealed with the signing in Doha of a peace protocol based on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). However, when the JEM-Bashar delegation was travelling through Chad on its return to Darfur it was attacked by members of the JEM faction led by Jibril Ibrahim. Mohammed Bashar, his right hand man, Suleiman Arko, and five other members were killed. The international commission overseeing the implementation of the DDPD remarked that "it is not only an act of vengeance but a calculated and deliberate move to dissuade others who may be willing to join the peace process."

In October the Government of Sudan and the JEM faction (Bashar) led by "Dabajo" signed an agreement to implement the peace accord. The pact was based on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur of 2011 and stated that both parties would abandon hostilities and initiate a peace process. According to the spokesperson of the faction, Ali-El-Wafi, the key issues identified to be included in the negotiation were security, power sharing and the future of refugees. "Dabajo" returned to Khartoum in mid-November and was received by the Sudanese authorities. At that time, the main JEM group, led by Jibril Ibrahim, and other groups in the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), the SPLM-N and two of the main SLA groups, led by Abdel Wahid Al Nur (SLA-AW) and Minni Minnawi (the SLA-Minnawi, which had signed a peace agreement in 2006 and withdrew in 2011), maintained their refusal to establish partial peace negotiations and proposed a global solution to eliminate the regime and establish a democracy that would respect the rights of the different regions. In November several armed groups that had not yet signed any peace agreement held a second meeting (the first had taken place in Tanzania in August) in the Ethiopian capital, with the mediation of UNAMID, to discuss the humanitarian situation and the possibilities of beginning peace negotiations. These groups believe that democratization of the country and a new constitution are needed.

The leader of the LJM coalition that signed the DDPD in 2011 said that Khartoum was delaying the implementation of the security agreements and was not fulfilling its obligation to move LJM members into the civil service. In November 2013 the Sudanese government and Tijani El-Sissi's LJM signed a security agreement which would place between 2,000 and 3,000 members of the LJM in the Army and police. The agreement was signed with UNAMID intermediation. Moreover, at the end of the year the vice president of Sudan, El Haj Adam Yousif, proposed an "action plan" that would involve members of Parliament, the State Legislative Councils and the Darfur Regional Authority, in addition to civil society organizations. In mid-December a meeting of the Committee for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement (DDPD) was scheduled to take place in Cairo (Egypt) and would be attended by the Government, the LJM, JEM-Bashar, the AU, the Arab League, Burkina Faso, Chad, Qatar, Egypt and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

In March 2014, a meeting was held in Chad between the Presidents of Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, and Chad, Idriss Deby, to activate the political dialogue in Sudan. In April the Chadian president met in Paris with the president of the Gibril Ibrahim faction of the JEM to discuss the situation in Darfur. In early July the Chadian President Idriss Deby met again with the leader of the faction of the JEM, Gibril Ibrahim, also in Paris, and in response to a petition made by Zaghawa tribal leaders. A few days earlier during the EU-Africa Summit Ibrahim met in Brussels with the leader of the SLM-MM, Minni Minnawi, who is also from the Zaghawa ethnic group. In 2010 Minnawi pulled out of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement. Ibrahim said he did not want partial peace, but agreements with the entire SRF (Sudanese Revolutionary Front) alliance, including a ceasefire and discussion of political issues, with international mediation.

In July the president of the opposition group, the National Umma Party (NUF), and the leader of a faction of the JEM, Gibril Ibrahim, who was also secretary for foreign relations of the SRF, held meetings at the headquarters of the European Parliament in Strasbourg to achieve support for the peace process and national dialogue in Sudan. In late August members of the SRF, including Gibril Ibrahim, met in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) with the African Union, the Sudanese Government mediator for Darfur and the UN special envoy for Darfur.

During October several things occurred that could help build peace in the country. First, following a meeting held by the Berghof Foundation, Germany announced in early October that it would cooperate with the Sudanese stakeholders to facilitate a peace process in the country with the goal of achieving peace. The Berghof Foundation organized a meeting with the leaders of armed groups that were part of the SRF coalition, including the president of one of the JEM factions, Gibril Ibrahim, the leader of the SPLM-N, Malik Agar, and the president of the SRF, Minni Minnawi. The leaders pledged to participate in any political process that would lead the country to peace. The German Foreign Ministry said it was willing to facilitate those goals. During the

seminar the SRF said that it was necessary to bring together the armed groups, political parties and civil society organizations. The Berghof Foundation announced that it was willing to contribute to this goal. After the seminar in Berlin, the SRF announced plans to form a strategic alliance with the umbrella group of opposition parties, the National Consensus Forces (NCF), and other opposition parties. Some media organizations said the Egyptian Government was interested in mediating in the peace process. In late October Minnawi's SLM-MM announced it would soon begin peace talks with the Sudanese Government in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), with the mediation of the AU.

In early November a delegation of ambassadors from EU countries visited Darfur to gather information on the political, development and humanitarian situation in the region. Italy, France, Sweden, UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain took part in the mission. At the end of that month talks were held in Addis Ababa with Gibril Ibrahim's JEM and they continued until early December. The delegation for the Sudanese Government arrived at the meeting without an agenda and only wanted to discuss security issues, while the JEM wanted to address a long list of more structural issues (compensation for the impoverished population, return of the displaced population, the development of Darfur, farming and land ownership issues, security, the disarmament of the Janjaweed militias, and justice and reconciliation programs). The mediator, Mbeki, asked the Sudanese Government to grant its negotiating delegation more power and he travelled around Europe asking for the Sudanese debt to be cancelled as an incentive to begin negotiations that produce results. The meeting in Ethiopia ended without any advances.

The AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) organised direct talks between the government, the SLA-MM and JEM-Gibril at Addis Ababa. This seventh round of negotiations led by the AUHIP on 12 November 2014, in which the African facilitation was trying to accomplish what is known as "one process, two tracks" (Darfur and the Two Areas) ended on 8 December without progress. The SLA-AW decided not to participate in this round of negotiations. During the talks, the government reiterated that it had no intention of reopening negotiations on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), while the groups insisted that they were not bound by its provisions. The AUHIP proposed the inclusion on the agenda of the following points: security mechanisms, political issues, humanitarian issues, the relationship between these talks and national dialogue in Sudan, and the general working method. The government rejected the inclusion of humanitarian issues as a separate agenda item, while the armed movements insisted that it should be included and suggested adding other issues such as development, land and reconciliation. Unable to reach agreement, the AUHIP suspended talks on 30 November 2014 so that the parties could consult with their membership on the draft framework agreement. The political and armed opposition in Sudan, including the Darfur armed movements, adopted in Addis Ababa on 4 December a joint declaration entitled "Sudan Call", which includes the commitment to reach a comprehensive solution, starting with a ceasefire, to resolve the conflicts in Darfur and in the Two Areas (referring to South Kordofan and Blue Nile) and to establish mechanisms to promote a popular uprising or a comprehensive political solution.

The peace process in 2015

Given the stalemate in the situation, in January the AUHIP held a round of contacts in an attempt to resume the talks, albeit unsuccessfully given that the government put the contacts on hold given the prospects of holding the elections on the 13th of April. Between the 25th and 27th of February, the civil, social and armed opposition which signed the Sudan Call met in Berlin at a gathering organised by the Berghof Foundation to debate issues related to the peace negotiations and national dialogue. The government was not included in the talks. During the month of February, the governments of al-Bashir (Sudan) and Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) reached an agreement to form a "joint security mechanism" with the goal of pledging to reduce each government's support for the rebel groups living in their countries, namely the LRA in Sudan and the leadership of the SRF, headquartered in Uganda, which includes the JEM. This might also have implications for the conflict in South Sudan and for the resolution of this conflict. In late

March, the government and a group of 400 dissidents from the Sudan Liberation Movement (Minni A. Minawi), SLM-MM, under the leadership of Mohamedian Ismail Bashar signed a peace agreement with the Sudanese government in N'Djamena (Chad). The agreement was signed by the director of the Darfur Peace Office, Amin Hassan Omer, in the presence of the chancellor of Chad. Some sources noted that the agreement was reached with the blessing of the JEM (Dabajo). In late April, the head Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), Al-Tijani Al-Sisi, expressed his gratitude for the crucial role that Qatar had played in achieving stability in the region.

On the other hand, the three leading rebel groups in Darfur announced an agreement in which they pledged to step up their efforts to protect the rights of minors and adhere to the international norms currently in force. Thus, the organisations Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid El Nur (SLM-AW) and the SLM under the leadership of Minni Minawi (SLM-MM) ratified their commitment to protect the rights of minors at a consultative meeting held on the 27th and 28th of May in Stadtschlaining, Austria, at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution. The signatories declared that the protection of minors in Darfur was a priority for society and that this agreement could not wait until the peace negotiations of the National Dialogue Committee with al-Bashir's government were resolved, a process whose last meeting had been held on the 10th of May but was then interrupted by the election calendar.

During the second half of the year, the rapprochement and reconciliation process between Musa Hilal, the former Janjaweed leader and head of the Revolutionary Awakening Council (RAC), and the Sudanese government was revealed. Hilal, who attended President Omar al-Bashir's inauguration on the 30th of May, announced that talks would get underway with the government to achieve peace in Darfur, which would include registering the RAC as a political party along with security measures and reconciliation and political reform in Darfur. Hilal served as a Janjaweed leader in Darfur operating under the mandate of the government of Sudan against the rebel forces, and this loyalty led al-Bashir to offer him the post of presidential assistant for federal affairs in 2008. However, he later distanced himself from the government and formed the RAC in 2014. According to different sources, in July 2014 the RAC had signed an agreement with the SPLM-N with the goal of bringing down the Sudanese regime and establishing a democratic system in the country.

During the third quarter of the year, the president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, stated his intention to step up the launch of the talks with all the armed movements in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and on the 22nd of September he signed two presidential decrees to this effect. The decrees included a two-month ceasefire in the areas of conflict, as well as the offer of a general amnesty for the leaders of the rebel movements who were participating in the peace talks. The day prior to the issuance of both decrees, the Sudanese president had expressed his intention for the conflicts in the three regions to reach a conclusion before the end of the year, thus putting an end to a conflict that got underway in 2003 in Darfur and in 2011 in the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile with the rebels of the SPLA-N.

In September, too, representatives of the Salamat and Fellata ethnic communities signed a peace agreement between both peoples in an attempt to put an end to the inter-community clashes that had left 205 deaths and dozens of people injured since they had gotten underway in February 2015. The agreement was preceded by a cessation of hostilities agreement that had been signed on the 7th of September in the community of Buram, South Darfur, with the mediation of the traditional chief of the Habbaniya group, along with the presence of representatives from the Tullus, Dimsu, El Radoom, El Sunta and Gireida communities. In this agreement, each group pledged to pay the other for human losses as well as for damaged and lost property. On the other hand, under the auspices of the so-called Darfur-Darfur Dialogue Committee, which is supported by the UNAMID, other mediation process started to get underway. In the North Darfur region, mediations started with different groups from the town of Mellit to achieve peace and stability, while in East Darfur talks were launched to solve the disputes between the Rizeigat and Ma'aliya groups, and peace talks began in the West Kordofan region on the 15th of September in order to

put a stop to the prolonged clashes between both peoples. In early October, the president of Chad met in Paris with leaders of the three armed groups in Darfur – Jibril Ibrahim (JEM), Abdel Wahid El Nur and Minni Minawi (two JEM factions) – asked them to participate in the National Dialogue.

Most significant events of the year

- A group of 400 dissidents from the Sudan Liberation Movement (Minni Minnawi), SLM-MM, led by Mohamedein Ismail Bashar, signed a peace agreement with the Sudanese government in Ndjamena (Chad).
- There was a process of rapprochement and reconciliation between Musa Hilal, a former Janjaweed leader and head of the Revolutionary Awakening Council (RAC) and the Sudanese government.
- The president of Sudan adopted two decrees, which included a two month ceasefire in the areas of conflict, as well as offering a general amnesty for the leaders of the rebel movements that took part in the peace talks.
- Representatives of the Salamat and Fellata ethnic communities signed a peace agreement between the two peoples to try to end the intercommunal clashes.
- The Chadian president met in Paris with the leaders of the three armed groups from Darfur: Jibril Ibrahim (JEM), Abdel Wahid El Nur, and Minni Minnawi (from two factions of the SLM).

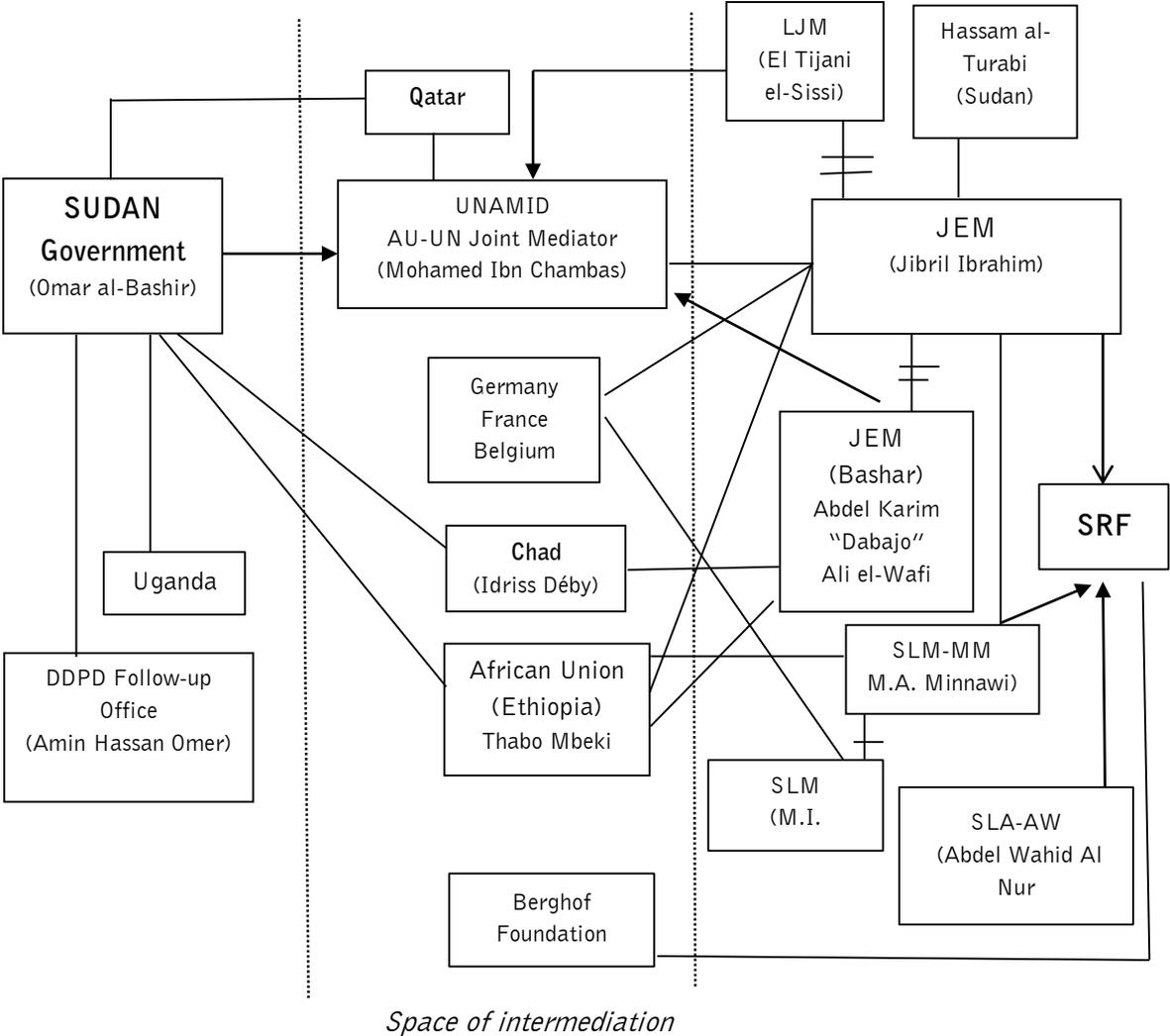
Causes of crises during the year

- The Government put contacts on standby given the prospect of the holding of elections.

Websites of interest

- African Union (www.africa-union.org)
- IGAD (www.igad.org)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Issues in Peacebuilding (www.cmi.no/sudan)
- JEM (www.sudanjem.com)
- JEM (Gibril Ibrahim) (jem.knowprocess.com) (www.JEMSudan.org)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Small Arms Survey SPLM-N)
- Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
- UNAMID (www.un.org/es/peacekeeping/missions/unamid)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)
- UNMIS (www.unmis.org)

Main parties involved in the process



b) South Kordofan and Blue Nil

Context of the conflict

The situation in Sudan took a turn for the worse after the April 2010 general elections, when several members of the military who had presented themselves as candidates or supported political opponents of the presidential party, the SPLM, failed to win. They refused to recognize the election results and decided to take up arms to demand access to the institutions, where the Dinka dominated and the other communities were underrepresented, and to accuse the Government of South Sudan of corruption.

Population: 4,2 million
Area: 421,989 km ²
Armed actors: SPLM-N
Facilitators: AU

After South Sudan became independent in July 2011 tensions emerged between the Sudanese Government and the non-Arab border regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which had been assisting South Sudan in its struggle for independence. The conflict has produced large numbers of displaced persons (nearly one million in the first year), and hundreds of people have died. The government of South Sudan is backed by the Popular Defence Forces paramilitary group. Humanitarian negotiations began so that the AU could gain free access to the zones in conflict and an agreement was signed in August 2012 with the AU, the Arab League and the UN. The **Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)** emerged in 2011 as a subsidiary of South Sudan's SPLM and mainly operated in the oil rich Sudanese states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile on the South Sudan border. The group struggles against the Government of Sudan and defends the region's religious, gender or ethnic differences. The SPLM-N has a humanitarian arm called the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency. South Sudan accused Sudan of supporting the SPLM-N in the two border states.

Background to the peace process

Since November 2012 Sudan has demanded that the demilitarized zone between Sudan and South Sudan be extended by 50 km so that it would include the border it shares with South Kordofan, where the SPLM is fighting against the Sudanese Armed Forces.

In June 2013 the SPLM-N once again requested talks with the Government to negotiate humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile for a polio vaccination campaign, but the Government said that before it would negotiate any humanitarian issues a political agreement had to be reached. In May both sides expressed their disagreement on this issue. The SRF said that aid workers had to enter the areas under their control from Ethiopia and Kenya, while the Government said it had to be from Sudan. In July and September the Sudanese government tried to establish contact with the SPLM-N through three countries to resolve the conflict in South Kordofan. The new governor of South Kordofan, Adam al-Faki, also tried to establish relations with the movement in mid-July. However, the SPLM-N rejected calls for negotiations and called for a comprehensive solution covering both the Blue Nile and South Kordofan areas and Darfur.

However, it did agree to a 15-day humanitarian ceasefire so that the polio vaccination campaign could be conducted. In late November the SPLM-N negotiator did not oppose the proposal to resume negotiations in December in Ethiopia, with AU mediation. Also of interest was the work performed by some community mediation associations, such as Justice Confidence Centres (JCC) and the Joint Conflict Programme (JCPR). In December members of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) stated that the SPLM-N would only accept a global solution that involved a regime change.

After being on hold for nearly 12 months, at the beginning of the 2014 talks between Sudan and the SPLM-N began once again. On February 13 the parties met again in Addis Ababa under the

auspices of the AU. On February 18 the AU mediation team, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), headed by Thabo Mbeki, proposed that the two sides should implement an immediate ceasefire and allow access to humanitarian aid organizations. Aid for a million people was being blocked by conflict and had caused a humanitarian crisis. The AU said it would appoint a third party to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire. Despite this, the parties began exchanging accusations again and interrupted the talks. The head of the SPLM delegation, Yasir Arman, said that Khartoum wanted to put the war on hold without providing solutions to either the humanitarian or the political situation, and he accused the SPLM-N of bringing to the table issues that were not related to the war affecting South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM-N armed group, launched unsuccessfully in February, were resumed in April and interrupted again in May. The group decided it wanted to return to an agreement reached on June 28, 2011 that had never been applied, but could serve as a starting point for the new framework agreement.

In mid-November negotiations resumed in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), although they were subsequently postponed for a few days. AU mediator Thabo Mbeki said Sudan was using "a two-track process" referring to the parallel negotiations being held in the Sudanese region of Darfur, and that both negotiations should be "synchronized". The conflict in Kordofan and Blue Nile had already caused 650,000 displaced persons. In December the negotiations broke down, after a three-week ceasefire, because of the many differences in the proposals made by both parties. On the one hand the SPLM-N wanted a global agreement, while the Government was interested in a partial agreement. The Government wanted the rebels to disarm and declare a ceasefire before addressing political issues, which was not accepted. The guerrillas were also in favour of achieving a "synchronized agreement" with the Darfur armed groups before they participated in the National Dialogue. The SPLM-N also rejected Islamic law, called for the dismantling of the national Police, the Army and the security bodies. Moreover, there were indications that conditions for new negotiations had been established, such as the commitment made at the third meeting of the Geneva Call by the leader of the SPLM-N to destroy its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines or the willingness by both sides to participate in a large-scale operation to release all prisoners of war.

The peace process in 2015

In the second quarter, the peace process stood out for the presence of different opposition groups in the European Parliament who were attending a working meeting on Sudan. The European Parliament held a meeting on the situation in Sudan on the 8th of June in Strasbourg, to which it invited different representatives of the country, including representatives of the SPLM-N, the National Umma Party, the coalition of opposition parties National Consensus Force, the Civil Society Initiative, as well as other rebel movements allied together under the umbrella of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF). Mubarak Ardol, the spokesman of the negotiation delegation of the SPLM-N, confirmed the organisation's presence at the meeting, in addition to attending the annual meeting on Sudan held in Germany in late June. The meeting was part of the European tour underway by different members of the SPLM-N with the goal of condemning the humanitarian situation suffered by the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. On the 29th of June, the armed group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) became the first African non-state actor to sign the Minors Protection Act. Through its secretary general, Yasir Arman, and the head of political training, Orwa Hamdan Zeid, the SPLM-N signed the commitment to protect minors from the effects of armed conflicts in Geneva. The text was an initiative developed to allow the armed groups that were not recognised as parties in international treaties to ratify agreements on the protection of minors. The SPLM-N's adherence meant that it was the first African non-state armed group to adhere to it, which signalled a huge step forward for a civilian population that was immersed in the regions in conflict. This was not the first agreement that the SPLM-N had signed based on humanitarian norms and the Geneva Convention, as back in 2013 it had also ratified the ban on anti-personnel mines. The announcement was joined by the agreement reached in May in which the most important rebel

groups in Darfur (the Justice and Equality Movement or JEM, the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid El Nur or SLM-AW, and the SLM under the leadership of Minni Minawi or SLM-MM) announced their commitment to spearhead efforts to protect the rights of minors and adhere to the international norms currently in force, ratifying their commitment at a consultative meeting held on the 27th and 28th of May in Stadtschlaining, Austria, at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution. In October, the SPLM-N expressed its interest in opening up a negotiation process with two negotiating routes. The SRF network, in turn, declared a six-month unilateral cessation of hostilities in the regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

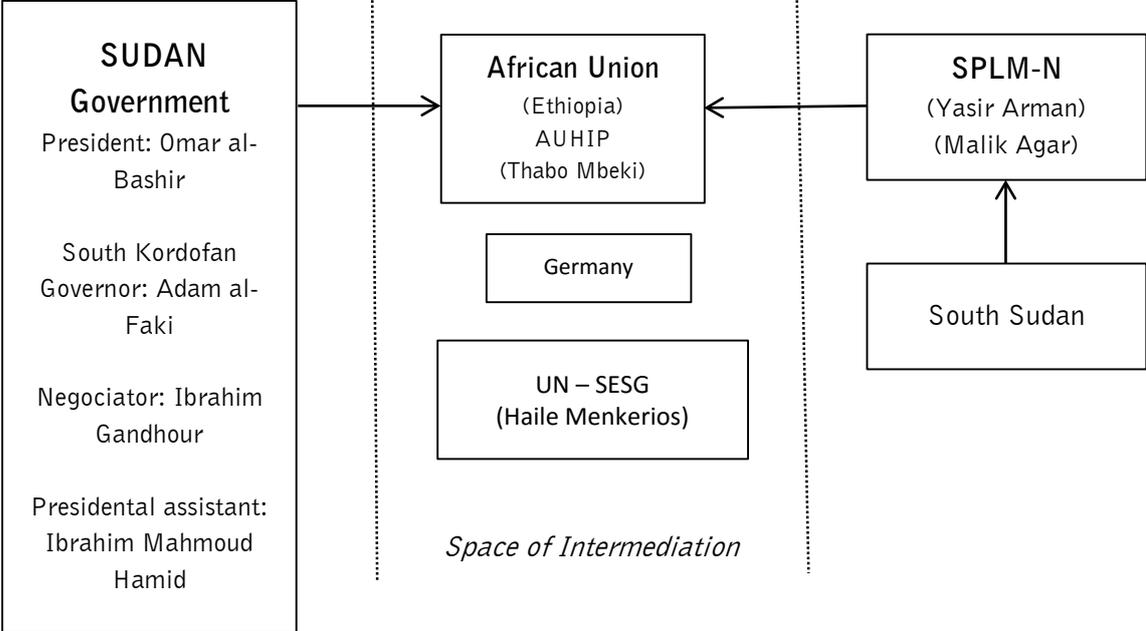
In November, after five days of deliberations, Thabo Mbeki, president of the AUHIP, suspended the 10th round of negotiations, given that the two sides could not agree on the issue of humanitarian aid to the two areas. They had previously agreed to a ceasefire, which was not respected. In December new informal talks began in the Ethiopian capital, chaired by the presidential aide, Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, and the secretary general of the SPLM-N, Yazid Arman. After three days of talks, the talks were unsuccessful, as they were unable to agree on the issues of a ceasefire, national dialogue and humanitarian aid.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The armed group, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), became the first African non-state actor to sign the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict. • The SPLM-N expressed interest in opening a two track negotiating process. • In December informal talks began in the Ethiopian capital.

Causes of crises during the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian situation.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Union (www.africa-union.org) • International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) • Relief Web (reliefweb.int) • Small Arms Survey (www.smallarmssurveysudan.org) • Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)

Main parties involved in the process



SOUTH SUDAN

Context of the conflict

After years of conflict between the central Government of Sudan and the south, led by the SPLM rebel group, a peace agreement was reached in 2005, mediated by IGAD, that provided for a referendum on southern independence to be held in 2011. The vast majority of the population voted for independence, which came into effect shortly after, but the tensions did not diminish either between the two countries (Sudan and South Sudan) or within South Sudan, where disputes broke out over control of land, livestock and political power. In the 2010 general elections several soldiers, mostly from the Nuer ethnic group, did not accept the results and they took up arms to demand a place in the institutions dominated by the Dinka. In late 2013 there was an escalation in the fighting between supporters of President Salva Kiir and those who backed former Vice President Riek Machar (the SPLM/A-in-Opposition), which were made up of different ethnic groups. The personal ambitions of the two opponents are thus an important dimension in the conflict. The conflict caused about 10,000 deaths and 1.8 million displaced persons.

Population: 11,7 million
Area: 619,745 km ²
GDP PPA: 21,407 millions USD
Per capita income: 950 USD
HDI: 169 (of 188)
Armed actors: SPLM/A-in-Opposition
Facilitators: AU, IGAD, Ethiopia, Tanzania, CMI

Background to the peace process

In April 2013, the president offered amnesty to the leaders of six rebel groups. Initially it was only accepted by the South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army armed group (SSLA). According to local sources, the 3,000 member group crossed the border from Sudan with a hundred trucks and delivered weapons to the authorities in South Sudan. In June the leader of another militia fighting in Upper Nile State, Johnson Uliny, also accepted the amnesty offer. Uliny was the new leader of South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army (SSDM/SSDA) that had signed a peace agreement with the Government in February 2012 under the leadership of Peter Kuol Chol Awar, after the death of George Athor. In early July the Government of South Sudan announced that peace talks were beginning with the leader of the Murle Militia, David Yau Yau. Previously the country's president, Salva Kiir, had asked the elders of the Murle community to persuade Yau Yau to respond to the amnesty proposal.

At the end of April 2013 the president offered amnesty to six leaders of rebel groups. Initially it was only accepted by the SSLA armed group. According to local sources the 3,000 member group crossed the border from Sudan with a hundred trucks and delivered weapons to the authorities in South Sudan. In June the leader of another militia fighting in Upper Nile State, Johnson Uliny, also accepted the amnesty offer. On December 14, 2013 there was a coup attempt that President Salva Kiir managed to quash, although one thousand people were killed in heavy fighting. Kiir accused former Vice President Riek Machar of orchestrating the coup and ordered his arrest, but he denied any involvement. Forces loyal to Machar took control of Unity State, an important oil region, and Bor, capital of Jonglei state. Bor was the scene of a massacre in 1991 between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, that Kiir and Machar belong to respectively. Both sides continued fighting for the control of other important towns in clashes that took place in different parts of the country. There was a growing concern that a new conflict was in the making and the UN announced that it was sending more peacekeeping forces. Riek Machar's forces became known as the SPLM/A-in-Opposition. A series of visits were organized by delegations from different organizations and key countries in the region, especially the leaders of Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya, in an attempt to get the parties to reach an agreement. IGAD, which played an important role in the 2005 peace agreement, also facilitated talks between the two conflicting sectors in South Sudan, although the mediation was often called into question and led to a profound crisis in 2014 due to the Prime Ministers lack of confidence in the process.

In early January 2014, the Government and the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, began peace talks in Addis Ababa that included negotiations for the release of prisoners and agreements to implement a ceasefire, which was reached on January 23, although it was violated systematically by both sides. Fighting continued throughout the first quarter as the peace talks went on, with facilitation by IGAD and support by the AU and the UN. The second round of peace talks held between the Government and the Machar faction on February 11 ended without agreement on March 3. The Government continued to demand the return to Juba of the seven ex-political detainees (out of 11) that were released in January (the so-called Third Platform). The Government says that they could be judged for their possible links to the alleged coup, while the opposition continued to demand the withdrawal of the Ugandan Armed Forces and other foreign forces that supported the Government. The seven politicians from the Third Platform are in Addis Ababa and are trying to act as a channel for dialogue between Kiir and Machar. Their proposal was that Kiir continue to be president of an interim government and that the party in power, the SPLM, be completely reformed. During this round of negotiations, the parties reached an agreement on the mechanisms for the monitoring and verification of the cessation of hostilities and they discussed the next steps regarding national dialogue and issues that affected the SPLM. On March 19 the U.S., UK, EU and Norway threatened both sides with targeted sanctions. The third round of negotiations began on March 26 with both sides threatening to boycott the process and unable to reach an agreement. IGAD requested a one-month suspension of the talks. According to Africa Confidential, the opposing parties were not in agreement with IGAD's role, especially the plan to send in a stabilization force, since both sides believed that the other side would benefit from the presence of foreign troops.

In May the Government of South Sudan signed a peace agreement in the Ethiopian capital with the South Sudan Democratic Movement— Cobra Faction (SSDM-Cobra faction) led by David Yau Yau. The accord would establish a special territorial administration in Pibor County based on the principle of decentralization. The agreement was reached under the auspices of the Church Leaders Mediation Initiative of South Sudan (CLMI). At the beginning of January the two sides had already signed an agreement to cease hostilities and declared the area under the armed group's control a "Zone of Peace". This group had joined forces with the SPLM in 2011, but in April 2012 it split away.

Several rounds of talks took place in Addis Ababa between supporters of President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar. Two peace agreements were reached in May and June, which were violated by both sides. After the May 9 ceasefire, representatives of the Government led by Salva Kiir and the rebel faction SPLA-in-Opposition led by former Vice President Riek Machar committed once again on June 11 to cease the fighting and to create a transitional government within 60 days, after meeting on the sidelines during the regional IGAD summit. The agreement was reached in Addis Ababa after the IGAD regional organization had threatened to impose sanctions if both parties did not commit to the peace process. The May 9 agreement had been systematically violated, according to IGAD, which expressed its frustration with the constant fighting. Despite pressure by different international actors, the peace talks following the agreement were boycotted by the Government because the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Mahboub Maalim, had called the Government and the opposition "stupid". President Salva Kiir demanded a formal apology. The talks were also subsequently boycotted by the opposition in late June because the civil society organizations selected to participate in the talks were aligned with the government.

On August 25 both the Government and the rebel faction SPLA-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO), led by former Vice President Riek Machar, met again in an attempt to end the devastating war that had begun in December 2013. As a result of the meeting the parties signed a new ceasefire agreement with the mediation of IGAD, which again threatened to impose sanctions if this new agreement failed. This agreement also established a protocol for the formation of a national unity government, including a prime minister from the opposition, transitional justice mechanisms, financial management and humanitarian issues. Just like the previous ones the agreement at the

end of August failed and IGAD restarted the talks with both sides on September 22. A delegation of the SPLA-IO visited Beijing and held talks with the Chinese government. On September 21 China stopped arms sales to the Government and said it would deploy 700 soldiers to the UNMISS to help protect civilians.

In October the IGAD chief mediator, Seymour Mesfin, announced that negotiations had been broken off and the Government of South Sudan criticized the three countries of the Troika (the U.S., the UK and Norway) for attempting to force a regime change and for being responsible for the current crisis. The Government also demanded that the negotiations be moved from Ethiopia to Kenya. In the second half of the month the parties agreed to continue negotiations in Arusha (Tanzania), complementing the efforts of IGAD, although under the facilitation of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) from Finland and coordinated by Itonde Kakoma. The CMI had been working in South Sudan since 2011, and in 2014 supported the Intra-SPLM Dialogue, hosted by the Government of Tanzania. In October it got all parties to sign the so-called Arusha Communique, in which all parties recognized their collective responsibility in the conflict. At the beginning of November, however, President Kiir left the negotiating table and accused the former vice president of opting for a military solution.

The peace process in 2015

In the first quarter of the year, multiple mediation processes were underway which led to agreements and uncoordinated processes, according to the International Crisis Group. In a report in January, the organisation stressed how the efforts being made by regional organisations had been futile due to the private interests of their competing members, in addition to international actors' scant investment in resolving the conflict. The report further stressed the need to lower foreign involvement and cross-border activities of the armed groups, to improve the coordination of the mediating efforts and the need for a more steadfast commitment from the UN Security Council, China and the USA. The conflict in South Sudan deteriorated the relationship between Khartoum and Juba because of Uganda's participation in supporting the government of Salva Kiir. Sudan, in turn, was playing a double role by supporting the rebellion in South Sudan, in part to put a damper on Uganda's role and in part because the Sudanese armed groups were also fighting alongside the government of South Sudan, while it also posed as a mediator between the clashing parties in the conflict.

In this sense, in January China got involved in the peace process and held a meeting in Khartoum between Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and China. This Asian country presented an initiative in which it exhorted the conflicting parties to bear in mind the interests of the people of South Sudan by safeguarding the peace and stability in the region. In fact, China had already taken the decision to deploy peacekeeping troops in South Sudan to support the mediation efforts of the regional organisation IGAD, and to put an end to the armed conflict in which the country was enmeshed. To this end, worth noting are the bilateral relations between China and Sudan, which reinforce the Asian country's interest in stabilising the region. In turn, the different factions that belong to the SPLM (government, SPLM-IO and the SPLM faction known as SPLM 7) signed a peace agreement in Tanzania on the 21st of January with the facilitation of the presidents of Tanzania and Kenya, to pave the way to the end of hostilities in South Sudan and with the goal of reconciling the three SPLM factions, whose internal disputes were hindering the national peace talks, even though this initiative remained merely symbolic. In late January, a process got underway with the support of UNICEF to demobilise 3,000 minor soldiers recruited by the SSDM-Cobra faction led by David Yau Yau. UNICEF calculated that the reintegration of each minor would cost \$2,300 in two years.

In February, both parties met once again on the initiative of IGAD, although no agreement was reached. However, the South Sudanese president, Salva Kiir, and the rebel leader and former vice president of the country, Riek Machar, signed a document which confirmed their commitment to a cessation of hostilities in early February, in which they pledged to form a transition government

and share political power, although in practice this document turned out to be somewhat futile. Shortly thereafter, the South Sudanese rebels claimed that the agreement was not fully concluded and that talks on the functions and division of power within the new interim government should continue. To this end, the chief mediator of the regional organisation, IGAD, Seyoum Mesfin, stated that the talks would resume in late February and that both clashing sides should reach an agreement to form a transition government by July, when Salva Kiir's presidential mandate ended. However, the Parliament extended Kiir's mandate by three years in an effort to avoid a power vacuum in the midst of the conflict. In March, the contacts mediated by IGAD were resumed, but without reaching an agreement, so IGAD issued a call stating that any future mediation initiative had to be expanded to the AU, China, the EU and the Troika (made up of the USA, the United Kingdom and Norway). However, by late March no future encounter had been scheduled, and Kiir's government expressed its refusal to allow the troika to participate in the negotiations. The UN Security Council announced its approval of a resolution that would allow South Sudan to be sanctioned if the conflicting forces in the country did not reach a peace agreement. The South Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, rejected the UN's resolution by arguing that threats or impositions of sanctions would only harm the peace process, leading to more negative consequences that would only aggravate the existing conflict. In March, too, a report from the African Union Committee to Investigate South Sudan (AUCISS) was leaked to the press on the last day of peace talks in South Sudan. The report reached the conclusion that the president of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, and his former vice president, Riek Machar, were responsible for organised massacres and large-scale violence, and that they should thus be expelled from the government. In January, the African Union (AU) announced the indefinite postponement of its publication of the report, arguing that publishing it could interfere with the peace negotiations. Many human rights organisations and international organisations deplored this decision, asking that the AU officially publish the report and either take the leadership in transnational justice or leave the way open to other actors. The AUCISS has the mandate to investigate human rights abuses and violations in South Sudan and to formulate recommendations on the best ways to ensure accountability, reconciliation and cleansing.

None of the seven ceasefires managed to stop the more than 10,000 murders and the displacement of 1.8 million people in the conflict in South Sudan, whose latest phase started in December 2013. The lack of effective agreements, after months of IGAD mediation, and the persistence of the conflict, which had unleashed a severe humanitarian crisis, led the IGAD to announce the expansion of the mediation mechanisms to other actors such as the AU and specifically to five member states (Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Chad and Algeria) on the 11th of March. These states would join the mediation along with as representatives from the USA, the United Kingdom and Norway (who make up the Sudan Troika), which do not have the approval of the government of Salva Kiir. The United Nations, the EU and China have also come to play a more active role, expanding the actors in the negotiation to what has been called "IGAD Plus", where the role of the mediators is no longer just regional but multilateral. On the 29th of May, the president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, announced that both the peace process under IGAD mediation and the reconciliation and reunification process of the SPLM would merge into the same mediation process in order to ensure better coordination and results. As part of the progress towards reunification, in early June a five-member delegation of the so-called SPLM 7 visited South Sudan accompanied by a delegation from the mediation group. The advances in the SPLM reunification process were even more tangible with the reincorporation of Pagan Amum as the secretary general of the SPLM on the 23rd of June; Amum had been a member of the SPLM 7 group and had been removed from the job by Salva Kiir as a result of the start of the armed clashes in December 2013. On the 8th and 10th of June, IGAD special envoys held consultations with the South Sudanese parties involved in the conflict and presented them with a proposal to revisit in the forthcoming negotiating rounds, which according to Seyoum Mesfin, the former Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the IGAD mediation process, would resume in mid-July. The proposal, as Seyoum revealed, suggested the establishment of a national unity transition government for 30 months, with the vice presidency assigned to the rebels, and an 18-month period during which the rebel forces from the SPLM-IO would be reintegrated into the country's armed forces. In this regard, the rebels proposed keeping separate forces throughout the

entire three-year transitional period, while the government had insisted on a maximum of six months. The proposal also sought to establish a truth and reconciliation commission during the transitional period, as well as a "hybrid" tribunal with the participation of the UN and the AU.

On the other hand, during the second quarter external pressures were on the rise because of the events unfolding, the persistent conflict and the humanitarian impact. Different international actors and bodies, including the Troika member states, the EU and even the AU, requested that sanctions be targeted at the leaders of the clashing parties, specifically at six senior military commanders, three per side, as well as that an arms embargo be implemented, obligating the parties to make headway in the peace agreements. Along the same lines, in May 2015 the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) requested the UN Sanctions Committee to take urgent measures to stop the violence, but these measures were not taken due to the lack of agreement. IGAD stated that it was not interested in promoting the addition of possible sanctioning measures since this could become yet a further obstacle to achieving peace.

In May, the SPLM-IO and the authorities from Gambella (Ethiopia) signed a border peace agreement. The tensions between the border communities in Akobo county in South Sudan and Tergol county in Ethiopia, due to systematic cattle theft and violence (rapes, kidnapping of minors, murders) perpetrated via attacks by the Murle community, seemed to be solved with the signing of a cross-border peace agreement between the corresponding authorities. The agreement, which was backed by the authorities from the SPLM-IO in Akobo, as well as by the authorities from Tergol, was ratified during the conference in Gambella (Ethiopia), and it included actions related to the control of cross-border issues, the use of shared resources and the promotion of trade. The prominent points included: control of poaching with joint patrols in the national parks; the peaceful, shared use of the grazing and fishing grounds; the use of standard fishing nets; and the promotion of trade between both parties. For Ethiopia, the conference was attended by the Ministers of Information and Justice from the state of Gambella, Chuol Chany Kier and Thomas Tut Puk, respectively, and the county commissioner of Tergol, D. Simon Dol; and on behalf of South Sudan, the participants included the county commissioner of eastern Akobo, Tut Chot Rial, along with six other civil servants from the county and members of the Nuer Peace Committee. The peace agreement proposed by IGAD-Plus in South Sudan was ratified by all the parties involved in the conflict during the month of August after 20 months of violence, negotiations, unfulfilled agreements, heavy international pressure and threats of sanctions and arms embargoes. The IGAD-Plus is made up of IGAD, the AU, the UN, the USA, China, the EU, the United Kingdom and Norway.

Thus, both the government of South Sudan, presided over by Salva Kiir, the opposition rebel movement SPLM-IO led by Riek Machar, the group of former prisoners from the SPLM led by Pagan Amum and representatives of other political parties, as well as South Sudanese civil society, signed the peace agreement that laid the groundwork for national reconstruction. On the 24th of July, the IGAD-Plus submitted a draft peace agreement to the parties with a signing deadline of the 17th of August in order to achieve an end to the conflict which was ticking on after the negotiations held to date had not borne fruit. The submission of the proposal dovetailed with the state visit by the US president Barack Obama to the region. On the 27th of July, Obama met in the Ethiopian capital with African leaders, where one of the talking points revolved around the situation in South Sudan, with discussions of possible sanctions and penalties if the parties did not pledge to uphold the peace agreement by the deadline set by the IGAD-Plus. On the 17th of August, the agreement was ratified by Machar and Amum, but not by Salva Kiir, who asked for more time to assess it. The government of South Sudan was given a 15-day extension, during which the US government sent a draft to the UN Security Council so it could immediately implement sanctions and an arms embargo if the agreement was not signed by the government by the 1st of September. Finally, on the 26th of August, after holding several consultations, Salva Kiir ratified the agreement with the addition of a list of 16 different reservations (which were not accepted by IGAD-Plus), expressing his disagreement with it and the fact that he agreed to it under pressure and threats. The signing took place in the capital of South Sudan, Juba, with the presence of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn, the President of Uganda,

Uganda Yoweri, the First Vice President of Sudan, Bakri Hassam Salih, and the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta.

The peace agreement was comprised of measures in seven different chapters of action, which sought to ensure that peace and stability were maintained in the country. The following points represented the bases of the agreement:

Chapter Main Points

Chapter 1) Transitional Government of National Unity

- Creation of a 90-day Transition Government to govern for 30 months, comprised 53% by the SPLM, 33% by the SPLM-IO, 7% by the SPLM FD and 7% by other parties.
- Presidency for the SPLM (Kiir) and creation of two vice-presidencies, the most important one for the SPLM-IO (Machar).
- Elections to be held 60 days before the end of the mandate of the transition government.
- The states of Blue Nile and Unity will be governed by the SPLM-IO, while the state of Jonglei will be in the hands of the government. (Most of the current war has taken place in these three states.)

Chapter 2) Permanent ceasefire and security mechanisms

- Permanent ceasefire for all the parties involved 72 hours after signing, and compliance with the cessation of hostilities agreement in January 2014.
- 45 days for disarmament, demobilisation and repatriation of the non-state armed actors.
- 90 days for all the military forces to leave the capital of Juba.
- Unification of the armed forces (SPLM and SPLM-IO) into a single army within 18 months.

Chapter 3) Humanitarian assistance and reconstruction

- Ensure humanitarian assistance, protection and the rights of the civilian population.
- Guarantee the return of refugees and displaced persons.
- Establish a special fund for reconstructions.

Chapter 4) Economic and financial resources

- Measures based on transparency, accountability and anti-corruption.
- Institutional reforms: national bank, national budget, anti-corruption commission, etc.
- Resource management: oil, land, water, agriculture and livestock, etc.

Chapter 5) Transitional justice, accountability reconciliation and healing

- Creation of 3 transitional justice institutions:
 - 1) Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing created by the Transition Government;
 - 2) Hybrid Court for South Sudan, created by the AU to investigate and pursue violations of international law on both sides;
 - 3) Compensation and Reparation Authority, created by the government.

Chapter 6) Permanent Constitution

- The constituent process must be completed in 18 months.

Chapter 7) Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission

- Establishment of the Commission by IGAD-Plus with the participation of the 13 South Sudanese and 19 external actors present in the mediation process, which will be charged with verifying the transition process.

The separate list of the government of South Sudan's 16 different reservations to the peace plan, all of them rejected by IGAD-Plus, included important issues that questioned the power-sharing with the rebels. Some of its points also described the proposal as "humiliation", "reward for rebellion" and even "neo-colonialist", casting doubt on the value and possible success of the peace achieved. Some of the demands that the South Sudanese government requested be revised include:

- Division of power in the transition government by both sides.
- Creation of the figure of First Vice President in the hands of the rebels, which would once again place Machar in his previous position which gave rise to the war. This would be humiliating to the current vice president.
- Delivery of the rebels from the states of Unity and Upper Nile, the main oil-producing states, which to the government would send the message that rebellions are rewarded.
- Demilitarisation of the capital Juba, which Kiir believes is an issue of national sovereignty and national protection and could not be part of any agreement.
- Gradual (18-month) process of integration of the rebels into a single army. Kiir argued that “the transitional period must begin with the national army, not two armies”.
- Role of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) which, according to the text, would represent a loss of the sovereignty and independence that the country fought so hard to achieve.

While the annexe was not accepted by IGAD-Plus, which placed new obstacles along the road to peace-building, dissent with the agreement was voiced from both sides. From the side of the South Sudanese government, senior military officials from the National Army questioned Salva Kiir’s ratification of the agreement, revealing further fragmentation within the SPLA/M. From the opposition side, a group of senior commanders from the SPLM-IO, led by Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, deserted the group and announced the creation of another armed movement on the 11th of August. In a statement published in Khartoum, the group expressed its opposition to any peace agreement that included Salva Kiir and Riek Machar as the leaders of the National Transition and Unity Government, claiming that they were responsible for the war and posed the greatest obstacles to reaching peace because they had polarised and divided the Dinka and Nuer communities.

On the 2nd of October, President Salva Kiir announced a unilateral decree to expand the current ten states that comprise the country to a fragmented 28 federal states. Riek Machar, the leader of the opposition rebel group SPLM/A-IO, claimed that this measure was a serious violation of the peace agreement signed in August, and that it put its continuation at risk. The group known as the Troika (USA, United Kingdom and Norway), as well as the regional organisation IGAD, also condemned Kiir’s announcement, expressing their concern and warning the government that the announcement directly contradicted the peace agreement and that any substantial change had to be made within the National Unity Transition Government which had yet to be established. The IGAD requested that the government withdraw the decree. The political opposition as well as local experts also questioned its legality. In another unexpected move, the governing party announced the dissolution of all the leadership structures of the SPLM with the exception of the position of president which Kiir held, so that he could propose new candidates. A similar move had triggered the crisis in December 2013, which led the party to split and started the civil war. Machar also harshly questioned this measure, describing it as yet another provocation which threatened peace. On the other hand, Uganda started the withdrawal of its troops (UPDF) from the country. The IGAD established the former president of Botswana, Festus Mogae Gontebanye, as the president of the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee. The Ugandan Lieutenant General, Ivan Koreta, was also appointed as the authority of the Ceasefire Transitional Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism (CSAMM). On the other hand, the factions that had signed the peace agreement resumed negotiations to put the finishing touches on the measures agreed upon in the security chapter. The meeting was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from the 21st to 26th of October, and it was mediated by the IGAD-Plus team. By the end of the meeting, the parties had agreed to a permanent ceasefire and signed a transitional security agreement.

In November, there were some steps forward in the country, within the framework of the commitments included in the August peace agreement, while at the same time there continued to be accusations of hostilities and ceasefire violations by both sides, as well as political tensions that continued to endanger national stability. Among the most significant advances we can highlight the agreement reached between all parties on chapter II concerning security, where the government and the SPLA-IO rebels agreed the terms of the partial demilitarisation of the

capital, Juba, limiting the strength of the National Security Service to only 170 operatives, of whom 50 will be members of the SPLA-IO. Moreover, during the month it was reported that various rebel forces present in Western Equatoria state that had not previously signed the peace agreement, had integrated themselves into one of the signing parties, which meant they now formed part of the pacification process. On the one hand, the SPLA-IO announced two binding agreements with rebel groups, one with the Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNASAS) and one with the local militia known as the Arrow Boys, headed by Alfred Karaba Futiyo Onyang and made up of around ten thousand combatants. Both armed groups became part of the structure of the SPLA-IO, and committed themselves to the peace agreement, announcing the cessation of hostilities. For its part, the Government also announced the signing of a peace agreement with the militia organisation, the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM). The agreement was reached through the mediation of Bishop Edward Hiboro of the local diocese, and led to a ceasefire by the militia. However, and on a negative note, during the month there continued to be different episodes that kept tensions high. Both sides continued to accuse each other of violating the ceasefire. Furthermore, the unilateral announcement by the Government of the creation of a federal formula with 28 states, made in early October, created more tension for the peace agreement, and provoked strong opposition within the country. Riek Machar, leader of the SPLA-IO, insisted once again that the measure could derail the agreement unless it was revoked. In parallel, and as a reaction, a new armed group emerged, Tiger Faction New Forces (TFNF), in the Upper Nile State, which affirmed its intention not to lay down its arms until the administrative division formula that gave greater power to the Dinka ethnic group, of which President Salva Kiir is a member, was annulled. In mid-month the South Sudan parliament voted for the reform amendment but without reaching the two-thirds majority needed for its approval.

Most significant events of the year

- There were numerous mediation processes under way, leading to a lack of coordination of agreements and processes.
- China was involved in the peace process and held a meeting in Khartoum between Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and China.
- The various factions that make up the SPLM (government, SPLM-IO and the SPLM faction known as SPLM 7), signed a peace agreement in Tanzania on 21 January, with the facilitation of the Tanzanian and Kenyan presidents.
- The IGAD called for any future mediation initiative to be extended to the AU, China, the EU and the Troika (made up of the USA, the UK and Norway). The Kiir administration expressed its opposition to the participation of the Troika in negotiations.
- United Nations, the EU and China began to play a more active role, broadening the negotiating actors to what has been called "IGAD plus", where the role of mediators was no longer only regional, but also multilateral.
- The peace agreement proposed by IGAD-Plus in South Sudan was ratified by all parties to the conflict during the month of August.
- The Government of South Sudan expressed 16 different reservations on the peace agreement, all of them dismissed by IGAD-Plus.
- President Salva Kiir announced a unilateral decree expanding the current 10 states that make up the country and fragmenting it into 28 federal states.
- The parties agreed to a permanent ceasefire and signed a transitional security agreement, under which the Government and the rebel SPLA-IO agreed to the terms of the partial demilitarisation of the South Sudanese capital, Juba.
- Various rebel forces present in Western Equatoria state that had not previously signed the peace agreement integrated themselves into one of the signing parties, which meant they now formed part of the pacification process.
- A peace agreement was signed with the militia group, the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM).

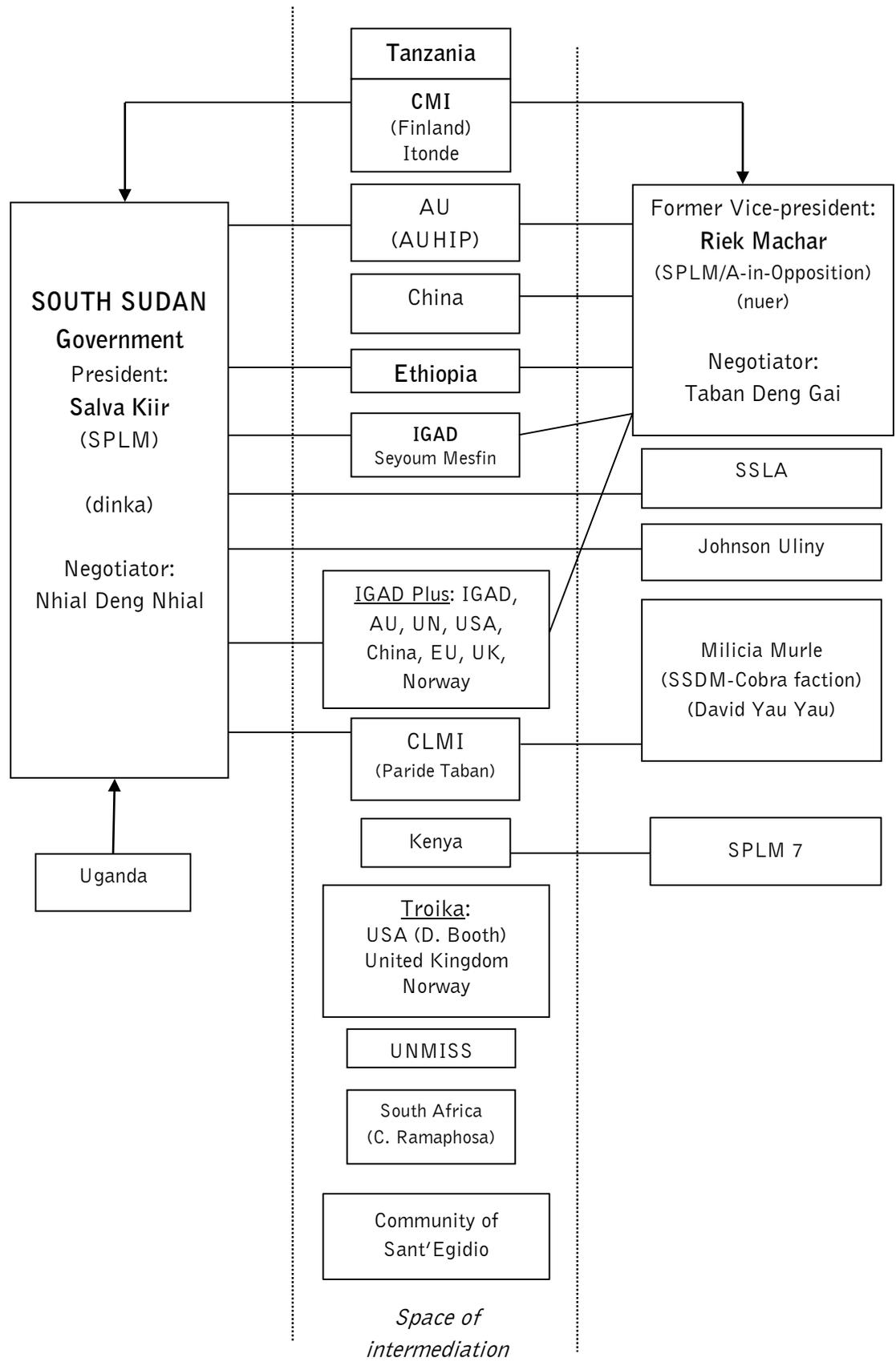
Causes of crises during the year

- The existence of uncoordinated agreements, actors and processes.
- Incompatible personal interests.
- Participation by a third State in defence of one of the sides.
- Rejection of the participation of the Troika in the negotiations.
- The AU announced the indefinite postponement of the publication of a report on human rights violations.
- Severe humanitarian crisis.
- Differences concerning proposals to maintain separate forces.
- Salva Kiir ratified the peace agreement while expressing his disagreement with it and stating that he was signing under pressure and threats.
- The Government of South Sudan expressed 16 reservations on the peace agreement, all of them dismissed by IGAD-Plus.
- A group of high ranking SPLM-IO commanders, headed by Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, deserted and announced the creation of another armed movement on 11 August.
- President Salva Kiir announced a unilateral decree expanding the current 10 states that make up the country, fragmenting it into 28 federal states.
- The ruling party announced the dissolution of all the SPLM leadership structures, except for the post of president held by Kiir, who would propose new candidates.
- Violations of the ceasefire.
- A new armed group appeared, the Tiger Faction New Forces (TFNF), in Upper Nile State.

Websites of interest

- African Union Peace and Security (www.peaceau.org/en)
- All Africa (allafrica.com/southsudan)
- BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/news)
- Crisis Management Initiative (www.cmi.fi)
- Enough Project (www.enoughproject.org)
- Gurtong (www.gurtong.net)
- IGAD (igad.int)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- News Now (<http://www.newsnow.co.uk/h/World+News/Africa/South+Sudan>)
- Relief Web (reliefweb.int/country/ssd)
- South Sudan Info (southsudaninfo.net)
- South Sudan News Agency (www.southsudannewsagency.com)
- South Sudan Today (southsudantoday.net)
- Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)

Main parties involved in the process



SUDAN-SOUTH SUDAN

Context of the conflict

The start of the conflict dates back to 1983, when the armed opposition group SPLA in the south of the country rebelled against the Sudanese Armed Forces, which were opposed to southern independence advocated by the SPLA. The conflict caused the death of more than a million people. In 2005, a peace agreement was signed that granted independence to South Sudan in 2011. However, both countries had to continue negotiating to clarify some points, especially the future of the city of Abyei, located in an oil-rich area. The challenge is to avoid escalation of violence for control of the region, and tensions between the Misseriya and Ngok-Dinka communities.

<p>Population: Sudan: 38,7 million South Sudan: 11,7 million</p> <p>Surface area: Sudan: 1,886,681 km²: South Sudan: 619,745 km²</p> <p>HDI: Sudan: 167 (of 188) South Sudan: 169 (of 188)</p> <p>GDP PPA: Sudan: 154,414 million USD South Sudan: 21,407 million USD</p> <p>Per capita income: Sudan: 1,710 USD; South Sudan: 970 USD</p> <p>Armed groups: the Armed Forces of both countries</p> <p>Facilitators: African Union (Thabo Mbeki), UN (Francis Mading Deng)</p>
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Background to the peace process

The first explorations were made in 1988 and the following year, the government and the SPLA signed a first Declaration of Principles by the IGAD, the mediating body, to hold a referendum on self-determination for the southern part of the country.

The beginning of an agreement was reached in July 2002 under the auspices of the IGAD that established autonomy for the south before holding a referendum in 2011. The first direct meeting also took place between the Sudanese President and the leader of the SPLA. Various rounds of negotiations were held in Kenya from 2002 to 2004, in which progress was made on a wide array of issues. These rounds allowed the parties to reach a final peace agreement on 5 January 2005, by which the north and south would keep their Armed Forces separate, a joint force would be formed for the most controversial areas, a six-year autonomy period would be established, a referendum on self-determination would be held in 2011, oil profits would be shared fairly and a national unity government would be formed with a member of the SPLA as Vice President. In addition, it was agreed to not apply Islamic law in the south of the country and each side was allowed to use their own flag. In 2011, a referendum was held and South Sudan became an independent country. The process took 13 years in total and seven years until the peace agreement was signed.

The end of the war with the north and subsequent attainment of independence by South Sudan in 2011 was not enough to bring stability to the southern region. Disputes over territorial control, livestock and political power increased across many communities in South Sudan, raising the number, seriousness and intensity of the clashes among them. The situation worsened still after the general elections in April 2010, when various military figures that had run as candidates or supported political opponents of the ruling party, the SPLM, were not victorious. These military figures refused to recognise the results of the elections and decided to take up arms to back their claim to the right to govern, denounced the dominance of the Dinka and the under-representation of other ethnic groups in the government and described the government of South Sudan as corrupt. Juba's offers of amnesty did not put an end to the insurgency, which has been accused of receiving Sudanese funding and logistical support.

In June 2011 the UN Security Council authorized the creation of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to observe and verify the withdrawal of military forces by both countries from the area of Abyei, to protect civilians from physical violence and to establish a Joint Border

Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. During the 2011, two important armed fronts formed in the Greater Upper Nile region: the South Sudan Liberation Army, under the command of Peter Gadet, in Unity state, and the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army, led by General George Athor, in Jonglei state. Both groups share the aim of overthrowing the government of South Sudan, led by President Salva Kiir, whom they brand as corrupt and accuse of poor governance, while also accusing the main party, the SPLM, of monopolising political power within institutions and of marginalising the rest of the non-Dinka parties and communities (mostly in the SPLM). They also say that the South Sudanese Army (SPLA) and police are poorly equipped and incapable of ensuring the population's security, despite the fact that they receive large amounts of resources from the government.

The attacks of the SSLA and the SSDM/A, together with the militias led by Gabriel Tang-Ginye (Upper Nile), Gatluak Gai (Unity) and David Yau Yau (Jonglei), caused thousands of fatalities over the course of the year in the Upper Nile region. One of the most serious attacks in terms of the number of victims was perpetrated by the SSDM/A in Fangak county (Jonglei), where 300 people were killed in February and March, according to government sources. The government's response to the insurgency took two forms: a renewal of the offer of amnesty for its leaders, which included having its troops rejoin the Army, and direct combat carried out by the Armed Forces. The military operations aggravated the situation on many occasions when soldiers were accused of attacking, assaulting and killing civilians they had accused of colluding with insurgents. The Army's burning of at least 7,000 homes in Mayom county (Unity state) in May was a clear example of these kinds of actions.

In September and October, the SSLA warned NGOs and UN agencies to abandon the states of Unity, Upper Nile and Warrap, as it aimed to launch powerful attacks there. George Athor (SSDM/A) took advantage of the amnesty in January, but continued fighting and expanded his attacks in later months. Athor died in December in a military ambush on the Sudanese border. Similarly, military rebel Gatluak Gai agreed to an amnesty with the government in July, but was killed in mysterious circumstances later in the month in Koch county (Unity). David Yau Yau and Peter Gadet availed of the amnesty in June and August, respectively, but Gadet's group (SSLA) refused to give up the armed struggle. Furthermore, the rebel Gabriel Tang-Ginye remained under arrest in Juba since April. Repeatedly throughout the year, the South Sudanese government accused Khartoum of providing assistance and arms to the military rebels. In this regard, various reports published during the year by Small Arms Survey, which identified and evaluated the material seized from Athor and Gadet's forces by the Army, corroborated suspicions that both groups may have been receiving outside support.

During the third quarter of 2012, various meetings and rounds of negotiation took place between Sudan and South Sudan, and it was not until 27 September that a partial agreement on security and economic relations was reached under the auspices of the AU's High-Level Implementation Panel. In addition to the AU's official mediator, Thabo Mbeki, the United States and China had considerable influence in the peace talks. The agreement led to the resumption of oil exports and an agreement to demilitarise the shared border and thereby avoid a military conflagration of major consequence. However, many key points remained unresolved, including the status of the disputed Abyei region and several border areas disputed by both countries.

In October, the AU's Peace and Security Council unanimously approved to prepare mediation efforts aimed at resolving the dispute over Abyei, which pits Sudan against South Sudan. The AU's proposal called to hold a referendum in October 2013 in the disputed region, and only members of the Misseriya community residing in Abyei would be eligible to vote. The United States, France, the United Kingdom and the EU expressed their support for the referendum proposal, while Russia said that Abyei should be partitioned, which is also Khartoum's position.

In March 2013 the Governments of both countries agreed to implement the September 2012 accord that established a 10-kilometers demilitarized zone on each side of the border and that would allow South Sudan to export its oil through Sudanese pipelines once again. The central

banks of the two countries agreed on a methodology to facilitate the collection of oil revenues by Khartoum. In late March the U.S.-based Carter Center, in collaboration with the Sudanese Future Studies Center and the Ebony Center for Strategic Studies in South Sudan, agreed to implement a one-year project aimed at creating a discussion forum for practical ideas to consolidate peace.

In South Sudan at the end of April the president offered amnesty to the leaders of six rebel groups. Initially it was only accepted by the SSLA armed group. According to local sources the 3,000 member group crossed the border from Sudan with a hundred trucks and delivered weapons to the authorities in South Sudan. In June the leader of another militia fighting in Upper Nile State, Johnson Uliny, also accepted the amnesty offer.

In April the two countries reached an agreement. The main points on the agenda were to open ten corridors on the border, establish a Joint Security Committee, and deal with rebel demands. Oil production was resumed and the oil reached Sudan on April 7, following the agreement reached in March. However, Sudan's decision to close the pipeline again increased the tension between the two sides. In June the two countries agreed to AU mediation to resolve disputes.

The presidents of both countries met in Khartoum in early September to begin discussions on the pipeline crisis. As a result, the president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, announced on September 4 that his Government would not prevent South Sudan from transporting oil through its facilities. In early July the Government of South Sudan announced that peace talks were beginning with the leader of the rebels, David Yau Yau. Previously the country's president, Salva Kiir, had asked the elders of the Murle community to persuade Yau Yau to respond to the amnesty proposal.

In October the presidents of Sudan and South Sudan, Omar al-Bashir and Salva Kiir, respectively, held a meeting in Juba to discuss the status of the Abyei region. The two presidents reached an agreement on the terms and conditions for its administration. Decisions were taken on issues such as the Abyei Council and Police organs in addition to payment to the Abyei Administration of 2% of the oil revenues, including payments due. The definitive status of the region has been disputed since 2005. Currently it is under UN administration, which has deployed 4,000 peacekeepers in the area. Khartoum had opposed a referendum because the ethnic Misseriya nomads, Sudanese citizens and those in favour of the region joining Sudan could not vote. In late October thousands of people returned to the region to vote in an unofficial referendum and the voters, mostly Dinka, were in favour of becoming part of South Sudan. The two countries involved in the dispute and the AU considered the referendum illegal. During preparations for the referendum the UN Security Council issued a statement calling on the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to refrain from any illegal actions that could increase the tension between the two countries. For its part, the AU announced it would send a mission to Abyei on November 5 and 6 to mediate in the negotiations on the region's status, reduce tensions in the area and prevent any unilateral actions.

In 2014, no new progress had been made in the implementation of the Agreement signed on June 20, 2011 between Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the dispute over Abyei, according to a statement by the UN Secretary General in February. No progress was made in the establishment of joint provisional institutions, namely the Administration, the Council and the Police of the Abyei region. Due to the total absence of local governance and public order, UNISFA (the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei) continued to fulfil its mandate, with a complete absence of local governance and public order. In its report at the end of September, the Secretary General also expressed concern over the proliferation of small arms among the local population. At the end of the year UNISFA had 4,045 staff members, mostly from Ethiopia, and an annual budget of \$318 million. Also in September, the National Elections Commission in Sudan announced that the Abyei region would be included in the 2015 elections, which prompted a protest by the authorities in South Sudan. In October the special envoy of the UN Secretary General, Francis Mading Deng, proposed a new agreement for Abyei that would declare it to be a neutral region. He stated that each of the affected countries needed to resolve their internal conflicts and provide guarantees to

the Misseriya community. At the beginning of November the presidents of the two countries met in Khartoum to try to resolve the border disputes.

The peace process in 2015

The peace agreement signed in South Sudan in August outlined the tensions that still existed between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, in which each state accused the other of supporting and maintaining their domestic rebellions, maintaining war dynamics by proxy. In the peace agreement (in which the signature of the government of South Sudan was present as a guarantor and IGAD member), chapter 2 of the text on permanent ceasefire and security mechanisms included some points that were directly related to this dynamic. On the one hand, the call for a ceasefire extended to all the parties involved in the conflict, including the allies of each side (forces and militias). In the case of the government of Salva Kiir, this referred indirectly to groups like the Uganda armed forces and the rebel armed movements which were fighting in the neighbouring Sudan, while in the case of the South Sudanese rebel forces of SPLA-IO, it alluded to its alliance with al-Bashir's government. Likewise, article 1.6, chapter II of the text was completely explicit on the Sudanese rebel forces' participation in the war in the south, as it literally stated: "The parties in conflict agree that all the non-state security actors, including but not limited to the Revolutionary Forces of Sudan (SPLM-N, JEM, SLA-Minawi, SLA-Abdulwahid) should be disarmed, demobilised and repatriated (...)." This point was contested by the government of South Sudan in the document attached to the peace agreement, which claimed that this statement incriminated its government and that the Sudanese rebel armed groups were not present in the territory of South Sudan.

Most significant events of the year

- The tensions that continued to exist between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan were made clear in the peace agreement signed in South Sudan in August. The agreement called for a cease-fire.

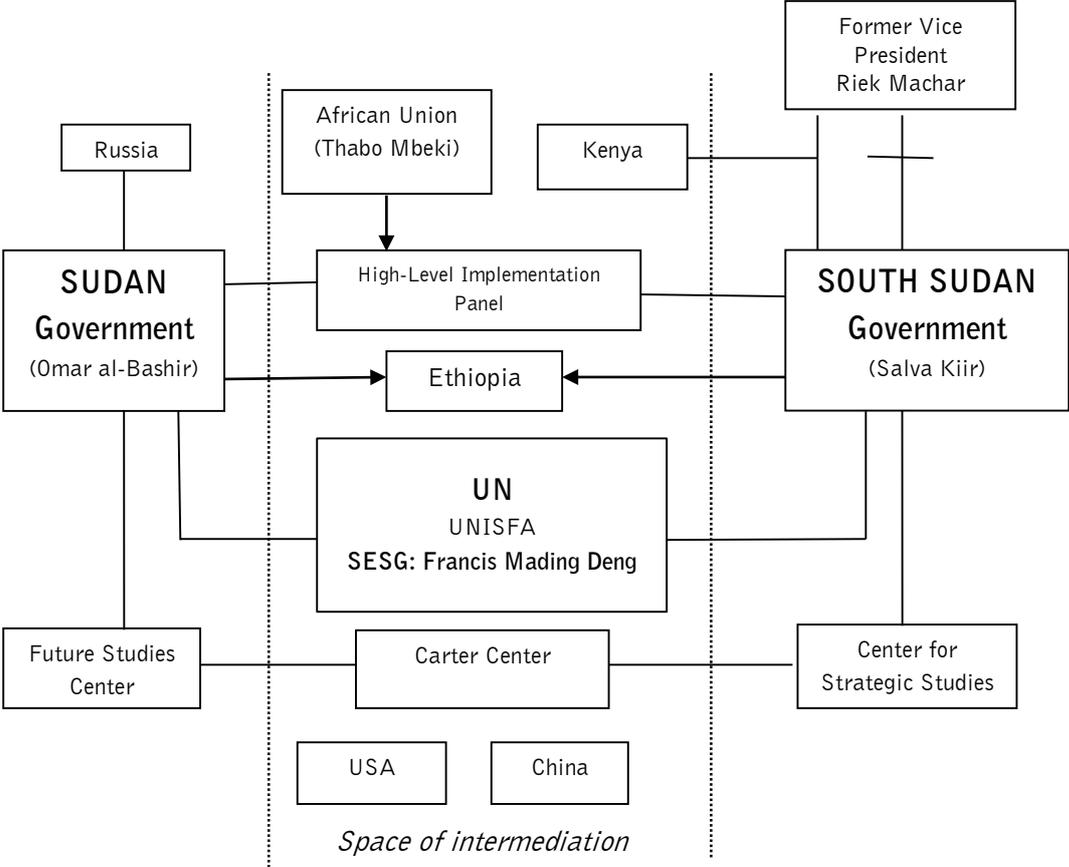
Causes of crises during the year

- Each state continued to accuse the other of supporting and maintaining internal rebellions in their countries.

Websites of interest

- African Union Peace and Security (www.peaceau.org/en)
- All Africa (allafrica.com/southsudan)
- BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/news)
- Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
- UNISFA (www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unisfa)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)

Main parties involved in the process



C) Great Lakes and Central Africa

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Context of the conflict

The Central African Republic (CAR) won independence from France in 1960. For the first six years of its independence it was governed by the dictator D. Dacko. Dacko was later overthrown by his cousin J. B. Bokassa, who set up an eccentric military dictatorship. Later France backed a coup d'état that reinstated Dacko, until he was once again overthrown in 1981, this time by Ange Félix Patassé, who took over ownership of the companies exploiting the country's natural resources. The country suffered from several military mutinies in the 1990s because it failed to pay the soldiers' salaries, and there was a coup in 2003, when the current president François Bozizé came to power. Despite the fact that the country is rich in diamonds, gold, uranium, wood and coffee, the CAR has been suffering from political instability, ineffective governance, insecurity, banditry and deterioration in its economic situation for twenty years, while half of its population remains illiterate. With the economic recession in Europe and the United States, the diamond industry entered into a deep-seated crisis and most companies closed. In the words of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to this country, the roots of the conflicts in the CAR lie in the collapse of its socioeconomic structures and the absence of political dialogue. Since 2003, the conflict between the government and several armed groups has been closely linked to the situation in Darfur (Sudan), which shares a border with the CAR, since the armed groups from both countries take refuge in refugee camps on both sides of the border, generating serious tensions between the two countries. The majority of the conflict is thus centred in the northern region of Vakaga, whose capital Birao has been controlled by the rebel groups on several occasions. 2005 saw the creation of the armed opposition groups the **Popular Army for the Reconstruction of the Republic and Democracy (APRD)**, and the **Union des Forces du Renouveau (UFR)**, headed by F. Njadder-Bedaya. Another armed group, the **UFDR (Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement)**, led by Michel Djotodia, is a coalition between three groups (GAPLC, MLCJ and FDC), and the **Front Démocratique pour le Peuple Africaines (FDPC)**, led by Abdoulaye Miskine, who was close to former president Patassé. New President Michel Djotodia was Muslim, though only 15% of the population follows Islam. In January 2014, he had to flee the country.

<p>Population: 4,7 million inhabitants Area: 623,000 km² HID: 187 (of 188) GDP PPA: 2,866 million USD Income per inhabitant: 320 USD Armed actors: FDPC, APRD, UFDR, UFR, Séléka, anti Balaka militias Facilitators: Gabon (Denis Sassou Nguesso), International Contact Group, Kenya, Community of Sant'Egidio, Humanitarian Dialogue, Chad, Congo.</p>
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Background to the peace process

After the country experienced three mutinies in its armed forces in 1996, in January 1997 the Bangui Agreements were signed between the forces loyal to then-president Patassé and the rebel groups. These agreements called for an inter-African force, called MISAB, whose 800 soldiers would be in charge of demobilising the combatants and ensuring compliance with the agreements. In 1998, after intervention by French troops, the United Nations sent a peacekeeping mission (MINURCA) to protect the capital of the country and replace MISAB. Since 2007, the government has been signing peace agreements with the different armed groups. In February 2007, the government and the FDPC led by Abdoulaye Miskine signed a peace agreement in Syrte (Libya) under the mediation of Muammar al-Gaddafi. In April, an agreement was reached with Damane Zakaria's UFDR, with a joint call for a cessation of hostilities and the offer of amnesty for the members of the group. In May 2008, the government signed an agreement with

the APDR, run by Jean-Jacques Demafouth, who was in exile in France, in Libreville with the mediation of the President of Gabon, Omar Bongo. Later, in December 2008, the government and several armed opposition groups reached an Inclusive Political Agreement (IPA) with the mediation of the archbishop of Bangui, Paulin Pomodimo, forming a joint government and calling free elections in 2010, which were postponed until 2011. The dialogue was co-facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva. Two former presidents also participated in it, André Koulingba and Ange-Félix Patassé, as well as Jean Jacques Demafouth's APRD, Damane Zakaria's UFDR, Florent N'Djadder's UFR and Abakar Sabone's MLCJ (a faction of the UFDR). Months later, in July 2009, Abdoulaye Miskine's FDPC joined (Miskine was in exile in Libya) with mediation by Libya, and in October 2009 Hassan Ousman's MNSP (a faction of the MLCJ) also adhered to the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD). The only rebel group that remained on the margins of the peace process was Charles Massi's Convention des Patriotes por la Justice et la Paix (CPJP). In July 2011, the government and a dissident faction of this armed group, which is made up of around 500 combatants, signed a peace agreement in the town of Nzako in the east, after they had reached a ceasefire agreement in June.

Notably, a peace agreement was signed with the armed group CPJP and the government on 25 August 2012. The CPJP was the last armed Central African group active in the country, as the four main armed groups signed various peace agreements in 2008. However, an alliance of different armed groups called **Séléka** started a rebellion on 10 December 2012, took control of various parts of the country and threatened to overthrow President François Bozizé if he did not implement the peace agreement made in 2007. This alliance, a union of different factions and breakaways from the armed groups CPJP, UFDR and CPSK active in the northern part of the country, and which had reached various peace agreements with the government in recent years, demanded payment of the stipends resulting from the peace agreement and the release of political prisoners. However, it later increased its demands and at the end of the year it said that Bozizé had to step down before any negotiations could begin.

The different parties in the conflict did not comply with the peace agreement reached in early January 2013 in the Central African Republic and the fighting started again. The rebellion in December 2012 that was launched by the Séléka rebel coalition succeeded in forcing the Government led by François Bozizé, who was cornered by the insurgents, to accept peace talks. Moreover, the international community put pressure on the Government to accept peace talks in Libreville, Gabon, on January 10. Both sides agreed to pursue these contacts in Gabon with the aim of reaching an agreement. ECCAS facilitated peace talks that led to the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the parties, with Bozizé staying in power until the end of his mandate in 2016. The agreement also included the creation of a national unity government responsible for organizing early elections within one year after the National Assembly was dissolved. This Government should be inclusive, with the participation of the political opposition and a prime minister that would also be from the opposition. The ECCAS (MICOPAX) peacekeeping mission should be reconfigured and its goal should be to implement the agreements. In addition, foreign forces should withdraw from the country. However, violence by some groups in Séléka opposed to the agreement continued and, in February the rebels accused Bozizé of not complying with the agreements and threatened to return to arms. In late March the group made good on its threat and launched an offensive against the capital, Bangui. The Central African president was forced to flee with his family and sought refuge in the DR Congo. In August the leader of the rebellion, Michel Djotodia, became the country's new president, and Nicolas Tiangaye was reconfirmed as prime minister. Tiangaye appointed a new government with 34 ministers from different political tendencies, as established in the Libreville Agreement: nine from the rebellion, eight from the former opposition, a former collaborator of Bozizé and the rest from the civil society.

In late 2013 the situation deteriorated when fighting broke out between the Christian community's **anti-balaka militia**, which had traditionally held political power, and the Muslim community, which caused hundreds of deaths and triggered a serious humanitarian crisis. In

response France sent a detachment of 1,200 troops to restore order and force the Séléka to withdraw. A resolution by the UN Security Council in early December authorized intervention to end human rights abuses in the country and restore order. France complained that the EU was providing very little military support.

In January 2014, President Djotodia was forced to leave the country after Séléka was defeated. After Djotodia's departure the mayor of the capital, Catherine Samba Panza, was named interim president of the country. The UN Security Council approved the creation of an EU mission (EUFOR RCA), that mid-year included 700 soldiers and gendarmes –from France, Spain, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland and Romania. This mission would be a first step to transforming MISCA into a UN mission and the EU would provide about 500 soldiers to support the 5,000 African and 1,500 French soldiers already on the ground. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) also announced its support for the deployment of a UN mission. In April the Security Council decided to establish the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), consisting of 10,000 troops, which would replace BINUCA.

In July a forum for reconciliation and political dialogue was held in Brazzaville (Congo), facilitated by the congolese president Denis Sassou-Nguesso, with the participation of different armed groups and thirty countries and international organizations that make up the International Contact Group on the CAR. The groups reached a ceasefire agreement that was signed by both Mohamed Moussa Dhaffne, the Séléka representative, and Patrice Edouard Ngaissona, national coordinator of the anti-balaka militias. It was also signed by the archbishop of Bangui, Dieudonné Nzapalainga, and the Imam Layama Kobine, the president of the country's Islamic community. However, the ceasefire agreement was not accompanied by a disarmament plan. Several analysts highlighted the difficulty of implementing the ceasefire due to strong internal divisions within Séléka and the fact that the anti-balaka militias were a movement with no centralized organization and coordination. Subsequently, the fighting resumed and the agreement became worthless.

At the end of December the official facilitator of the peace process, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, in an attempt to revive the process asked Uhuru Kenyatta, his Kenyan counterpart, to hold contacts between the leaders of the Central African armed groups in Kenya. Although the Congolese president sent two emissaries to the Central African president to report on the content of the talks, which were intended to bring the peace process closer to the two former Central African presidents and current insurgent leaders, François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, his Central African counterpart believed that the initiative was a plot because the results of the talks included a ceasefire and a review of the transition process, which called into questioned Catherine Samba-Panza's Government.

The peace process in 2015

On the 28th of January, a ceasefire agreement, a cessation of hostilities, an agreement over disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and a general amnesty were signed in Nairobi between the former Séléka and the anti-Balaka, with the mediation of Kenya. Several diplomats pointed out that this was merely a catalogue of claims set forth by the supporters of the two former presidents, Michel Djotodia (on behalf of Séléka, whose delegation was led by Nourredine Adam) and François Bozizé (on behalf of the anti-Balaka), which could not be validated, as stressed by the official vice mediator Soumeilou Boubei Maïga, the former Minister of Defence of Mali. In the agreement, they also called for a change of government and a new transition. What is more, they noted that they wanted all the forces present in the country to be under UN supervision, in reference to the French operation, and that the former presidents could run in the forthcoming elections. In February, both former presidents of the Central African Republic, Michel Djotodia and François Bozizé, agreed to sign a joint declaration in which they asserted that they were joining the dialogue process which had gotten underway in Congo-

Brazzaville in July 2014 between the different political and military forces of the CAR and the transitional government led by President Catherine Samba-Panza. Their acceptance of the Brazzaville agreement was tantamount to implicit recognition of the authorities who were promoting it. What is more, both expressed their willingness to participate in the preparations for an inclusive political forum which was slated to be held in Bangui and in the elections of August of that year, which would put an end to the transition.

A dozen political leaders, including four former prime ministers of the country and future candidates in the presidential elections, met in Rome on the 27th of February thanks to an invitation from the Community of Sant'Egidio. This meeting was apparently part of the official initiative called the Bangui Reconciliation Forum, and the initiative of this forum was led by the transitional government. In the Rome Appeal, its signatories pledged to not use force to attain the presidency of the country, to participate in the elections scheduled for July and August, to ensure that these elections were free and transparent, and to respect the results. The Rome gathering dovetailed with an official visit to Italy by the official mediator in the CAR conflict, the Congolese president Denis Sassou-Nguesso, which was considered both a coincidence and a new attempt by the Congolese president to pass on this mediation, since some analysts and the press noted that Nguesso was fatigued with the issue of the Central African Republic, especially since the appointment of Mahamat Kamoun as the new Prime Minister of the country, the renewed influence of the president of Chad in the conflict and the failure of the Nairobi meeting. The Nairobi process, which had been launched in December and was facilitated by Kenya and the Congolese president, consisted of promoting peace negotiations between the representatives of the former Central African presidents Michel Djotodia (representing the former Séléka coalition) and François Bozizé (anti-Balaka militias).

There was headway in the peace process during the second quarter. On the 5th of April, an agreement was reached between the former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia to promote reconciliation in the country. Subsequently, the National Reconciliation Forum was successfully held between the 4th and 11th of May in Bangui; it gathered around 700 representatives and leaders of different actors and groups from Central African civil society, who reached a historical peace agreement known as the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction. Those attending included the transition government, the different political parties, the most important armed groups in the country (members of the former Séléka and the different anti-Balaka militias), the management organisation, representatives of civil society, community leaders and religious groups, all of whom strove to define what the future of the country should be like. Different meetings and thematic committees were held on the most important items on the country's peace-building agenda, including the areas of peace and security, justice and reconciliation, economic and social development and governability. The most important results and recommendations adopted during the forum were: 1) the signing of a new cessation of hostilities and disarmament agreement among 10 factions of Séléka and the anti-Balaka militias, which stipulated the integration of their members into the security forces for the members who had not committed war crimes, or their being the beneficiaries of community development projects; 2) the release of minor soldiers, as between 6,000 and 10,000 minors are estimated to be part of the rebel groups, and free access to humanitarian personnel, support programmes for refugees and displaced persons; 3) an electoral calendar, the extension of the current mandate of Catherine Samba-Panza and the postponement of elections, which came as no surprise given the requirements yet to be fulfilled, and the reform of the constitution (and the subsequent referendum) and the national code, which allowed the Muslim population to become citizens of the country; 4) the establishment of local and national justice and reconciliation commissions; and 5) an agenda of priorities for the country's economic and social development, the revitalisation of the agriculture sector (distribution of agricultural goods), the livestock sector (to allow for a return of the cattle herds to the country) and the mining sector (negotiating the lifting of sanctions against mining and trading in diamonds through the Kimberley Process). The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has been providing technical support and advisement to the national reconciliation process since 2014. Five national reconciliation debates have been held since 1980, although they have not avoided the resumption

of instability, the last two times in 2003 and 2008. Despite the success of the meeting and the results, the challenges and difficulties are nonetheless immense, and this was visible at the closure of the forum when different representatives of Séléka and the anti-Balaka militias expressed their rejection of some of the recommendations and abandoned the forum during the closing ceremony, while between 200 and 300 supporters of both rebel groups held protests and shot guns around the forum to express their frustration at the fact that many of their companions were under house arrest and facing trials for crimes committed during the conflict. The financing of the most important projects (minors and DDR) and the leaders' ability to control their fighters were the main challenges cited. However, the anti-Balaka militias and Séléka released 300 minors as part of the commitment reached in the Bangui Forum.

During the third quarter, the peace process was stalled and little headway was made in implementing the agreement reached at the National Reconciliation Forum held in Bangui in May. In late July, the International Contact Group for the CAR held a meeting in Addis Ababa. Its conclusions included the following: the need to affirm the refugees' right to vote in the elections, the importance of respecting the non-eligibility clause in the Transition Charter, and the imperative need to respect the election calendar. The conclusions also stressed the need to forge a national consensus on the reform of the security sector and its ties to the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation process. To this end, the National Transition Council reconsidered its decision announced on the 30th of June to refuse to allow the refugee population (most of whom are Muslims) to vote in the presidential elections scheduled initially for October. On the 20th of August, the National Transition Council announced that it would guarantee their right to vote by order from the Constitutional Court in view of the concern voiced among the international community. The displaced population also faced major challenges when registering. On the 30th of August, the National Transition Council approved a new constitution that was to be subjected to a referendum on the 5th of October, but in mid-September the Council also decided to postpone the referendum, leading to the assumption that it would be held in 2016. The draft constitution included a two-term limit for the president of the country. The political dialogue remained stalemated, and in September a group associated with the former Séléka coalition, which was poised to participate in the meeting in the capital with other actors in the CAR peace process, was attacked, which froze the initiative and unleashed an escalation in the violence.

On 5 September, around 35 political coalitions, parties and independent politicians signed a joint statement calling for a new transition period intended to last several years, which would include the replacement of the Head of State, the Prime Minister and his cabinet and the National Transitional Council. On 13 November, the members of this so-called third transition group, as well as civil society and the anti-balaka and former Séléka factions, signed an agreement calling for the establishment of a new transition period of 18 months and for elections to take place during this new transition period. The UN continued to provide good offices to support the conclusion of the political transition, including mediation between all political actors and the provision of strategic advice on ways of revising the electoral calendar and ensuring the continuity of government until the elected leaders occupy their posts. As a follow-up to the Bangui Forum, the UNDP, in collaboration with MINUSCA and other United Nations and international partners, supported the efforts of the Transitional Authority to implement its national reconciliation strategy as outlined in the Republican Pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction. These efforts included the establishment of local peace and reconciliation committees at the prefectural level, drawing on existing initiatives, where possible, and in support of the 13 peace committees already established in different parts of the country. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continued to assist the ad hoc Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, MINUSCA, UNDP and bilateral partners, on the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, including the allocation of premises, the selection of national magistrates and the profiles of international magistrates and staff.

Also in November, the National Election Authority (NEA) proposed a new electoral calendar, setting the date of 13 December for the celebration of the constitutional referendum to be

followed by the first round of presidential and legislative elections on 27 December. The second round was scheduled for 31 January 2016. Moreover, the Summit of Heads of State of ECCAS, held in Libreville (Gabon), agreed to extend the transition period in the country from 31 December to 31 March 2016, according to the declaration of the ECCAS Secretary General, Ahmad Allam-Mi. CEEAC leaders decided to provide financial support to cover the costs of the upcoming elections. The visit to the country by Pope Francis at the end of his trip to Africa, which took him to Kenya and Uganda, prompted the former Séléka coalition to make an appeal to citizens asking them to show their hospitality and prove that the problems that the country was going through did not have a religious origin. The document, signed by the general political coordinator of the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), Moustapha Saboune, stressed the need to promote dialogue between different social and political actors so as to consolidate the country's governability. The UN committed itself to an increase the number of blue helmeted peacekeepers in the country by 1,140, given the possibility of new violent situations within the electoral period, as well as to the deployment of drones in Bangui. Senegal, Egypt and Mauritania pledged to send additional military and police contingents to reinforce the 12,000 members of the MINUSCA. On 30 December, three days later than planned due to logistical issues, legislative and presidential elections were held in a peaceful climate. The MINUSCA pointed to the high turnout and the absence of incidents as signs of the success of the elections. Previously, on 13 December, the constitutional referendum was held, and the Constitution was ratified with a support of over 90%, according to the UN, a fact that was celebrated by the international community, amidst significant logistical and technical deficits. In parallel, the rebel Nourreddine Adam, leader of a faction of the former Séléka rebel coalition, proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Logone, in the north, but later recanted, thanks to the mediation or pressure of Chad and the OCI.

Most significant events of the year

- Former Séléka and anti-Balaka forces signed, in Nairobi and through the mediation of Kenya, an agreement for a ceasefire; a cessation of hostilities; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); and a general amnesty.
- The two Central African ex presidents, Michel Djotodia and François Bozizé agreed to sign a joint statement in which they assured that they would join the dialogue process initiated in July 2014.
- Renewed influence of the president of Chad in the dispute.
- On 5 April agreement was reached between the former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia to promote reconciliation in the country. Subsequently, the Forum for National Reconciliation was held successfully between 4 and 11 May in Bangui.
- Several representatives of Séléka and of the anti-balaka expressed their rejection of some recommendations and left the Forum during the closing ceremony.
- The National Transitional Council reconsidered its decision announced on 30 June to reject the vote of the (mostly Muslim) refugee population in the presidential elections.
- The UN committed itself to increase the number of its peacekeepers in the country by 1,140.
- Legislative and presidential elections were held in a peaceful climate. The MINUSCA pointed to the high turnout and the absence of incidents as signs of the success of the election day. Previously, on 13 December, the constitutional referendum was held, and the Constitution was ratified with a support of over 90%,

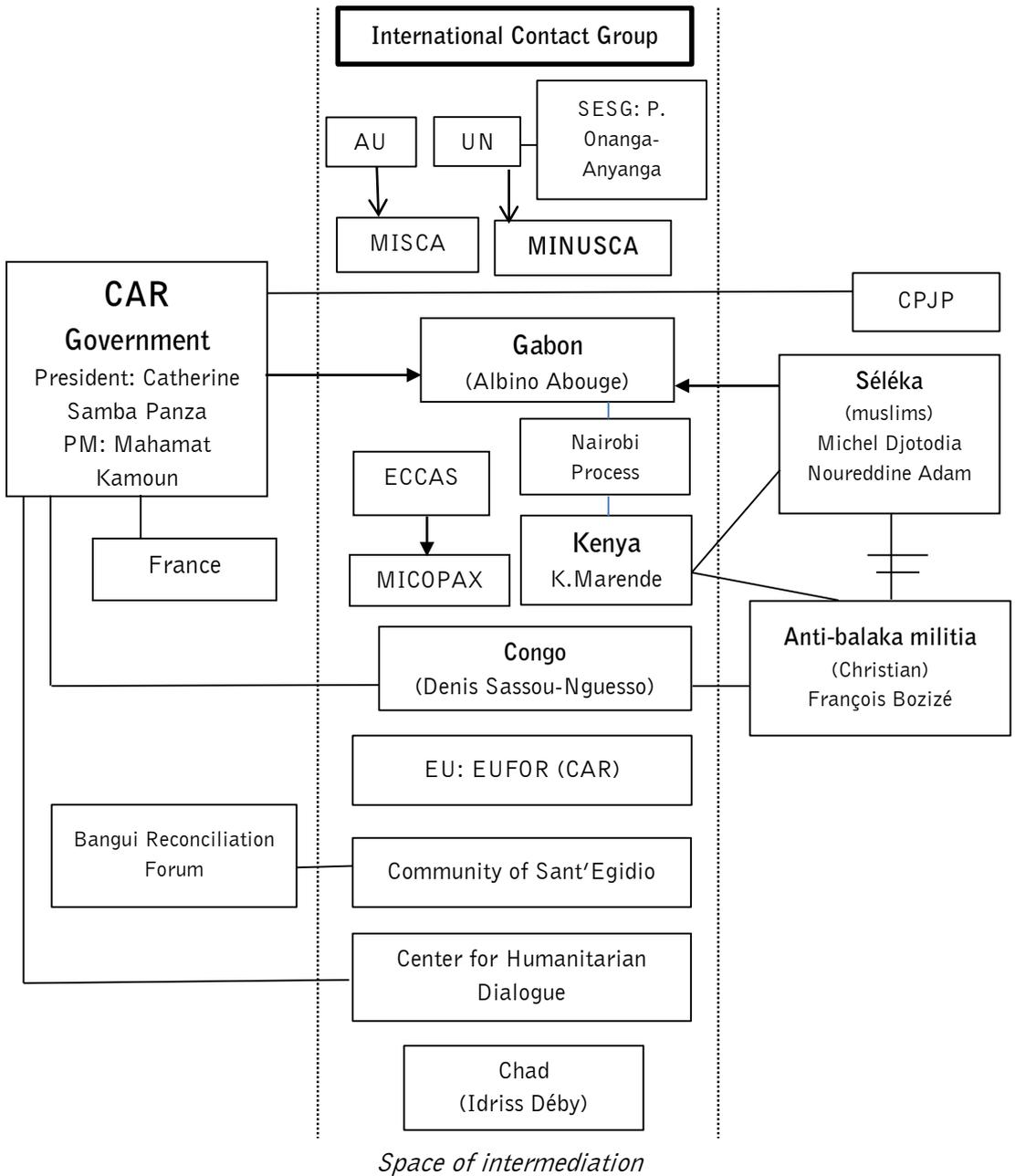
Causes of crises during the year

- Several representatives of Séléka and of the anti-balaka expressed their rejection of some recommendations of the Forum and left it during the closing ceremony.
- Frustration at the fact that many actors were under house arrest or facing trials for crimes committed during the conflict.
- The approval of the new Constitution was postponed.
- There was an attack on a group linked to the former Séléka coalition that was preparing to attend a meeting in the capital with other actors in the CAR peace process.

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Main parties involved in the process



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (East)

Context of the conflict

During the 20th century, the DR Congo was immersed in a situation of despotism, with an absence and disintegration of the state. In addition, the country's natural resources were plundered. This situation began during the Belgian colonial period, and except for a brief interval after independence in 1960, it continued for over 30 years under the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko. This dictatorship was characterised by the repression of political dissidence, serious human rights violations and a

<p>Population DRC: 69,4 million inhabitants Area: DRC (2,345,000 km²), Kivus (124,600 km²), Ituri district (65,600 km²) GDP PPA: 48,813 million USD Per capita income: 380 USD HDI: 176 (out of 188) Armed actors: FDLR Facilitators: Uganda, Community of Sant' Egidio</p>

situation where the Mobutu elite amassed wealth by plundering the natural resources for their own benefit. The 1994 Rwanda genocide caused over half a million deaths. Most of the victims were from the Tutsi minority, only 15% of the population, who died at the hands of the Hutu militias. In response to the massacre, the RPF Tutsi military forces, trained in Uganda, attacked and gained control of the country, forcing over 1.5 million Rwandan Hutus to leave the country and settle in DR Congo, which was under the control of the Interahamwe militias. In 2000 they joined together under the acronym **FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)**.

In 1996 the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL), led by Laurent Desiré Kabila and supported by Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, began an uprising against Mobutu which culminated in Mobutu ceding power in 1997. In 1998 Kabila lost the support of his old allies, neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, who invaded the DR Congo under the excuse that they were guaranteeing the security of their borders. These countries supported different armed groups (Rwanda, the DRC and Uganda, the MRC) fighting against Kabila's government. The government was supported by different countries in the region (Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Chad) in a war that has caused around three and a half million deaths through combat, hunger or illness. Plundering the natural resources (gold, diamonds, wood and coltan) has become the driving force behind both the war and the prolonged presence of foreign armed forces in the country. Several neighbouring countries and western multinationals have profited from this enterprise, according to the United Nations. This chapter only discusses the processes related to the Rwandan FDLR group installed in DR Congo since the 1994 genocide.

Background to the peace process

The first stage in the RD Congo peace process was the Lusaka ceasefire agreement, which was signed in July 1999 by the different countries and armed groups involved in the conflict. This agreement was reached with the facilitation of the regional organisation SADC (the Southern Africa Development Community) and primarily South Africa. It enabled the UN to establish a peacekeeping mission (MONUC) in November 1999 (UN Security Council Resolution 1291) to monitor the ceasefire and promote the disarmament of the militias. Its mandate is divided into four phases: enforcing the ceasefire agreements signed in Lusaka; monitoring any violation of the agreements; organising the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the combatants; and facilitating the transition in order to organise credible elections. Its mandate is governed by Chapter VII of the charter, which authorises it to use force if necessary.

Nonetheless, the conflict continued in the east of the country. Laurent Desiré Kabila was assassinated in 2001, and his son Joseph Kabila took over power. It was only then that J. Kabila revitalised and promoted the Inter-Congolese Dialogues (ICD) held in South Africa. The ICD led to negotiations between the belligerent parties in Sun City, which led to the signing of an

agreement at the end of these negotiations, known as the Global and Inclusive Agreement. This was signed in Pretoria in December 2002. The Sun City Final Agreement was reached in April 2003, bringing together and summarising the previous agreements. The Sun City Final Agreement led to the integration of the government and the armed opposition groups into the Transitional National Government (TNG). Joseph Kabila kept his office as president of this government and four vice-presidents were appointed, representing the government, the MLC, the DRC/Goma and the unarmed opposition. The agreement called for a two-year transitional phase, after which general elections would be held and new Congolese armed forces would be formed, which would be made up of the different armed opposition groups.

In early 2005, 6,000 troops from one of the six armed groups in the region, the FAPC, were demobilised. In late July 2006 some of the main militias operating in the eastern region of the DR Congo, within the armed opposition coalition MRC, decided to lay down their weapons, to facilitate the free movement of displaced people in the area in order to exercise their right to vote in the elections. They also agreed to join the country's armed forces gradually in exchange for amnesty for all their members. The agreement was reached through mediation by the UN peace team in the region. One of the demobilised members was a leader of the FNI militia, Peter Karim. In March 2005 the FDLR announced that it was abandoning the armed struggle against Rwanda and condemned the 1994 genocide. The group was based in DR Congo and had been launching regular attacks on Rwanda. The announcement came after the Community of Sant 'Egidio began to act as mediator. The agreement sparked internal divisions within the group.

In late November 2006 the last three armed groups operating in Ituri signed a Framework Agreement for Peace in Ituri with the government, meaning that they agreed to lay down their weapons and join the DDR process. All told, the groups had 6,000 troops: 3,500 from "Cobra" Matata's FRPI, 1,800 from Peter Karim's FNI (some of which, however, were opposed to demobilising and continued fighting) and 500 from Mathieu Ngudjolo's MRC. In early December the Congolese government accepted the demand to hold direct peace talks with Laurent Nkunda's CNDP militia under the auspices of the United Nations and its Special Envoy, Olesegun Obasanjo, in Kenya. In 2008 the FDLR called on the Rwandan Government to begin talks. A faction of the FDLR with 300 troops, called RUD-Urunama, surrendered their weapons to MONUC and showed their willingness to be repatriated to Rwanda. Early January 2009 witnessed a major division within the Congolese Tutsi group CNDP, as the military leader (Chief of Staff) of the rebellion, Bosco Ntaganda, announced the expulsion of General Laurent Nkunda as the leader of the group for reasons of poor governability. Shortly thereafter, Laurent Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda in a joint military operation between the Rwandan and Congolese armed forces. Furthermore, the faction of the Tutsi armed opposition group CNDP led by General Bosco Ntaganda, alias "Terminator", and ten other senior leaders of the rebellion, who just days earlier had stated that they had deposed General Laurent Nkunda, the leader of the movement, issued a declaration on the 16th of January in which they announced that they were putting an end to the hostilities against the Congolese Armed Forces. After the agreement this faction announced that it would join the Armed Forces, and was willing to help in the offensive against the Rwandan Hutu armed opposition group, FDLR.

In late May 2010, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1925 extending MONUC's mandate until the 30th of June. It also decided that in view of the new phase that the country had reached, the United Nations' mission in this country would be called the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) starting on the 1st of July. MONUSCO was to be deployed until the 30th of June 2011 and it would have at most 19,815 troops, 760 military observers and 1,441 police officers. It would also be supplied with the corresponding civilian, judicial and penitentiary members. The Security Council also authorised the withdrawal of at most 2,000 United Nations troops by the 30th of June 2010 at the latest in the zones where security conditions allowed it. It further authorised MONUSCO to not only concentrate its efforts on the eastern zone of the country but also to keep a reserve force with rapid deployment capacity in any other part of the country. Finally, the Security Council stressed that the Congolese government was the main body in charge of security and protection of

the civilian population. In June, the UN Secretary General appointed Roger Meece, the US ambassador in the DR Congo between 2004 and 2007, as the new UN Secretary General Special Representative to replace Alan Doss. In August, at least 400 former members of armed groups from North and South Kivu proceeded to be demobilised. From 2009 until August 2010, 4,178 former combatants had laid down their weapons. The event also included a call for the members of the groups Mai Mai Kifuafua, Pareco-FAP and APCLS to disarm and reintegrate into the Congolese armed forces. In late December, a government delegation and a MONUSCO delegation held talks with a delegation of the Mai-Mai militia regarding the possible demobilisation of this group.

The Congolese armed forces and the armed group Forces Républicaines Fédéralistes (FRF) reached an agreement in February 2011 after intense negotiations that led to the group's joining the army. The FRF is made up of people from the Banyamulenge community located in the Haute Plateau zone between Uvira and Fizi in the province of South Kivu. The group, led by self-proclaimed Generals Venant Bisogo and Michel Rukunda, has never posed a military threat, and its membership currently fluctuates between 50 and 500 combatants. However, the army's operations against them led to numerous civilian deaths and had a heavy impact on the humanitarian situation in the region. One of the key issues in the negotiations, the status of the region of Minembwe, was postponed. The Banyamulenge people advocated on behalf of creating an autonomous Banyamulenge entity for the people with its own services and administration, as well as a separate election district. One of the prime leaders of the armed Hutu Rwandan group present in the east of DR Congo, the FDLR, namely Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Bisengimana, also known as Sam Mutima-Kunda, abandoned the armed group and joined the DDR programme being conducted by MONUSCO. Mutima-Kunda had been an officer in the former Rwandan army, a company commandant, and his current responsibilities were to mobilise civilian support of the FDLR and facilitate recruitment. In 2010, 1,681 members of the FDLR, including 64 officers, decided to surrender and begin the DDR process. In this regard the Secretary General's Special Representative in the country, Roger Meece, said that the FDLR, the main existing armed group in eastern DR Congo, was weakening as a result of military action and desertions and the threat it poses could disappear. The 15,000 members it had in 2001 had dropped to about 6,000-7,000 by the end of 2007 and in 2011 it was estimated that it had 3,500 fighters.

In 2012 the armed group M23 arose in North Kivu, led by Sultani Makenga and Bishop Jean-Marie Runiga Lugerero and formed by Tutsis. At first it rose up in arms against the government's alleged breach of the March 2009 agreement, although it later said it was fighting to liberate the entire country and oust Kabila. In July 2013, Rwanda and DR Congo agreed to create a regional force to combat the M23, with the support of the Great Lakes Initiative. In December, peace talks facilitated by the Ugandan government began between the M23 and the DR Congolese government, which allowed for the liberation of the city of Goma.

The negotiations underwent moments of crisis with continuous mutual accusations of lacking the political desire to participate in the negotiating process, which ended with French military intervention at the end of the year 2013. The government denied a lack of commitment to the process and, regarding the amnesty, said that the soldiers could avail of it and rejoin the Army, but not the commanders. Nevertheless, in early June, Bertrand Bisimwa declared his intention to resume peace negotiations. The Congolese government accepted the offer, but stressed that it would not let the talks drag on forever.

Alongside these developments, the debate on Congolese citizenship started up again, which is one of the deep causes of conflict in the country and in the region, since Rwanda wanted the Rwandan refugee population in the rest of the world to return to the country or be naturalised by their host countries. In 2011, the UNHCR and countries hosting Rwandans said that on 30 June 2013, the Rwandan refugee population that fled before 31 December 1998 would lose its refugee status. The most important case was the Rwandan population in DR Congo, where giving Congolese citizenship to hundreds of thousands of Rwandans living there would cause a demographic shift in

an area where this issue was already a source of conflict in the 20th century. The peace negotiations resumed in September due to the military pressure of the UN Force Intervention Brigade and the DR Congolese Armed Forces and to the diplomatic pressure exerted by the countries of the region.

In late October, the Congolese Army took control of the town of Bunagana, the main base of the armed group M23, marking a turning point in the conflict. The United Nations and Uganda called for a pact to end the conflict. Martin Kobler said that the M23 was about to vanish as a threat after the Congolese Army took back five towns controlled by the M23, including Rumangabo, where the group had a large military training base. On 5 November, the M23 capitulated before the Congolese Army's large military offensive backed by the UN Intervention Brigade (FIB). That same day, hours after the capture of the final hills of Chanzu and Runyonyi, controlled by the M23 along the DC Congolese border with Rwanda and Uganda, the head of the M23 said in a statement that he was ending the rebellion according to the recommendations of the talks in Kampala. A governmental delegation and a rebel delegation were supposed to sign a political agreement on 11 November to put an end to the conflict, but after the military victory, Kinshasa refused to sign the agreement and preferred to call it a "declaration", which would resolve the issues of the combatants' quartering, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. Kinshasa rejected a general amnesty for pardons on an individual basis. Combatants that were not guilty of war crimes could rejoin the Congolese Army or police. On 20 November, a ceremony to destroy the weapons of former combatants was held in Goma. The government and the M23 each signed a separate declaration that reflected the agreement reached during the talks". Some armed groups (like the APCLS, Nyatura militias) demobilised as part of the dissolution of the M23.

In application of the amnesty law passed in February 2014, was mainly targeting members of the M23 that were in Uganda, but during the year the terms of this amnesty were not clarified and most of the members of M23 were thus not included. In this regard, a major controversy erupted following the death of Paul Sadala, alias Morgan, the leader of the Mai Mai Simba (from the Ituri region). He had surrendered to the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) and had stated he wished to be included in the amnesty with 42 of his combatants. In April, the FDLR announced a voluntary disarmament, although there were some doubts regarding the real extent of the process. A process thus began whereby the Rwandan armed group voluntarily surrendered its weapons and demobilized its combatants.

In June, the FDLR continued its disarmament and held talks with the Congolese government in Rome with the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio. MONUSCO announced that it had received 200 combatants and 500 civilian dependents, although there were still some 1,400 fighters to disarm. The demobilized soldiers were assembled in a transition camp located in Kisangani (Orientale Province). In August Russ Feingold, the U.S. special envoy for the Great Lakes region, said that the armed group should demobilize before the end of the year or it could face a military option. Feingold, who had assumed the official line of the Rwandan government, said there was no justification for the group's demands for a political negotiation. The Sanctions Committee of the UN did not agree to allow the Deputy President of the FDLR in DR Congo, Gaston Rumuli Iyamuremye, alias Victor Rumuli Byiringiro, to travel to Rome for a meeting. The FDLR has not been involved in any major action on Rwandan territory for years, and the purpose of these contacts was to see if the Rwandan government wanted peace by proposing to begin talks with Kigali, which was categorically rejected. In December the head of MONUSCO asked members of the FDLR to return to Rwanda, their country of origin, or otherwise the military option would become inevitable in 2015. Since 2000, 11,000 combatants from this group have returned to their country of origin. As a result, the January 2, 2015 deadline came around and the group had not yet disarmed. This prompted the UN Security Council to back all the steps necessary to disarm the FDLR, making the short term future look very difficult.

In DR Congo, with respect to the M23, the ICGLR said that the Congolese government had until October to provide the organization with a precise roadmap for amnesty and the repatriation of

the members of the former insurgency. Uganda, which was hosting 1,430 former M23 combatants, threatened to withdraw their refugee status if they did not return to the DR Congo and accept the terms of the peace agreement signed in late 2013. The refugees in Uganda included rebel leaders Kanyuka and Sultani Makenga.

The peace process in 2015

In February, the armed forces of the Congo launched the military operation against the Rwandan armed group FDLR with an offensive in the province of Kivu South. This operation was announced in late January against the members of the FDLR who rejected the voluntary disarmament that the group had announced in April 2014. Despite this, the FDLR reported on the launch of a political dialogue with Rwanda as a condition for continuing the disarmament, although Rwanda rejected this dialogue. The regional organisations gave the FDLR six months, which ended in January 2015, to disarm under the threat of military retaliation. Numerous analysts had doubted the government's willingness to carry out this offensive against the armed group, which had been its ally at some points. In parallel, the UN announced that it was withdrawing its support for the military operation of the Congolese army against the FDLR after the government's refusal to replace two generals involved in the operation due to serious accusations of human rights violations. The government rejected this request and decided that it did not need MONUSCO's military support for the operation. This decision was labelled as populist by different analysts, who argued the government's need to amend its damaged image after the repression of the mobilisations in January against the president's desire to change the constitution in order to extend the presidency of Joseph Kabila to a third term. The UN and the EU expressed their dismay with the situation. In late February, the government and MONUSCO resumed talks to provide military support. The launch of the operation also took place the day after the announcement of the resignation of Russ Feingold, the USA's representative in the Great Lakes region. Feingold had been critical of the attempt to get President Kabila re-elected and of the CAR's real desire to pursue the FDLR, the enemies of Rwanda.

In the second half of the year, the Congolese government announced that it was expecting to resolve the issue of the armed group M23, whose members were still refugees in Uganda and Rwanda, before the UN General Assembly sessions in September. With the goal of accelerating the repatriation of the former combatants remaining from the M23, at an extraordinary summit held in Luanda on the 18th of May, the ICGLR decided to establish a mechanism made up of the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, the AU, the ICGLR, the SADC and the UN. The government stated that it had fulfilled its promises associated with the Nairobi Declaration signed in December 2013, after having militarily defeated the M23, with the launch of the DDR programme and the submission of the draft law on amnesty for M23 members. However, in January 2015 the coordinator of launching the Nairobi Declaration for M23, René Abandi, resigned from his post after accusing Kinshasa of failing to respect the agreements. On the other hand, the UN Secretary General Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Saïd Djinnit, visited Kisangani, where the demobilisation camp for the Rwandan armed group FDLR was located, in order to encourage the former combatants to return to their home country, Rwanda, and to check the conditions in the camp. There was an initiative underway whose goal was to seek countries of asylum for the members of the FDLR who did not want to voluntarily return to Rwanda.

In late September, the DRC and Rwanda met in Kigali to work on a joint security plan that could resolve the crisis in which both countries had been enmeshed in recent years, which had sporadic expressions of violence. Official representatives of the military and the respective Ministers of Defence met in Kigali and agreed to establish a joint team to promote the repatriation of the members of the former armed group M23 (at odds with the DRC and supported by Rwanda) still present in Rwanda, and the members of the armed group FDLR (at odds with Rwanda and supported by the DRC) present in the DRC. The representatives also agreed to hold regular security meetings. The relationships between both countries cooled as the result of a UN report which accused Rwanda of supporting the M23, which is present in the DRC, while Kigali denied

this report and accused Kinshasa of supporting the FDLR. This meeting held in Kigali on the 26th of September was preceded by other meetings held in parallel at the summits of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held in Luanda on the 13th of May and in Kinshasa on the 27th of June. In a joint declaration, the Rwandan Defence Minister, James Kabarebe, and his Congolese counterpart, Aimé Lusa-Diese Ngoi-Mukena, stated that both countries had agreed to resolve their security problems. The most worrisome issue was the disarmament of the FDLR, whose numbers were estimated at 1,500 to 2,000 combatants, although Kigali estimated that this figure was closer to 3,500 to 8,500 combatants. The call FOR voluntary disarmament expired on the 2nd of January 2015, and Kinshasa was pressuring Rwanda to extradite the members of the M23 who fled to Rwanda after being defeated by the UN brigade in November 2013. Since then, Kigali has insisted that it was fulfilling its international obligation to protect combatants who fled, including the leaders of M23.

Most significant events of the year

- The FDLR posed the opening of a political dialogue with Rwanda as a condition for continuing with disarmament, but Rwanda rejected this dialogue.
- The UN announced that it was withdrawing its support for the military operation by the Congolese army against the FDLR following the government's refusal to replace two generals involved in the operation who were subject to serious allegations of human rights violations.
- The DRC and Rwanda met in Kigali to work on a joint security plan. They agreed to establish a joint team to promote the repatriation of members of the former armed group M23 and members of the armed group, the FDLR.

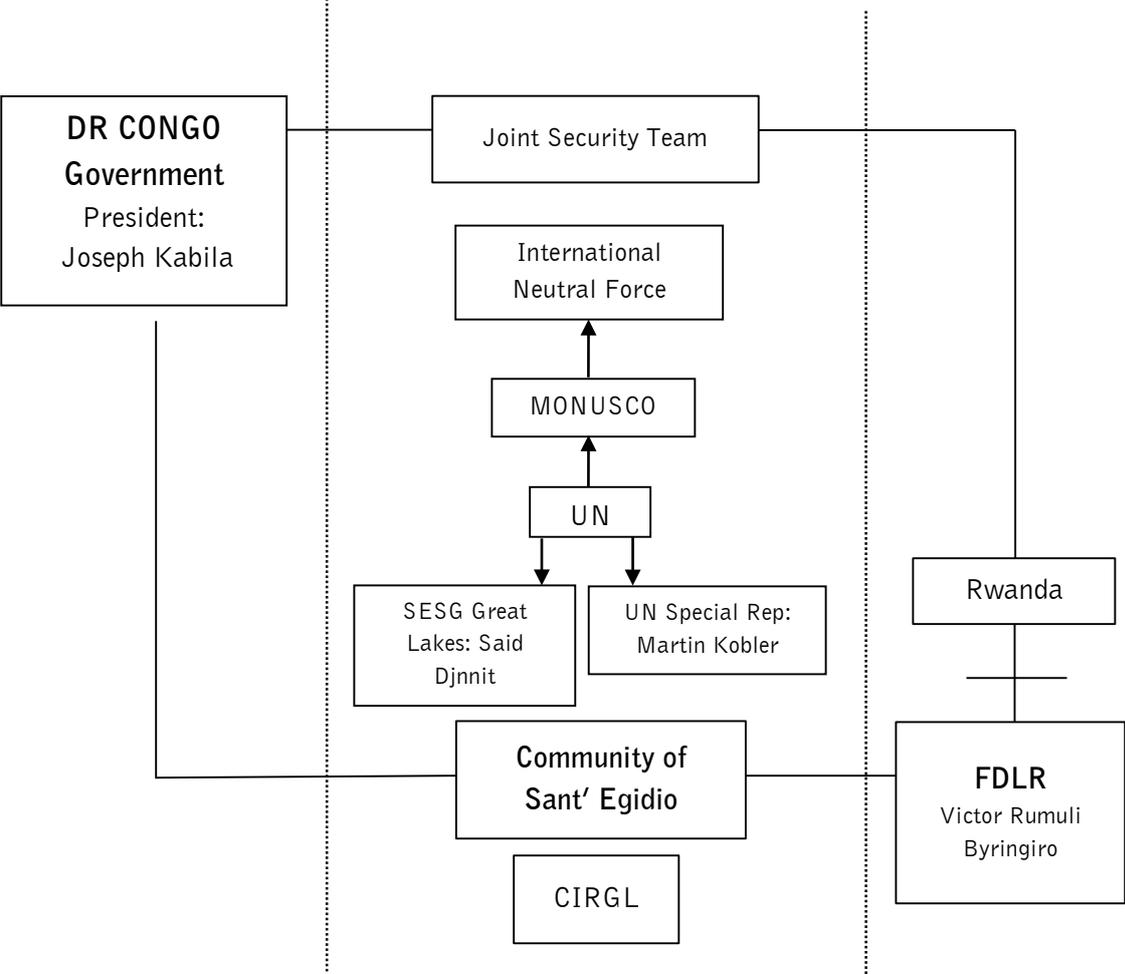
Causes of crises during the year

- Demonstrations against President Joseph Kabila's intention to amend the Constitution to permit the extension of his presidency to a third term.
- Rwanda rejected dialogue with the FDLR.
- Refusal of the DRC Government to replace two generals involved in a military operation and subject to serious allegations of human rights violations.
- Resignation of the US representative in the Great Lakes region, who had been critical of President Kabila's attempt to obtain re-election.
- The coordinator of the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration for M23 resigned after accusing Kinshasa of not respecting the agreements.
- Difficulties persisted in the disarming of the FDLR.

Websites of interest

- All Africa (allafrica.com)
- CIRGL (www.icglr.org)
- Congo Daily (www.congodaily.com)
- Congo DR News (www.drcnews.com)
- Dialogue Advisory Group (www.dialogueadvisorygroup.com)
- ICG (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- MONUC (monuc.unmissions.org)
- MONUSCO (www.un.org/spanish/Depts/dpko/monusco)
- OCHA (www.rdc-humanitaire.net)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- SADC (www.sadc.int)

Main parties involved in the process



El espacio de intermediación

d) Maghreb

Libya

Context of the conflict

In 1912 Italy invaded what is present day Libya, a vast desert area that was populated by only about a million inhabitants, but the country's significant energy resources, estimated at 47,000 million barrels, were then unknown. In 1951 the country achieved independence and came under the rule of King Idris I. Idris was overthrown in 1969 by Muammar al-Gaddafi, who installed an authoritarian, populist and personalistic regime. The country has many tribes, about 140, which control various regions or cities (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Sirte, Fezzan and Kufra). Most of the population is Arab or a mixture of Arabs and Berbers.

Population: 6,3 millions
Area: 1,759,541 km ²
GDP PPA: 100,124 millions USD
Per capita income: 7,820 USD
HDI: 84 (of 188)
Armed actors: many
Facilitators: UN, Algeria, Morocco

During the 2011 popular revolts in several Arab countries, known as the "Arab Spring", several cities in eastern Libya, with Benghazi taking the lead, launched an initially peaceful revolt against the autocratic government of al-Gaddafi, who had been in power since 1969. After the regime launched a military offensive to quell the riots, which included bombing cities and civilians, there was a coordinated international military intervention by NATO in support of the rebels, sanctioned by UN Security Council resolution 1073 (March 17, 2011), which at that point had become militarized forces. In October the rebels, which included African mercenaries, were finally able to free much of the country from the control of forces loyal to Gaddafi, who was captured and killed. At the end of February 2011 the rebels announced the creation of a National Transitional Council (CNT). It was initially recognized by the international community, including the UN, and was operational until August 2012. However, the large number of local or regional militias that participated in the offensive until Tripoli was captured were not disarmed at that point. Many parallel structures sprang up and there was a proliferation of armed groups with different agendas trying to maintain their share of military control. Clashes between them were frequent and the country was plunged into a situation of almost feudal instability for several years, with each militia initially taking charge of security in a specific city or region. However, torture, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations perpetrated by all sides were reported by several international organizations that pointed to a situation of growing insecurity in the country. In the first few months of the conflict in 2011 an estimated 15,000 people died. In March 2012 the leaders of the Cyrenaica region, in the east of the country, demanded greater autonomy for the region. The area is rich in energy resources and had previously been ignored during Gaddafi's long rule. The Government opposed these demands. A few months later, against a backdrop of fighting between tribal groups and Government's inability to control them, the leaders of the Cyrenaica region demanded a more equitable distribution of seats in the future parliament.

Some of these groups worked to provide security and ensure ceasefires in some areas of the country, others have acted in their own interest, for revenge, as part of power struggles, or to gain control over oil flows, irregular immigration routes or drugs in border areas. On the political front, during the third quarter of 2012 the first free elections in 50 years were held, with former interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril's National Forces Alliance (NFA) winning. A large number of seats in Parliament were reserved for independent candidates. After the August 2012 election the National Transitional Council handed over power to the General National Congress (GNC), based in Tripoli. Mustafa Abushagour, with close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, was appointed prime minister.

In March 2014 the New York Times estimated that in the previous two years the internal conflict had caused 1,200 deaths. Militias loyal to retired Gen. Khalifa Haftar launched an attack on the parliament building in Tripoli and ordered it to dissolve. Haftar and federalist leader Ibrahim Jedran, among others, refused to recognize the Government of the new Prime Minister Ahmed Maiteeq, which had been ratified by the GNC. Maiteeq replaced Al-Thani who had replaced Prime Minister Ali Zeidan in March. Maiteeq resigned in June after the Supreme Court decided that his appointment was illegal. Al-Thani resumed power once again. In August Al-Thani resigned in an attempt provide a way out of the crisis, but the House of Representatives reinstated him to his position and passed a decree which called for international intervention to deal with the crisis. With the support of Libya Dawn (or Fajr Libya) former GNC legislators based in Tripoli appointed the Islamist political veteran Omar el-Hassi as prime minister. Fajr Libya is an Islamist militia that distanced itself from the terror of Ansar al-Sharia, akin to Al Qaeda. The group stated that it was in favour of a peaceful transfer of power, although in September 2014 it did not accept the ceasefire called for by the UN. In this rapidly changing context the UN mission in Libya, UNSMIL, created in September 2011, was unable to promote political dialogue to replace the chaos.

In May 2014 Haftar went up against several Islamic jihadists groups, including Ansar al-Sharia, in Benghazi and the east of the country in an offensive called "Operation Dignity". At the same time the Islamist militias from Misrata (Libya Dawn), which have ideas close to those held by the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Justice and Construction Party, attacked the Zintan militia, which are more liberal and followers of General Haftar. The Zintan militia had refused to hand over Gaddafi's son and took control of the capital. In June the Libyan Parliament elections were held in which the supporters of General Haftar and the Zintan brigades won the most seats. In August the House of Representatives was formally established in Tobruk. It had 200 elected members and Aguila Issa was declared president. This marginalized the Islamist majority from the previous parliament, controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood and supported by Qatar. The Islamists refused to leave their posts and proclaimed the General National Congress in Tripoli, which also had 200 members, 120 of whom were supposed to be independent. They declared their support for the Islamist militias of Misrata and Benghazi (east), and the jihadists of Ansar al-Sharia. The country was divided between two opposing political alliances. Both sides received international support. Qatar was accused of defending Islamist forces from Misrata (Libya Dawn), while the UAE supported the Zintan militia, a regional and tribal force present in Tripoli. In August the United Arab Emirates bombed the Islamic militias. According to some sources Egypt supported the attack, but this was denied by the Egyptian government. Saudi Arabia also supported Egypt and the Emirates. The U.S., UK, France, Italy, Germany, Egypt and Malta are among the countries that openly support the anti-Islamists who dominate the House of Representatives in Tobruk and the Government of Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani.

In late August, the Government announced that it had lost control of the capital. The militia coalition known as Libya Dawn, which has a significant number of Islamists and links to armed groups from Misrata, took control of the city after the Zintan militia withdrew. Libya Dawn demanded the restoration of the previous Parliament, the General National Congress (GNC), where there was a greater presence of Islamist forces, as opposed to the new legislative body elected in June and based in Tobruk, which was dominated by liberal and federalist forces and had greater international recognition. In October General Khalifa Haftar said he was going to free Benghazi, the second largest city of the country, which had been under the control of the Islamist militia Ansar al Sharia. Several analysts said that the fighting between the militias was not so much an ideological issue, but more a question of economic control of the airports and trafficking in arms, drugs, gold and other contraband.

In October 2014 UNHCR recorded 287,000 persons displaced from 29 Libyan cities. In 2014 many peace initiatives were launched, although none of them were inclusive, a necessary requirement to achieve lasting peace. These initiatives should strive for a single inclusive government (including moderate Islamists), a single parliament, a plan for transitional justice,

reform of the security apparatus, one army, a new constitution, the rebuilding of damaged infrastructures and reconciliation of the country. In addition, it would be necessary for third States to refrain from taking military action in favour or against any of the parties, and an agreement to stop supplying arms to any of them. Libya needs to be demilitarized, and all parties must be legitimized through a process of internal Libyan dialogue.

Background to the peace process

The UN does have a mission in the country, UNSMIL, which was created in September 2011 by a Security Council resolution. It was given a mandate to support the political transition of the new government that was in power at that time. In May 2012 a group of UN experts visited Libya to discuss the use of mercenaries. In August 2013 Prime Minister Ali Zeidan announced the beginning of a national dialogue.

On February 12, 2013 a Conference to Support Libya in Areas of Security, Justice and Rule of Law was held in Paris. The attending diplomats focused their attention on the deteriorating security situation and the lack of a unified command over the different military forces in the country. This conference was the continuation of a previous meeting held in London on December 17, 2012, and the Regional Ministerial Conference held in Tripoli on March 11-12, 2012, which addressed the problem of border insecurity.

The fragile and turbulent situation in Libya was examined by several Western countries during an international conference on Libya held in Rome (Italy) on March 2014, with the presence of the Secretary of State, John Kerry. The delegates warned that there was a risk of the country becoming totally out of control in the absence of an effective political system and due to the lack of dialogue between the Government and rival factions. The conference highlighted the division that exists in the Government of Libya. There was a great amount of confusion since both the President of the General Congress, Nouri Abusahmain, and the Prime Minister, Ali Zidan, were present and each had a separate delegation. On March 14 the Security Council adopted Resolution 2144, which "supports the timely establishment of a single, inclusive and transparent national dialogue in Libya and an inclusive and transparent constitutional drafting process, and reiterates the need for the transitional period to be underpinned by a commitment to democratic processes and institutions, good governance, rule of law, national reconciliation and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in Libya

On June 25 elections for the House of Representatives were held, with voter participation only reaching 18% and an Islamic representation that was symbolic. On 14 August Spanish diplomat Bernardino León was appointed special representative of the UN Secretary General for Libya and Head of UNSMIL. Since 2011 ambassador León had been serving as Special Representative of the European Union for Libya. In late August Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani resigned, but was reappointed to the office a few days later by the House of Representatives. Despite receiving international recognition, al-Thani does not control a large part of the country. The other government, with headquarters in Tripoli, is headed by Omar al-Hassi, who was commissioned by the General National Congress to form a "national salvation government". On 27 August, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2174, which, among other things, "calls on all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire and an end to fighting, and expresses its strong support for the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in this regard".

On 17 September a Conference on Stability and Development in Libya was held in Madrid (Spain), under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The conference was attended by the 5 + 5 (Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia); members of the Med 7 group (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Cyprus and Greece), and Libya's neighbours (Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia). Representatives from international organizations such as the Arab League, European Union,

African Union, the Union for the Mediterranean and the United Nations also participated, including the Secretary General's special representative for Libya. On September 22 Algeria hosted in Algiers a meeting of countries committed to peace in Libya, the first of several, in an inclusive dialogue. The U.S., Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Qatar, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the European Union participated. The recommendations were called the "Algeria Initiative". A few days later the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), which had appointed a special envoy for Libya, the former Prime Minister of Djibouti between 2001 and 2013, Dileita Mohamed Dileita, said the dialogue should be based on three principles: respect for the August 2011 constitutional declaration, the commitment to a democratic process, and unambiguous rejection of terrorism and violent extremism. In coordination with the United Nations the Council decided to establish an International Contact Group on Libya (ICG-L), comprising neighbouring countries and bilateral and multilateral organizations. It also created a high-level Committee of Heads of State and Government to allow the AU to more effectively support peace and efforts to rebuild Libya. Both groups will be coordinated by Egypt and Algeria.

Algeria's bid to lead the process of internal dialogue in Libya received the endorsement of the UN Secretary General during the annual meeting of the General Assembly. Ban Ki-Moon said that "Algeria had a vision, knowledge and initiative that were the best for a solution in Libya". Algeria also sought the support of Tunisian Islamist leader Rachid Ghannouchi to ensure the presence of Libyan Islamists in future meetings, especially Abdel Hakim Belhadj, head of the Libyan political party Al-Watan, and those groups close to the Muslim Brotherhood. However, several Libyan leaders, including Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani, said they had not been invited by Algeria to discuss a peace process in Libya since at that time it was not planning on inviting armed groups. The special representative of the secretary general, Bernardino León, was received in Algiers by Abdelkader Messahel, Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs. The Algerian government said it was preparing a "roadmap" that would propose a comprehensive program of spokespersons that would be inclusive. Algeria insisted that the crisis was only political and that the solution could not be a military one. It also insisted on the full implementation of the arms embargo on Libya, included in UN Security Council resolution 2174. In mid-October the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ramtane Lamamra, emphasized that there was no solution to the conflict without the direct participation and involvement of the Libyan groups.

On September 29, a dialogue was held in Ghadames, western Libya, with support from the local City Council. The dialogue took place between some of the conflicting parties (12 people per side), with the presence of Bernardino León, representatives of the United Kingdom and Malta, and with an initial commitment to a second conference in Madrid in November, proposed by the secretary of State, John Kerry. Eleven members of the House of Representatives in Tobruk attended the meeting in Ghadames, but members from the different militias that had taken over control of the country's major cities, including the capital, did not participate. In fact, in late September, the coalition of Dawn militias that controlled Tripoli rejected the ceasefire required by the UN, and instead demanded that their opponents lay down their arms.

In early October the United Arab Emirates and Italy said that they backed Algeria in its peace efforts. In this regard, it should be noted that every year thousands of refugees from Libya and other countries in conflict reach the Italian coast, which is why Italy has a special envoy to Libya, Giuseppe Buccino Grimaldi, and is particularly interested in stabilizing that country. On October 11 UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon made a surprise visit to Tunisia and Libya with his representative to Libya, Bernardino León, and called for a ceasefire and dialogue. In addition to Tripoli the secretary general visited Misrata, the stronghold of one of the most powerful militias, and Tobruk, on the Egyptian border, where a group of parliamentarians elected in the June elections of had taken refuge. At the meeting with parliamentarians in Tripoli León denounced the institutional chaos and said a ceasefire was a precondition for successful political dialogue. He said that only one Parliament should exist (the current House of Representatives), but that it must strive to be inclusive. On October 20 Libyan Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani visited

Malta, which Libya wants as an intermediary with the EU. The next day the Turkish special envoy for Libya, Emrullah Isler, visited Malta. At the same time Gaddafi's cousin Ahmed Gaddafi al-Dam, living in exile in Egypt, said he was willing to work with the Libyan authorities for the reconciliation of the country and would use his influence over tribes loyal to Gaddafi, most of which are in the south. The same day, a three-day meeting organized by The Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Africa was held in Cairo with Libyan tribal leaders.

At the end of October the special envoy of Turkish President Emrullah Isler visited Libya and met with the self-proclaimed prime minister of the Islamist government, Omar al-Hasi. In early November he met with the internationally recognized Government in the city of Bayda (NE of the country). Meanwhile, the Algerian Government continued to confer with all parties in order to organize a "reconciliation dialogue" in Algiers, although the date was pushed back several times because of the difficulty of bringing all of the parties together. The Algerian Prime Minister, Abdelmalek Sellal, visited Doha (Qatar) in an attempt to put together a "diplomatic pole" between Algeria, Qatar and Turkey. The Islamist Government of Tripoli declared Bernardino León persona non grata and banned him from entering its territory. The Security Council, meanwhile, put the Islamist groups Amsar Al Sharia Benghazi and Ansar Al Sharia Derna on the list of terrorist groups linked to al Qaeda, which would in principle make it impossible for them to participate in an inclusive negotiation.

At the beginning of November the Libyan Supreme Court, dominated by the Islamists from Tripoli, ruled that the parliamentary elections held in the summer by the House of Representatives in Tobruk were illegitimate. In response Bernardino León said that the Europeans could host a meeting of "good willing Libyan lawmakers" that through consensus could put together a new roadmap and select a government of national unity. León was in favour of preserving the neutrality of certain Libyan institutions, such as the National Oil Company and the Central Bank, of avoiding the partition of the country and of reaching a ceasefire. Surprisingly there was news on November 10 that the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Ali Karti, had gotten all the warring factions to accept Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir's proposal for peace and reconciliation and that a meeting could be held in the Sudanese capital with Libya's neighbouring countries. In October the Prime Minister of the internationally recognized Libyan Government, Abdul al-Thani, visited Sudan and accepted Sudanese mediation. Also in November, radicals close to the Islamic State (ISIS) set off two car bombs in the Libyan capital near the embassies of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which had opposed the Islamist Government that is ruling over part of Libya. ISIS launched other attacks in various parts of the country, including one that targeted the diplomat Bernardino León.

On December 9 León was supposed to begin a second attempt to open talks with all stakeholders except Ansar al-Sharia, declared a terrorist group. The goal was to de-escalate the conflict, launch a dialogue based on mutual respect and create a national unity government, after achieving a ceasefire, but the talks were postponed at the last moment. In parallel, the UN special envoy for the Sahel, Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, said she was concerned about the impact that Libya's deteriorating security situation was having on this African region, and she described Mali as the first victim. She also said that southern Libya was becoming a haven for terrorist groups. Later in the month the United Nations announced a new attempt to begin talks in early January 2015, in which issues such as a national unity government, a ceasefire plan and the withdrawal and disarmament of all militias would be discussed. She also said she was concerned about the large number of weapons in the country, despite the embargo. The United Nations postponed once again the peace talks between the rival factions in Libya, without announcing a new date, according to Libyan media organizations.

The peace process in 2015

Throughout the first quarter, several meetings were held in an attempt to foster a negotiated solution to the crisis in Libya. The talks promoted by the United Nations were delayed in January,

but two rounds of contacts ended up being held in Geneva with the main goal of facilitating a ceasefire and forming a national unity government. The internationally recognised government and the Parliament based in Tobruk participated in these sessions, while the rival government and Parliament in Tripoli refused to participate. Mid-month, 19 leaders of different parties and social groups from different regions of the country met in Geneva with the goal of reaching an agreement on a permanent ceasefire and thinking about a common government. The representatives of the General National Congress (GNC), headquartered in Tripoli, did not participate in the meeting. Bernardino León travelled to Ankara (Turkey) to meet secretly with the Turkish president and the president of the GNC, Nuri Abu Sahnain. The same day, Fajr Libya, a coalition which is estimated to concentrate 80% of the 140 militias on Libyan soil, announced a ceasefire on all the fronts that were active. Likewise, when meeting in Tripoli, 100 of the 110 deputies of the GNC voted in favour of joining the talks if they were held in Libya, specifically in the southern city of Ghat. A few days later, the GNC declined this option to the military escalation. The UN, in turn, suggested sending an international force to Libya with the approval of the clashing parties. France and Italy had already expressed their support for this intervention. In February, the clashing parties met in Ghadames (Libya) with the participation of the GNC and the mediation of Bernardino León. The parties did not sit at the same table and they spoke through the UN mediator. Immediately afterward, new meetings were held in Geneva. It is also worth noting the tension between President Al Thini and General Khalifa Haftar, who are purportedly allies, regarding reaching a non-aggression pact. Shortly thereafter, the authorities of Tobruk decided to withdraw from the contacts, arguing that the Parliament of Tripoli had not condemned an attack perpetrated in the eastern portion of the country which caused 45 deaths, and claiming that the dialogue was lacking in perspective. Despite this, the contacts continued in March in Skhirat, Morocco, with another three rounds. In parallel, pathways of dialogue between the leaders of the political parties in Algeria and talks among municipal leaders in Brussels were opened, and a fourth pathway was being planned so tribal leaders could meet in Cairo.

In early March, the Algerian Minister of African Affairs admitted that his country had held secret meetings with the majority of the parties involved in the Libyan civil war and that they had agreed to meet again a few days later in Algiers and later in Brussels, with representatives from Libyan towns. At the end of the first quarter, the UN presented the authorities in Tobruk and Tripoli with a six-point plan. According to press reports, the UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL) described the proposal as a foundation upon which the parties could work in the quest for a solution. According to reports, the plan included the formation of a transition government that would lead the country until a new constitution is approved in a referendum and elections are held. This unity government would be led by a president and a presidential council made up of independent figures. A Parliament representing the entire Libyan population would also be established, along with a State Council, a National Security Council and a Council of Municipalities. The acting committee in charge of drafting the new constitution would continue to work within the framework of this transitional period, which would last as long as the parties agreed to. The UNSMIL stressed that this proposal emerged after broad consultations with Libyans, and it underscored that all the parties have to be willing to make concessions. According to press reports, the removal of the Prime Minister of the government of Tripoli, Omar el-Hassi, in March due to internal differences might eventually make it easier to make progress via negotiations. After the last round of contacts in Morocco, the UN Special Envoy for Libya, Bernardino León, also suggested that room be opened to allow the Arab League to get involved in managing the conflict.

In April, after the fourth round of contacts held in Algeria and Morocco, Bernardino León submitted a new plan to try to achieve a political solution to the conflict in the country. However, both the Parliament based in Tripoli and the one headquartered in Tobruk presented objections to the proposal. In parallel, some members of the UN Security Council stressed the need to impose sanctions against certain Libyan actors because their actions were believed to be hindering the attempted dialogue. However, the attempts by some actors (United Kingdom, USA and Spain) to sanction certain Libyan actors (Abderrahman Swelhi and Othman Mlegta, associated with the General National Congress in Tripoli and the House of Representatives in Tobruk, respectively)

accused of obstructing the attempts at reconciliation did not materialise because they were blocked by Russia and China.

In June, León submitted a new draft agreement (the fourth since the beginning of diplomatic efforts early in the year) which defined a transitional scheme until a new constitution is adopted. Hardline sectors in Tripoli and Tobruk questioned the initiative, although it was more warmly welcomed by authorities in the Libyan capital. Finally, the Parliament of Tobruk also accepted the proposal in theory, although it suggested that amendments would have to be added. Representatives of both sides sat down at the same table for the first time at a meeting held in Skhirat (Morocco) in late June, a fact that was considered important in terms of the possible formation of a unity government. According to the plan, which included 29 principles and almost 70 articles, a national agreement government had to be established which would operate for one year. The House of Representatives would act as the legislative power, and a State Council would also be created, made up of 120 people, 90 of whom would come from the Parliament based in Tripoli. The proposal also addressed other issues, such as the conditions for a ceasefire, the disarmament of the armed groups and the withdrawal of the militias from the cities. According to numerous sources, late in the quarter differences between the representatives of Tripoli and Tobruk still persisted on several aspects of the plan, including the Council's purview, the legitimacy of the House of Representatives and the definition of the authority with competences over the armed forces, among other issues.

It should be noted that parallel to the efforts to make headway in the dialogue with the authorities of Tripoli and Tobruk, a series of other initiatives aimed at facilitating a political solution to the crisis continued. They included the Libyan Women Dialogue Forum (in Tunis in April), meetings of tribal leaders (in Cairo in May), gatherings of political leaders and activists (in Algiers in June), meetings between Libyan representatives and diplomats from different countries as part of the Libyan Political Dialogue (in Berlin in June) and the round of consultations with Libya's neighbouring countries (in N'Djamena in June). The UN Security Council also weighed several initiatives, including those from civil society, which have helped to launch the local ceasefires and exchanges of prisoners.

In July, the negotiations spearheaded by the UN led to the acceptance of a preliminary political agreement in Skhirat (Morocco) which included the creation of a national consensus government for a two-year period (which would end with parliamentary elections), the extension of the mandate of the House of Representatives (the internationally-recognised Parliament headquartered in Tobruk) and the establishment of a State Council in which the members of the General National Congress (GNC) would participate (the Parliament headquartered in Tripoli which was another of the main poles of power in the country). This was the fourth draft agreement presented by the UN Special Envoy for Libya. The agreement was backed by the majority of factions participating in the political dialogue (including authorities from the House of Representatives, delegates from political parties, town halls and civil society), but not by the GNC, which deemed that it lacked clarity on the competences and role to be played by the State Council. The authorities in Tripoli wanted the State Council to have powers similar to the House of Representatives on legislative matters and appointments of key positions in institutions. They also suggested recognition of the Supreme Court pronouncement which invalidated the House of Representatives, an amendment rejected by the Tobruk authorities.

In August and September, several rounds of meetings were held in Geneva and Skhirat in which the GNC stressed the need to introduce amendments to the July agreement. The future of the controversial General Khalifa Hifter, an ally of the Libyan authorities in Tobruk and head of its military forces, was also the topic of debates, since the GNC did not want him to become the chief of the armed forces. There were discrepancies between the GNC and the House of Representatives until the end of the period, despite the deadlines imposed by León. Throughout the third quarter there were also clear tensions and divisions within the leading sides of the conflict, along with scepticism from some sectors regarding an agreement with rival groups. In late August, the representative of the GNC in the negotiations resigned from his post over differences with the

president of the GNC, which meant that the delegation did not attend the talks in Morocco. In September, around 50 parliamentarians from the House of Representatives threatened to withdraw from the negotiations if changes were introduced into the agreement in order to incorporate some of the GNC's demands. In late September, León reported to the parties that there would be no further negotiations on the peace plan and that they had to issue a statement on the text when they returned from the recess for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. Within this context, analysts expressed their doubts on the prospects of the agreement, as well as on the absence of a far-reaching dialogue with the most important armed factions in the country. In late October it was reported that in September deputies from Tripoli and Tobruk had begun peace talks without the UN in Tunis and in the southern city of Jofra. Apparently not all the deputies were in favour of the initiative.

In late November, delegations of the Tebu and Tuareg ethnic groups, that had been clashing in the south of the country, met in Rome under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio and pledged to support the process driven by the UN to form a national unity government. In early December, Bernardino León unexpectedly left his post as the UN secretary general's special representative in Libya, being replaced by the German diplomat, Martin Kobler. León had previously accepted a position at the diplomatic academy of the United Arab Emirates, a country which supported the Government of Tobruk. For this reason he was criticised for a possible lack of impartiality in his work. Some days later, representatives of the two Libyan governments met in Rome, to speed up the formation of a national unity government. The meeting was attended by the heads of diplomacy of the USA and Russia. Meanwhile, representatives of the two factions met up without the participation of the UN. In mid-month, members of the two rival parliaments that existed in Libya signed an agreement promoted by the UN which laid down a plan for the creation of a national unity government. The pact was signed in the Moroccan town of Skhirat by 50 of the 136 members of the General National Congress (GNC), the parliament based in Tripoli, and about 80 of the 188 representatives of the legislature based in Tobruk, the House of Representatives (HoR), the body that is recognised internationally. In this context, some key sectors that were not present at the ceremony — among them the leaders of both acting governments — distanced themselves from the agreement or denounced it as illegitimate. The ceremony was attended by the foreign ministers of Spain, Italy, Turkey, Qatar, Tunisia and Morocco. The pact established a nine-member Presidential Council, a unity cabinet, a House of Representatives and a State Council.

The UN Security Council gave unanimous support to the agreement in Libya (in a motion proposed by the UK) and called on the new Presidential Council to comply with the 30 days stipulated to form the unity government and to finalise security arrangements. The Council stressed that the government of national unity would be the only one recognised by the international community. Experts point out that there was a risk that the agreement could lead to a third institution that would be unable to meet in the capital or even in the country. Some analysts stressed that several countries were interested in the formation of a legitimate government in Libya which would centre its efforts on the fight against the ISIS faction operating on Libyan territory and that, once established, would request international intervention in the country against the armed group. According to press reports, the USA, UK, France and Italy were considering a possible intervention in Libya. Until the end of December, the UN special envoy to Libya, Martin Kobler, held meetings and contacts with Libyan representatives in an attempt to broaden support for the political agreement. Kobler gave positive reports on negotiations with the President of the Parliament in Tobruk, Agila Saleh and with General Khalifa Haftar, and of meetings in Tripoli with members of the GNC.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March, the UN presented a six-point plan to the authorities in Tripoli and Tobruk. The plan included the formation of a transitional government that would lead the country until the adoption by referendum of a new constitution and the holding of

elections.

- In March the Prime Minister of the Tripoli Government, Omar el-Hassi, was dismissed due to internal differences.
- Representatives of the two sides sat down at the same table for the first time at a meeting in Skhirat (Morocco).
- In July, the UN led negotiations resulted in the signing of a preliminary political agreement at Skhirat (Morocco), but it was not signed by the GNC, which considered that it lacked clarity about the responsibilities of the State Council and the role it should play.
- In late September, Leon informed the parties that there would be no more negotiations on the peace plan and that the parties should decide on the text when they returned from the recess for the Muslim feast of Eid el-Adha.
- Delegations of the Tebu and Tuareg ethnic groups in the south, that had been clashing, met in Rome under the auspices of the Community of Sant 'Egidio, and pledged to support the UN-led process.
- In December, members of the two rival parliaments that existed in Libya signed a UN promoted agreement that laid down a plan for the creation of a national unity government. The agreement, however, was not signed by the top leaders.

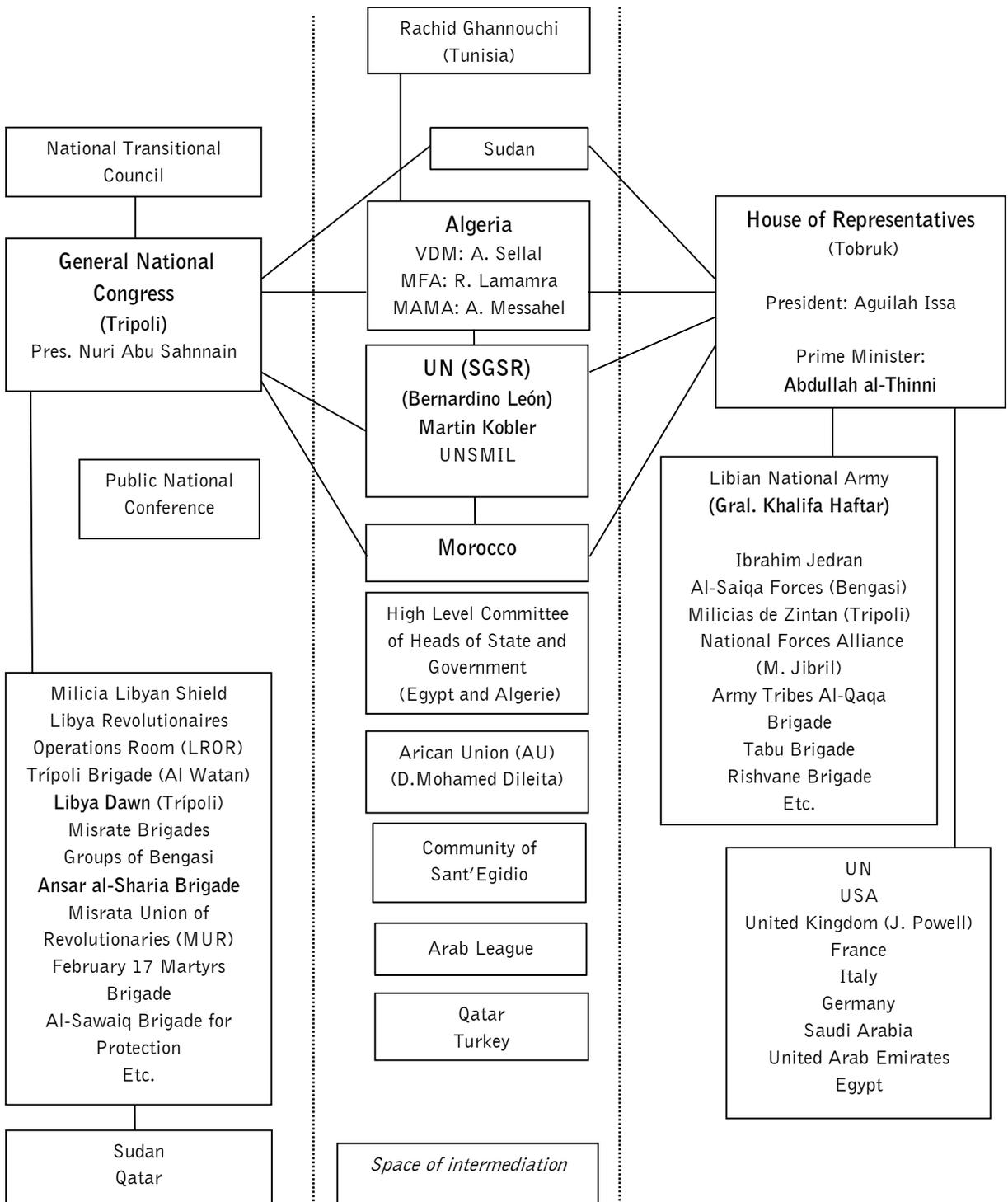
Causes of crises during the year

- Tensions between President Al Thani and General Khalifa Haftar, supposedly allies.
- Persisting differences between the representatives of Tripoli and Tobruk on various important aspects.
- Lack of clarity about the responsibilities and the role to be played by the State Council.
- Debate about the future of the controversial General Khalifa Haftar, ally of the Libyan authorities in Tobruk and head of its military forces.
- The ultimatum given by the UN Secretary General's special representative, and his subsequent resignation.
- Faced with the agreement reached in December between the two governments existing in the country, some key sectors not present at the ceremony —among them the leaders of both acting governments — distanced themselves from the agreement or denounced it as illegitimate
- Representatives of the two factions met without the participation of the UN.

Websites of interest

- Al Arabiya News (english.alarabiya.net/en)
- Al Jazeera (www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast)
- Al Monitor (www.al-monitor.com)
- Carnegie Endowment (carnegieendowment.org/regions/?fa=147)
- Chatham House (www.chathamhouse.org/about/structure/mena-programme/libya-working-group-project)
- El Watam (www.elwatam.com)
- Libya Herald (www.libyaherald.com)
- Middle East Eye (www.middleeasteye.net/news)
- RFI (www.rfi.fr/afrique)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)
- UNSMIL (unsmil.unmissions.org)
- USIP (www.usip.org/category/countries/libya)
- Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (www.wrmea.org)

Main parties involved in the process



WESTERN SAHARA

Context of the conflict

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony until 1975, when a referendum on self-rule was held. In the same year the territory was invaded by Morocco. As a result, almost half the population fled and settled in the Algerian area of Tinduf, close to the border with the Western Sahara. This incident led to the breaking off of relations between Algeria and Morocco. From then until 1991 there has been an open military confrontation between Morocco and the Saharan people led by the **POLISARIO Front**. In 1991 some of results of the negotiations begun by the United Nations back in 1988 were put into effect, leading to a ceasefire and the deployment of a United Nations mission (MINURSO). However, since 1991 Morocco has encouraged the colonisation of the Sahara by Moroccan settlers. Morocco was ready to create an autonomous region in the Sahara, while the POLISARIO Front called for the referendum promised, with the option of choosing independence.

Population: 600,000 inhabitants
Area: 184,000 km ²
HDI (Morocco): 126 (of 188)
GDP PPA (Morocco): 251,489 million USD
Per capita Income (Morocco): 3,070 USD
Refugee population: 86,000-150,000
Actors: POLISARIO Front
Facilitators: United Nations

Background to the peace process

Since the ceasefire between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front was reached in 1991, the United Nations has been working through diplomatic channels to reach a satisfactory agreement between both parties. However, to date the desired results were not obtained in any stages of the process. The government of Morocco has limited itself to offering autonomy, while the POLISARIO Front is demanding that a referendum be held with the option of independence. The so-called Settlement Plan from 1991, which called for a referendum to be held in the short term, was blocked shortly thereafter due to the allegations levelled by Morocco and despite the fact that in 1997, through the Houston Agreements, which were signed by both parties, it seemed that negotiations could be fruitful. The fact is that the new roadblocks put up by Morocco distorted what had been signed in Houston, which required the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, James Baker, to submit a new balanced proposal, or framework agreement, which gave Morocco's demands a considerable advantage, given that it suggested an autonomous regime for Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty. The POLISARIO Front roundly rejected this plan. Furthermore, starting in 2000 the UN Security Council resolutions stopped mentioning the word "referendum". In 2003, James Baker presented a new, more balanced proposal known as the Baker Plan II, which was accepted by the POLISARIO Front as a starting point for negotiations. However, this time the proposal was rejected by Morocco.

In 2007, Morocco submitted its proposal for regional autonomy for Western Sahara to the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. The proposal states that this region would be autonomous in its administration, economics, taxation, infrastructure, culture and environmental issues. The state of Morocco, in turn, would keep exclusive jurisdiction over matters of national sovereignty (the flag or national currency), the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, religious and constitutional matters and any matter related to the figure of the king, national security, defence, territorial integrity, foreign relations and judicial power in the kingdom. In early January 2009, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, named diplomat Christopher Ross as his Special Envoy for Western Sahara. Ross is the former US ambassador to Syria and Algeria, and in February he visited the region for the first time and declared his support for finding a solution to the conflict that takes into account the Saharan people's right to self-determination. In early January 2010, the King of Morocco, Mohamed VI, announced the creation of an Advisory Committee on Regionalisation (ACR), which was to lay the groundwork for the country's process of regionalisation, which would begin in the so-called southern provinces (Western Sahara).

In 2011, it should be noted that the USA stated its support for Morocco's autonomy plan, which it described as "serious, realistic, credible and using an approaching that may satisfy the aspirations of the Saharan people". In July, Morocco and the POLIARIO Front persisted in their differences over the future of Western Sahara. However, according to UN sources, at the meeting held in July in Manhasset, the parties seemed to have listened to the recommendations of the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and begun talks to include representatives of the Saharan people in the negotiation process. This would facilitate the debates on issues like education, the environment and healthcare.

In April 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accused Morocco of spying on the UN mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO). In a report submitted to the Security Council, Ban warned there were indications that the confidential communication between the mission in El Aaiún and the UN headquarters in New York had been intercepted. Ban Ki-moon also complained in the report that MINURSO's access to the population was being controlled by Morocco and that the Moroccan security forces posted outside the entrance to the mission's headquarters discouraged people from approaching it. In May, Morocco withdrew its confidence from the UN Secretary-General's Envoy for the Western Sahara, US diplomat Christopher Ross. In mid-September, representatives of the MINURSO, the POLISARIO Front and Morocco met in Geneva (Switzerland) to jointly evaluate implementation of a series of confidence-building measures. In December, Christopher Ross said that he did not favour holding new rounds of informal talks between the POLISARIO and Morocco given that the meetings since August 2009 had not produced any results.

Latest rounds of negotiation		
1 st	Manhasset (New York)	June 2007
2 nd	Manhasset (New York)	August 2007
3 rd	Manhasset (New York)	January 2008
4 th	Manhasset (New York)	March 2008
1 st	Dürnstein (Austria)	August 2009
2 nd	Armonk (New York)	February 2010
3 rd	Manhasset (New York)	November 2010
4 th	Manhasset (New York)	December 2010
5 th	Manhasset (New York)	January 2011
6 th	Mellieha (Malta)	March 2011
7 th	Manhasset (New York)	June 2011
8 th	Manhasset (New York)	July 2011
9 th	Manhasset (Nueva York)	March 2012
10 th	Geneva	September 2012

In 2013 no formal negotiations took place. The UN secretary general special envoy travelled to Mauritania and from January 28 to February 15 visited the capitals of the members of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara (Madrid, Moscow, London, Washington and Paris) in addition to Germany and Switzerland. Ross also met with the leader of the Polisario Front, Mohamed Abdelaziz. In a statement in mid-March Abdelaziz said that the Sahrawi people would continue with their peaceful struggle, but if necessary would resume the armed struggle to achieve independence. According to press reports, after Palestine was recognized by the United Nations the leader wants the Polisario to set a similar goal which would lead to SADR's presence in the UN.

In late March and early April UN special envoy Christopher Ross made a return visit to the region, visiting the Saharawi territory for the first time since his appointment in 2009. Ross called on both sides to be flexible and creative in finding a solution to the conflict and, at the same time, tried to promote a rapprochement between Morocco and Algeria, the main ally of the POLISARIO front. Ross met with both the President of Algeria and the King of Morocco during his tour of the area.

The personal envoy proposed three ideas for the negotiation with modest goals that would be presented to the parties and the neighboring States. First, he would hold bilateral consultations with each party and ask each to acknowledge that negotiations imply give and take and that the spirit of compromise must prevail. On this basis, he would ask each of the parties to offer specific ideas to him about the nature and elements of a compromise settlement. That could lead to a period of shuttle diplomacy and eventually enrich the negotiating process. Secondly, he would ask each party to begin thinking about how to present its proposal in a new way when a further face to face meeting is held. That is, by explaining the benefits and advantages of that proposal for the other party. Finally, he would ask the parties to accept that they will not reach an agreement on the final status of Western Sahara in the short term and to agree that they can discuss practical aspects of governance of the Territory in a systematic way without prejudice to its final status at such time as a further face-to-face meeting is held.

With regard to the climate surrounding the negotiation process, he presented three additional ideas. First, he would renew his efforts to encourage Algeria and Morocco to develop their bilateral relations further, building on the ministerial visits to date and on the priority sectors identified in exchanges of messages between the two leaders and during his most recent visit to the region. Second, he would encourage UNHCR to expand its programme of seminars to accommodate the yearning for more contact between Saharans in the Territory and in the refugee camps, in particular among women and young people. Third, as the members of the Arab Maghreb Union continue their efforts to revitalize the regional organization, he would encourage them to explore the role that it might be able to play in helping to find a solution to the Western Sahara conflict, which remains the major conflict of the region.

During the first week of April Ban Ki-moon stated that the climate of instability and insecurity in the Sahel requires an urgent settlement to the dispute over Western Sahara. He urged the parties to engage in genuine dialogue and stressed the importance of independent, impartial, comprehensive and sound monitoring of the human rights situation in both Western Sahara and in the refugee camps controlled by the Polisario Front in Tindouf in southern Algeria. Similarly, the report of the secretary general stressed that representatives of civil society in these areas, especially women and youth, had shown a growing appetite to broaden direct contacts. In this sense Ban proposed bringing these groups together under an expanded trust building program under the auspices of UNHCR. The U.S. proposed an extension of the MINURSO mandate to include the monitoring of human rights. However, Morocco strongly rejected this initiative and launched a lobbying campaign to stop it. Finally, the Security Council voted to extend the MINURSO mandate for another year without including the human rights issue.

During the second quarter there were some indications that a rapprochement between Morocco and Algeria could be possible. Following a meeting in Rabat on regional security issues Algerian Foreign Minister Dahou Ould Kablia stated in late April that the closure of the Moroccan-Algerian border –closed for more than two decades due to differences between the two countries over the Western Sahara – could be resolved soon if the negotiations on the border issues were sped up. Previously, his Moroccan counterpart, Mohand Laenser, had visited Algiers to meet with Kablia, in a meeting that the local press described as "favourable".

Despite a deadlock over the key points of the conflict, in August representatives from both sides met again in Geneva at the headquarters of the High Commissioner for Refugees and in the presence of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Sahara, Christopher Ross. During the meeting, which was also an attempt to strengthen trust between the parties, an

agreement was reached over a new schedule for visits in 2014 and to celebrate cultural seminars. During the period several sectors continued to call for MINURSO's mandate to include monitoring of human rights. In October the President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, Nizar Baraka, presented to King Mohammed VI the final Council report on a new development model for the so-called "southern provinces", which includes the Western Sahara but also extends to some areas north of the territory. The report noted that "The return of people from the Tindouf camps should also be anticipated and prepared to ensure their integration into the economic and social fabric of the Kingdom (Morocco). This would be based on a per-family approach... An interregional fund dedicated to social assistance and the integration of returnees from the Tindouf camps will be set up". At the end of the year the Council stated that over the next six years it would invest 12.5 million euros in the so-called "southern provinces" to enhance sea transport and agricultural and industrial activities.

During the 2014, the United Nation's strategy was to continue bilateral consultations with the possibility of shuttle diplomacy. The parties also agreed to a code of conduct in which their conversations with the Personal Envoy would be considered confidential unless they expressly agree that something specific can be made public.

During the first quarter, the UN special envoy for Western Sahara made a new visit to the region in an attempt to revive the dialogue between the Polisario Front and Morocco. Christopher Ross met in January with the leader of the Polisario Mohamed Abdelaziz in the Tindouf refugee camps; with Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal; with Moroccan Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar; and with the Prime Minister of Mauritania, Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf. After the last round of visits to the region in October 2013 the UN special envoy said that a new round of contacts between the parties would not be organized until there is some hope that the talks can make some progress. The U.S. diplomat asked the parties to be flexible in their positions and creative when it comes to finding a solution. In January the Personal Envoy met with the working groups that had been recently created by the parties in Rabat and Tindouf to confidentially submit questions formulated specifically for each one. The questions were deliberately challenging, designed to push the parties outside their comfort zone, introduce them to conversations different from those of the past, and prod them to demonstrate flexibility as they began to consider alternatives to their initial positions and to search for elements of compromise. At the beginning of March Ross returned to the area and met with senior representatives of the parties in dispute. In this context it was announced that flights to reunite Saharawi families would be resumed. The flights had been suspended since August 2013 and were part of the Confidence Building Measures between the parties. To allow the parties ample opportunity to engage, the Personal Envoy planned to hold bilateral discussions with them and with the neighbouring States about once a month in the intervening period. A face-to-face meeting of the parties and the neighbouring States will be convened only if enough progress has been made in the bilateral consultations to warrant one.

During the second quarter UN Special Envoy Christopher Ross continued his efforts to unblock the dialogue between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. However, the confidentiality of the most recent contacts made it difficult to gauge their success. Still, it is noteworthy that in his April report on the situation in Western Sahara, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon assessed the strategy deployed by Ross beginning in March-April 2013, following the failure of 13 rounds of direct talks based on the two proposals made by the parties in April 2007. Ross's new approach included bilateral consultations between the parties and neighbouring States to determine how willing they were to be flexible in finding a political solution to the dispute, the application of the principle of confidentiality during the talks, and the use of shuttle diplomacy, which led Ross to make numerous visits to the region. The report of the UN Secretary-General reviewed the consultations by Ross in 2013, both in the region and in member countries of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, as well as those in the first quarter of 2014. With the past experience in mind, Ross met with the working groups established in Rabat and Tindouf and presented them a series of questions in January 2014. He returned to the area in February for the answers to those questions, which at this stage should be very much in line with the respective formal

proposals of the parties. Ross hoped to hold monthly consultations with the parties until October and would then make his first assessment of this new approach to the negotiations. The plan was to hold a meeting between the parties only if the bilateral consultations made enough significant progress to justify direct contact between representatives from Morocco and the Sahrawis from the Polisario Front.

As in previous years the mandate of the UN MINURSO mission was renewed during the quarter. Although the Polisario Front, Algeria and human rights groups had demanded that the mandate include responsibility for human rights, the Security Council once again decided not to include it. In resolution 2152 approving the extension of MINURSO until April 2015, the Security Council stressed that improved cooperation between the states in the Arab Maghreb Union would contribute to a political settlement of the conflict over the Western Sahara and would also favour greater stability and security in the Sahel region. In addition, the text raised the possibility of refugee registration in the Tindouf camps. Saharawi Prime Minister Abdelkader Taleb Omar held a disconcerting press conference in which he expressed his satisfaction with the UN resolution, despite the fact that MINURSO was not given responsibility to monitor human rights. The resolution called on the parties to show political will to make progress in the preparation for a fifth round of contacts and begin an important phase of the negotiations. Finally, in late June the former Mozambican President, Joachim Chissano, was appointed African Union special envoy for Western Sahara.

During the third quarter no progress was made in the Western Sahara negotiations. The period was marked by the Moroccan decision to implement an autonomy plan that would be achieved through an advanced regionalization process and would begin in the Western Sahara. King Mohammed VI made the announcement in late July, coinciding with the 15th anniversary of his inauguration, in a move that was criticized by the Polisario Front. In late September the Moroccan Interior Ministry presented a bill for consideration by the political parties. Sources close to the POLISARIO front stressed that holding a new round of negotiations would depend on the visit by the UN special envoy Christopher Ross to the area. According to some media reports which quoted sources close to the POLISARIO leadership, The Sahrawi organization was disappointed with Ross's mediation efforts and would criticize the American diplomat's methods. During a meeting with Polisario leader Mohamed Abdelaziz and senior members of the group in the town of Rabouni, the Sahrawi leadership expressed their frustration at the departure of the German diplomat Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber as head of the UN mission for Western Sahara (MINURSO), who they considered had supported their position. Weisbrod-Weber was replaced by Canadian Kim Bolduc.

The peace process in 2015

On the 22nd of January, King Mohammed VI and the UN Secretary General spoke by telephone and reached an agreement on the course to pursue. After the telephone conversation, the Personal Envoy held the first series of consultations in the region in almost a year in order to restore contact with the interlocutors, both old and new ones, strengthen trust in the negotiation process and clarify the road to take. From the 11th to 23rd of February 2015, he visited Rabat, Rabouni, Nouakchott and Algiers. In March, the government of Morocco officially invited the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, to visit Morocco during the course of the year. Furthermore, as agreed jointly, the UN OHCHR also agreed with the government of Algeria, as the host country, and the POLISARIO Front, to organise a mission to visit the refugee camps near Tindouf from the 4th to 10th of May 2015. During the first quarter, Morocco finally welcomed the new UN special representative for Western Sahara and the head of MINURSO, the Canadian Kim Bolduc. The diplomat had been appointed by the UN Secretary General in May 2014, but her appointment caused hesitation in Rabat. It was not until the telephone conversation between Ban Ki-Moon and King Mohammed VI that Morocco agreed to welcome her. The POLISARIO Front had expressed its willingness to cooperation with Bolduc.

In his report dated the 10th of April, the Secretary General noted that "after 40 years in refugee camps, increasingly difficult economic conditions and a lack of visible progress towards a political solution, some sectors of the refugee community are pervaded by a lack of frustration. The people who go back after pursuing higher education abroad bring greater civic and political awareness and compare the difficult living conditions in the camps with the standards of living in other places and pressure the POLISARIO Front leaders to ensure a higher quality of life for the inhabitants of the camps. The POLISARIO Front also warned MINURSO about the 'hundreds and hundreds of idle youth' affected by an environment characterised by its proximity to contraband routes and extremist activities in the Sahel, among other things. These conditions sparked political, economic and safety concerns. During the period of this report, there were demonstrations in the Laayoune camp and five in Rabuni. On one occasion witnessed by a MINURSO worker, the security forces of the POLISARIO Front intervened in order to prevent the demonstrators from entering the headquarters of the secretary general of the POLISARIO Front. Later, the POLISARIO Front authorities promised to respond to the concerns of the demonstrators through broader consultation processes and inclusive governance." In the document, the senior official challenged the reservations outlined by Morocco regarding both the previous report and the approach to the negotiations, which had blocked the process for several months in 2014.

On his first trip, Ross held meetings in Rabat, Rabuni, Nouakchott and Algiers and exhorted all parties to negotiate without conditions, to go beyond their respective proposals and to explore innovative formulas. In Morocco, the authorities stressed that the plan presented by Rabat in 2007 should serve as the foundation of the negotiation and that the state of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front should not be treated as equals. In Ross's meetings with the POLISARIO Front, leaders of the organisation expressed their dissatisfaction with the absence of progress in the negotiations and with the fact that the UN Secretary General had provided Morocco with guarantees without consulting them. During his visit to Algeria, the senior officials of this country conveyed a similar message, criticising the UN for overstepping its bounds by offering "unilateral, counterproductive assurances" to Morocco without having consulted the Security Council or the POLISARIO Front. During his second trip to the region in March, Ross visited the same cities and noted that it would be premature for the parties to resume the talks, so the programme of bilateral consultations and travelling diplomacy continued. As part of these steps, Ross also visited the countries in the Group of Friends of Western Sahara and held meetings in Madrid, Paris, London, Moscow and Washington. Finally, after the publication of the UN Secretary General's special report, in late April the Security Council renewed MINURSO's mandate for another year. Just as in previous years, in late June the issue of Sahara was once again analysed within the UN's Committee on Decolonisation.

In August, there were reports that the head of MINURSO, Kim Bolduc, had secretly met in Tindouf (Algeria) with the leader of the POLISARIO Front, Mohamed Abdelaziz, to discuss the forthcoming visit by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, to the refugee camps in the region. The purpose of the visit to Tindouf, which according to reports in the Moroccan press might take place before the end of 2015, might have been to bring momentum to the negotiations between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, which had been stalled in recent years. Moroccan sources claimed that Ban Ki-moon would also visit the kingdom before the end of his UN mandate in 2016, which would be the Secretary General's first trip to the country. Towards the end of the quarter, in September, the UN Secretary General Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, took a three-day trip to the Saharan refugee camps in Chahid el-Hafed, the first trip of this kind since he had submitted his report on the status of the conflict to the UN Security Council the previous April. Ross then met with senior diplomats in Algeria and Spain, and he was expected to visit Morocco in October. Just as in previous occasions, the content of these meetings was shrouded in secrecy. Press reports stress that on his most recent trips to the region, Ross had not met with the leader of the POLISARIO Front but instead with members of the group's negotiation delegation. According to reports, Abdelaziz may not have met directly with the UN representative upon the request of Algeria, which would contradict what is viewed as more pressure on the POLISARIO Front than on Morocco in the quest for a negotiated solution.

Most significant events of the year

- King Mohamed VI and the UN Secretary-General spoke by phone and reached an agreement on the way forward.
- The head of MINURSO, Kim Bolduc, met secretly in Tindouf (Algeria) with the leader of the Polisario Front, Mohamed Abdelaziz, in order to discuss a visit by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Moroccan sources maintained that Ban would also visit the kingdom before finishing his term at the UN in 2016, in the first visit to the country by the Secretary General.

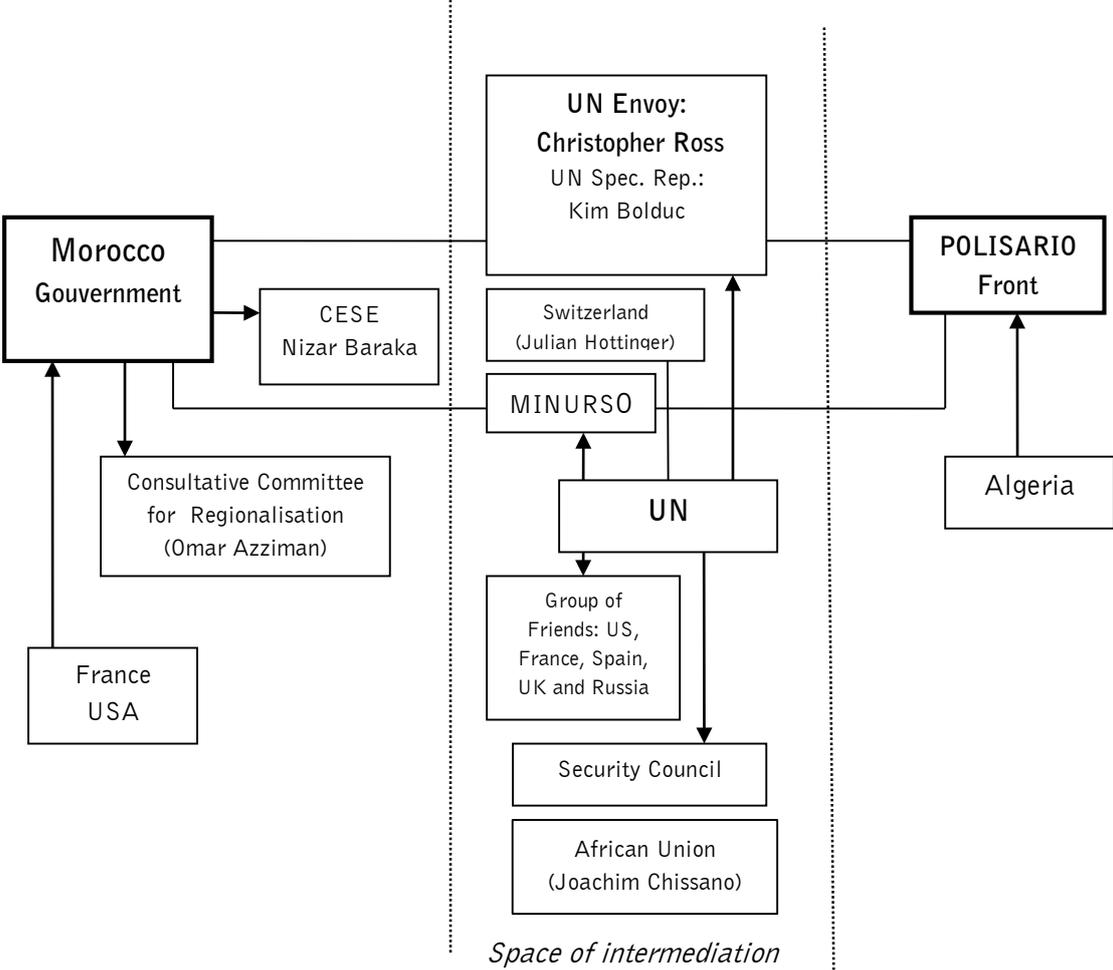
Causes of crises during the year

- Pressure on the leaders of the Polisario Front for them to ensure a better life for the inhabitants of the camps.
- Closeness to smuggling routes and extremist activities in the Sahel.
- Criticisms of the UN for having gone beyond its prerogatives in giving “unilateral and counterproductive assurances” to Morocco without having consulted the Security Council or the Polisario Front.
- At the request of Algeria, the Polisario Front leader, Abdelaziz, did not meet directly with the UN representative on his trip to the refugee camps.

Websites of interest

- Afrol News (www.afrol.com/es/paises/Sahara_occidental)
- ARSO (www.arso.org)
- Gobierno de Marruecos (www.mincom.gov.ma/french/reg_vil/regions/Sáhara)
- ICG (www.crisisgroup.org)
- MINURSO (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minurso)
- Sahara Libre (www.saharalibre.es)
- Sahara Press Service (www.spsrasd.info)
- Social and Economic Council (Morocco) (www.ces.ma)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)

Main parties involved in the process



Latin America

COLOMBIA

Context of the conflict

The armed conflict in Colombia has very deep roots that go beyond the emergence of the present guerrillas in the 1960s. Violence characterised the relations between liberals and conservatives from the 19th century to the National Front regime (1958-1978). In addition, any alternative political option has been repressed. Therefore the emergence of various guerrilla groups in the 1960s and 1970s can be explained by politics that serve the interests of the elite, social exclusion and the lack of democratic opposition parties. Among the guerrilla groups are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (**FARC**) and the National Liberation Army (**ELN**), both of which were formed in 1964. They currently have 10,000 and 3,000 fighters respectively. The violence increased when paramilitary groups such as the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (**AUC**) emerged in the early 1980s to fight against the insurgents. Within this environment of violence, the production and export of drugs and the recent emergence of new paramilitary structures linked to drug trafficking are other factors that make the conflict more complex. The civilian population is the main victim of the conflict.

<p>Population: 48,9 million inhabitants Area: 1,139,000 km² GDP PPA: 616,946 million USD Per capita income: 7.970 USD HDI: 97 (out of 188) Armed actors: FARC, ELN Facilitators: FARC: Norway, Cuba (guarantors); Venezuela, Chile (accompanying) ELN: Norway, Brazil, Ecuador (guarantors); Venezuela, Chile, Cuba (accompanying)</p>
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After five years of investigation, the consulting firm Cifras y Conceptos calculated that 39,000 Colombians were victims of kidnapping in 40 years, with an impunity rate of 92%. Thirty-seven percent of the abductions were attributed to the FARC and 30% to the ELN. Finally, a UNHCR report indicated that there have been 4.7 million forced displacements in Colombia since 1997. Moreover, a report released by the organisation Somos Defensores said that 37 human rights defenders were killed in the first half of the year. It also revealed the conclusions of the report on Historical Memory after six years of work. In late July 2013, after the release of the Centre for Historical Memory's *¡Basta ya!* report, President Santos said that "the state had to recognise its responsibility in the conflict so that we can turn over a new leaf for a Colombia without fear". He added that government players that allied with illegal groups to sow violence in the country had to be tried. As such, he admitted that "through omission or the direct action of some of its members, the state has been responsible for serious human rights violations". The report indicated that between 1958 and 2012, the conflict caused the death of 40,787 combatants and 177,307 civilians. The number of people missing from 1981 to 2010 was 25,000, with 27,023 kidnappings and 150,000 murders. Of the killings, 38.4% were the responsibility of paramilitary forces, 16.8% were caused by guerrillas and 10.1% were caused by the hands of the security forces.

Background to the peace process

Since the 1980s, many efforts have been made to build peace by both actors involved in the conflict and by Colombian society. The FARC's position is to achieve structural changes, especially in agricultural matters, while the ELN has shown its desire to develop a participative mechanism in society to achieve the democratisation of the country. In 1982, President Betancur appealed to the guerrillas to reach a peace agreement. Two years later, the FARC ordered a ceasefire that formally lasted until 1990, when president Gaviria ordered an attack on FARC's command centre. In 1990, after lengthy negotiations, the third guerrilla group in the country, M-19, was demobilised, resulting in the approval of a new constitution in 1991 that formally consolidated the rule of law. In 1991, too, other groups (EPL, PRT, MAQL) were demobilised, followed by CER in 1992, CRS, MPM, MMM and FFG in 1994, and finally MIR-COAR in 1998. With regard to the guerrilla groups that were not demobilised then, in 1991 and 1992, meetings

were held in Caracas and Tlaxcala (Mexico) between the government and the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator group, whose members include the FARC, the ELN and the EPL. However, the 1992 talks were suspended when the FARC assassinated a minister they had kidnapped. In January 1999, the United Nations' Secretary General appointed Jan Egeland as his special advisor for Colombia. Three years later, J. Egeland was replaced by James Lemoyne.

FARC

International support for the peace process with the FARC reached a high point during the presidency of Andrés Pastrana. This president believed that negotiations could take place in the middle of the conflict without a ceasefire agreement. In late 1998, President Pastrana allowed an extensive swath of the country to be demilitarised in order to negotiate with the FARC, with whom he reached a 12-point agenda (Common Agenda for Change towards a New Colombia, or the La Machaca Agenda from May 1999). However, in February 2002 there were several crises and the FARC hijacked an aeroplane, bringing the talks with the FARC to an end. After negotiations with the FARC were broken off, the situation changed dramatically. A new president, Álvaro Uribe, was elected. He introduced a programme of "democratic security", which was based on the militarisation of the civilian population and military combat against the guerrillas. This programme was supported by the USA through the Colombia Plan. Since then, negotiations with the FARC have not resumed beyond attempts to reach a humanitarian agreement. In February 2005, the UN Secretary General suspended his mediation mission to seek rapprochement with the FARC after six years of efforts, acknowledging the impossibility of continuing this mission and maintaining direct contact with the guerrilla leaders. In his investiture speech on the 7th of August 2010, the new president of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, stated that "the doorway to dialogue is not locked", and he added: "During my government, I aspire to sow the seeds for a true reconciliation among Colombians. To the illegal armed groups that cite political reasons and today are speaking once again about dialogue and negotiation, I say that my government will be open to any talk that seeks to eradicate violence and build a more prosperous, equitable and fair society." In early November 2011, after an air attack, the top leader of the FARC, Alonso Cano, died, which opened up a period of uncertainty as to the future of the organisation and a stage of temporary peace talks. He was replaced by Rodrigo Lodoño Echeverri, alias 'Timochenko'. In the second half of November, the president Juan Manuel Santos claimed that he was ready to open the door to dialogue with the FARC guerrillas when he stated that he was convinced that the end to the conflict in Colombia had to come via a political solution. "The key is in my pocket and I am willing to open the doors because I believe that the end should be via a political solution, but I need clear signs that these people are not going to betray the trust of the Colombia people," Santos stated.

The most striking feature of the first few months of 2012 was the information coming from different sources indicating that exploratory talks were taking place abroad between the Colombian government and the FARC, which were confirmed by the President in August, who said that the approaches would be subject to the following guiding principles: 1) to learn from the mistakes of the past so as not to repeat them; 2) any process must lead to ending the conflict and not to prolonging it; and 3) Colombian military operations and presence would be maintained over every centimetre of national territory. The President of Venezuela used his good offices in all these first contacts, in which it was decided that Norway would act as an observer. Later, it was decided that Chile and Venezuela would accompany the process and that Cuba would be a guarantor country like Norway.

At a solemn ceremony in early September 2012, President Santos (in Bogota) and the FARC (in Cuba) announced the beginning of a serious, dignified, realistic and effective peace process and presented a five-point road map: 1) comprehensive agricultural development policy; 2) political participation; 3) an end to the conflict; 4) a solution of the illicit drug problem; and 5) victims. The negotiations were raised under the principle that nothing would be agreed on until everything was agreed on. The rules established for the negotiations were as follows:

- Each negotiating team may have 30 members.
- Up to ten people per delegation may participate in each table session and a maximum of five will be plenipotentiary, meaning able to make decisions.
- The table will invite experts at different points on the agenda; these thematic advisors will not be a permanent part of the negotiations.
- The agreement provides for the publication of regular reports.
- The agreement includes a mechanism for receiving suggestions from the public and organisations regarding the items on the agenda.
- The table is autonomous; nothing that happens in the outside world, including events of the war, can affect the discussions.

The FARC raised the issue of a ceasefire at the start of the talks, but President Santos rejected such a possibility and said it could only be discussed at the end of the process. For the moment, public participation would be directed through the Regional Working Tables, which would encourage the different social stakeholders participating in them to present their proposals on thematic issues of the general agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace. On 19 November, talks on the agreed agenda began in Havana. The FARC unexpectedly announced a unilateral two-month ceasefire to give the talks a positive atmosphere. At the end of the year, the heads of the ELN and the FARC decided to form a united front to negotiate an end to the conflict. In October, the Senate approved a law that would permit a referendum to be held on the day of the presidential elections on whether to approve or reject the peace agreement if such an agreement is eventually reached with the rebels. Furthermore, the United States pledged 68 million USD for the land restitution process. According to some analysts, this would include the massive granting of deeds to prevent the killing of peasants that might dare to trickle back and reclaim their land.

During 2013 negotiations with the FARC continued. Meanwhile, the leaders of the ELN and the FARC decided at the end of the year to present a united front to negotiate an end to the conflict. In October the Senate approved a bill that would allow, in case of a peace agreement with the guerrillas, a referendum on the day of the presidential election to vote either in favour or against the accord. The United States pledged 68 million U.S. dollars for the land restitution process. For some analysts, it would be necessary to issue an enormous amount of land titles to prevent the peasants from being murdered as they dare to return, little by little, and reclaim their land.

At the beginning of February, and after six rounds of talks in Havana, the Colombian government and the FARC reached a deal on various agricultural issues, which was the first item on the agenda. This agreement improved trust between the parties and their willingness to deal with the remaining topics and begin with the second item, political participation. A congressional delegation travelled to Cuba to discuss this point with the guerrillas and also the treatment of victims, which, although it was the last item on the agenda, would require significant consideration by the two delegations. With regard to the land issue, agreements were reached on access and use of land, unproductive land, formalization of property, recovery of land that was obtained illegally, access for farmers without land by creating a 400,000-500,000 hectare land bank, update of the cadastre, agricultural frontier and protection of reserves. According to some media outlets, the parties were negotiating so that the FARC would agree to stay in the areas where they are currently located, to eradicate crops, and to replace or surrender laboratories including the illicit drug routes. The possibility of issuing titles to some of the guerrillas for the land they occupied was on the table providing they committed to making them productive again. Moreover, the FARC proposed creating a high-level commission to study those cases where the guerrillas had allegedly taken land. The commission would include former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, along with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Government, peasants and FARC representatives.

In other matters, the Congressional Peace Commissions promoted the creation of Regional Peace Tables to help bring the conflict to an end, specifically with regard to the issue of victims. The

proposals were systematized by the United Nations, which, together with the National University of Colombia's Center for Thought and Monitoring of the Peace Process, directed by Professor Alejo Vargas, was responsible for organizing various public forums to discuss the issues on the agenda. The conclusions of these meetings were taken to Havana. President Santos said he was in favour of holding a referendum at the end of the process to endorse the agreements with the FARC. Beginning in April regional meetings were organized across the country. They were led by the Congressional Peace Commissions and were responsible for collecting the opinions of victims to bring them to the negotiating table in Havana. In addition, Congressional Peace Commission meetings were held in various European cities to gather input from Colombian immigrants and exiles. There was also a confrontation between the Attorney General, Alejandro Ordóñez, and the Director of Public prosecutions, Eduardo Montealegre. Ordóñez was against negotiations with the FARC, while Montealegre defended the process and was in favour of establishing alternative formulas for the guerrillas. Instead of going to prison once the peace agreement was signed he said that demining the country could be an alternative punishment for the FARC. On April 7 "Pablo Catatumbo", member of the Secretariat of the FARC, joined the negotiating team. The High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, said in a convention that the implementation of all of the parts of the negotiating agenda could take ten years. On May 26 the tenth round of negotiations concluded and both sides issued a statement on the land agreements that had been achieved.

Discussions of the second item on the agenda, political participation, began in June. The FARC asked that elections be postponed for one year to allow time to negotiate all the points on the agenda. The proposal was not accepted by the Government. One of the most difficult points was the FARC's proposal to create a National Constituent Assembly that would act as a peace treaty and a new social contract. This was strongly rejected by the government delegation. As they did with the first point on the agenda, a centre of the National University and the United Nations organized in Bogotá a forum for political participation where different sectors of society could make proposals to be considered in the negotiations in Cuba. The FARC also proposed constitutional changes to the legal and economic order, the tax system and the role of the Bank of the Republic (they asked for popular representation on the board); the restructuring of the army and changes to the national security doctrine; and a territorial chamber to replace the current House of Representatives, in an attempt to consolidate its power on the local and regional level in its area of influence. With regard to their arms, in late June FARC commander "Pablo Catatumbo" said that they are not willing to "put down" their weapons, but that they are willing to "give them up" so that the weapons are no longer used for war. The FARC showed interest in the process used in Northern Ireland regarding the destruction of the arsenal of the IRA and Loyalist paramilitary groups, which was done without the presence of cameras and reporters. In November 2012 a group of Irish parliament members visited President Santos and members of the Government's negotiating team. At the beginning of June 2013 the London-based human rights organization Justice for Colombia (JFC) organized a visit to Havana for a group of politicians from the major parties in Northern Ireland and they met with the FARC negotiating team. In other matters, there was speculation that the political priority of the FARC was the 2015 local and regional elections, more than the 2014 elections to Congress.

At the beginning of August the FARC delegation in Cuba requested ownership and participation in the state media, including its programming, with state funding. Specifically, they requested a newspaper, a theory and policy analysis journal, a radio station and a television channel. Santos asked the UN to actively participate in the post-conflict consolidation. For his part, the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) announced that if the negotiations with the FARC were successful, the bank "could make investments in areas where the State did not have the presence that it could have had." Days later the Government and FARC delegations reported that after discussing and exchanging views, positions and proposals on the second item on the Negotiating Agenda regarding Political Participation, they began to build agreements on rights and guarantees for the political opposition in general and, in particular, for new movements that could arise after the final agreement is signed. In mid-August the FARC leader "Timoshenko" said that "if we achieve a peace deal that is socially just, you can be sure that the weapons will remain

in the background", which does not imply surrendering the weapons to the State. Meanwhile, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Colombia, Fabrizio Hochschild, said that the UN could assist in the verification of the peace agreements. Also in August, the FARC acknowledged for the first time since the beginning of the talks in Havana its share of the responsibility for the thousands of people that had been killed in the armed conflict. The FARC leaders also said that cruelty and pain had been caused by their ranks. They also recognized the need to approach the issue of victims, their identification and reparation, with complete loyalty to the cause of peace and reconciliation. Pablo Catatumbo also expressed the need to immediately create a "commission of national and international experts to do historical research to establish the truth about what happened during the partisan violence of Colombia." In a written statement the FARC also highlighted the need for "collective forgiveness." In the final paragraph of the press release they once again made a public invitation to the national government to sign a special agreement to regulate the conflict, while at the same time honouring the proposed bilateral truce.

In August the Colombian President proposed holding a peace referendum in March or May 2014, which would coincide with the elections. The Colombians would be called to the polls to decide whether they wanted a negotiated settlement to the conflict or continue with the war. To be valid, voter turnout would have to be at least twenty five percent and at least half would have to vote in favour. The talks were suspended for a few days while the two delegations in Cuba held consultations on the president's proposal. The FARC insisted that the mechanism used to approve an eventual peace agreement should be a national constituent assembly. In a separate statement, the FARC asked the Government to implement a special information and communication program aimed at reconciliation and peace with social justice for the general population once an eventual agreement bringing the conflict to an end is signed.

The State Council restored the legal status of the Patriotic Union (UP) political party. The organization was founded by the FARC in the eighties and between 1986 and 1994 many of its members were exterminated by paramilitary and security forces. Several analysts believed that the Council's decision was an endorsement of the FARC's possible return to politics after a peace process including disarmament. On August 21 the FARC presented in Havana its initiatives to stimulate social and political participation in the cities. According to some media outlets the existence of special peace circumscriptions that would allow the FARC to play an active role in politics without resorting to weapons could not be ruled out. At the same time the FARC insisted on creating a committee of national and international jurists with the participation of all of the communities that would study the extent of State's responsibility for the internal conflict of the last decades. In late August, and after six months of intense legal debates, seven of the nine judges on the Constitutional Court approved the Legal Framework for Peace, the Colombian State's roadmap in its negotiations with the rebel groups. The judges said that it did not go against the Constitution and that the State must make investigating and punishing the major crimes committed during the conflict a priority. The Court did, however, set clear limits to the scope of a peace negotiation. Those who wish the benefits of alternative punishments should meet requirements such as bringing the war to an end, laying down arms for once and for all, surrendering any minors in its ranks and handing over the bodies of their victims. The Court also noted that transitional justice measures were needed. The next steps would be for Congress to conduct the rulemaking for the law and the Attorney General to rank or select the punishable crimes and determine who is responsible for them.

Meanwhile, in a letter sent to the Constitutional Court the ICC argued that sentences that are too lenient or a pardon of certain crimes in any agreements reached with the FARC would allow the court to exercise its jurisdiction in the country. The head of the FARC, Timoshenko, rejected the government's decision because it had been taken without consulting the guerrillas. The FARC negotiating team in Cuba said that the group would not accept any legal framework that had been designed unilaterally. In addition, the 4000 proposals made by thousands of victims in the nine Regional Peace Tables, from May to August, were officially presented to Congress. A group of victims of the conflict travelled to Havana to deliver to the parties the proposals collected from different regions of the country. The victims said there was a need to truly clarify what had

happened during the armed conflict and, to that end, demanded the creation of a truth commission, which the FARC had also requested. The guerrillas asked those responsible for drafting the Historical Memory Report to meet in Havana with the delegations participating in the peace talks, in order to make it more complete and establish links with the negotiating table.

In September a civic forum on illegal drugs, which was the fourth point of the peace agreement, was held in Bogotá. During the month a crisis erupted between the FARC and the Government, since the latter took several unilateral decisions, such as a referendum to approve the agreements with the FARC and the rejection of the request by the FARC to convene a national constituent assembly at the end of the peace process. Later in the month FARC leader "Timoshenko" denied that he had threatened to breach the confidentiality of the process. In this regard it is worth mentioning that to date the FARC's usual procedure has been to make almost daily statements and make all of their proposals public. Conversely, the Government has decided to be more reserved and discreet. President Santos reshuffled his government in late September and appointed a peace cabinet, a team of trusted people to help implement the rural development agreements that had been reached with the FARC.

In the middle of the discussion on the second point of the agenda, political participation, the FARC approved a document entitled "Guarantees for political and social participation of peasant, indigenous and afro-descendant communities, as well as other excluded social sectors", which implies that the group is not only trying to obtain guarantees for themselves. A few days later they released another document entitled "Nine minimum proposals on political culture for participation, peace and national reconciliation, the right to protest and social and popular mobilization". They also called on the Government to create a Commission of Revision and Clarification of the Truth of the History of the Internal Conflict in Colombia to complement the report prepared by the Historical Memory Group and other major initiatives that already existed or were under way.

Already in October pressure on the FARC delegation was stepped up to accelerate the pace of negotiations because there was concern that there would not be time to sign a final agreement before the elections. Thus, a discussion began over whether it was better to temporarily suspend the talks during the 2014 election period or, conversely, continue the negotiations right up to the last moment. The FARC said that if a pause was proposed it should be tied to a bilateral truce, which President Santos rejected. This debate came with other complaints by the Government that the FARC want to consider items in the preamble (the whereas clauses) as part of the Agenda, which would mean having to discuss structural issues that were not included in the agenda itself. In relation to social movements the FARC also proposed a national event where the most representative social organizations could reach a democratic and binding agreement on a regulatory framework that would guarantee their existence.

In November President Santos approved changes to the methodology being used in the negotiations with the FARC, with longer rounds of discussions and shorter breaks. He also included two women in the Cuban talks, Maria Paulina Riveros (former director of Human Rights of the Interior Ministry) and Nigeria Renteria, a lawyer. It was also made public that the Government would create Special Peace Circumscriptions in the House of Representatives, not with the idea of guaranteeing a seat in Parliament for the FARC leaders, but so that the inhabitants of the areas that had suffered the most during the conflict could run for office, and also so that the social movements, victims' organizations and human rights organizations in these regions could compete democratically with the political parties. Mid-month the Government and the FARC announced from Havana a 15-point agreement on political participation. With regard to the third item on the Agenda, which began in November and dealt with illegal crops, the head of the FARC delegation in the Cuban negotiations, "Iván Márquez", said that they should consider legalizing drug use. This would mean that the coca leaf could be sold freely, but not cocaine, he said. The technical committees on both sides worked separately on the issue of illicit crops and presented reports to the negotiators that would act as a basis for the talks.

In December 2013 the FARC declared a truce (ceasefire and end to hostilities) from December 15 to January 15. The statement came after the chief negotiators of the Government and the FARC met behind closed doors to analyze the tension created by a FARC attack. At the end of the year the FARC also released a twelve-point plan to create a Constituent Assembly that would have 141 members and would approve the agreements reached in the peace process.

During the first quarter 2014, the discussions on illicit crops continued in Havana, where the negotiations with the FARC were being held. The FARC delegation was joined by "Fabian Ramirez", head of the Southern Bloc, which meant that all of the blocs had representatives in Havana. In March the FARC leader "Timoshenko" called on the Government to sign a mutual ceasefire and make peace, to avoid permitting impunity for acts of war. Also in March the FARC relaunched their proposal to create a Commission of Revision and Clarification of the Truth of the History of the Internal Conflict in Colombia, which would go back to 1936. The Government commission in the Havana peace talks said that there would be a Truth Commission after the peace agreement was signed, but not before. The ELN guerrillas, meanwhile, said that if a peace process were launched it would also include reparation for victims. A short time later former Senator Piedad Cordoba, the representative for the organization Colombians for Peace, launched an initiative to establish a Reconciliation Committee made up of military personnel and guerrilla fighters in prison. The proposal was endorsed by the Government.

In mid-May, after five months of negotiations, the Government and the FARC reached an agreement on the fourth item on the agenda dealing with the problem of illicit drugs. The parties agreed to discuss at a later date six sub-items related to this discussion point, which included the extradition of FARC members for drug trafficking. The agreement included measures such as the presentation of alternatives that lead to improving the welfare and well-being of the communities living in the areas affected by illicit crops, dealing with drug abuse using a public health focus, public participation in community meetings to solve the problem, creating a new Comprehensive National Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, manual crop substitution in those cases where growers decide not to participate in the replacement program, ensuring that mines are cleared from coca-growing areas, the creation of a National Program for Comprehensive Action against Illicit Drug use, strengthening the institutional presence and effectiveness in the investigation and punishment of crimes associated with the drug trade, fighting against the corruption associated with drug trafficking, and promoting an International Conference within the UN framework to review the fight against drugs. A few days earlier the FARC and the ELN issued a joint statement declaring a unilateral ceasefire for eight days during the presidential campaign. During a forum for peace in Bogota indigenous Colombians asked the Government and the guerrillas to declare a bilateral ceasefire and to allow ancestral authorities to participate in the Havana negotiations with the FARC. They also proposed activating a National Indigenous Peace Council to enable their participation in the negotiations. Also in May the Government of Chile, which was acting as an "accompanying country" in the peace process with the FARC, appointed the socialist Luis Maira as a delegate for Chile in the negotiations.

In late May, after President Santos came in second in the presidential election and a second round of voting was needed, the Government launched the National Peace Council to begin a national education campaign on the end of the conflict. This was done in close collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and was organized on the department level and not centrally. President Santos also said that in the future they would analyze the way in which the National Peace Council could participate in a possible dialogue with the ELN. On the same day a surprising statement was made by presidential candidate Óscar Iván Zuluaga, who won in the first round. He said that if he became president he would continue the talks in Cuba with the FARC, under conditions and terms that would guarantee visible progress. He said specifically that the FARC should bring an end to child recruitment and make a solid commitment to participating in demining activities. Until then he had strongly opposed continuing negotiations with the guerrillas, so this new approach was thought to be an election stunt. A week before the second round, and with the polls running against President Santos, the Government and the FARC surprised everyone by releasing a "Statement of Principles for the discussion of item 5 of the

agenda: "Victims", in which they recognized their responsibility in the conflict and pledged to let the victims have a voice in the discussions. At the same time, the FARC announced a unilateral ceasefire during the last week of the election campaign.

In late June Assistant Ombudsman Esiquio Manuel Sánchez Herrera confirmed that a meeting of the National Victims Roundtable had been held the previous week in the capital of the Republic, with the Ombudsman acting as Technical Secretariat. As a result of the meeting the leaders of the victims' organizations chose the first group that would go to Havana to participate in item 5 of the agenda in the talks between the Government and the FARC. In early July, Archbishop Luis Augusto Castro, a devoted backer of the peace negotiations, was named president of the Episcopal Conference. In the second half of the month the FARC and ELN issued a joint statement to Congress saying that what was agreed at the negotiating table should "be included in a grand peace treaty and it should be set in stone by the sovereign decision of the people so that it would endure for generations to come." The fact that the statement was signed by Timoleon Jimenez "Timoshenko" head of the FARC, and Nicholas Rodriguez "Gabino", maximum leader of the ELN, gave the impression that the Government was trying to get the ELN to accept everything that had been agreed so far with the FARC.

In early August the Constitutional Court ruled on the second and final lawsuit against the Legal Framework for Peace, and left it to Congress to define what would be considered political crimes. The Framework is a constitutional amendment passed in 2012 that allows some of the thousands of crimes committed during the armed conflict to not be prosecuted, and make a priority the selection of only the worst crimes to bring to trial. On day 5 the FARC and the Government issued a joint statement (number 40) with measures for the successful visit to Havana of the victims, the Commission on the History of the conflict and its victims, the "end of conflict" sub-committee and the gender sub-committee. Thus, in the second half of the month the Commission on the History of the conflict and its victims was created. It included 12 experts (six appointed by the Government and six by the FARC) and two rapporteurs; only one woman was elected. The Commission was given four months to draft a report that would serve as a tool for the future Truth Commission, which would be created at the end of the negotiations. The first face to face meeting also took place between the 12 people representing the victims and the two delegations negotiating in Havana. The list of participants was put together by the National University, the Episcopal Conference and the United Nations (UNDP), following previously agreed criteria. In turn, president Santos appointed retired general and former police chief Oscar Naranjo as Minister-Counsellor of Post-Conflict, Security and Human Rights. Naranjo will be responsible for creating, organizing and coordinating post-conflict policies and programs through the Ministry of Public Safety and will act as an advisor to modernize security, demobilization and reintegration models. The appointment stirred controversy as some sectors suspected that in the future the police would not be part of the Ministry of Defence, which is common in most countries. At the end of the month the National Federation of Departments (FND) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a cooperation agreement to provide information about the agreements finally reached at the negotiating table with regard to land and rural development. Citizens from all regions will thus have a clear and direct understanding of the country's post-conflict agricultural roadmap.

In September the FARC proposed creating a comprehensive victim's compensation fund, consisting of 3% of the country's GDP. Moreover, a public debate was sparked by the decision by the negotiating parties to establish a "Subcommittee on Laying Down Arms and Incorporation into civilian life", with up to 10 members from each of the delegations, which would deal with the issues such as surrendering weapons and a bilateral ceasefire. The Government announced the creation of the "Strategic Transition Command", made up of active military personnel and police officers. The Command would be headed by General Javier Flórez and would be responsible for all of the technical issues surrounding the disarmament. In response to the Government initiative the FARC said they would be willing to create a guerrilla "Normalization Command", which would study how to restore the insurgent force to its constitutional role and dismantle the counterinsurgency battalions. They also proposed creating a Committee for the investigation of

paramilitary groups, which should not be confused with the Truth Commission. Before these proposals President Santos had stated that the security forces would not be reformed as a result of the negotiations. This is never the case after a peace agreement is signed, since security system reform is always necessary. President Santos also said that "the FARC would not surrender their arms to the national Army, but they would lay down their arms", which implies that a classic DDR program (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) would not take place and raises the possibility that the weapons could be surrendered to an international commission.

The second group of victims travelled to Havana in the second half of September. Meanwhile, the victims of the FARC declared they would create their own historical commission. A few days earlier the Government and the FARC created a gender subcommittee in the context of the talks (provided for in the June 7 agreement). This is the third subcommittee to be created, along with the subcommittee for disarmament and the panel of experts on the history of the conflict. Also in September, during the General Assembly of the United Nations, the President of Colombia met with the UN Secretary General who expressed his willingness to provide assistance in the post-conflict stage in areas such as economic cooperation, verification of the agreements and the return to civilian life by those who lay down their arms. Any involvement by the UN must be approved by the FARC. In mid-September simultaneous "International Victims' Forums" were organized in cities around the world. This initiative was supported by UNHCR, the Government of Colombia, the FARC and the ELN. At the end of the month, and to counter some criticisms and malicious rumours from sectors that are opposed to the talks, the Government and the FARC decided to make public all the agreements reached to date. Around the same time the country was concerned with the rise in the number of threats against human rights defenders, left-wing politicians, demobilized guerrillas and social leaders, in an attempt to defy the sectors in favour of the negotiation with the insurgents. In addition to all of these problems it was discovered at the end of September that the phones and email accounts of the head negotiators, the Government's chief envoy Humberto de la Calle and the head of communications for the FARC, had been illegally intercepted, probably by members of sectors opposed to the smooth progress of the negotiations.

In October it was reported that the leader of the FARC, "Timochenko", was given authorization to travel to Cuba for a meeting with the FARC negotiating team. At the end of that same month new members of the FARC delegation travelled to Cuba. These were all members of the military structures that were going to hold talks with the Colombian military related to the ceasefire and laying down arms, among others issues. FARC spokesman "Iván Márquez" said that "laying down arms" was understood by the FARC as "not using them in politics", which seemed to indicate that for the time being the group had no intention of "surrendering" its weapons, but simply "silencing them", which raised serious concern in those areas of government involved in the talks. While discussions continued with the victims who had travelled to Havana, the FARC suggested that both the guerrillas and members of the security forces should be recognized as victims if they had suffered the consequences of violations of international humanitarian law. Moreover, the FARC negotiators proposed the creation of a special commission to study the situation of political prisoners, and a census of victims of the conflict that would be conducted in the eighteen months following the signing of an eventual peace agreement with the Government. At the end of October the FARC's "Pablo Catatumbo" admitted the damage that the 50 years of conflict had caused Colombians. He said that "it is clear that we have actively intervened in the conflict, we attacked the enemy and in some ways affected the population that has been immersed in the conflict ... We explicitly recognize that our actions have affected civilians at different times and under different circumstances throughout the war, and that because it has lasted for so long it has caused greater and multiple impacts, but it was never the reason for our existence".

An incident occurred in November that threatened to destabilize the situation when the FARC captured a Colombian Army general who appeared, in plain clothes and without much protection, in a town of Chocó controlled by the FARC. Both the Government and many media outlets described it as a "kidnapping". The general was held for two weeks, during which the Government temporarily suspended the Cuban talks. The crisis ended after the FARC unilaterally released the

general and his two companions. When the talks resumed the two delegations agreed on some new rules, including that no one would leave the negotiating table no matter what happened in Colombia, and the guarantor countries would play a more active role as mediators if a new crisis arose.

At the beginning of December the International Criminal Court (ICC) said that an eventual peace agreement with the FARC should be compatible with the Rome Statute and legal proceedings that do not comply with this condition and are described as "not authentic" or "not genuine" could come under ICC jurisdiction. Meanwhile, in Havana the immediate goal was to reduce the impact of dispute by following the recommendations made by Professor Carlos Medina, who suggested a "de-escalation" of the conflict. In turn, the leader of the FARC sent a message to the Armed Forces that stated that "the old conceptions of total war must make way for other notions of security that emphasize the true national interests, those of the large majorities, not the wealthy and selfish elites". In response to the debate raging at the time over the uncertain legal future of many members of the military, President Santos said they would have legal certainty in the post-conflict era and that they would have access to transitional justice within the Legal Framework for Peace. Halfway through the month the International Crisis Group (ICG) published a report on the FARC and the end of the conflict that recommended granting the FARC a role in the reintegration, taking advantage of its cohesion, promoting local transitional justice, a bilateral ceasefire that goes into effect immediately after signing the peace agreement preceded by a de-escalation of the conflict, the urgent implementation of development programs in the FARC's areas of influence, establishment of an international commission to oversee the disarmament and ceasefire, security sector reform, a commitment to long-term financing, the transfer of demobilized combatants to assembly zones, storing weapons under international supervision rather than delivering them directly to the state, establishing a detailed schedule for the first phase of the transition, establishing a joint mechanism to monitor the implementation of peace agreements in their entirety, the participation of members of the FARC as a rural police or having them participate in highway construction and demining, the possibility of joining individual or collective integration plans, giving the FARC joint responsibility for managing reintegration programs with adequate gender and ethnic focus and ensuring that transitional justice mechanisms are compatible with reintegration incentives for rank-and-file members.

On December 17 the FARC announced an indefinite unilateral ceasefire and an end to hostilities that would begin on December 20, and which should lead to an armistice. The FARC stated that it wanted UNASUR, CELAC, the CIGP and the Broad Front for Peace to provide oversight for the process, which the Government quickly rejected since it wanted no international supervision. The FARC stated that the unilateral ceasefire would obviously be terminated only if its guerrilla organization were attacked by security forces. An additional condition for the ceasefire was the acceptance of international oversight, which, given the Government's response, meant that the proposal was useless. Despite these initial reactions, these institutions finally fulfilled their mission. In a statement to the Colombian military, and using terms from the antiwar school of thought, the FARC said "both sides know the reality of this confrontation and we know that nobody wants to be the last one to die in a war that is drawing to a close. It does not make any sense for more people to die or be injured or affected by the conflict".

At the end of December a public presentation was made of the Popular Mentors for Peace network, promoted by the District of Bogotá and with government support, to train thousands of volunteers that would explain to the public the peace agreements reached with the FARC. "Peace education" was considered crucial before an eventual citizens' referendum of the agreement with the insurgency, and it was also important not to forget the negative experience in Guatemala in this regard. The visits to Havana by a total of 60 victims of the conflict to explain their personal experiences also came to a close. In this regard the apology that FARC commander "Pablo Catatumbo" offered to the victims of the 2002 slaughter of Bojayá (Chocó) was noteworthy for its symbolism. In the meantime another member of the FARC Secretariat, Southern Bloc commander "Joaquín Gómez", arrived in Havana to join the FARC team that will discuss military issues with members of the Colombian Armed Forces. For the FARC this new addition was a sign

of its determination to move towards the signing of a final agreement. Also at the end of the year, another FARC commander, "Pastor Alape", said in Cuba that the FARC would be willing to decouple children under age 15 from their ranks and consider demining.

The peace process in 2015

In early January, President Santos met with his negotiating team and his international advisors (William Ury from Harvard University; Joaquín Villalobos, a former Salvadoran guerrilla; Jonathan Powel, former head of Tony Blair's cabinet; and Shlomo Ben Ami, the former chancellor of Israel) to take stock of 2014 and look towards 2015. In the new year, there would be a stage of "simultaneity" of negotiation topics, such as military issues discussed in parallel, or the government's proposal to create a special commission to step up the searches for disappeared persons. He also announced that due to the headway made in the negotiations, the principle of negotiation in the midst of the conflict may no longer be needed in the sense of continuing to wage offensive operations, rendering this "disconnection" meaningless. Santos started the year with the goal of lowering the intensity of the conflict (also called de-escalation), earning the concurrence of the FARC, which issued a communique saluting the government's new position. A general from the armed forces later stated that the de-escalation of the conflict could mean an end to the bombardments. The president gave his negotiators instructions to start the talks on the point regarding the bilateral, permanent cessation of hostilities as soon as possible, which sparked a great deal of confusion in academia, politics and journalist circles, who believed that this clearly and automatically meant that the FARC would have to turn in its weapons. Santos, in turn, sanctioned the law to approve a future peace agreement via referendum, which outlined the rules for holding constitutional referenda. The norm stipulated that these consultations could be held at the same time as elections; ensured the publication of the Final Agreement; allowed campaigns in favour or against it or in favour of abstention; and guaranteed those activists equitable access to the media. The FARC's position on this matter, even though it had not yet entered the discussion phase, was that there should be a referendum and a constituent assembly, cited as a Referendum Assembly, which the Final Agreement would reach similar to an Oil Agreement.

In the second half of January, several national and regional organisations, as well as the government itself, noted that the FARC had largely respected the unilateral ceasefire. In an interview with *El Tiempo*, General Óscar Naranjo, one of the negotiators from the government of Cuba, stated that in order to make the bilateral ceasefire agreement come to fruition, the FARC had to stop recruiting minors, demine more than 650 towns (11,000 mine victims, both dead and injured, have been recorded since 1990) and reveal the truth of what happened to thousands of disappeared persons, aspects to which the FARC agreed. However, the General issued a surprising statement by saying that "the guerrillas should be billeted and protected in order to verify fulfilment of the agreement". This condition is similar to the one that led to the failure of the negotiations with the ELN in April 2007, and it was probably neither necessary nor imperative, while it would place one of the parties, the FARC, in a completely defenceless position. In any event, it was an issue that the parties had to discuss during the early months of the year. Also surprising was the statement that "when we talk about bilateral ceasefire we are talking about a permanent ceasefire, forever," when in the history of armed conflicts there are countless examples of ruptures of bilateral ceasefires for a host of different reasons. What everyone wishes does not always happen because it is the best situation. Finally, it is worth noting that Spain, which became a member of the Security Council in 2015 through its Minister of Foreign Affairs, suggested that the European Union create a "peace mission" that could "coach" Colombia in its "demilitarisation" process when the government signs a peace agreement with the FARC. This mission would be accompanied by the creation of a fiduciary fund that would "finance the post-conflict", as President Santos requested during his European tour in November 2014. "Spain," said the minister, "would play a key role in supporting the Colombian state in its tasks of demilitarisation, demobilisation and demining."

The FARC once again stressed the need for the final peace agreements to be approved by the entire population of Colombia, contradicting the opinion expressed by the Attorney General,

Eduardo Montealegre, who had stated that from the legal or constitutional vantage point this was not necessary. In late February, however, some media reported that the FARC would not accept the referendum and that, as an alternative, they would propose a new constituent assembly. Another source of controversy was the publication of a book by the president's brother, the journalist and participant in the exploratory phase Enrique Santos, providing details on how the process began, thus violating the confidentiality of any exploratory phase. Another report that sparked controversy was the dissemination of a study by the General Comptroller's Office of the Republic, which revealed that the investment in resources required by the Colombian state in the event that the FARC might be demobilised would be between 655 and 983 million euros, based on the demobilisation experience of the AUC and armed individuals. In the opinion of the author of this Yearbook, the calculation of 65,500 to 98,300 euros per person is truly excessive and deviates from all international norms related to DDR. Regarding this issue, the president did not discard the possibility of allowing demobilised FARC members to join the Rural Police, a proposal that was rejected by the governor of Antioquia, Sergio Fajardo, stating that this would spark tensions, mistrust and fear in regions that had formerly been occupied by the guerrillas. On a visit to France, Santos stated that the French model of gendarmes might be of interest to Colombia. The mayor of Bogotá, Gustavo Petro, expressed his support of an initiative of this kind in order to prevent demobilised persons from falling into crime. On other matters, the Minister of Defence stated that after the peace agreement is signed, the reduction in the armed forces might take between 5 and 10 years and that in a post-conflict scenario, the armed forces might play an important role in rebuilding infrastructures, protecting biodiversity and participating in international peace missions.

In February, round 32 of the negotiations resumed in Havana with a discussion on what model of truth, justice and reparations for the victims should be applied. A great deal of time was spent on the discussion on gender violence and violations of women's rights. The government had 19.3 million euros to pay reparations to the victims until 2021, a risible amount compared to the FARC's proposal of earmarking 3% of the GDP to a victim reparation fund, while also requesting that military expenditures be lowered to 1% of the GDP. The FARC reiterated their commitment to abandon armed activity and become a political party if the government fulfilled the reforms and guarantees they had requested. At the same time, the logistics of what is known as the Commission on End-of-Conflict Issues (its real name is the Sub-committee on Laying Down of Weapons and Integration into Civilian Life) began to get underway. President Santos gave instructions to begin discussing the points related to "de-escalating" the conflict, although there had already been a notable decline in the number of victims as a result of the clashes, which both sides were trying to avoid. Both the government and the FARC issued statements in favour of pledging to demine, even by performing joint actions at the end of negotiations. In parallel, General Javier Flórez and Colonel Vicente Sarmiento (the leading members of the Strategic Command for Transition) on behalf of the government, and the guerrilla leaders "Joaquín Gómez" and "Carlos Lozada" (in charge of what is called the Guerrilla Command for Normalisation) began to define the rules of the game of the Sub-committee on Laying Down of Weapons and Integration into Civilian Life, which includes topics like a permanent, bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, laying down weapons (the government drew from the experiences in El Salvador and Nepal, with the participation of the United Nations, while the FARC drew from the experience of Northern Ireland) and the reincorporation of the guerrilla movement into civilian life, with full guarantees of security, transitional justice to be applied to both the guerrillas and the public forces, and, according to some sources, attempts to develop an "inventory" of the FARC to ensure that no structure remained outside when signing the peace agreement. The sub-committee may also invite renowned experts in the matter, based on a list presented by the guarantor countries (Norway and Cuba) or by common agreement. All of the issues are extraordinarily complex and the two sides are starting from very divergent positions. The sub-committee is only technical; it will not negotiate and it will have brief three- to four-day cycles for each round of negotiations. The topics will be brought to the negotiating table once the issue of victims is concluded. The conceptualisation and application of the transitional justice to be implemented at the end of the negotiations is inevitably a recurring topic of discussion. The debate was coloured by a Supreme Court finding which stated that "law cannot be an obstacle for

peace, and no legal institution can be a 'straitjacket' to impede the construction of this common good". Its spokesman stated that non-punitive forms of transitional justice should be negotiated in Havana, and that when the guerrillas laid down their weapons they should rejoin civilian life.

Point 7 of the joint statement, Havana, 12th of February 2015, on the Technical Sub-committee from point 3 of the "End of conflict" agenda

- Guarantees that the FARC-EP will rejoin civilian life – economically, socially and politically, in accordance with its interests.
- A review of the status of private individuals who are free or on trial or sentenced because they belong to or collaborate with the FARC-EP.
- An intensification of the fight to put an end to criminal organisations and their support networks, including the fight against corruption and impunity.
- The institutional revision, reform and adjustments needed to deal with the challenges of peace-building.
- Security guarantees.
- Elucidation of the phenomenon of paramilitarism, among other phenomena.

The Dialogue Table will create the mechanisms needed to address these topics.

In mid-February, the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims, made up of 12 scholars, launched a debate on the causes of the armed conflict in the country. The historians did not reach a consensus after five months of work, which ended with a report more than 800 pages long. The reporters were Eduardo Pizarro and Víctor Moncayo, and the report was expected to help the future Truth Commission. Nonetheless, all the authors agreed that the agenda in Havana was the right way to deal with the country's problems. They also concurred that the responsibility for the war was shared by the FARC, the state and the paramilitary organisations, although they had major discrepancies over the legitimacy of the armed struggle started by the insurgents. The reporters stressed the "basic consensus" among the members of the commission on the factors that contributed to prolonging the conflict, such as the agricultural structure, the lack of mechanisms to guarantee land ownership, the scant presence of state institutions in rural areas and problems with drug trafficking and corruption. Another important development at the end of round 32 was the FARC's announcement that it would henceforth not recruit anyone under the age of 17 to its guerrillas. According to the government, around 2,500 minors had left the ranks of the FARC in the past 13 years. The FARC pledged to turn in 13 minors aged 15. Another topic that caught the public's attention was the declarations made by former president, César Gaviria, aimed at applying transitional justice to all the actors in the conflict (military officers, businessmen, politicians, judges, etc.), and not only to the guerrillas. His words were warmly received by both the FARC and the members of the armed forces. President Santos stated that these "non-combatant" sectors, who might number as many as 13,000 individuals, should also benefit from transitional justice if they contribute to truth and reparation. Santos also stated that he understood the guerrillas' position of not wanting to spend even a single day in prison, and that transitional justice was designing alternative punishments to prison. The head of the government's negotiation team, Humberto De la Calle, declared that for the transitional justice agreements reached with the FARC to be internationally accepted, this justice could be based on the ruling by the Inter-American Human Rights Court on a massacre that took place in El Salvador which determined that multilateral authorities could not be an obstacle to peace. The case was resolved by a Truth Commission. However, De la Calle stressed that transitional justice did not mean total impunity for the FARC.

In the second half of February, the United States government appointed a veteran diplomat, Bernard "Bernie" Aronson, as its delegate to continue the peace process with the FARC, although he had no executive functions. This appointment was celebrated by all sectors, including the FARC, who interpreted it as explicit support for the development of the negotiations. Aronson had worked as the Deputy Secretary of State for Latin America and had experience in the peace processes in El Salvador and Nicaragua. He had plans to travel to Cuba to meet with both negotiating delegations separately. Days before his trip, the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, visited Cuba to provide an impetus for the peace process. With regard to the United

States, Santos said that he was not in favour of extraditing the members of the FARC after the peace process was concluded and that he had already discussed this matter with US government officials.

In March, the High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, declared that justice had to be separated from truth so that the latter could do its work. He also stated that he wanted a peace that would break with the historical cycles of violence and its association with politics, and that the transitional justice should contribute to building peace in the region. In the first few days of the month, the Sub-committee on Laying Down of Weapons and Integration into Civilian Life began to operate. Its members on behalf of the government were four generals and an admiral, who would work parallel at the negotiating table, but only three days in each round. On behalf of the FARC, the head of this sub-committee was "Carlos Antonio Lozada" and on behalf of the government it was General Javier Flórez. This sub-committee had to listen to 20 experts on military issues suggested by Norway, a guarantor country. The Post-Conflict Ministry, in turn, planned to get around 10,000 soldiers involved in future demining jobs once the peace agreement is signed. Several countries expressed an interest in collaborating on this matter, led by Japan's ambassador to the UN and diplomats from the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Holland and United Nations agencies, such as its Mine Action Service and UNICEF. Around the same time, the FARC and the government reached a historical joint demining agreement for the region with the help of the civil organisation Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which will lead and coordinate the project. This organisation has more than 20 years of experience in this field. The agreement stipulated choosing an initial number of sites to demine, preferably the zones affected the most but without excessive clashing between the armed forces at the FARC at this time. The goal is to talk with the communities in these regions, to verify the jobs performed, to enlist the support of the guarantor countries, civilian medical staff, and to achieve guarantees that further mining will not occur. Preliminary calculations estimated that the demining operation of 688 towns (63% of the country) might take 10 years and cost 200 million dollars. The participating guerrillas would wear civilian clothing. Organisations like the OAS stated that there were no heavily mined regions in Colombia (in terms of density), while other specialised centres indicated that the cost might be much lower and that at time the extent of mine contamination was unknown. The Peace Commissioner stated that he would lift the capture orders for a few guerrillas so that they could help to identify the areas with the most mines. Other members of the FARC might be trained for the demining jobs.

Joint statement # 52. Havana, 7th of March 2015.

AGREEMENT ON LAND CLEAN-UP AND DECONTAMINATION FROM THE PRESENCE OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES (APMs), IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (IEDs) AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXOs) OR EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR (ERWs) IN GENERAL.

Within the framework of de-escalation, seeking to move forward in building trust and in order to contribute to create security conditions for the inhabitants of risk zones due to the presence of land mines, improvised explosive devices, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war, an in order to provide non-repetition guarantees to the communities, the Government and the FARC – EP have agreed to ask the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) organization to lead and coordinate the implementation of a land clean-up and decontamination project from APMs, IEDs, UXOs and ERWs. In order to ensure the continuity of the process, the possibility of including other organizations already accredited or accreditable in Colombia will be left open.

- Site selection: The National Government and the FARC – EP will select an initial number of sites to be subject to a first clean-up and decontamination phase within the framework of de-escalation. The decontamination efforts will prioritize those sites where the population is at greater risk of being affected by the presence of APMs, IEDs, UXOs and ERWs, based on information available to the National Government and the FARC – EP, and taking into consideration the information provided by specialized organizations and the communities.

-Information gathering using Non-Technical Survey (NTS) Teams. An NPA team will conduct the NTS within the selected areas, with the participation in each NTS team of members representing the FARC – EP and National Government technicians, as required. The NTS shall accurately identify the areas

actually contaminated with APMs, IEDs, UXOs and ERWs, resorting as well to the support provided by local communities in the vicinity of contaminated areas.

The NTS will be carried out in a traditional manner with a questionnaire to be previously submitted to the National Government and the FARC – EP (which will include socio-economic impact data). The questionnaire shall be developed specifically for Colombia. The team will evaluate all available information, shall consult key information sources and will also speak with men and women who live in the affected areas. The results of the NTS will be the basis for the development of a clean-up and decontamination plan.

Clean-up and decontamination using multi-task teams. The NPA shall form multi-task teams aimed at clearing confirmed dangerous areas from the threat of APMs, IEDs and UXOs or ERWs, mark the areas that will not be cleared during the pilot project, and ensure that local communities understand the risks associated to APMs, IEDs and UXOs or ERWs (by means of risk education).

In an initial phase, each multi-task team will be comprised by an NPA coordination and verification leader and the Government's technicians. The Government will designate the Demining Engineers Battalion (BIDES, for its acronym in Spanish) for the mine removal. The entire clean-up and decontamination process will be accompanied by two members each from the Government, the FARC – EP and the communities.

The Government will speed up the NPA's certification process in order to move forward on other phases of this project, agreed by the National Government and the FARC – EP, and will also engage the support of civilian demining teams.

The clean-up and decontamination of the confirmed dangerous areas will be carried out pursuant to international and national standards.

Dialogue with the communities. During the implementation of the clean-up and decontamination process, an ongoing and close dialogue will be maintained between the NPA and the communities, in order to create trust on the quality of the clean-up and decontamination or removal operations, and information exchange on APMs, IEDs, UXOs and ERWs with the multi-task teams will be promoted by the communities.

Verification. In order to ensure that the clean-up and decontamination or removal operations comply with the necessary standards and to ensure that the territory is free of any suspected presence of APMs, IEDs and UXOs or ERWs, the NPA will conduct a systematic verification in accordance with best international practices and standards. The verification and the entire process involving the clean-up and decontamination operations will be accompanied by two National Government delegates, two representatives designated for said purpose by the FARC – EP, and two representatives from the communities.

Formal delivery to the national and local authorities and the communities. The NPA verification team, along with the delegates of the National Government and the FARC – EP, will formally deliver the decontaminated lands to the local community representatives and authorities.

The guarantors will accompany this project's activities.

The National Government and the FARC – EP will establish a technical group to determine the sites and the roadmap for the implementation of this measure, including the forms and specificities of their participation in the project.

The National Government undertakes to guarantee the necessary technical and material resources and the transport logistics required by the NPA –which will be of a humanitarian nature- for the commissioning of the initiative, and to adopt the necessary measures for the recovery of the affected goods and services. Medical support personnel will be civilian. The Government will keep the Dialogue Table informed about all resources provided.

The National Government and the FARC – EP undertake to maintain the areas clean and decontaminated, thus providing non-repetition guarantees to the communities.

The Dialogue Table will establish a mechanism to report the progress and compliance with the implementation of this de-escalation measure, which is a mutual commitment.

The NPA will certify that the site is free from any suspected presence of APMs, IEDs, UXOs and ERWs.

Two days after this agreement, on the 9th of March, the government gave the order to temporarily suspend the bombardments of the FARC camps (initially for a one-month period, which could be extended) as a measure to de-escalate the armed conflict and in response to FARC's fulfilment of its unilateral ceasefire. The extension was also linked to the FARC continuing to honour its commitment to the ceasefire. The president also announced that a nine-member Peace Advisory Committee had been created, three of them women. This committee travelled to Havana to participate in the 34th round of talks. The FARC expressed its disagreement with the composition of the committee since it was exclusionary; however, it believed that it was positive that it allowed for people from the opposition. On the other hand, the FARC asked that a committee be created on archives and access to reserved information, made up of experts along with representation of the guerrillas. This committee was supposed to organise and launch the process of opening and declassifying the archives. The committee should also have information that is in the hands of the U.S. government. In an interview, the commander of the FARC, "Iván Márquez", stated that in the negotiations the government had not wanted to discuss the issue of the large estates, that it resisted the FARC's proposal to put limits to selling off land, and that the issue of mining-energy exploitation and their environmental impact had not been resolved. With regard to the controversy on the farian concept of "laying down weapons", he stated that this meant "not using them in politics" and added that this did not work for the insurgency but for the state, its armed forces and its police. He added that "after the peace agreement, weapons should be silenced and the army should return to its constitutional function of defending the borders".

In mid-March, the Universidad Nacional, the Universidad Externado, the Universidad de los Andes and the Universidad Javeriana announced an academic alliance to analyse the peace process in the country and to open up a space of debate which might lead to proposals. In March, too, a controversy was unleashed over the absence of General Mora in the negotiations in Havana, as he was accompanying the president of Colombia at several meetings with military battalions of the country to explain the advances in the peace process. This led to the withdrawal of three generals appointed by the Colombian Association of Retired Officers, who were very critical of the negotiations, who advised the government in the negotiations free of charge and apparently did not share the government delegation's approach. On another front, in late March, upon request from the congresswoman Clara Rojas, the FARC responded that they had expressed their willingness and invited Colombian society as a whole to participate in a national reconciliation day, asking for a date for a collective forgiveness and recognition of victims. In the statement at the end of round 34, the FARC insisted on "sharing the wording of the agreements for the reparation of the victims of everyone involved at different points in the historical conflict". Both delegations also decided to start the pilot plan on demining the departments of Antioquia and Meta on three points to be defined, creating three formal structures to start work. At the end of March, the chief negotiator of the government, Humberto de la Calle, declared that if a final agreement was reached with the FARC, "it has to include a comprehensive solution that offers legal security guarantees for everyone" and that "we did not come to Havana to discuss a possible reduction of the military forces or the structure of these forces in a potential post-conflict scenario. This was not part of the talks." Subsequently, the Minister of Defence discarded the proposal to eliminate the police to create a civilian police, with members of the guerrilla, as has been done in other countries.

In early April, Germany created the post of special commissioner for the peace process in Colombia, which went to the former human rights delegate, Tom Koenings, who had United Nations experience in Afghanistan, Guatemala and Kosovo. The FARC delegation, in turn, spoke out about the need to create a Victims Fund. The government announced that for 2015, it would earmark 3.3 million euros to the victims of the conflict, a 7% increase over the amount allocated in 2014. Precisely on this topic, thousands of Colombians took to the streets on the 8th of April in a march for the victims of the conflict and to support the peace process. The march was also supported by the guerrillas. In Bogotá, the first stone was laid in what will be the National Museum of Historical Memory. When the 35th cycle of talks got underway in Havana, President Santos announced that he was extending the suspension of bombardments of the FARC for one month, since the guerrillas has respected the unilateral ceasefire. Around mid-month, former president Samper, who was the secretary general of UNASUR, suggested that this organisation verify a future demobilisation and disarmament of the FARC, as well as a potential bilateral ceasefire, specifically citing Chile and Argentina, which already participate in the Cruz del Sur military group. He also stated that UNASUR might participate in a future Truth Commission, and that the transitional justice system might include penalties other than imprisonment. Mid-month, too, one of the FARC spokesmen in Havana, "Pastor Alape", stated that "the time will come to get rid of all of FARC's weapons... as long as the political guarantees are in place so that we opposition political movements can operate". With regard to the application of justice, the top leader of the FARC, "Timoleón Jiménez", stated in a communique that "it is all totally meaningless if we don't accept what they want to impose on us in matters of transitional justice, in which case it would turn out that the peace talks are nothing other than theatrics, whose last act will inevitably lead to the subjugation of those who rose up... Our position has been to admit at all times the part of the responsibility which is ours in the violence that surrounds the dynamic of war to death, which does not mean that we regret our uprising. However, the state, the establishment as a whole, must also frankly accept its responsibility... Because the goal is an agreed-upon solution... a political solution which will necessarily require a law which must be abided... It is illogical to pretend that the insurgent leaders are the only ones to blame and that they are also subjected to penalties that will exclude them from politics in the future."

However, the same day as this statement, a terrible event occurred which significantly compromised trust in the peace process and the advances made in it. Without previously breaking the unilateral ceasefire, a FARC commando made a night-time attack on a military garrison located in a town in the Department of Cauca, in which eleven soldiers were killed. The guerrillas stated that the attack was the result of a permanent siege by these soldiers. This unfortunate episode sparked widespread rejection and signalled the end, at least temporarily, of what had been called the "de-escalation" confrontation. In response, President Santos ordered that the bombardments of the FARC resume. The FARC were obligated to end their unilateral ceasefire and the conflict was revived with numerous attacks between the two parties, which led to a significant rise in the number of victims in the ensuing weeks. In one week, more than 40 FARC guerrillas died. Two of the victims were members of the FARC Peace Delegation in Havana, who according to the guerrillas were on a "pedagogical peace mission" on their fronts. In an exceptional act, the guarantor countries asked both sides to try to work towards a bilateral ceasefire. In late April, "Pablo Catatumbo" claimed that the Bolivarian Movement would be the political platform with which they hoped to be active in public life at the end of the peace process. The FARC also asked for the "immediate application" of the partial agreement on illicit drugs reached the previous year, in the midst of a controversy on the use of pesticides to eliminate them, especially owing to WHO declarations that glyphosate may be a carcinogen. However, both the government and the FARC had agreed at the start negotiations that the partial agreements would only be applied after the final peace agreement was signed. It was known that the Colombian government helped the top leader of the ELN, "Gabino" to meet in Cuba with the leader of the FARC, "Timochenko" with the goal of helping the ELN to start negotiations with the government. In early May, a spokesman for the FARC asked that a Truth Commission be created which would clarify and disassemble the paramilitaries. The peace commissioner of Colombia, Sergio Jaramillo, surprisingly stated that "Simón Trinidad", a prominent member of the FARC who had been arrested in the United States, should be part of the peace process. President Santos

himself was pulling strings to bring this to fruition. Mid-month, the debate on the replacement of illicit crops once again arose after the National Drug Council decided to put an end to its fumigations of coca, and the government decided to protect around 200,000 families who would replace their illicit crops. On other matters, the government appointed Luis Carlos Villegas as the new Minister of Defence; until then Villegas had been the president of the National Business Association of Colombia (ANDI) and in 2013 he participated in the negotiations in Havana. As round 37 began on the 20th of May, the government appointed the chancellor María Ángela Holguín and businessman Gonzalo Restrepo, the president of Bancolombia, as members of its negotiating team. In parallel, the decree was approved allowing for the start of the pilot humanitarian demining plan and the cleansing of the territory of improvised explosive artefacts and unexploded munitions, which the government and FARC had agreed upon on the 7th of March. In late May, the UN Secretary General Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, visited both delegations meeting in Havana and asked that the women be heard and “empowered” in the peace talks.

In early June, the chief of the FARC delegation, “Iván Márquez”, declared in an interview that “we believe that we can find a reconciliation formula grounded upon historical truth, transformative justice, comprehensive reparations and non-repetition”. Regarding the FARC’s demand for a Constituent Assembly to be held at the end of the peace process, he added that, “we suggest that special districts be created so that those who have never had a voice before, such as peasants, young people, Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples, can elect their representatives. And the duration can be six months. That is the Constituent Assembly where the guerrillas can be present.” Another of the FARC’s chief negotiators, “Pastor Alape”, stated that if they decided that all the actors responsible for the conflict had to pay a term of imprisonment, not necessarily a traditional prison sentence, they would certainly take it into account; that is, they would not discard it for the FARC.

On the 4th of June, in joint statement no. 53, both delegations announced that they had reached an agreement to launch a Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition once the Final Agreement has been signed. This commission would be an independent, impartial, non-legal mechanism which will be part of a comprehensive truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition system that has to be agreed up in the committee to satisfy the rights of victims, put an end to the conflict and achieve peace. The Commission will work for a three-year period and will be made up of 11 people, 3 of whom can be foreign. Six people will be appointed by the government and the FARC. The Commission will organise regional hearings to listen to victims and perpetrators. They also stated that they would continue working to reach a consensus on other mechanisms that would guarantee victims’ rights to truth, justice and reparations, in addition to contributing to guaranteeing the Colombian people that the conflict would not be repeated. That same day, in another statement, the FARC demanded that the state archives be opened in order to know the truth. “The time has come to learn the pure, clean truth, the causes and the identity with names of the senior leaders who in 190 years of republican life had prevented us from exiting the dark labyrinth of exclusion and political violence that afflicts Colombia and still keeps it chained to the despotism of war”. The FARC repeated that they had not gone to Havana to negotiate impunity with anyone and that new extra-judicial mechanisms could be devised, including sanctions, “which find the true way to concordance and peace starting with the truth demanded by the victims of the conflict, comprehensive reparations and non-repetition”.

In June, too, a report from the Ministry of Defence stated that the Public Forces would be the guarantor of the agreements that might be reached in Havana. The Public Forces would not be reduced after the peace agreement but instead strengthened in many human and technical aspects in order to concentrate its efforts on other fronts such as lowering the amount of crime through theft, homicide, personal injury, micro-trafficking, micro-extortion, weapons trafficking, human trafficking, etc. The Carabiniers would also be strengthened, along with the fight against illegal groups, organised crime, contraband, criminal mining, cyber-crime, drug trafficking, extortion, etc. The document advocated a 25,000-member increase in the police. On other matters, the

European Union announced that it would create a fiduciary fund to support the post-conflict in Colombia. Mid-month, the FARC announced that they would stop letting anyone under the age of 15 join its ranks. In February, the FARC had announced the same measure for anyone under the age of 17. Another major development was the departure of General Óscar Naranjo as the Minister of the Post-Conflict and Citizen Safety in what was hoped to be a restructuring of different organisations related to the development of the peace process. Anecdotally, a chronicle from late June reported that two years after having started the talks, both delegations had only shared two informal dinners in the residence of the ambassador of Norway.

In early July, the FARC suggested that the government begin to implement the agreement on the point on drugs and illicit crops reached the previous year, dovetailing with the government's decision to suspend the glyphosate fumigations. In a statement, the FARC also suggested beginning to implement everything that had been agreed, without waiting until the end, since the laws in place allowed much of what had been agreed to be implemented. Both delegations published a joint report on the progress in the talks on the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition. The guarantor countries issued an appeal to de-escalate the conflict, and President Santos suggested stepping up the negotiations on the bilateral ceasefire. The FARC announced that starting the 20th of June it would launch a new four-month unilateral ceasefire as the first step in moving towards the aforementioned bilateral ceasefire. They also asked for the good offices of the Broad Front for Peace to verify the unilateral truce. This organisation had already participated in verifying the first FARC ceasefire, for which it had issued five reports. Later, institutions like the Inter-Ecclesial Dialogue for Peace, Constituents for Peace and the University Network for Peace were added. Around the same time, President Santos stated that the Armed Forces would guarantee the FARC's security after peace was reached. Later, Santos appointed General Naranjo as the president of the sub-committee in charge of ensuring the security of the FARC after the peace agreement. Regarding insecurity, the FARC recalled that to date the Patriotic March had already accounted for 102 of its murdered members. The president also declared that in the next four months substantial headway had to be achieved in the negotiations, and that after this period the negotiations would be reconsidered based on the advances made during this period. The chief negotiator for both the government, Humberto de la Calle, and the FARC stated that if a bilateral ceasefire agreement were reached, they hoped for verification by the United Nations and UNASUR. Mid-month, both delegations agreed to change the negotiating methodology in order to step up its pace, and they solicited the participation of the two aforementioned organisations to monitor the work of the technical sub-committee in charge of studying the verification of the bilateral ceasefire. The negotiation cycles would no longer be 11 days; once a topic was addressed, the parties would only take a recess when an agreement on the topic was reached. It was also decided to create a sub-committee on justice and other topics that emerged in the talks, so it would deal with several topics at once. The government pledged to de-escalate the clashes again, the same day that the FARC's unilateral ceasefire took effect. On subsequent days, UNASUR appointed the former Uruguayan Defence Minister and member of the Broad Front, José Bayardi, as the delegate to the technical sub-committee on the bilateral ceasefire.

In the second half of July, President Santos met with the Under-Secretary-General of Political Affairs at the UN, Jeffrey Feltman, and with the Director of the Americas at the Department for Political Affairs, Martha Doggett, in Bogotá to analyse the organisation's support of the peace process. The FARC, in turn, changed the number of its delegates to 17 (more than half) to reorganise the work of the sub-committees. The changes affected no members of the secretariat present in Havana. Previously, Luis Carlos Villegas and Nigéria Rentería had been removed from the government's delegation and replaced by businessman Gonzalo Restrepo and Chancellor María Ángela Holguín. Likewise, the FARC suggested creating a working group in charge of disassembling the paramilitary structures that still existed in the regions, "opening the legal and military archives" and immediately activating the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition before taking a final decision on the way to apply transitional justice, under the precept of "knowing the truth before applying justice". On the 25th of July, President Santos ordered that the bombardments against the FARC be suspended once again.

In early August, the first meeting of the legal advisors of each party was held (Juan Carlos Henao, Álvaro Leyva, Enrique Santiago, Manuel José Cepeda, Diego Martínez and Douglas Cassel) to analyse the issue of justice and build agreements on the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. The FARC published a communique in which it expressed that its "conception of restorative justice should mean the conquest of the application of distributive justice". On the other hand, a UN team led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenca, met in Havana with members of the technical sub-committee on end-of-conflict issues. A few days later, the UN Secretary General appointed the French diplomat Jean Arnault as the UN's representative on this sub-committee. Arnault is a diplomat with extensive experience in peacekeeping missions and peace process negotiations. It was also announced that the head of the government commission, Humberto de la Calle, and the head of the FARC, "Timochenko", had met twice in Cuba. Meantime, President Santos' proposal to create a "mini-congress" caused a great deal of upheaval and disapproval among the FARC. Santos' proposal called for a mixed congress called a "special transitory and mixed legislative commission" which would join 54 congress members and the government and FARC negotiators and would be in charge of defining the laws on transitional justice and political participation. In August, too, it was revealed that several soldiers and guerrillas imprisoned in the La Picota prison had sent a peace proposal to Cuba through the so-called Reconciliation Committee, an initiative that had gotten underway in 2011.

September was a month full of positive developments in the negotiations. Mid-month, the FARC announced that the work of the sub-committees was moving along quickly and that consensus on difficult issues were being reached, although the meaning of its statements that "when we talk about laying down weapons, we refer to not using them in politics" still needed to be clarified in that it contrasts with the usual criterion of what disarmament means. In parallel, and with majority support, the Congress began to process the laws on peace, and the Constitutional Court had two months to review the laws and reforms underway. However, the government clarified that first the end of the conflict with the FARC had to be signed and all the agreements that this entailed had to be passed, and only then would the extraordinary legal and political authorities of the president and the special legislative commission needed to implement the conclusions of the peace process take effect. The Technical Sub-Committee charged with debating the ceasefire issues met in Havana with the delegate of the United Nations Secretary General Jean Arnault, and the delegate of the UNASUR president, José Bayardi. The FARC asked that a committee to accompany the regulatory development of the agreements be created, which would be in charge of designing the approval, verification and implementation of the peace agreement. The leader of the FARC, "Iván Márquez", also asked that the Centre for Thinking at the Universidad Nacional and the UNDP call a new public forum on the end of the conflict, as it had done with other issues on the agenda, which would be a citizen exercise to prepare the atmosphere for the discussion of the thorny topic of citizen approval. The FARC also stated that the time had come to stop discussing the so-called "provisos", or specific aspects that could not be approved in the past on the agenda issues related to land, political participation and the end of illicit crops. On other matters, the UN expressed its concern with the lack of security for the social and political leaders, since so far that year 69 leaders had been murdered, one-quarter of whom were indigenous. Another 332 leaders had received threats.

The FARC had proposed concentrating in 80 rural areas (the same number of fronts that existed currently) with international oversight, once the topic of laying down weapons began to be discussed. The government had apparently proposed only six concentration zones (Cauca, Putumayo, Meta, Chocó, north of Antioquia and north of Santander). The government also announced a "new comprehensive strategy to replace illegal crops" in line with what had previously been agreed to with the FARC, which would not have to await the final signing of the peace agreement. The pilot departments would be Putumayo and Nariño, and the initiative would imply creating an Agency for the Replacement of Illicit Crops. This procedure would allow other issues agreed to in Havana to be implemented despite the initial principle that "nothing would be agreed to until everything is agreed to". On the 23rd of September, President Santos and the

leader of the FARC, "Timochenko", were in Havana to publicise the agreement to create a Special Jurisdiction for Peace (see box below), for which it was decided to create an Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, as well as a Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which would have justice courtrooms and a court of peace. According to the agreement, the state pledged to grant the broadest amnesty possible for political and related crimes, which could benefit more than 15,000 members of the FARC. In contrast, behaviours defined in the national laws as crimes against humanity, genocide and grave war crimes, among other serious crimes, would not be the object of amnesty or pardon for either FARC members or state agents. There would be two types of procedures: one for those who recognise the truth and acknowledge responsibility, and another for those who do not or who do so late. The sanctions would be geared more towards restoration and reparation of the damage caused and they would have a component of restrictions on freedoms and rights through the performance of jobs, work and activities. FARC's participation in the integral system would be subjected to laying down its weapons, which must begin 60 days after the final agreement is reached at the latest. Immediately afterward, the Attorney General ordered that all charges against the FARC leadership be dropped, while the adjustment in the methodology of the agreement signed was furthered. The president and "Timochenko" also pledged to conclude negotiations by the 23rd of March 2016.

Joint statement # 60 regarding the Agreement for the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Havana, 23rd of September 2015.

1. The government of the Republic of Colombia and the FARC-EP reaffirm their commitment to the agreements reached to date: "Towards a new Colombian countryside: Comprehensive rural reform", "Political participation: Democratic opening to build peace" and "Solution to the problem of illicit drugs".
2. In turn, they reaffirm their commitment to a formula of justice that satisfies the rights of the victims and contributes to building a stable, lasting peace. With this purpose in mind, we are building an Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. Within this framework, we have agreed that a Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition would be created, and we have achieved major agreements on matters of victim reparation.
3. Regarding the justice component, we have agreed to create a Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which will have courtrooms and a Court of Peace. The courtrooms and Court of Peace will primarily be made up of Colombian magistrates and will have minority participation by foreigners who fulfil the most stringent requirements. The essential purpose of the courtrooms and the Court of Peace will be to put an end to impunity, to reveal the truth, to contribute to victim reparations and to judge and impose sanctions on those behind the serious crimes committed during the armed conflict, particularly the gravest and most representative crimes, in an effort to ensure they are not repeated.
4. The justice components stipulates that when hostilities are over, in accordance with IHL, the Colombian state will grant the broadest amnesty possible for political and related crimes. An amnesty law shall outline the scope of the association between cases. Under no circumstances shall behaviours classified in the national laws as crimes against humanity, genocide and serious war crimes receive amnesty or pardon, along with other serious crimes such as hostage-taking, forced disappearances, illegal executions and sexual violence. These crimes shall be the subject of investigation and judgement by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.
5. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace will have authority over everyone who has participated in the internal armed conflict either directly or indirectly, including the FARC-EP and the state agents, for crimes committed within the context and for the purpose of the conflict, especially regarding the most serious and representative cases.
6. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has two kinds of procedures: one for those who recognise the truth and their responsibility, and another for those who do not or who do so too late. The former will be given a sentence based on their acts after they are compared to the investigations of the Attorney General of the Nation, the sanctions imposed by other state bodies, the existing legal sentences and the

information coming from victims' and human rights organisations. The latter shall face an adversarial proceeding before the Court.

7. The purpose of the sanctions imposed by the Court is essentially to satisfy the victims' rights and to consolidate peace, and their primary purpose should be to restore and repair the damage caused. For everyone who recognises their responsibilities for crimes against the system, the sanction will have a component that restricts their rights and freedoms to guarantee fulfilment of the reparative and restorative functions by performing jobs, works and activities and in general by satisfying the victims' rights. The sanctions for those who recognise very serious crimes will be at least 5 and at most 8 years of effective restriction on their freedom under special conditions. People who recognise their responsibility to the Court too late will be sanctioned with prison sentences of 5 to 8 years under ordinary conditions. In order to have the right to alternative sentencing, the beneficiary must pledge to contribute to their re-socialisation through work, training or study during the time that they are deprived of their freedom. People who refuse to recognise their responsibility for these crimes and are found guilty shall be condemned to up to 20 years of prison under ordinary conditions.

8. To access any special treatment within the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, it is necessary to bring full truth, to provide reparations for the victims and to ensure non-repetition.

9. In the case of the FARC-EP, participation in the integral system will be subject to it laying down its weapons, which must begin at most 60 days after the signing of the Final Agreement.

10. The transformation of the FARC-EP into a legal political movement is a shared goal which will have.

As a really innovative confidence building measure, in late September the FARC suspended their military training courses, replacing them with political and cultural education. Meanwhile, the European Union appointed Eamon Gilmore, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, as EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia. Gilmore will coordinate EU initiatives in favour of peace. In October, the FARC evaluated the suspension of recruitment into its ranks, as a new gesture towards de-escalation. On 6 October, the FARC-EP's Peace Delegation issued a major statement entitled "Ten minimum proposals to guarantee the end of conflict, national reconciliation and the construction of a stable and lasting peace", related to the agenda point called "end of the conflict". The points were as follows:

Proposal by the FARC

1. Legal formalisation of the institutional reforms and adjustments needed to meet the challenges of building peace;
2. National Plan for the end of the conflict, national reconciliation and the building of a stable and lasting peace;
3. Establishment of the National Fund for the end of the conflict, national reconciliation and the building of a stable and lasting peace;
4. Normalisation of national life and the transformation of the FARC-EP into a political movement;
5. Establishment of Special territories for peacebuilding (TECP);
6. Redefinition of the State's security policy and the dismantling of criminal counterinsurgency structures;
7. Clarification and dismantling of paramilitary forces as a contribution to historical truth and a guarantee of non-repetition;
8. Comprehensive security guarantees for the population in general and for the political movement into which the FARC-EP will transform itself;
9. Bilateral cease fire and cessation of hostilities;
10. Abandonment of arms, understood to mean their not being used in politics.

The next day, the FARC proposed a National Plan for the end of the conflict, reconciliation and peace building (PLANPAZ), which would coordinate the implementation of the agreements and be part of the FARC's acts of reparation for the victims of the conflict. A National Plan Commission (CONAPLAN) would be formed, with a mixed composition including the participation of representatives of civil society, business groups, territorial bodies and academia. In mid-October, "Ivan Márquez" stated in a radio interview that once the peace agreement had been signed, the FARC arsenal would not be destroyed because for the FARC it represented a symbol of resistance, and that the aim was for both the guerrillas and the government to cease using weapons, and not end up with what happened years ago with the extermination of the Patriotic Union. He clarified that "where are we are going to have them... a long way away. Here there will be an important role for third parties, other countries. Hopefully time will pass and we'll think about what to do with the weapons. Like setting up a museum to remind us that what we have gone through must not happen again." In late October, President Santos travelled to New York to talk with United Nations about its participation in the verification of a future cease-fire and bilateral abandonment of arms. His objective was also for the UN Security Council to grant a mandate that would allow it to monitor and verify the bilateral ceasefire.

In another development, the government and the FARC reached an agreement on the issue of disappeared persons, under which some initial humanitarian measures would be taken for the search, location, identification and dignified hand over of persons reported disappeared in the context of and because of the internal armed conflict. This would be launched before the signing of the final agreement. These actions will have the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and will affect disappearances carried out both by the FARC and by the security forces. A unit will be created which will coordinate the search for information and other operations for this purpose. This body shall be independent, shall have administrative and financial autonomy, and will include the participation of victims' organisations, and human rights and specialist groups. For the ICRC, the search for the disappeared will be a task lasting years, because, according to various sources, there could be between 20,000 and 100,000 disappeared persons. In mid-November, various social, popular, human rights, trade union and religious organisations called for the strengthening of the participation of society in the peace process, through the creation of the "Mesa Social para la Paz" (Social Roundtable for Peace) which might offer solutions for the end of the armed conflict in the country and pave the way for a post-conflict situation. The Roundtable's proposals could apply to agreements with both the FARC and the ELN. The FARC, meanwhile, issued a statement stipulating a number of conditions regarding their participation in politics and their transformation into a political movement. These would include the direct allocation of seats in the Congress of the Republic, for at least two terms of office, as well as ensuring their participation in municipal councils and departmental assemblies. At the same time, and after several meetings between the representatives of the Senate and of the lower chamber, and with the support of the Government, it was agreed that the threshold in the plebiscite referendum on what had been signed with the FARC would be 13% of the electorate, that is, about 4.4 million votes; this would require an amendment of the existing legislation. The text will have to be reviewed by the Constitutional Court, for which reason it cannot be approved until perhaps March 2016. This mechanism was not discussed nor agreed at the negotiating table in Havana, and was consequently the subject of criticism by the FARC, which is in favour of a new Constituent Assembly, and which accused the government of acting unilaterally on some issues, including the verification of the ceasefire, a job that the FARC considered could be taken on by UNASUR, while the Government was making efforts for the Security Council to authorise the United Nations to take charge of this task, sending a "peace mission" to Colombia.

In the second half of October, the Government declared that it was pardoning 30 FARC members who had been convicted solely for rebellion, and that it promised to review the status of another 106 FARC prisoners who were ill. On 20 November, President Santos sent his brother Enrique — who had already participated in the exploratory talks with the FARC — to Havana to convince "Timochenko", the FARC leader, that no one should leave the negotiating table until all outstanding issues had been dealt with, making it clear that he wanted to complete matters by the end of March. "Timochenko" finally accepted the proposal of "not leaving the table" until a final

agreement had been reached, as suggested by the President, through his brother Enrique. For the FARC it would also be appropriate to establish a "common spokesperson" for the process. "It's something we've been raising for a long time, but it has not been possible to implement it. If we do that, I think we will make quite a lot of progress", stated "Timochenko". Moreover, President Juan Manuel Santos announced that the National Council on Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) approved the creation of the Colombia in Peace Fund, a body that will channel international aid in the post-conflict phase in the country into five different funds. The control of this 'fund of funds' will be in the hands of the Ministry for Post-Conflict, whose head, Rafael Pardo Rueda, had just sworn office in the presidential palace. These funds included those that were promoted by the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, as well as resources from other countries that were interested in supporting the post-conflict stage. "Today international aid is around \$750 million for five years; the total is estimated to reach \$3,000 million for the same period, with post-conflict issues and for environmental matters in the post-conflict", said Pardo. This aid comprises two stages: firstly the 12-18 months just after signing the peace, and subsequently the promotion of economic development, with a territorial approach and in harmony with the environment. The two lines of action laid down in CONPES included on the one hand security, justice and reconciliation, and on the other sustainability over the medium and long term, respecting sustainable development. At the end of November, the head of the Government Delegation in Havana, Humberto de la Calle, announced what were for the Government the 15 principles for peace, which are very educational and are set out below:

Principles for peace, from the Colombian Government

1. It is possible to bring the conflict to an end through a political solution.
2. A purely military solution is long and painful.
3. The victims are the ethical justification for dialogue. The victims are at the centre. But also the future victims. Those that we can avoid.
4. The judicial solution should include the different actors. Each one must assume their responsibilities. The definition of justice is not limited to punishment. There are forms of restorative justice that contribute to a broader fulfilment of victims' rights. Blind justice must not hamper the achievement of peace.
5. Reparations are essential. Symbolic, spiritual and also material reparations.
6. Truth is the starting point for the reconstruction of the social fabric.
7. Forgiveness is a personal decision, but society must not remain trapped in resentment. Not to minimise the issues, but as a way of achieving reconciliation.
8. Forgetting the rural areas is an economic error and a cause of an ongoing source of inequality that also has a negative influence on urban life.
9. Political Participation. The progress achieved in strengthening our democracy is not an argument for stopping the expansion of the political horizons.
10. The end of the conflict is crucial to overcoming the drug problem.
11. Reintegration must be carried out within a framework of dignity.
12. Given its 50 years duration and the more than 6 million victims, the excuses of "you are also responsible" and of "you started it" are irrelevant arguments when it comes to ending this painful conflict.
13. Peace is about more than the silence of the guns. The end of the conflict is an opportunity to make profound changes.
14. The financing of the agreements requires the contribution of everybody, which in turn is an incentive for international cooperation.
15. The end of the conflict and the implementation of a final peace must be an objective that includes all Colombians. All Colombians.

The FARC, meanwhile, asked the Government to jointly define an action plan against the paramilitary groups, forming a "specialised investigation unit" which within a maximum of four months shall submit a report on such groups' geographical location and their links with political

and economic powers, locally, nationally and transnationally. The plan, according to the FARC, could count on the verification of the UN and other international organisations. In another vein, and as a goodwill gesture, President Santos rejected, for the first time, the extradition of a FARC combatant. In early December, the FARC publicly acknowledged its responsibility in the Bojayá massacre, which took place in 2002, and in which 79 people died. A group of guerrillas led by "Pastor Alape" appeared in the town and made an act of contrition before the community. On 14 December, and in anticipation of what would be a major issue to be negotiated in the final stage of negotiations, in 2016, the FARC specified what they understood could be the mechanism of bilateral ceasefire, the oversight (with international monitoring and verification by the UN, the CELAC and popular and civic oversight) and the "social abandonment of arms" by the FARC and the government. The FARC also noted that "the parties agree on the terms of such monitoring and verification, which will also count on oversight by the communities settled in the Special Territories for Peacebuilding (TERREPAZ)". The full text of their proposal, not yet presented at the negotiating table, was as follows:

Proposal by the FARC

Developing the "Ten minimum proposals to guarantee the end of the conflict, national reconciliation and the construction of a stable and lasting peace" we present the following initiatives related to proposal 9 concerning the Bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities for the ending of the armed confrontation and for the beginning of the reforms required for peacebuilding; and to proposal 10 concerning the Abandonment of arms by the FARC-EP and the Colombian state.

9. Bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities for the ending of the armed confrontation and for the beginning of the reforms required for peacebuilding;

9.1 Bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities as a process that leads to the definitive end of the armed confrontation and the offer of guarantees of non-repetition.

The bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities will be defined as a process whose primary purpose is that the Parties generate the conditions for the definitive end of the armed conflict and, with that, give guarantees of non-repetition to victims of the conflict and to Colombian society. The process will be designed in two stages: The first stage, a bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, which will lay the basis for passing to the second stage, which will be the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

9.2 Bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities for the putting into practice of the agreements on Point 3 "End of the conflict."

The declaration of a bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities stems from the existence today, de facto, of a bilateral ceasefire throughout the country. It will be formalised through the parties inviting the UN and the CELAC to assume the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire, alongside the oversight by social forces, which have already been carrying out this task.

9.3 The definitive and bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities is defined as the formal beginning of the implementation of the agreements and reforms demanded by the construction of peace.

The signing of the final agreement and it having being voted on in a referendum, which shall include especially the legal formalisation of the set of specific agreements contained in the final agreement, according to the referendum mechanism agreed by the Parties, will give rise to the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, and to the implementation of the agreements and reforms required in building peace, without prejudice to the measures that were already being applied.

9.4 Establishment of the monitoring and verification mechanism for the Definitive Bilateral Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities (DBCCH).

The Parties will establish a monitoring and verification mechanism whose main objective will be to deal with the different factors that might jeopardise the DBCCH and verify compliance with the rules governing the DBCCH.

9.5 International monitoring and verification and civic and social oversight of the Definitive Bilateral Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities.

The process of Definitive Bilateral Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities will benefit from international monitoring and verification by the UN and the CELAC. There will also be civic and social oversight.

10. Social abandonment of arms and the abandonment of arms by the FARC-EP and the Colombian state.

10.1 The social abandonment of arms as the basis for the demilitarisation of society, reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The social abandonment of arms is a necessary and at the same time an indispensable condition for the demilitarisation of society, reconciliation and the building of a stable and lasting peace.

10.2 National political agreement for the social abandonment of arms.

The social abandonment of arms will be based on a national political agreement which includes an explicit and special commitment, through a public declaration, by the National Government and other public authorities, political parties and the economic and business associations.

10.3 The abandonment of arms as a bilateral process and action to which the parties are mutually committed.

The abandonment of arms is a bilateral process and action that especially involves the commitment of the Parties, the legal armed forces of the state as well as the guerrilla military force.

10.4 The abandonment of arms as an act of reparation for the victims of the conflict and a guarantee of non-repetition.

The social abandonment of arms in general and, in particular, the abandonment of arms by the Parties, represent an act of reparation for the victims of the conflict and at the same time constitute a guarantee of non-repetition.

10.5 Commitments by the state to the abandonment of arms and consequences.

The commitment by the state goes in the direction of promoting the demilitarisation of national life and of political decision-making and of a process leading to the end of the recourse to arms when addressing anything that is considered to be a threatening political or social protest, alternative or opposition to the existing social order.

10.6 The FARC-EP's decision to abandon arms and its consequences.

The commitment of the FARC-EP consists in reiterating the will and the political decision to cease to use arms and to abandon them in a real and material form, to work for the taking of power and the construction of social power for the welfare and wellbeing of the population.

10.7 Criteria and mechanisms of the process of the abandonment of arms by the FARC-EP.

The Parties shall define the specific criteria and mechanisms for the process of the abandonment of arms by the FARC-EP. In any case, such criteria and mechanisms will be established in line with the process of social abandonment of arms and the abandonment of arms by the state.

10.8 International monitoring and verification of the process of the abandonment of arms.

The process of the abandonment of arms by the FARC-EP will benefit from international monitoring and verification by the United Nations and the CELAC. The Parties will agree the terms of such monitoring and verification, which will also benefit from the oversight of the communities in the "Special Territories for Peacebuilding (TERREPAZ)".

The next day, 15 December, after a year and a half of debates, the negotiators presented the full text of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-repetition that would be implemented in order to compensate the rights of victims, which meant they had achieved an agreement on the fifth point on the agenda. Among the commitments presented by the parties, five key strategies were mentioned to compensate the victims: the creation of the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-repetition; the Special Unit for the Search for Persons deemed Disappeared in the context and as a result of the conflict; the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), measures of comprehensive reparations and guarantees of non-repetition. The parties were emphatic in stating that the following acts would not be eligible for amnesty or pardon, nor any equivalent measure: crimes against humanity, genocide, serious war crimes, hostage-taking or other severe deprivation of liberty, torture, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, violent sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual violence, forced displacement, as well as the recruitment of minors. In the words of the parties, this is a system that places special emphasis on restorative and remedial measures, and aims to achieve justice not only with retributive sanctions. That is to say, not only will there be sentences of some years in prison under a special regime (depending on their collaboration with the Comprehensive System), but the application of restorative sanctions is also being contemplated. The negotiators presented the points that will cover the 10 principles that were taken into account in the discussion of the issue of victims. They include the recognition of victims, acknowledgment of responsibility, satisfaction of victims' rights, uncovering the truth, how reparations to victims will

be made, and what guarantees there will be for their protection and security. Additionally, there will be the protection of the life and personal integrity of the victims, as the first step in meeting their other rights, what guarantees there will be of non-repetition, the principle of reconciliation, and the attitude that was taken towards rights, as well as ensuring the participation of victims. The fundamental objectives of the agreement were as follows:

- Satisfaction of victims' rights, by combining judicial and extra-judicial mechanisms.
- Accountability, by establishing the responsibilities of all direct or indirect participants in the conflict.
- Non-repetition, through the implementation of all the measures within the System so as to prevent revictimisation and repetition.
- An approach that is territorial, differential and gender sensitive, through the differential treatment of territories and populations, especially of women and child victims, and of the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population who were for that reason those most affected by the conflict.
- Legal certainty, through the fulfilment of the conditions of the Comprehensive System and especially of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, with the necessary guarantees of due process.
- Coexistence and reconciliation, through building mutual trust on the basis of the positive transformations generated within society by the peace agreements.
- Legitimacy, responding to the expectations of the victims and of society in general, and to the national and international obligations of the Colombian State, including compliance with what was signed in the final agreement.

The general outlines of the Special Jurisdiction were also announced. This will include alternatives to prison sentences, and amnesty for rebels who are not implicated in serious actions but have only been involved in the armed uprising. Under the agreement, the restriction of liberty for serious offenses will be for 2 to 8 years. While the sanctions that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will impose on guerrillas and other parties to the conflict will have a restorative and reparative aim — actions that will benefit the victims — serious crimes will be punishable by the restriction of liberty and of rights — freedom of residence and movement — for a period that will range between 2 and 8 years, depending on the degree of implication in the crime.

If the implication in the crime was not very significant, the penalty will be between 2 and 5 years. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace shall determine the conditions of the restriction of liberty, and obtaining these benefits will be conditional on providing reparation to the victims and telling the truth about the events. The FARC will give reparation to their victims through participating in the location of the remains of people killed or disappeared, in mine clearance, in the substitution of illicit crops, in rebuilding the infrastructure of the war-damaged territories and in reforestation work. The guerrilla organisation also committed itself to contributing to material reparations for the victims. In fact, the coordinator of the FARC delegation, Ivan Márquez, stated that all parties involved in the conflict accepted their obligation to compensate those who have suffered the war "with actions, with political decisions and with material contributions". As Humberto de la Calle said, in the case of the military and police who committed serious crimes, "the State shall develop a special scheme that shall be simultaneous, balanced and fair". On the matter of extradition, one of the FARC's fears, the agreement explicitly ruled out its application to acts or conduct that occurred during the armed conflict.

Three pillars of the transitional justice agreement

1. Truth, through the Commission

1. The Truth Commission will only start work when peace has been signed.
2. It has an extrajudicial nature, that is, no evidence handed in to the commission can give rise to judicial proceedings, because its aim is to clarify the truth about what happened so as to avoid repetition.
3. It will focus on key cases, given the impossibility of gathering the evidence on everything that happened over more than 50 years.

4. It will decide which cases it investigates, but the idea is that it should deal with representative events.

5. It can also investigate a massacre committed by paramilitaries or important killings carried out by the Patriotic Union.

6. It must explain what mechanisms it will use to check and verify the information on victims and perpetrators.

2. Key Points for justice

1. Only the Court for Peace, which is part of the Special Jurisdiction, may override a decision taken by this body with respect to a person being processed.

2. Every case that is resolved at the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will become *res judicata* and shall not be reopened by any other court. In this way legal certainty will be guaranteed to those who submit themselves to this instance.

3. Those who have committed an offense related to the conflict can present themselves to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and after telling the truth may obtain the benefits.

4. Jurisdiction for Peace can only compel the attendance of those who have a sufficiently proven crime.

3. Reparations

1. In addition to material reparations and reparations in work that benefits the communities, the FARC shall prepare public ceremonies in which they recognise their responsibility and ask for forgiveness.

2. State agents who committed serious crimes and those individuals who sponsored the war must also make acts of acknowledgment and requests for forgiveness.

3. The restitution of land will be linked to the plans for collective reparations.

4. These reparations will also include the psychosocial and individual rehabilitation of those directly affected by the war who require emotional treatment. There will also be collective rehabilitation in communities to facilitate coexistence and reconciliation.

5. As part of the reparations the collective return of displaced people will be reinforced.

Source: Summary published in *El Tiempo*, 16 December 2015.

ELN

Regarding the ELN, the first negotiations between the government and this guerrilla group date from 1991 (Caracas and Tlaxcala). In 1998, both parties signed a peace agreement in Madrid, in which they agreed to hold a National Convention. That same year, ELN negotiators met with members of civil society in Mainz (Germany) and signed the "Puerta del Cielo" agreement, which was focused on humanitarian issues. In 1999, the government and the ELN met again in Cuba. The following year, the government authorised the creation of an encounter area in the south of the Bolívar region. Representatives of the Friendly Countries were involved in this process (Cuba, Spain, France, Norway and Switzerland). In June 2000, president Pastrana deemed that attempts to reach an agreement with this group were over. In 2005, the government reached an agreement with this guerrilla group to begin formal exploratory talks in Cuba during December with the involvement of Norway, Spain and Switzerland. These talks are known as the "external rapprochement process". In August 2007, the government and the ELN began the eighth round of peace talks in August in Havana without achieving results or signing the so-called Base Agreement, since they were unable to agree on how to concentrate and verify the guerrilla troops. The government insisted on demanding that they be located in one or several points, including abroad, but at previously determined locations and with the names of all the guerrillas concentrated there; these names would then be given to an international verification commission. However, this was rejected by the ELN, which was not prepared to reveal the identity of its members or gather together in conditions which they perceived as putting them at a military disadvantage. In June 2008, the ELN stated that it did not consider rapprochement with the Colombian government useful, so it did not envisage holding a new round of talks.

Throughout all of 2010 and 2011, there were tentative rapprochements between the government, via Frank Pearl, and the ELN, via Juan Carlos Cuéllar, a prisoner in the Medellín prison. In early

August 2011, the ELN sent a letter to Piedad Córdoba in which it stated that "the ELN has publicly and repeatedly expressed its willingness to engage in bilateral talks without conditions; the agenda and rules should be determined by the parties to these talks [...] A government and insurgency committee is the best pathway today, and we are making every effort to achieve it." In the letter, they also expressed their compliance with international humanitarian law.

In early November 2012, the ELN proposed a bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. A few days later, in its magazine, it announced that the ELN delegation for exploratory talks with the government was formed and ready to deliver for Colombia. At the end of the month, there was speculation that the ELN and the government could begin exploratory talks in Cuba and that the guerrilla group's representative would be "Pablo Beltrán". In January 2013, however, President Santos terminated the talks and withdrew the ELN delegates' right of safe passage.

Apparently exploratory contacts were held at the end of last year, but without results. Representing the government were Frank Pearl and Alejandro Eder, while the ELN delegation consisted of "Gabino" and "Antonio García". A senior German official served as the point of contact between both parties. One obstacle for future negotiations was the ELN's demand to participate in civil society, at which the government demurred. The ELN's agenda could not be different from the one mandated by the communities in the various events held in recent years. A great national peace movement was urgent for the ELN, which would bring together popular and social organisations, parties and other groups. As pointed out by Commander Gabino, in April the ELN assumed the mandate for peace as a strategic objective. A result of the National Convention, this political agreement should end in endorsement by a national constituent assembly. Meanwhile, the Civil Society Facilitation Committee made arrangements to possibly begin negotiations with the ELN. Another roadblock was the ELN's practice of kidnapping.

At the end of June 2013 the top FARC and ELN leaders issued a public statement for peace. In the not too distant past both guerrilla groups had been in favour of closer military collaboration, but this time they made a statement in favour of peace, defined as "the most noble, just and legitimate aspirations of our people [...]. The political solution to the social and armed conflict, which implies an end to the dirty war and aggression against the people, is part of our strategic horizon for peace in Colombia [...]. The political solution cannot be understood as the mere demobilization and disarmament of the guerrillas, with no structural changes and with everything continuing as usual. It has to be the road leading to the solution of the causes that led to the war and towards full democratization [...]. A Constituent National Assembly would be the ideal mechanism because it would forge a new and genuine consensus built on the most comprehensive and full participation of society [...]. (The Assembly) must include representative participation of the insurgency and a democratic participation of all the sectors that make up the nation". This joint statement was seen as a move by the FARC to open parallel negotiations with the ELN. President Santos had said that talks would be possible if the ELN freed a Canadian it was holding hostage, which the ELN did. At the same time the ELN released an army corporal who it was also holding. But this may not be the only hurdle that needs to be overcome. The nature of the ELN and its emphasis on popular participation in any potential negotiation made it difficult to reach an agreement with the Government. As the academic Carlos Medina noted, "the operational emphasis of the ELN appears in organizational aspects, in the construction of a political imaginary and its focus on militant social practices in its relationship with grassroots movements. This often carries more weight than operational military aspects." The ELN wanted the excluded majorities to become the lead players in future talks, which made it more difficult to successfully conduct the negotiations. In early July more than a hundred civil society members signed a letter in favour of negotiations between the Government and the ELN.

In late August the ELN released a Canadian that it was holding hostage. Immediately afterwards the president of the Government said he was ready for talks. The guerrilla group stated that it was part of the millions of Colombians who categorically opposed the Government's mining and energy juggernaut because it provides more benefits to foreigners than to Colombia, it is

squeezing out agriculture and industry and destroying the environment and biodiversity. The ELN also noted that a genuine peace process is one that understands that the mandate should be based on the nodal issues, expressed in different contexts and during protests, affecting large groups of people that are marginalized from power, in order to find solutions in a true democratic and participatory process. In addition it said that "we understand that setting conditions to launch or conduct a dialogue between the insurgents and the Government only adds hurdles to these processes. We have a lot of experience with the positions of different governments that have repeatedly breached agreements, including the current government, which will be made public in due time. The resulting distance and distrust makes it hard to make progress on the path of peace in Colombia.

In late September Norway offered its good offices for the talks with the ELN. The ELN Central Command, meanwhile, said that negotiations with them would be to discuss the major economic, political and social problems that had led to social and armed conflict. They also emphasized that time could not be a straitjacket, and that the agenda in any kind of dialogue should include the petitions and demands of the communities, and mechanisms that allow for their participation in both the process and in defining the issues. The ELN stated that it doubted that the agreements would be finally implemented, since they are frequently violated. However, in October the ELN repeated that it was ready to start talks with the Government, and it created a five-person delegation for exploratory talks. In the same month the Congress of the Peoples, close to the ELN, issued a statement with the five following requests:

1. Political recognition of the peasants and the black and indigenous peoples.
2. Property for the people that work the land and care for it.
3. Oil for a decent life.
4. Mining for good living.
5. Autonomous and concerted substitution of illicit crops.

In November 2013, the ELN accepted the challenge of beginning negotiations without a bilateral ceasefire. Soon after the group freed a kidnapped engineer, which was one of the Government's conditions to launch a dialogue with the guerrillas.

Four days before the second round of the presidential elections, and immediately after the Government and the FARC had signed a preliminary agreement on the issue of the victims, President Santos announced on June 2014 that since January the Government had been holding exploratory talks with the ELN. Initial contacts were made in late 2013 and a 21-day meeting took place in Ecuador in January. A 20-day second round was held in Brazil along with other short meetings. The government delegation was led by Frank Pearl, former peace commissioner and former director of the reintegration program, retired general Eduardo Herrera Berbel, expert in negotiations and peace processes, and Jaime Avendaño, a veteran official of the President's office. Representing the ELN was "Antonio Garcia", commander of the guerrilla group, who had participated in the failed negotiations held from 2005 to 2007 in Cuba, along with four other delegates. The countries acting as guarantors for the talks included Ecuador (represented by Juan Meriguet, adviser to the Chancellor), Brazil and Norway, and as accompanying countries, Venezuela, Chile and Cuba. In a joint statement issued on June 10 by the ELN and the Government, the parties reported that the agenda for the talks would include items related to victims and participation of society. The rest of the topics had yet to be agreed. The exploratory talks were not easy, because the Government did not accept, among other things, the bilateral ceasefire demanded by the ELN. According to some media sources, the formal negotiation would most likely take place in Ecuador, whose president had already offered his country's assistance. Since progress had been made on the agenda with the FARC, in future formal talks the ELN could accept the points already agreed to with the guerrilla group and perhaps, as a first condition, it could renounce its age old aspiration of creating a National Convention. The ELN could continue to focus its main interest on the control of energy resources. President Santos insisted that there should not be two different models for negotiation, only one.

As previously mentioned, in the second half of July the FARC and ELN issued a joint statement to Congress saying that what was agreed at the negotiating table should "be included in a grand peace treaty and it should be set in stone by the sovereign decision of the people so that it would endure for generations to come." The fact that the statement was signed by Timoleon Jimenez "Timoshenko" head of the FARC, and Nicholas Rodriguez "Gabino", maximum leader of the ELN, gave the impression that the Government was trying to get the ELN to accept everything that had been agreed on so far with the FARC. In August "Gabino" wrote an open letter to members of the Colombian armed forces that reiterated the "urgency of a bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. If an agreement was reached he considered that the parties must be willing to accept oversight by the national and international community so that the commitments are fully complied with." He also said that the way the parties address each other and the language used should change.

In October, in its magazine called *Insurrección*, the ELN suggested that there might be problems of understanding with the Government in the exploratory phase, since "the purpose of building a country in peace and equality brings together two opposing ways of viewing the conflict and its solution. One thing is the scope of peace proposed by the insurgency, which reflects the feelings of the majority, and the idea that the Government and the ruling elite have is a completely different thing... A real peace process would mean that it is no longer necessary to use arms to defend and fight for the rights of the majority; the struggle could be resolved using democratic channels and there would be guarantees that the leaders of the opposition and social protests would not be murdered, displaced or exiled. Democratic activity can only be undertaken by the majorities and it should therefore be them who in the peace process develop this activity in their daily lives and struggles through direct participation... We launch the idea of "two processes and one goal", but we know that there is only one peace in Colombia. In mid-October Gabino reiterated in a message that the ELN was willing to begin a peace process similar to the Government's talks with the FARC, and he stressed the urgency of a bilateral ceasefire. He also said that agreements had already been reached on two agenda items in the exploratory negotiations with the Government: the participation of society and victims of conflict. At about the same time President Santos said he wanted absolute confidentiality with regard to any contacts with the ELN and asked his ministers not to make any comments on the process. In this sense the ELN said they would have preferred to provide information at all times on how the discussions were progressing, but the group had decided to relax its position and respect the commitments it had assumed in this regard. At the end of the month there was a setback in the process when the Army captured Wigbert Chamorro, alias "Jairo", the ELN commander in Tolima, who had a role in the exploratory talks with the Government. The judicial system had not issued any arrest warrants against this negotiator.

In December the ELN's magazine complained that the structural reforms already negotiated with the FARC had not been included in the "2014-2018 National Development Plan". It also stated that the large majority of workers had been absent from the current peace talks and that the regime's idea of peace was a mere distraction. "If it really wanted peace, –the group said– the Government would have made gestures and launched specific actions to reduce the impact of war, and within this context we propose an agreement for a bilateral ceasefire, which is what society is demanding." Still, "in the midst of the expected mutual distrust, we have responded to the Santos Government's proposal to end the military confrontation, which for us is to attempt to resolve a political conflict... Consequently, in almost two years of exploratory talks the only profound differences we have encountered is when it comes to defining what the Government means when it talks about achieving peace; for the regime peace is demobilization, impunity, pacification and a few changes so that everything remains the same; meanwhile, for the ELN peace is social justice, democracy, equality and sovereignty. These differences make it very difficult to achieve peace." In mid-December President Santos said the Government would begin the peace process with the ELN only if it stopped kidnapping, and demanded the prompt release of the mayor of Alto Baudo (Chocó), who had been kidnapped a few days earlier. In a letter to both the ELN and the Government a group of prominent politicians, academics and members from the civil society

asked the negotiating teams to set up the "formal" negotiating table. In response, the ELN Central Command made several interesting observations to explain the slowness of the exploratory phase and it criticized the negotiating techniques, which are isolated from social dynamics. Thus, "peace must not be understood as an academic exercise between two delegations", since it needs society's involvement. "It would be good if the dialogue process created a new dynamic in the country and included humanitarian actions agreed to by both parties, a bilateral ceasefire agreement and opportunities for participation by society in an open dialogue." "A process that turns its back on society and uses a behind-closed-doors methodology is not right for the Macondian Colombia". "It is inexplicable that the country does not know what is on the table for discussion and that this ignorance is used to manipulate the facts". "It would be best for people to participate in the preparation of the agenda, the topics to be discussed, and the spaces and scenarios to build." This shows once again the ELN's conviction that the group would only participate in the peace process to the extent that it was a process of social participation.

The peace process in 2015

In early January 2015 President Santos called on the ELN to join the FARC's unilateral ceasefire and to make progress in the preliminary discussions that had been launched several months earlier. The ELN then took the political initiative and began to make proposals and public statements. On January 7 the ELN held its 5th Congress and issued a statement that received national and international media attention. The ELN leader, "Gabino", said "we are participating in this dialogue to observe the real intentions of the Government and the Colombian state; if we conclude that weapons are not necessary, we would be willing to consider if we should stop using them." The FARC sent a message of unity to the ELN. In a radio interview, "Gabino" said "we must eradicate what remains of vanguardism in guerrilla organizations ... because the vanguard is the masses, the popular movements, the social organizations". In several messages, "Gabino" reiterated that the group's members would remain in the regions to participate in politics". In an interview, "Gabino" said that "conflicts within a society will never end due to their human nature; what we need to avoid is that such conflicts lead us to confrontation and violence; they must be resolved through honest dialogue". This is thus assuming a basic principle of education for peace, we must be able to distinguish conflict from the violence in the conflict (which is needed to achieve change), since this is necessary or inevitable for social transformation. In the same interview he stated "we have always said that if Colombia were ever able to open up democratic channels so that the majority could use those spaces in their struggles without resorting to the right of rebellion, no one would be forced to take up arms". Halfway through the month the ELN requested a climate of peace to begin discussions and expressed its willingness to address all of the issues related to peace, including the issue of weapons, but it also demanded that the social and environmental conflict be discussed. In the January issue of the magazine *Insurrección* the ELN said that "peace ... means changes in the economic, social, cultural and territorial structure, and in military matters. Or to put it in more colloquial terms, the issue of weapons and the doctrine of the Armed Forces". And the article asked, quite rightly, "why not include this issue of vital importance in the national debate when in the continent there are winds of a new sovereign, truly independent military doctrine where people are no longer considered the enemy?", which is in line with what was previously discussed in the section on the FARC, in the sense that all peace agreements involve a reduction in military structures and their budgets, and a change in military doctrine.

Meanwhile, in an interview ELN commander "Antonio Garcia" revealed for the first time some details regarding the progress made so far in the exploratory phase. According to him, "the points that we have been working on and have not yet been completed are:

- 1- Participation of civil society. The aim of the peace process is to influence or change the very course of the political dynamics that the country is familiar with.
- 2- Democracy for peace. A discussion and definition of what must be done to make democracy complete and real, a responsibility that society as a whole must take on.

- 3- Changes necessary for peace (has yet to be discussed). The people must decide what needs to be changed, considering that peace will not suddenly appear the day after the agreements.
- 4- Victims. It is essential to deal with the full set of issues: displacement and its causes, truth, justice, reparation, no repetition, forgiveness and not forgetting.
- 5- End of the armed conflict (has yet to be discussed).
- 6- Implementation of the agreement and referendum of its content."

The specifics of the methodology that would be used when formal negotiations begin had not yet been defined at the start the year. The possibility of changing the order of the six discussion points mentioned to bring them in line with the pace of negotiations with the FARC cannot be ruled out. "Antonio Garcia" explained that it was the Government who had contacted them two years ago, and that the Government of Venezuela facilitated the first meeting (subsequent meetings were held in Ecuador and Brazil). He said that seven months went by before the first meeting was held, and eight months before the second, which gave the ELN the impression that the Government was in no hurry. He criticized the "criteria" that the Government had established as preconditions for these first contacts: "confidentiality, direct dialogue and to be held abroad", although this is quite common in these kinds of preliminary contacts. He also said that all the issues were complex, and that the Government did not want to discuss issues such as the Armed Forces, the economy, the State, national sovereignty and questions regarding the cause of the conflict. He also said that "we demanded immediate, measurable actions. We wanted society to see immediate changes in their daily lives, as a guarantee that change is truly taking place. We did not want often-repeated promises", which could mean that they did not like the principle used with the FARC that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." The ELN preferred a scheme where steps were applied immediately once they were approved at the table, and said they would only hand over their arms "after the negotiation of the agenda and after confirming that they agreements had been implemented", which the Government did not accept. The ELN's initial impression was that the Government simply wanted to subdue the group and achieve "peace". Given the above "Antonio Garcia" said that in order to address the present and future situation the Government should recognize or comply with the following points:

- 1 - The peace agreement will not guarantee that life will be less traumatic.
- 2 – The political nature of the conflict and changes to the military doctrine.
- 3 - The state must set aside its idea that the other party (the ELN) will violate any agreement.
- 4 – The peace negotiating tables must be open and must motivate and involve the whole country ", which the Government would surely accept when the formal negotiations begin.

Finally, the ELN demanded a unilateral ceasefire by the State. In January, too, the government of Ecuador once again expressed its willingness to host the formal negotiations with the ELN, when they occur, and the Civil Facilitating Commission asked that both the government and the ELN start formal negotiations as soon as possible. It also reminded them that the role and protagonism of civil society in all the phases of the process was essential to the ELN. In February, the ELN continued to perpetrate kidnappings while also releasing some people. Aware of the tacit practice of "de-escalating" the clashes with the FARC, the top leader of the ELN, "Gabino", suggested creating a "military operation-free zone" where both the armed forces and the guerrillas could go without attacking each other in order to avoid direct confrontation and to protect the people. According to the ELN and several analysts, this practice has been common in several regions of the country for years, and it has been done with utter confidentiality. "Gabino" also suggested not repressing or torturing the settlers as a way to get information on the insurgency; not setting up troop encampments in schools, country estates or populated places that use the local people as shields; and not restricting the settlers' access to food or medicine in their punitive actions, since this would be equivalent to sending the operatives against the people.

In late February, "Gabino" claimed that the ELN had been ready to negotiate for a year and had appointed two national commanders and two regional commanders to engage in talks with the government. In mid-March, the ELN announced that on the 8th of that month a new round of

rapprochements had concluded and that only one point was missing before a dialogue agenda was set. It also clarified that "the agreements on each point will be reached in the public phase, while in the current phase (exploratory) there will be no pre-agreements". In April, the new president of Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez, confirmed his country's offer to be the site of the future formal talks with the ELN. The top commander of the ELN, "Gabino", declared that "on issues of agenda points and approaches, as well as the participation of society, (the ELN) has a different way of viewing the headway and developments (than the negotiations with the FARC)". With regard to the old aspiration of holding a National Convention, he stated that "although we do not regard it as invalid, we believe that the mass political movement, through its organisations, should launch its own proposal based on its democratic principles and revisit the National Convention if it regards it as valid". In the second half of April, "Gabino" stated that after 15 months of negotiations, there was now 80% agreement on the agenda with the government, and that this agenda matched that of the FARC. He added that "the train of peace will get moving soon" and that some political and social changes to combat poverty and inequality spearheaded by the government would help to get them to sit at the negotiating table. He also commented that they would be willing to help demine the territory. In the April issue of the magazine *Insurrección*, "Gabino" stated that "it is necessary to stop the war, since negotiating in the midst of an armed confrontation makes it impossible to create the trust needed for an honest dialogue. This is why we confirm that need for a bilateral ceasefire as a guarantee of a real peace process." In the opinion of "Gabino", "the serious problems in this country are not going to be resolved at a dialogue table with the insurgency or with its demobilisations, but we do aspire to opening up a pathway of changes, generating new social conditions in which the regime pledges to guarantee that social organisations, leaders and opposition heads who have proposals for changes can engage in political activity without being persecuted and murdered, as has happened throughout our history." In late April, "Gabino" and the head of the FARC, "Timochenko", met in Havana with the permission and facilitation of the Colombian government to exchange impressions on their respective talks with the government. A FARC spokesman, "Iván Márquez", mentioned that the intention of the meeting was for both the guerrilla groups to work with the government on two different tables but within the same peace process.

In May, both the government and the media blamed the ELN for showing the extremity of a soldier who was the victim of a mine in a school in Santander. Despite the fact that the leaders of the ELN immediately denied responsibility for such a criminal act and asked for an investigation commission, neither the government nor the media changed the initial news report, which seriously stigmatised the ELN. In early June, "Gabino" issued further declarations in which he particularly blamed the United States for being the main obstacle to achieving peace in Colombia, and the opposition for unilateral ceasefires such as the one declared by the FARC, as they were too risky for those who undertook them "because the government takes advantage of them to intensify their military operations.

In August, several media sources reported that the future formal negotiations with the ELN would be held in Quito (Ecuador), which is the home to the UNASUR headquarters. They also mentioned that the president of Venezuela had influenced the ELN to be more flexible in its negotiations. The stepped-up pace of negotiations with the FARC also seemed to have influenced the ELN to act likewise. In late September, "Gabino" stated that the public phase of talks was about to begin. He said that during the three years of explorations, they had had the support of four guarantor countries and two companion countries, and that convergence with the negotiations underway with the FARC had to be achieved with the goal of working within just a single process. Finally, he added that the insurgent group was not in agreement with setting a possible deadline. Days earlier, "Gabino" suggested relaunching the "Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinator", an initiative which had joined six Colombian guerrilla groups together for years starting in 1987.

In early November, the ELN called for a bilateral ceasefire in order to establish formal negotiations with the government, for which they requested the intervention of the Church. The president of the Episcopal Conference, Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro, said they were prepared

to mediate in negotiations. In mid-November, various social, popular, human rights, trade union and church organisations called for the strengthening of the participation of society in the peace process, through the establishment of a “Mesa Social para la Paz” (Social Roundtable for Peace) which might offer solutions for the end of the armed conflict in the country and pave the way for a post-conflict situation. The Roundtable’s proposals could apply to agreements both with the FARC and with the ELN.

At year’s end, the ELN again insisted that formal negotiations would begin soon. The delay was apparently the result of the ELN wanting to carry out the negotiations in Venezuela, while the Government demanded that they took place in Ecuador. However, the political tension that emerged in Venezuela following the December elections helped to clarify the issue, so everything pointed to negotiations beginning in Ecuador in early 2016. According to the Ministry of Defence, between January and October 2015, 42 ELN members were killed in military operations and 212 were captured. Another 113 demobilised.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FARC reiterated their commitment to give up their armed activity and become a political party if the government complied with the reforms and guarantees requested. • The Subcommittee on the Abandonment of Arms and Incorporation into civilian life was created. • The Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims, made up of 12 academics, opened a discussion on the causes of the armed conflict in the country. • The US government appointed a veteran diplomat, Bernard Aronson Bernie, as its representative to monitor the peace process with the FARC, with no executive function. • The FARC and the government reached a historic agreement on the joint demining of the territory, with the help of the social organisation, Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA). • On two occasions, the FARC declared a unilateral ceasefire. The Government, for its part, gave the order to temporarily suspend bombings of FARC camps, also on two occasions. • The two delegations announced publicly that they had reached an agreement to launch, once the Final Agreement had been signed, a Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition, which would be an independent, impartial and extra-judicial mechanism. • The FARC proposed to the Government to start implementing the agreement on the point concerning drugs and illicit crops reached the previous year, coinciding with the government’s decision to suspend spraying with glyphosate. • In early August the first meeting was held of the legal advisers of each party, to analyse the issue of justice and to reach consensus on the Comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. • The head of the government delegation, Humberto de la Calle, and the head of the FARC, “Timochenko”, met twice in Cuba. • On 23 September, President Santos and the FARC leader, “Timochenko” met in Havana to announce the agreement to establish a Special Jurisdiction for Peace, for which purpose it had been decided to create a Comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition, as well as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which will have chambers of justice and a Court for Peace. The president and “Timochenko” also pledged to complete negotiations before 23 March 2016. • In late February, “Gabino” assured that the ELN had been ready to negotiate since a year earlier, and that two national and two regional commanders had been designated for talks with the government.

- In late April, "Gabino" and the head of the FARC, "Timochenko", met in Havana, with the permission and facilitation of the Colombian government, to exchange views on their respective dialogues with the government.
- In late September, "Gabino" declared that the public phase of talks was about to begin.

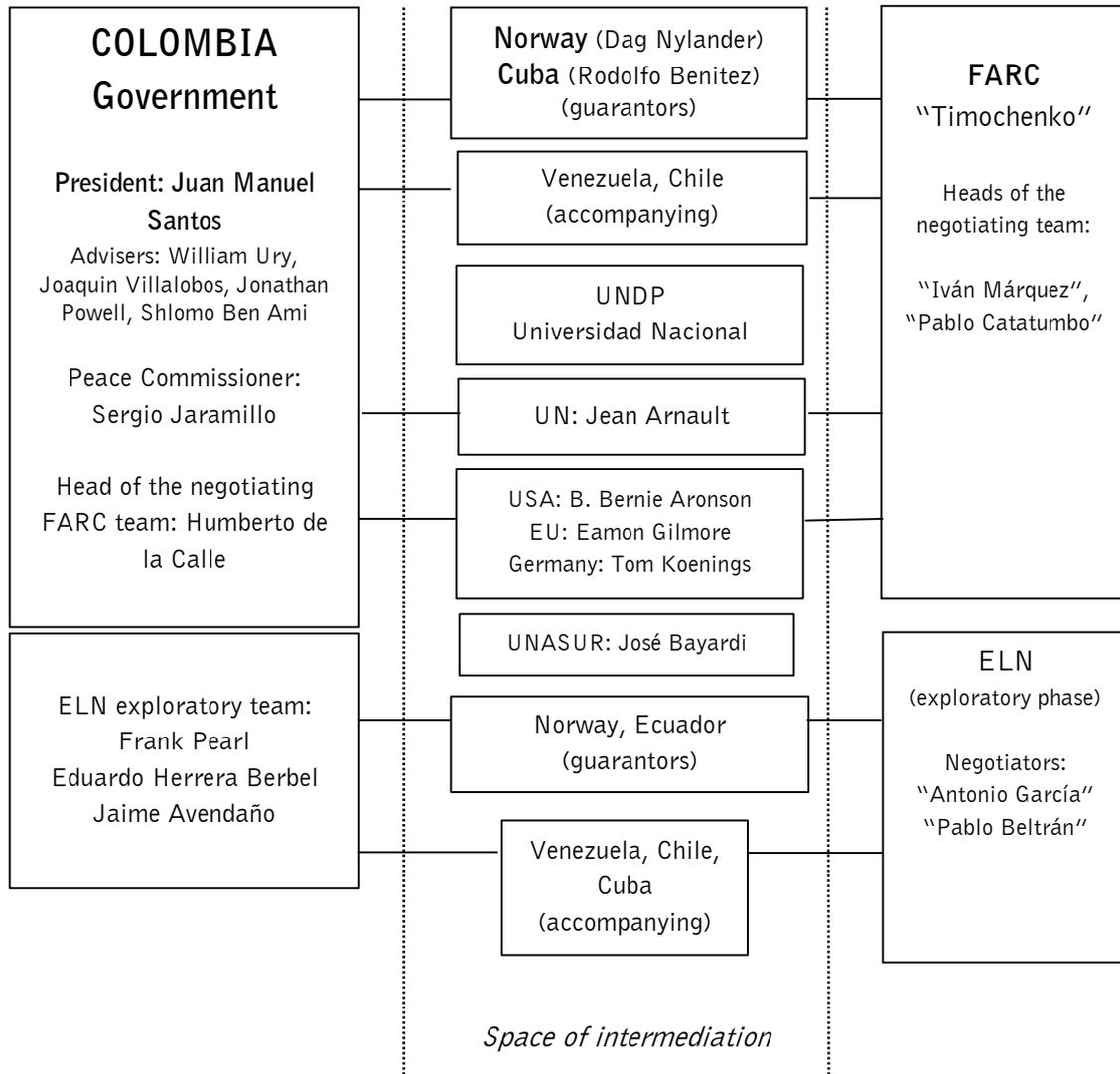
Causes of crises during the year

- Conceptualisation and application of the transitional justice to be implemented at the end of the negotiations.
- The FARC expressed their disagreement with the composition of the Peace Advisory Commission, for being exclusive.
- Resignation from the negotiating committee of three generals appointed by the Colombian Association of Retired Officers, who were very critical of the negotiations.
- Without previously breaking the unilateral ceasefire, a FARC commando unit carried out a night attack on a military garrison located in a municipality in the Department of Cauca, killing 11 soldiers. This act resulted in the resumption of bombings by the armed forces, the intensification of clashes and the breaking of the ceasefire by the FARC.
- The feeling within the ELN that the Government was in no hurry.
- The ELN said it would hand over its rifles only "after the negotiation of the agenda and after confirming the implementation of the agreements", a point that the Government did not accept.

Websites of interest

- Alto Comisionado para la Paz (www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co)
- Anncol (www.anncol.info) (información sobre las FARC)
- Centro de la Memoria Histórica (www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co)
- Centro de Pensamiento y Seguimiento al Diálogo de Paz, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (www.investigacion.unal.edu.co/piensapaz)
- Congreso de los Pueblos (www.congresodelospueblos.org)
- Delegación de Paz de las FARC (www.pazfarc-ep.blogspot.com.es)
- El Colombiano (www.elcolombiano.terra.com.co/pd.asp)
- El Espectador (www.elespectador.com)
- El Tiempo (eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/noticias/index.htm)
- ELN (www.eln-voces.com)
- FARC (resistenciafariana.blogspot.com) (farc-epeace.org)
- Fundación Ideas para la Paz (www.ideaspaz.org)
- Indepaz (www.indepaz.org.co)
- Mesa de conversaciones (www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co)
- PNUD (www.undp.org.co)
- Reconciliación Colombia (www.reconciliacioncolombia.com)
- Revista Semana (www.semana.com)

Main parties in the process



ASIA

a) Southern Asia

AFGHANISTAN

Context of the conflict

A mountainous, extremely poverty-stricken, ethnically diverse, predominantly Muslim country that cultivates opium and gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1919, Afghanistan's pre-existing monarchy came to an end with the coup d'état in 1973, when the country became a republic. A few years later, a Communist government came to power. This government became embroiled in fighting with an Islamic guerrilla group, a situation which led to the intervention of Soviet troops in 1979. The Soviets remained in the country with a total of 100,000 troops until 1989, and they only withdrew after negotiations with the United Nations and constant pressure from a coalition of militias (the Northern Alliance) that was supported by the United States. The civil war resumed, and in 1996 the Taliban forces ended up wresting control of the country. They remained in power until 2001, when an international coalition led by NATO occupied the country ('Operation Enduring Freedom') with a contingent mainly made up of US soldiers. Hamid Karzai became the president of the country. Between 1992 and 1996, the various Afghan militias that were engaged in internecine fighting caused the death of around 50,000 people, most of them civilians. The country lived under constant instability, and the government only controlled the capital. Much of the population are still living as refugees in other countries.

Population: 31,3 million inhabitants
Area: 652,000 km ²
GDP PPA: 63,179 million USD
Per capita income: 680 USD
HDI: 171 (of 188)
Armed actors: Taliban, Al Qaeda, occupation forces
Facilitators: Qatar, China

Background to the peace process

As a result of the Bonn Agreement, which was signed in December 2001, the Interim Authority was created, and the process culminated in September with elections for the National Assembly (Wolesi Jirga) and the provincial councils. Since then, NATO has kept a military contingent in Afghanistan called the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), with a mandate from the United Nations. In March 2001, as the outcome of a Security Council resolution, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was created with the purpose of implementing the commitments to reconstruct the country agreed to a few months earlier in Bonn. In early February 2007, the Wolesi Jirga or lower chamber of Afghanistan approved a draft law on amnesty for all the combatants who had participated in the 25 years of conflict, including Mullah Omar, the top Taliban authority, as well as individuals accused of war crimes, like the former Mujahedin (Afghan resistance fighters) who fought against the Soviets in the 1980s, some of whom now occupy government posts. In September 2007, the Taliban stated that it was willing to start negotiations with the Afghan government, after President Hamid Karzai made a proposal that negotiations get underway. In early October 2008, President Hamid Karzai revealed that he had asked Saudi Arabia to facilitate peace negotiations with the Taliban leaders, and he stated that his envoys had travelled to Saudi Arabia and to Pakistan to start these talks. In 2009, the president of the United States, Barack Obama, stated that reconciliation with the Taliban might be an important initiative in an armed conflict where a US military victory could not be foreseen. In April 2010, a peace conference was held in which an action plan was drawn up for the reintegration of the low- and middle-ranking Taliban insurgents. The plan included job offers, training and other economic incentives. The Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, stated that the Taliban were willing to hold negotiations with Western politicians. The Taliban leader had stated that he was no longer interested in governing the country and that the Taliban's objectives were to expel foreigners from the country and restore Sharia law and security. The Taliban had set no

preconditions for the talks; instead they had simply stated that they must be honest. In September, 40% of Afghans went to the polls for the legislative elections, and the president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, announced the launch of a peace plan for the country. This new strategy, which would be led by a High Peace Council, had a twofold objective: first, to begin a dialogue with the Taliban leaders, and secondly, to remove the combatants from the base of the insurgency.

In January 2011, Afghanistan and Pakistan created a joint commission to draw up kinds of direct negotiations for the possible beginning of peace talks with the Taliban as part of the peace plan for the country launched by President Hamid Karzai in late 2010. In June, the president of the United States, Barack Obama, announced his plan to withdraw from the country, which stipulated the withdrawal of around 33,000 soldiers by September 2012, 10,000 of whom would be repatriated during 2011. In December, US government sources stated that the talks with the Taliban were at a key juncture and that the US was considering the possibility of moving an unspecified number of Taliban prisoners being held in Guantanamo back to Afghanistan. The prisoners would then be under the control of the Afghan government. In exchange, it asked the Taliban to implement some kind of trust-building measures, such as denouncing international terrorism or making a public expression of its intention to embark on formal talks with the Afghan government. The US held several meetings with the Taliban in Germany and Doha, specifically with representatives of Mullah Omar.

In January 2012, the Taliban insurgency announced it was opening a political office in Qatar, a move that would eventually have been accepted by Karzai's government, which had been extremely reluctant to continue the peace process. However, the Taliban preferred to continue direct negotiations with the US and not with the Afghan government. In February, the US government and Taliban representatives held various meetings in Qatar in which they may have discussed preliminary confidence-building measures, such as a possible transfer of captives, according to the Taliban. However, the Taliban said that this was not linked to the peace process. Nevertheless, in March the Taliban announced that they were temporarily suspending negotiations with the US government. The main point of disagreement between the Taliban and the US was the issue of the prisoners in Guantanamo. Meanwhile, the High Peace Council appointed Salahuddin Rabbani to be its new chair. Rabbani is the son of Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Council's previous chair and former President of Afghanistan, who was assassinated by the Taliban in September 2011. In November, Pakistan released a group of Afghan Taliban prisoners, including the son of a prominent jihadist leader and other Taliban leaders, a move that Afghanistan interpreted as a sign of the neighbouring country's willingness to facilitate negotiations with the Afghan government and the Taliban insurgency. Also, the efforts exerted by Afghanistan's High Peace Council made the beginning of talks possible. In December, there was a meeting between leaders of the Taliban insurgency and Afghan government representatives in France organised by the French think tank Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique. The Taliban delegation included Shahabuddin Delawar, the representative of the political office in Qatar, and the meeting was also attended by members of the Afghan government, the Northern Alliance, which battled militarily with the Taliban for years, and Hezb-e-Islami, a Taliban ally. Before the meeting, Afghanistan's High Peace Council proposed a plan to transform the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami and other armed groups into political organisations and allow them to participate in all the political and constitutional processes in the country in 2015. According to this plan, Pakistan would replace the United States to lead the peace negotiations.

Both the Taliban and the U.S. denied in March 2013 that they had restarted talks, in response to accusations by Afghan President Hamid Karzai that they were holding "daily negotiations". He also accused the U.S. of conniving with Taliban violence to justify the presence of soldiers in Afghanistan. According to media sources Karzai travelled to Qatar in late March to meet with the Qatari regime and explore the possibilities of peace talks with the Taliban. In turn, U.S. secretary of state John Kerry who was visiting Afghanistan in March urged the Taliban to begin talks with

the Government. The U.S., meanwhile, stated that they were in favour of the Taliban opening an office in Qatar.

Furthermore, a round of dialogue between the presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan and British Prime Minister David Cameron was held in February in the UK. It was the third round of talks since David Cameron proposed this trilateral mechanism in 2012. Unlike previous meetings, on this occasion foreign ministers as well as military and intelligence leaders took part. The parties stated that they were in favour of opening an official Afghan office in Qatar and urged the Taliban militias to do the same. In June the Taliban opened an office in Qatar, after years of negotiations, and the United States announced it would immediately hold talks with the Taliban to launch a process to resolve the conflict. The Taliban said it supported a political solution to the Afghan conflict and wished to have good relations with neighbouring countries. The actual opening of a Taliban office in Qatar in June raised concerns and strong criticism from the Afghan government after the Taliban raised a flag with the name of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the symbol and the name used during the time when the Taliban controlled the country. Karzai's government reacted by suspending talks with the U.S. on its presence in the country after 2014 and on a bilateral security agreement. Finally, the symbols visible on the streets, the Taliban flag and the name, were removed from the office.

During the third quarter, the tension between the Afghan Government, the U.S. and the Taliban largely revolved around the Taliban office opened in Qatar that was closed after major disagreements between the parties. The Afghan government protested against the insurgents' attempt to portray the office as an embassy of a government in exile with the display of the Taliban flag and a plaque with the inscription of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the country's name during the Taliban regime), and urged the Qatari authorities to remove these symbols. Following the office closing the Taliban said they were looking at other options for alternative location. Meanwhile, the Afghan government said that it would only accept the negotiations if the office was opened in Turkey or Saudi Arabia. The conditions put forward by the Taliban to accept the negotiations were the release of Taliban prisoners from Guantánamo in exchange for the release of the only American prisoner of war in Taliban hands, the removal of the Taliban insurgents from the UN and U.S. terrorism lists, and recognition by the U.S. of the Taliban as a political and not merely military actor.

Furthermore, as the crisis unfolded some important events took place that could help relaunch the peace process. In September the Government of Pakistan set free Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, one of the four founders of the Taliban in 1994. This leader was in favour of a negotiated political solution to the conflict. According to representatives of the Afghan government, despite having little room to manoeuvre –the Administration said that it would not reform the Constitution, the release could help the process. Along with the Taliban leader the Pakistani Government had in recent months also released 30 other people, including members of the Taliban insurgency. At the same time, in a meeting during the celebration of the UN General Assembly, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated their support for a peace process in Afghanistan led by the Afghans.

In October the governments of both countries agreed that a delegation of the High Peace Council, which is responsible for leading the peace talks with the Taliban insurgency, meet in Pakistan with the released Taliban leader, Mullah Baradar. Although his release was intended to be a boost to the peace process, Taliban sources said that Baradar remained under house arrest and was not able to hold meetings. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated his interest in a dialogue with the Taliban insurgency and said that the Interior Minister, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, would be in charge of the talks. The insurgency, and in particular its leader Hakimullah Mehsud, said that he hoped a government negotiating team would be appointed. He also demanded an end to the drone attacks.

In the first months of 2014, some small progress was made. First, the High Council for Peace in Afghanistan acknowledged that a meeting had taken place with a Taliban faction in Dubai, in the

UAE. The Taliban delegation was headed by the former Taliban minister Agha Jan Mohtism. The meeting took place without the authorization of the Taliban leader Mullah Omar, although Mohtism did add that even though he was not sure if they would receive the leader's direct support, he had never disowned them. Various Taliban leaders were members of this faction, including several former ministers, diplomats and commanders. Both Mohtism and the High Council for Peace highlighted the cordial atmosphere of the negotiations. The most significant development during the second quarter was the agreement reached between the U.S. Government and the Taliban insurgency by which U.S. Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl –held as a prisoner of war by the Taliban for nearly five years – was freed in exchange for five Taliban leaders held in Guantanamo who were released and transferred to Qatar. The release was the result of a secret bilateral agreement reached between the U.S. and the Taliban without the intervention of the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and as both sides indicated, independent of any negotiation process regarding the armed conflict in Afghanistan. In parallel to the negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban, the Afghan government said the arrest of a former Taliban leader in the UAE was hindering the peace process because Agha Jan Motasim, a former Taliban minister of finance, would have acted as a mediator between the Afghan government and the Taliban leadership. Afghanistan attributed his arrest to efforts by those who want to hinder the peace process, which could be an indirect reference to Pakistan.

In early September the Foreign Minister of India visited Afghanistan and announced his willingness to assist in the peace process. On the 21st of that month the presidential candidates Ashraf Ghani (Pashtun) and Abdullah Abdullah (Tajik North) reached an agreement to form a national unity government, in which Ghani would be the president and Abdullah would hold the post of chief executive. Both signed a security agreement with the United States that would allow U.S. troops to remain in the country beyond the 2014 deadline. In October a meeting was held in China of the 4th Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan, with the participation of Russia, China and Iran, among others, and the role these countries could play in the peace process was discussed. In November the new president of Afghanistan visited Pakistan with the hope that cooperation between the two countries could help renew the negotiations with the Taliban. Both countries have plans to double bilateral trade in five years. Pakistan's Advisor on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, said that his country could facilitate negotiations, but it would not take the initiative. In this regard, he said that Qatar, Turkey and especially China could play an important role in the future since a meeting had already been held with the Taliban in Beijing. Qari Din Mohammad Hanif, who had been Planning Minister during the Taliban regime and is based in Qatar, participated in the meeting. In the same direction, at the end of the month the Pakistani Defence Minister said his country wants Russia to become involved in the peace process in Pakistan, since the presence of China and Russia were a source of stability. The Afghan president had already travelled to China to study the role it could play. China has great economic expectations for Afghanistan, a country rich in minerals (such as copper) and oil, and is planning to build a railway line between the Afghan and Chinese capitals and a pipeline that will unite the two countries. Furthermore, China wants to promote the Silk Route and reach Central Asia, as well as make profitable use of Gwadar Port in Pakistan for its maritime exports. Because of all of these economic interests, China has a keen interest in achieving peace in Afghanistan.

Another country involved in the economic development of Afghanistan is Germany, which in recent years has provided 430 million euros in aid annually for economic and social development and pledged 150 million euros a year to improve the Afghan security forces. In early December a conference on Afghanistan was held in London with the participation of 60 countries. As a trust-building measure Pakistan freed 50 Taliban, 9 of which joined the peace process. Also in December members of civil society from Afghanistan and Pakistan met in Beijing (China) in a "second track dialogue" on security and reconciliation. Among the organizations attending were Pakistan's Regional Peace Institute, linked to the intelligence services, and the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament, which has ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Also in December the NATO mission in Afghanistan, ISAF, came to a close and was replaced by the Resolute Support Mission, which provides support and training to Afghan security forces. In parallel, the U.S. also finalized its Enduring Freedom mission, which was substituted by the Operation Freedom's Sentinel. A total of 10,800 U.S. troops will continue to be deployed in Afghanistan, in addition to several thousand more troops from NATO, which would bring the total to 13,500 foreign troops in the country, although the final figure could be higher. By year's end there were two possible mediation paths. One was the tripod made up of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The second was a group of countries in the region, the so-called "6+1" group, made up of the U.S., Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. This group has already met twice.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, it was revealed that peace negotiations between the government and the Taliban insurgents might begin again. President Ashraf Ghani, who strengthened the diplomatic efforts to get Pakistan involved in possible peace negotiations after taking power, was optimistic about the prospects of these negotiations. The Pakistani government, with which the previous Afghan executive had constantly been at odds regarding peace negotiations with the Taliban, stated that the insurgency would be in favour of holding talks during the month of March. In this sense, a Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, also confirmed that a Taliban delegation had travelled to Qatar, although he revealed no further details. Even though different sources expressed their optimism about this process, there were still major doubts regarding the position of the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, as well as the sincerity of all the parties involved. Nevertheless, several factors had shored up the process since Ashraf Ghani had taken power, such as the aforementioned diplomatic rapprochement with Pakistan, which Ghani regarded as fundamental for any peace agreement, and especially the Pakistani army, as well as greater closeness with China, which had also offered to mediate. China has a special interest in achieving peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to ensure that its goods can be transported through Pakistani territory to the Arabian Sea. The Chinese government had welcomed a Taliban delegation the previous year, and during the Chinese Foreign Minister's recent visit to Islamabad it offered its government's help to facilitate negotiations. In fact, both China and Pakistan had advised the Taliban to start peace negotiations, and this must have encouraged the insurgency to agree to hold preliminary negotiations with the Afghan government. However, as the Reuters news agency revealed, the peace negotiations between Afghanistan and the Taliban insurgency were facing several stumbling blocks that were hindering headway. The Pakistani government, which had recently pledged to support the talks, required the Taliban to put an end to the rivalries between its two top leaders, the political leader Akhtar Mohammad Mansour (who is in favour of talks) and the military commandant Abdul Qayum Zakir (who is against the process and had openly questioned whether Mullah Omar, the top Taliban leader, was still alive). In parallel, there were further obstacles, such as the demands that the Taliban would unquestionably pose at the start of talks, which the Afghan government was opposed to at the time, namely: the complete withdrawal of foreign troops (currently 12,000) and the imposition of the restrictive interpretation of Sharia law promoted by the Taliban. Reuters revealed that a Taliban delegation travelled from Qatar to Pakistan to meet with Pakistani representatives and Chinese diplomats, and that the Taliban delegation had also travelled to Quetta (Balochistan, in Pakistan) to meet with Taliban leaders, although Taliban representatives and the Chinese government officially denied that the meeting had taken place. On the other hand, both the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and numerous women's organisations asked that the peace negotiations not put an end to the fragile advances that had been made in recent years and that the negotiations be held with transparency and respect for human rights and women's rights.

In the second quarter, the most significant development since President Ashraf Ghani had risen to power was the change in Afghanistan's policy towards Pakistan and the involvement of the other neighbours and allies to guarantee peace in the country, especially once the last military contingent withdrew (the USA will keep around 9,800 soldiers there until late 2015, which will

be followed by a non-combatant NATO support mission until late 2016). Ghani's outstretched-hand policy towards Pakistan made a rapprochement possible. The Afghan president was convinced that the Pakistani military held the key to getting the Taliban involved in the talks. This quarter, the negotiation process between the Afghan government and the Taliban materialised gradually with the help and coordination of a large number of countries, including the USA, Pakistan, China, Iran, Qatar and Norway. Ghani's government began by holding consultations with its neighbours (he visited Iran from the 19th to 20th of April and India from the 28th to 29th of April, and the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, visited Kabul on the 12th of May). On the 21st of April, on a state visit to Pakistan, the Chinese President Xi Jinping encouraged Islamabad to take on the role of mediating in the peace process between Afghanistan and the Taliban. The USA, in turn, made a visit to Central Asia to gather support for the dialogue with Afghanistan. Likewise, Ghani managed to make conciliatory statements in which he stated that there was room for the Taliban in Afghan politics (just before the negotiations in Qatar). On the 2nd and 3rd of May, Qatar hosted an eight-member Taliban delegation led by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai and a varied group of people associated with different parties and groups in Afghanistan, from members of civil society, particularly the High Peace Commissioner (HPC), including a few women, to members of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The gathering was organised by Pugwash, whose report claimed that each one attended individually, not on behalf of any government or institution. In the issues addressed in this first encounter, there was total unanimity in the need for peace in Afghanistan. Everyone agreed that the foreign troops had to withdraw. Among other demands, the Taliban asked that their members be stricken for the United Nations' terrorist lists, for the Afghan government to be Islamic, for the constitution to be reformed and for the Taliban office in Doha to reopen. In June, the recently-appointed Minister of Defence, Masoom Stanekzai, working as the Afghan government's special envoy for peace, met in Ürümqi (Xinjiang, China) with a Taliban delegation (Mullah Khalil, Mullah Abudl Razaq and Mullah Hassan Rahmani). On the 3rd and 4th of June, a delegation of Afghan women (Fawzai Kofi and Shukria Barekzai, female parliamentarians, and Hawa Alam Nuristani from the HPC) met with several members of the Taliban in Norway. One of the questions when negotiating with the Taliban was whether their involvement in Afghan politics would lead to a backsliding in the tentative advances that had been made in the participation of female Afghans in public life. On the 7th of June, a Taliban delegation met with parliamentarians and other Afghan politicians in Dubai, again organised by Pugwash. On the 15th of June, a meeting was held in Norway with another Taliban delegation (3 members) and several representatives of the Afghan government, with Mohammad Mohaqeq (Abdullah Abdullah's team) at the head of the group. All the encounters led up to the talks held on the 7th of July in Murree, Pakistan, between the Afghan government and the Taliban (with the USA and China as the guest observers). The groundwork covered at this meeting led to the assumption of future meetings and agreements between the many parties involved in moving this peace process forward.

The crisis in the negotiations emerged with the reports of the death of the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar. This announcement signalled a turning point in the movement. The doubts that had arisen in the ranks of the Taliban over the legitimacy of the negotiations and the best people to represent the movement brought pressure to bear on the movement, leading Mullah Omar, as the recognised leader, to make a public statement. Finally, on the 30th of July it was announced that the supreme leader of the movement had died in April 2013. That same day, the negotiations were cancelled and part of the Taliban leadership met to choose his successor, Mullah Akhtar Mansur. This choice did not please several Taliban leaders, including the family of Mullah Omar, who expressed their disagreement and accused Mansur of manipulating the choice. His opponents included the son of Mullah Omar, Mullah Yakub, and a traditional enemy of Mansur, Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir. The leader of the Taliban political committee, Tayyeb Agha, resigned in protest. These events showed glimpses of divisions within the Taliban rank-and-file along with possible internal struggles for the leadership, which diverted the group's attention from the negotiations with the government. Precisely the three Taliban members who went to Murree seemed to have no connection with the movement's political committee (represented by the office in Qatar) and no influence on the Taliban hierarchy. Despite the fact that Mullah Mansur gave

them his approval, the three members were controlled by Pakistan, and there were accusations that the country had forced them to negotiate. The main stumbling block in the negotiations was the internal division among the Taliban between those who supported the talks and those who were opposed to them. There were also differences among those who were in favour of the talks: some did not want Pakistan to play any role, whereas others had no issues with it serving as the mediator.

In his first statement after being appointed, Mullah Mansur expressed his opposition to holding talks with foreign powers or his Afghan subordinates. Even though the possibilities of resuming the talks thus seemed squandered, a subsequent message from Mansur on Eid ul-Adha did not fully erase the possibility of a new round of talks, as long as the right conditions were in place. However, in view of the recent upswing in the violence waged by the Taliban, President Ashraf Ghani declared in August that his government would not sit down to negotiate with anyone who murdered Afghans and acted against the nation's own interests. Pakistan was still being pressured to intercede, although this pressure was primarily being exerted by the United States. The commitment to intercede and mediate already expressed by several countries both in the region and elsewhere (such as Norway, Qatar and China) might foster a future resumption of the talks.

In November, US military sources announced the dismantling of what was probably al-Qaeda's largest training camp. This base, located in the Shorabak district of Kandahar province, measured 77.7 km². The loss of territory to the Taliban in some districts was accompanied by the recovery of other areas. ISIS increased its influence, partly thanks to infighting amongst the Taliban. In Zabul, Mullah Rasool Akhund was chosen as the leader of a Taliban faction opposed to that led by Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. This Taliban faction fought alongside ISIS (composed mainly of members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). As a result of this division, a known leader of the new group, Mullah Mansoor Dadullah, was killed by a Taliban loyal to Akhtar Mansoor. In relation to the process of reconciliation with the Government, the Akhtar Mansoor group appointed Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, a Taliban veteran who had participated in several rounds of talks, as head of their political office in Qatar. However, the Afghan government showed reluctance to return to dialogue. In December, the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, and the Pakistani president, Nawaz Sharif, agreed once more to resume peace talks. Ghani was received with honours at the "Heart of Asia" conference in Islamabad. The head of the Afghan intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, resigned because of his rejection of dialogue with the Taliban and the political opposition also expressed its hostility to talks. The key problem was the absence of an interlocutor, due to the internal divisions among the Taliban and the probable death of their leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, in a clash between rival factions near Quetta. In early December, the Taliban carried out an attack on Kandahar airport in which more than 50 people were killed. Six US soldiers were killed in the attack on Bagram airbase. Soon after, the Taliban launched attacks in Kabul.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several diplomatic efforts were made to involve Pakistan in possible peace negotiations. • The Afghan government's peace envoy met with a Taliban delegation in Urumqi (Xinjiang, China). • A meeting was held in Pakistan between the Afghan government and the Taliban (with the USA and China as guest observers). • Both China and Pakistan are believed to have advised the Taliban to enter peace negotiations, and this would have led the insurgency to agree to conduct preliminary talks with the Afghan government. • A Taliban delegation travelled from Qatar to Pakistan to meet with Pakistani representatives and Chinese diplomats and the Taliban delegation is also believed to have gone to Quetta (Balochistan, Pakistan) to meet with the Taliban leadership. • Support and coordination by a number of countries; USA, Pakistan, China, Iran, Qatar and

Norway.

- On 7 July there was a meeting in Murree, Pakistan, between the Afghan government and the Taliban (with the USA and China as guest observers).
- The death of the Taliban head, Mullah Omar, provoked divisions among Taliban leaders.
- In December, the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, and the Pakistani president, Nawaz Sharif, agreed once more to resume peace talks.

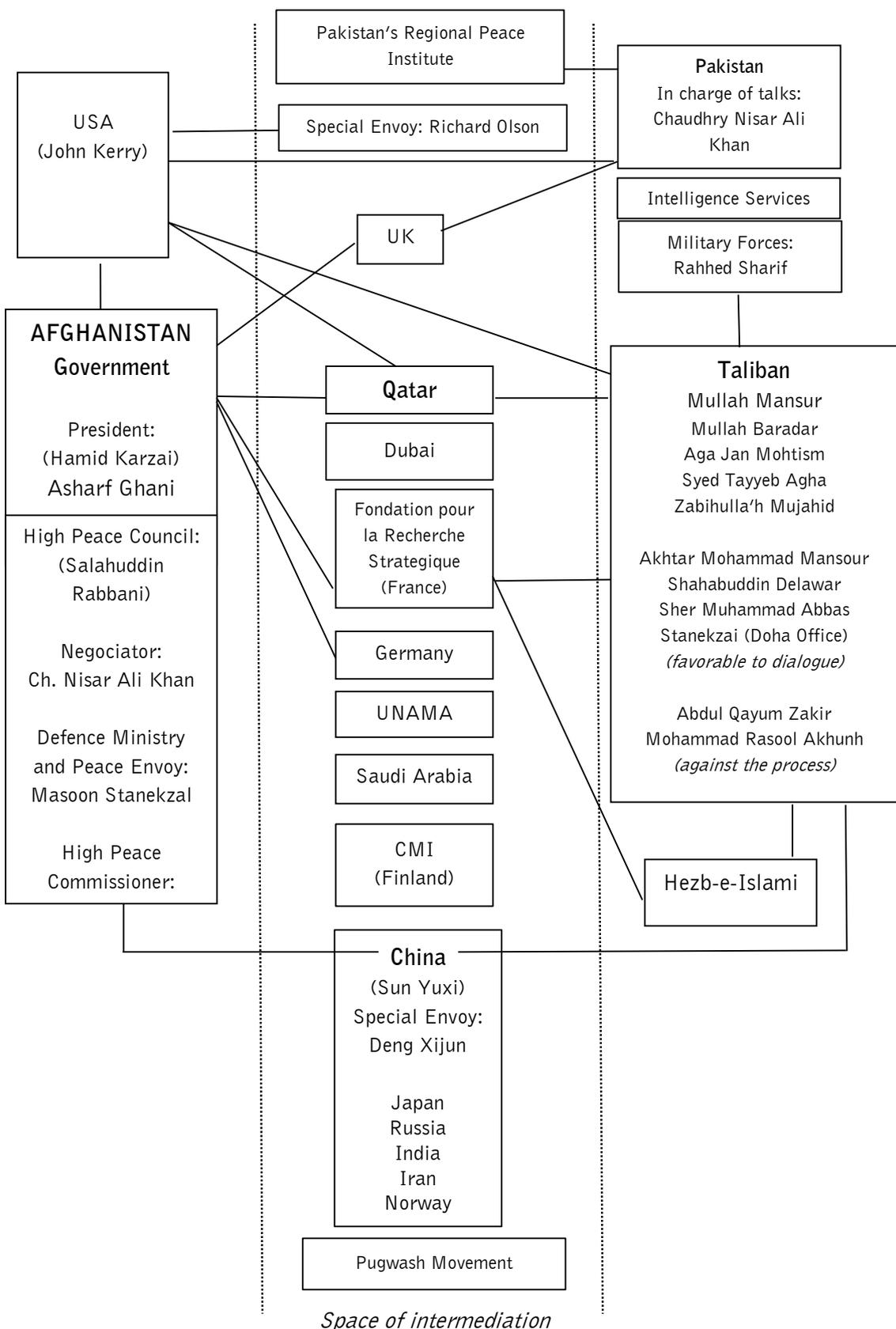
Causes of crises during the year

- The death of the Taliban head, Mullah Omar, provoked divisions among Taliban leaders.
- In his first statement following his appointment, Mullah Mansoor said he rejected dialogue with foreign powers or their Afghan puppets.
- ISIS increased its influence, partly thanks to infighting amongst the Taliban.
- The Taliban carried out an attack on Kandahar airport in which more than 50 people were killed.

Websites of interest

- Afghanistan Analyst Network (www.afghanistan-analysts.org)
- Eurasia (www.eurasianet.org)
- Human Security Report Project (www.hsrgroup.org)
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (www.ipcs.org)
- ISAF (www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.html)
- Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre (www.peacebuilding.no)
- PNUD (www.undp.org/afghanistan)
- President (www.president.gov.af)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- UNAMA (www.unama-afg.org)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)

Main parties involved in the process



INDIA

With 1.267 billion inhabitants, a surface area of 3.2 million km² and a GDP of 1.8 trillion USD, India is a genuine mosaic with regard to political cultures and traditions, expressed in the many regions inhabited by peoples with aspirations of reunification and self-government, which have led to armed conflict in some of them. This section discusses the processes that have emerged in the regions of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland and deals last with the dispute with Pakistan over the region of Kashmir.

a) Assam

Context of the conflict

Assam is a region in northeast India. Many immigrants from Bangladesh have arrived in this region, and as a result several nationalist groups have emerged calling for the region to be liberated. The main nationalist group is the United Liberation Front of Assam (**ULFA**), which was created in 1979 and has Maoist leanings. The ULFA chose to engage in an armed struggle from 1989 onwards. In 1994, 4,000 of its combatants abandoned the group. However, they did not lay down their arms and instead went on to attack ULFA bases in Bhutan. As conditions for talks with the Government, the ULFA requested negotiations abroad in the presence of UN observers. It has carried out attacks against oil company interests and has training bases in Bangladesh. The group underwent divisions that lead to the creation of the ULFA-PTF, which was led by Arabinda Rajkhowa and supported the negotiations, and the ULFA-ATF (now called the ULFA-I). This second group, created in 2011, was initially opposed to the negotiations and is led by the historical figure "Golap Baruah".

Population: 32 million inhabitants
Area: 78,400 km ²
HDI (India): 130 (of 188)
GDP PPA (India): 7,292,778 million USD
Per capita income (India): 1,570 USD
Armed actors: ULFA, NDFB
Facilitators: -

The other important group is the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (**NDFB**), created in 1988, which took up arms in 1992. They also fight against the Bangladesh immigrants, who are Muslims, and strive to create "Bodoland", an independent state separate from Assam. It has bases in Bhutan and around 3,500 combatants, many of whom are Christians. This group split into three factions: the NDFB-P that backed the negotiations with the Government, the NDFB (RD) led by Ranjal Daimary, and which eventually began a dialogue with the Government, and the NDFB (S) led by IK Singbijit, which was against any dialogue.

There are other groups in the region (BLT, UPDS and DHD) that have reached ceasefire agreements with the government.

Background to the peace process

The first contacts between the Government and the ULFA took place in 1991. In 1996 the ULFA made an offer of peace, but their demand for the independence of Assam was not accepted. In subsequent years the group's social backing fell significantly due to episodes of extortion and kidnapping and incidents that caused the death of civilians. In 2004, the ULFA approached the government regarding possible negotiations. During 2005, a delegation of eleven trustworthy citizens, the People's Consultative Group (PCG), was appointed to hold contacts with the Indian government. The contacts were facilitated by writer R. Goswami (who died in 2011) and the former footballer R. Phukan. This consultative group pledged to hold consultations with civil society and to forward the conclusions to the government. The first round of negotiations via the PCG was held on the 25th of October 2005. In 2007, the government noted that the doorway was open to a new peace process, but that the leaders of the ULFA had to be the ones to get in touch with the government, thus leaving behind the formula of negotiating via a third party (namely the

PCG). In early January 2009, the Alpha and Charlie companies of the 28th battalion of the ULFA, which had unilaterally declared a ceasefire in June, created a new organisation which they called ULFA Pro-Negotiations, led by Mrinal Hazarika. They also announced that they were giving up on their demand for sovereignty and independence and would work to achieve greater autonomy for the state of Assam. In June 2010, the Indian government gave the green light for the state of Assam to begin a negotiation process with the ULFA and appointed the former head of the intelligence office, PC Haldar, as the interlocutor with the armed group. The Indian government chose not to oppose the requests for release upon bail of the ULFA leaders in order to lay the groundwork for the start of peace talks. In February 2011, the Indian government and the pro-negotiation faction of the ULFA, led by Arabinda Rajkhowa, began the first round of formal talks. In August, the ULFA declared for the first time that it did not want to secede from India and that it would accept reaching some kind of sovereignty within the framework of the Indian constitution.

In 2003, an agreement was signed that put an end to 11 years of clashes between the government and the group BLTF-BLT (Bodo Liberation Tigers). In 2003, as well, the government signed a ceasefire agreement with the group DHD, which had been founded in 1995 and upheld the independence of the Dimasas people. In mid-September 2009, the DHD-J, also known as Black Widow, started a process of surrendering and turning in its weapons after the ultimatum issued by the government in this vein. With regard to the negotiations with the NDFB, in May 2005 talks began which led to a ceasefire agreement. The faction in favour of negotiations is called NDFB-Progressive, and its secretary general is Govinda Nasumatary, alias B. Swmkhwr, who reached a ceasefire agreement with the government in 2005. With regard to the faction of the NDFB led by Ranjan Daimary, which was traditionally against the peace process, in January 2011 it offered the Indian government a unilateral ceasefire with the goal of being able to start talks with the government.

In early 2010, 419 members and leaders of the armed opposition group Karbi Longri National Liberation Front (KLNLNF), which included 22 women, turned in their weapons. The KLNLNF emerged in 2004 as a faction of the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS). In late October 2011, the government signed a peace agreement with the armed opposition group UPDS after two years of negotiations. The agreement called for the creation of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council in that district, as well as its territorial reorganisation.

In January 2012, around 700 insurgents from nine armed opposition groups handed over their weapons to Indian Prime Minister P Chidambaram. The insurgents belonged to the armed groups APA, AANLA, STF, BCF, ACMA, KLA/KLO, HPC, UKDA and KRA. All nine groups belonged to the Kuki community, which inhabits the eastern part of the state, and to the Adivasi community, which lives in the north and west of Assam. Even though the groups have ceasefire agreements with the government, formal peace negotiations had not yet begun. The ULFA faction that supports reaching an agreement with the government (ULFA-PTF) would have accepted constitutional reforms to protect the state's identity and natural resources, meaning that it was stepping away from its initial claim of sovereignty. This faction asked for a separate constitution, similar to the one in Jammu and Kashmir, which affords complete autonomy to manage economic, forest, land, water and mining resources. In October, the Indian government and the government of Assam signed a peace agreement with both factions of the armed opposition group DHD. Reached after various rounds of negotiations, the agreement provided for the armed group to dissolve within six months and greater decentralisation in the district of Dima Hasao and was approved by both factions of the group, DHD(N) and DHD(J). Thus, the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council will now be called the Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council and there will be administrative reorganisation and social and economic development projects. The Indian government could begin negotiations with the faction led by Ranjan Daimary, of the armed opposition group NDFB, and is reportedly waiting for a formal letter from the government of Assam that endorses the agreement between the leadership of both parties to start talks.

At the beginning of 2013, in the peace talks between the ULFA PTF armed group (the Pro-Talks faction of the ULFA) and the central Government, it became known that the talks were making progress and that they were on track. The group declared that its goal was not to split away from India, but to achieve autonomy for the region within the Indian Constitution. The faction that was in favour of dialogue, led by Arabinda Rajkhowa, met with the Government delegation at the beginning of March. The armed group's delegation also met with Interior Minister Sushilkumar Shinde. In March it was disclosed that the secretary general of ULFA-PTF, Anup Chetia (alias Golap Baruah) could be transferred to India in the near future by the Government of Bangladesh –where he lived and served time after being arrested in 1997 by the authorities of that country– to join the negotiations. According to some sources, Chetia was an influential figure in the ULFA-PTF, even in the faction led by Paresh Barua that continued with the armed struggle and had, until then, been against talks with the Government.

In the second quarter the parties were looking for a solution to three issues where no agreement had been reached: the protection of the political and cultural identity of the native population of Assam, land rights and the issue of illegal immigration. The statements were issued after the sixth round of talks held in June between a 26-member delegation of the ULFA-PTF, led by its leader Arabinda Raikhowa, and the Government. The meeting was presided over by the Minister of Interior, R. K. Singh, who stated that he hoped the secretary general of the armed group, Anup Chetia, in prison in Bangladesh, could be returned to India very soon. Despite the progress made, some mid-level leaders of the ULFA-ATF expressed dissatisfaction at the leadership's lack of transparency regarding the content of the negotiating process, according to some media sources. Probal Neog, Jiten Dutta, Antu Choudang and Bijoy Chinese were some of the leaders that were critical of the process. In the third quarter, at a meeting between the Government and the Pro-Talks faction the ULFA, the Government agreed to grant Scheduled Tribe status for five ethnic groups Moran, Motok, Chutia, Koch-Rajbongshi and Tai-Ahom as requested by the armed organization. This status would help ensure land ownership rights and their presence in certain institutions. Government sources stated that this recognition also sought to prevent Bangladeshi immigrants from purchasing land. The Government could also soon accept other ULFA-PTF demands on issues such as work permits for immigrants from Bangladesh and that citizenship should not be granted automatically to those immigrants' descendants.

Also, in the Indian state of Assam the seven-year-long dialogue with the faction of the NDFB that had thus far been in favour of negotiations, the NDFB (Progressive), ran into serious difficulties in the first quarter of 2013, to the point that it had come to a standstill. In mid-January, the leaders of the NDFB (P) met with Interior Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde in New Delhi to express their unhappiness with the government representative and former intelligence chief, PC Haldar. They protested for the lack of results in the process and demanded a new government envoy or the start of talks at the political level. They accused the Government of trying to side-track the demand for a separate state under the Constitution. In March the group finally decided to withdraw from the talks until the Indian government was willing to discuss at the political level the demand for the creation of a separate state for the Bodos. The NDFB (P) explained that after the January meeting they had sent a list of written demands to the Minister of Interior. Since there was no response regarding their participation in the negotiations the group decided not to take part in the round on 28 February.

Preliminary talks continued between the Government and Ranjan Daimary, the leader of the NDFB (RD) Bodo faction, who is in prison in Guwahati. According to local media sources, Daimary had expressed interest in conducting peace talks and, once they had begun, the possibility that various leaders could be set free on bail so that they could take part in the process. However, no amnesty for especially serious crimes was planned and the peace talks would thus run parallel to the trials against members of the group that had been charged with such offenses. The conversations with Daimary were held through the government representative PC Haldar.

Ranjan Daimary was released on bail in June to make it possible for him to participate in the talks with the Government. According to a statement at the end of June by the government envoy for the dialogue with the NDFB (R), former head of intelligence PC Haldar, the peace talks could start soon. Informal contacts between the two had taken place over the last year in Guwahati prison to prepare the talks. With the start of formal talks the NDFB (RD) became the second faction of the NDFB to take part in negotiations, since the 7-year-long dialogue between the Government and the main faction of the group, the NDFB (Progressive), was still ongoing. The third faction of the group, the NDFB (S), under the leadership of I. K. Songbijit, was against the dialogue. In late November the Government and the NDFB (RD) signed a six-month ceasefire agreement. The group claimed to have 579 cadres and 40 weapons. The Government prepared two camps to house the cadres. Since 2008 fighting between this group and the Government has caused about 100 deaths. During 2014, nothing significant occurred.

The peace process in 2015

In the second half of the year, a first round of talks was held between the Indian government and the pro-negotiation faction of the armed opposition group ULFA. The meeting, which was tripartite and included the participation of representatives of India's central government, the state government and the pro-negotiation ULFA faction, was described as positive. On behalf of ULFA, its president, Arabinda Rajkhowa, attended, along with other members of the leadership, including Pradip Gogoi, Raju Baruah, Shasha Choudhury, Chitraban Hazarika, Pranati Deka, Mithinga Daimary and Prabal Neog. The government was represented by the main interlocutor, PC Haldar, and other senior officials from both the central and state governments. The pro-negotiation ULFA faction stressed that the main issues were addressed, and that their main demands were that its six communities be granted the status of Scheduled Tribes and would therefore have spaces reserved in the State Assembly and other legislative bodies. Furthermore, a call was issued for a greater decentralisation of powers, both state and local, in order to foster the empowerment of the people. Parallel to these negotiations, the central government stated that Paresh Baruah, the leader of ULFA-I, the faction, which was against negotiations, was not interested in engaging in talks with the government. These statements were contested by Baruah, who stated that his group was always willing to engage in an honourable, meaningful dialogue, but that the government only wanted to impose its own conditions on the insurgency.

Intelligence reports leaked to the press in late September warned that the slow advance of the talks with ULFA may lead a large number of ULFA-PTF members move to ULFA-I. However, the government stated that the group was severely weakened at that time. On other matters, in early July the former DHD leaders expressed their concern with the delays in the implementation of the Agreement Memorandum signed in October 2012 in New Delhi and demanded the removal of the pending lawsuits against DHD and DHD-J members, as well as rehabilitation programmes for them. They later met with the Interior Minister of the central government in his official residence to discuss the creation of a Dimasa homeland or fatherland. Regarding the NDFB-IKS, the government declared that the military pressure from the counterinsurgency operation launched in December 2014 had weakened the group to such an extent that several cells of the group in Assam had requested authorisation to surrender and turn in their weapons; however, the group's leadership in Myanmar had rejected this option. Furthermore, some journalists stated that the leader of the group, G. Bidai, who was extraordinarily vulnerable from the standpoint of his personal safety, had conveyed to the government his intention to sign a ceasefire. However, the government rejected any cessation of hostilities and added that the only solution for G. Bidai and the other group members was to turn themselves in and deal with the justice system's lawsuits against them. In turn, the NDFB-P criticised the central government for not having kept its promises regarding Bodoland and for allowing non-Muslims people from Bangladesh and Pakistan to remain in India without legal documents. In November, the leader of ULFA (Pro-talk), Anup Kumar Chetia, imprisoned in Bangladesh from 1997 to 2005, and then exiled in that country, was initially deported to India to participate in the peace negotiations. It was also hoped

that Chetia could convince his cousin, Paresh Baruah, to join the negotiating process. In late December, Chetia was released.

b) Nagaland

Context of the conflict

The conflict in Nagaland is one of the oldest in India. It involves Christian Tibetan-Burmese tribes who have been fighting for their independence since the 1950s. The main group is the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), which was founded in 1980. There was a schism in the group in 1988, and it divided into the NSCN (K), which operates in the north of the state, and the NSCN (IM), which is better established in the south. The NSCN (IM) has 4,500 combatants and a strong component of Christian fundamentalists. Its leaders are exiled in EEUU and Thailand. Many other members live in the Netherlands and Ireland. The region is rich in natural gas resources.

Population: 2,2 million inhabitants

Area: 16,600 km²

Deaths due to the conflict: 20,000

Armed actors: NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-KK

Facilitators: -

Background to the peace process

Since the first ceasefire in 1997, the NSCN-IM has held more than 80 rounds of negotiations with the government, many of them in Thailand and others in Amsterdam and New Delhi, in which the parties agreed to extend the ceasefire. The government reiterated to the armed group that the issue of sovereignty was totally off-limits for discussion and that any solution to the conflict had to fall within the country's constitution. The armed group may agree to remain part of India via a special federal relationship with the union. During the second half of February 2010, the central government appointed the former chief secretary of Nagaland, R. S. Pandey, as its interlocutor for the negotiations with the group. The executive noted that it was willing to grant Nagaland the maximum autonomy possible, even if that entailed a constitutional reform. The government and the armed group met once again in Delhi. The armed group was represented by a five-member delegation led by Muivah. The negotiations focused on the 31-point proposal submitted by the armed group, which included the unification of all the districts inhabited by the Naga people, and their own constitution, flag, currency and army. The leaders of the NSCN-IM, Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah, accepted an Indian passport in February 2011 as a symbolic gesture of their willingness to engage in talks with the government.

In early June 2009, the armed opposition group NSCN-K stated that it was prepared to start formal peace negotiations with the government of India, eight years after having reached a ceasefire agreement with Delhi. The NSCN-K stated that it was willing to set no preconditions for the dialogue and that issues like sovereignty could be discussed at the negotiating table, but without that being an obstacle to starting negotiations. In June 2011, the NSCN-K was grappling with an internal division after the tensions in early May between India-based sectors of the group and sectors operating from Myanmar. Some analysts stated that these tensions might lead to a rapprochement and reconciliation between the India-based sector of the NSCN-K and the NSCN-IM, which is currently involved in talks with the government.

Significant progress was made in the peace process during the third quarter of 2012, after all members of the Nagaland Assembly went to Delhi to meet with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to tell him that they were ready to give up their seats to make way for a new political agreement emanating from a possible peace agreement between the government and the insurgents ahead of the state elections scheduled for February 2013. After their meeting with the government, the Naga lawmakers held separate meetings with the four main Naga insurgent groups, the NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN (Khole-Kitovi or NSCN-KK) and NNC (FGN). All four

armed groups were in favour of reconciliation. However, the NSCN-K stated that they would only accept an agreement that included Naga sovereignty. In October, the Indian government and the armed opposition group NSCN-IM were close to signing a peace agreement. Both parties were reportedly working on a memorandum of understanding that considered different proposals. The agreement would involve establishing autonomous development councils, a unique flag for the state, more autonomy and a special status, in addition to formal recognition of the Naga people's unique history. The armed group began consultations with civil society and said that they would not sign anything until these consultations had terminated. The armed opposition group NSCN-K and the government would have begun peace negotiations in November, but there was no official confirmation in that regard. An insurgent delegation had an informal meeting with the government, although the armed group was apparently waiting to receive a formal invitation to start the process after initially getting a verbal one. No peace negotiations had taken place since a ceasefire agreement was signed in 2001.

During the second quarter of 2013 the peace agreements with the NNC independence group continued to be suspended by the central Government because of numerous attacks against candidates for the State Assembly earlier in the year. In turn, the NSCN-K agreed with the Government to extend for another year the joint ceasefire accord that expired on April 28. The ceasefire between the NSCN-KK and the Government was also renewed for another year. In turn, it was disclosed in April that the NSCN-IM, in negotiations with the central Government, had submitted a proposal for greater autonomy several months earlier, although the group said in April that it had not given up on its demand for independence and sovereignty. The peace process with this armed group remained at a virtual standstill during the first nine months of the year, with practically no significant progress in the negotiations between the Indian Government and the Naga armed opposition group NSCN-IM. The armed group said that it was the Government's turn to move the negotiations forward, since it had already taken the necessary steps. One of the proposals of the Government of Manipur referred to the possibility of amending some laws to enable the creation of an organism that would protect the customs and traditions of the Naga population in Manipur. Specifically, the Manipur Hill Areas Autonomous District Council Act should be reformed. This proposal had to be reviewed by the NSCN-IM. In addition, the Government of Manipur stated that it was considering the possibility of giving the autonomous district councils more budgetary independence. At the end of the year the Government's negotiator, RS Pandey, resigned to take part in partisan politics. The NSCN-IM, after holding 50 rounds of negotiations, proposed a special federal agreement that would allow the Naga people to govern themselves.

In late March 2014 three Naga insurgent organizations, the GPRN/NSCN (Khole Khitovi), NSCN/GPRN (IM) and NNC/FGN, signed the Lenten agreement, in which they once again accepted their previous commitments for the formation of a National Naga Government (NNG). Thus, they were all grouped together in a single insurgent organization. The three groups emphasized the importance of the progress made towards the reconciliation of the different Naga organizations and noted that another objective of the agreement was to reduce the hostilities between factions. In April several meetings were held by the member organizations. The most important was a five-day meeting which took place in the city of Kolkata in an attempt to move forward on the implementation of the Lenten agreement, especially with regard to confidence-building measures. The meeting was facilitated by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation and the main leaders of the GPRN/NSCN and NNC/FGN attended, but not those of the NSCN/GPRN (Isak Chisi Swu and Th. Muivah) because they did not obtain authorization from the Indian Government to travel to Kolkata where the meeting took place. However, the Government denied that it had not authorized the trip. The Government Joint Secretary, Shambhu Singh, issued a statement that while negotiations with the NSCN-IM were ongoing conversations with other insurgent groups would not be launched because many of the issues being discussed in this process would affect the rest. Nevertheless, neither the Government or the NSCN-IM provided details on when the formal peace negotiations would resume, although informal meetings between government representatives and the armed group continued to take place.

In mid-July the new Indian government led by the BJP party resumed the peace talks with the NSCN-IM, while the NSCN-K rejected any agreement. A delegation from the NSCN-IM went to Delhi at the invitation of the Indian government to prepare a new round of talks. The delegation was led by the president of the NSCN-IM, Isak Shisi Swu, and the general secretary, Thuingaleng Muivah. It was the first direct talks since November 2013, and following the election of the new Indian government, led by Narendra Modi. Different Naga sectors considered that the formation of the new Administration would be positive for the peace process. A crucial point was whether Prime Minister Modi would meet directly with leaders of the insurgency or if a previous encounter would take place with the envoy designated by the Government, RN Ravi. Meanwhile, the chief minister of Nagaland, T.R. Zeliang, said that the new Government will give added momentum to the peace process by establishing a timeframe for negotiations, but stressed that the role of the Naga government was limited to acting as a facilitator since it was not directly participating in the negotiations. In addition, Zeliang said that the Joint Legislators' Forum (that grouped together all Naga members of parliament to reinforce the peace process) would soon be re-constituted and it would meet with the Indian government, the insurgency and different political parties. Zeliang also stated that if an agreement were reached with the NSCN-IM it should be accepted by the other insurgent organizations, and if the Central Government finally accepted that areas inhabited by the Naga population in the state of Manipur could become part of Nagaland, this should be accepted by the state government. At the end of November, and after 17 years and 80 rounds of talks with the NSCN-IM, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, visited Nagaland in an attempt to bolster the dialogue with the group.

The peace process in 2015

Regarding the negotiations between the government of India and the Naga armed opposition group NSCN-IM, notably both parties resolved to reach a definitive peace agreement during this year or within an 18-month period, according to different sources. After RN Ravi was appointed as the interlocutor for the negotiations by the central government in August 2014, the format of these talks was changed to make it more efficient and effective. The negotiations no longer consisted of formal rounds; instead, a series of meetings would be held between the government interlocutor and the leaders of the NSCN-IM, who could meet to discuss any issue, allowing the dialogue process to move more quickly. The format of rounds, which was started in 1997, had yielded no results in the almost 20 years of negotiations. The issue of factional battles among the different Naga armed groups would most likely be set aside in the talks, which from now on would be more focused on the issue of the suffering of the Naga people, the right to collective self-determination and reaching an honourable solution for all parties. RN Ravi's post as interlocutor was elevated in status and became part of the Cabinet, which would facilitate his direct interlocution with the prime minister regarding the peace negotiations. The previous interlocutors did not have this ability, which proved a hindrance to the negotiations.

In the third quarter, the Indian government and the Naga armed opposition group NSCN-IM reached a 33-point framework pre-agreement on peace. The agreement was signed by the leaders of the armed group, Isak Chishi Swu and T. Muivah, and by the main government interlocutor, R.N. Ravi, in the presence of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The agreement, which was described by Naga representatives as a "preamble" to the final resolution of the Naga question which should serve as a framework for the continuation of the negotiation process until a final agreement is reached, emerged after more than 80 rounds of negotiations since 1997. Even though the final agreement would entail both parties' acceptance of the idea of "shared sovereignty" and coexistence, neither the text nor the details of the agreement were made public, which aroused a great deal of suspicion among the other actors involved in the conflict, especially the governments of the neighbouring states of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, which noted that they would accept no final agreement which entailed territorial modifications in order to bow to the Naga insurgency's demands to integrate all the lands inhabited by the Naga people into Nagaland. According to some reports, the framework agreement contained the special

separate budget, along with shared sovereignty, flag, passport, Supreme Court, currency and restricted-access areas, the training of both armies under the Indian army and four battalions of paramilitary forces for the NSCN-IM members, recognition of the Nagas' unique history (which would include their influence in Manipur), a declaration of a "no-war" policy in the territory of Nagaland, followed by a demilitarisation of the Line of Control, and competences in foreign policies.

On another front, a delegation of Naga representatives travelled to Myanmar at the request of the Indian government to try to convince the leader of the armed group NSCN-K, S. S. Khaplang, to reconsider his decision to halt the ceasefire and to join the peace agreement reached with the NSCN-IM. Khaplang refused to participate in any meeting and instead delegated it to the vice president, Khango Konyak, and the senior military commander, Nikki Sumi. This led the Indian government to ask Myanmar to extradite Khaplang and other leaders of the armed group. However, worth noting is the fact that in late September the NSCN-K ultimately decided not to sign the national ceasefire agreement being promoted by the Burmese government, alleging that there were still some unresolved underlying political issues which were hindering this group from adhering to this agreement.

Most significant events of the year in India

- In Assam, the former leaders of the DHD expressed their concern about delays in implementing the Memorandum of Settlement signed in October 2012.
- Also in Assam, the government rejected any cessation of hostilities with the NDFB-IKS, adding that the only way out for G. Bidai and the other members of the group was to give themselves up and face any possible charges in the justice system.
- There was a first round of talks between the Indian government and the pro-talk faction of the armed opposition group in Assam, the ULFA. In November, the leader of ULFA Pro-Talk, Anup Kumar Chetia, imprisoned in Bangladesh from 1997 to 2005, and then exiled in that country, was initially deported to India to participate in the peace negotiations. In late December, Chetia was released.
- The Indian government and the Naga armed opposition group, NSCN-IM, reached a preliminary framework agreement for peace. Both sides accepted the idea of "shared sovereignty" and coexistence.
- The NSCN-K decided not to sign the national cease-fire proposed by the Burmese government, claiming that there were some substantial political issues still to be resolved.

Causes of crises during the year in India

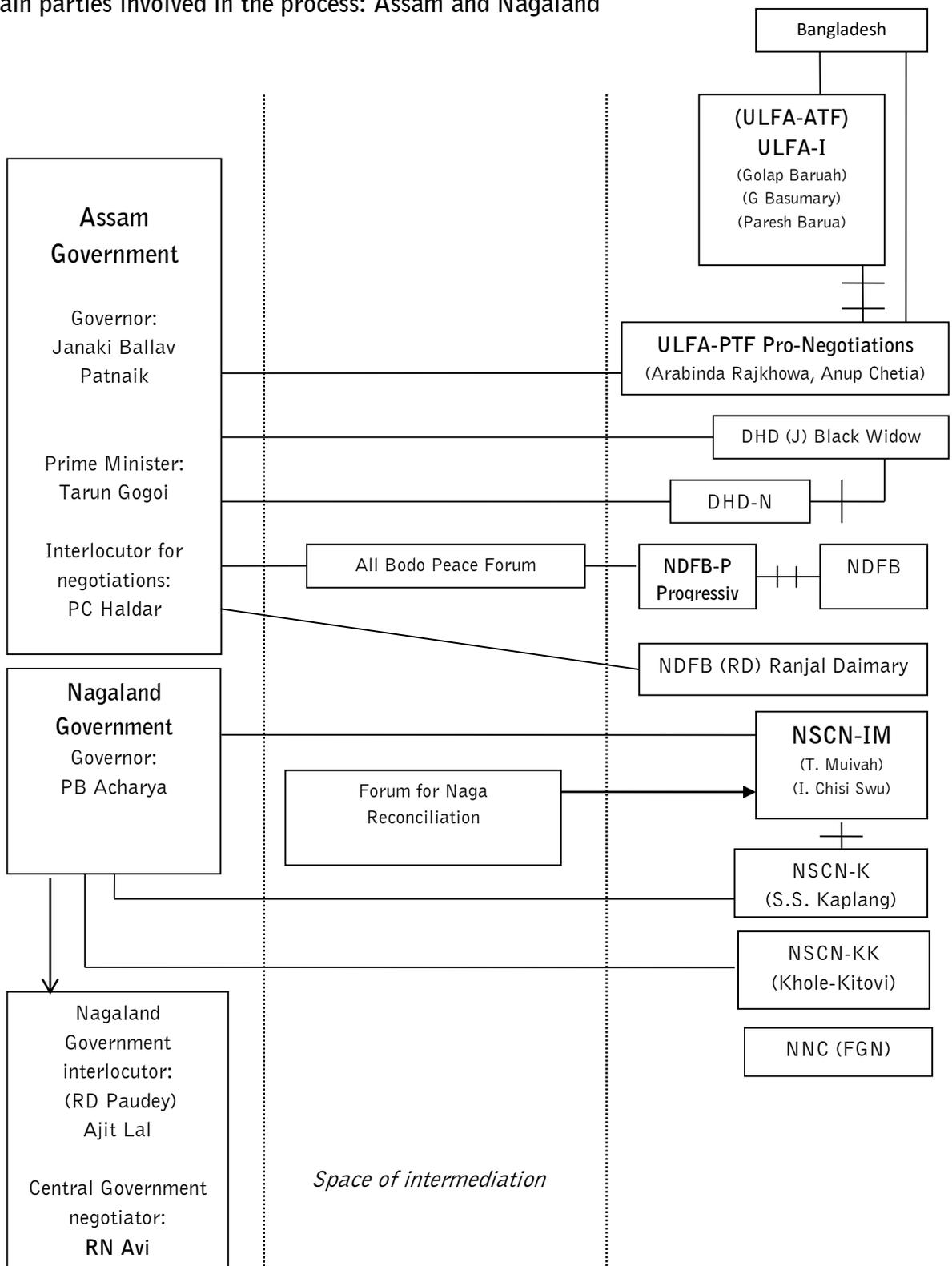
- Delays in the implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement signed in October 2012 with the DHD group.
- Substantial unresolved issues with the NSCN-K.
- The Indian government demanded of Burma/Myanmar the extradition of Khaplang and other leaders of the NSCN-K group.
- The ceasefire agreement with the Naga group, NSCN-IM, caused suspicions in the state of Manipur, where there are also Naga people.

Websites on the peace processes in India

- AlertNet (www.alertnet.org)
- Andhra News Net (www.andhranews.net)
- Assam Tribune (www.assamtribune.com)
- CDPS (cdpsindia.org)
- IDSA (www.idsa.in)

- [India Government \(india.gov.in\)](http://india.gov.in)
- [Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies \(www.ipcs.org\)](http://www.ipcs.org)
- [Nagalandia International Support Centre \(www.nagalim.nl\)](http://www.nagalim.nl)
- [Nagalandia Post \(www.Nagalandiapost.com\)](http://www.Nagalandiapost.com)
- [Nagalim \(www.nagalim.nl/naga/index-2.html\)](http://www.nagalim.nl/naga/index-2.html)
- [North East News Agency \(www.nenanews.com\)](http://www.nenanews.com)
- [SATP \(www.satp.org\)](http://www.satp.org)
- [South Asia Analysis Group \(www.saag.org\)](http://www.saag.org)
- [The Sentinel \(www.sentinelassam.com\)](http://www.sentinelassam.com)

Main parties involved in the process: Assam and Nagaland



INDIA – PAKISTAN (Kashmir)

Context of the conflict

The conflict between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir dates back to the partition in 1947, when both countries won independence from the United Kingdom and Kashmir was divided between India (the state of Jammu and Kashmir), Pakistan and China. According to the 1947 Indian Independence Act, Kashmir was free to join either India or Pakistan. Its decision to join India was a source of conflict between the two countries, and the clashes began the same year. India laid claim to the territories controlled by the other countries, arguing that those lands had been administered by the Maharajah of Kashmir. Meanwhile, Pakistan laid claim to part of an area under Indian control for reasons of Muslim identity.

Since then, there have been three armed confrontations (1947, 1948 and 1965), and hostilities resumed in 1971. In July 1949, both countries signed the Karachi Agreement, which set a ceasefire line that was to be controlled by observers. As a result, the UN created an observation mission called UNMOGIP. This mission is still active and has international observers on the Line of Control. At the end of the 1980s tension mounted, with the added risk of the nuclear weapons that both countries possess.

The conflict therefore has two dimensions. The first is an inter-state conflict, involving a border dispute between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region. This conflict is evident in the continuous infiltrations of Pakistani groups across the border. The other dimension is intra-state, involving the fighting waged by armed Muslim opposition groups within the Indian state of Jammu-Kashmir against India's central government. Some of these groups are fighting for the independence of a unified Kashmir, while others are fighting for this Indian state's integration into Pakistan. In 1992 the coalition **All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC)** was formed. The APHC demanded an internationally monitored referendum, as mentioned in the Security Council's first resolutions. Another conflict involves the dispute over control of the Punjab river basins.

Another important armed group is the **Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)**, created in 1989 and led by Sayeed Salahudeen. This group has been on the EU's list of terrorist groups since 2005 for having perpetrated numerous attacks against India's civilian population.

Background to the peace process

India has always refused any international mediation; rather it prefers direct bilateral dialogue. It is not in favour of changing the territorial boundaries and is supported by China. In contrast, Pakistan is in favour of internationalising any peace process, and based on the right of self-determination, it is calling for a referendum to be held under UN control, although lately it has declared that it may give up on this demand. The most noteworthy feature of this conflict is the dynamic of creating trust-building measures on both sides and the model of the process, which has become known as the composite dialogue, which consists of addressing all the disputes in a single process so that headway is made on several matters at the same time. In this process, even though it is difficult to reach agreements, once they are reached it is difficult to renege on them.

In 2005, the Pakistani president stated that the dispute over control of Kashmir may be resolved by greater autonomy for the region, while the Indian prime minister declared that a Kashmir without clearly defined borders and with greater autonomy for the zones administered by India

<p>Population: 13 million (Kashmir) Area: 222,200 km² (Kashmir) HDI: India 130; Pakistan 147 (of 188) GDP PPA: India, 7,292,778 million USD; Pakistan, 941,064 million USD Per capita income: India, 1,570 USD; Pakistan, 1,40 USD Deaths due to the conflict: 47,000-70,000 people since 1989. Actors: India and Pakistan Governments, APHC, Hizbul Mujahideen Facilitators: ----</p>

would be measures that might help to resolve the conflict and to weaken the border demarcation in order to detract importance from it. In turn, the coalition of pro-independence parties, APHC, asked that the armed struggle be abandoned in order to pave the way for peace negotiations which would lead to a sustainable peace agreement. In early November 2009, the central government of India announced that it had prepared a set of political measures for the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir. During the second half of February 2010, both countries resumed peace negotiations, which had been formally interrupted since the attacks on the Indian city of Mumbai in 2008. In February 2011, the leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, called for a referendum in the state to determine the people's aspirations.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari visited India privately in April 2012 and met with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. It was the first visit by a Pakistani head of state to the neighbouring country in seven years and the first meeting between both leaders since 2009. Singh agreed to visit Pakistan, though a date for the trip was not set. The Indian government authorised direct foreign investment from Pakistan; 600 Pakistani business owners participated in a trade fair in India. In November, the Pakistani government pledged to confer most favoured nation status on India. In June, the Pakistani Foreign Minister invited separatist Kashmiri leaders to participate in negotiations during a trip to Delhi. In the third quarter, India and Pakistan reached an agreement to relax the hitherto restrictive criteria for giving visas to their respective citizens. In October, the Pakistani Oil Minister said that the country was ready to purchase Indian fuel as long as the price was reasonable. He made these declarations while participating in a conference on the petrochemical sector in Delhi. In recent months, India and Pakistan have channelled their relations through economic diplomacy.

In 2013 attempts were made to re-establish the trust-building measures of recent years in order to overcome specific moments of tension and confrontation. Despite the crisis in the first months of the year caused by various acts of violence near the Line of Control, the dialogue process between India and Pakistan did not come to a standstill in the second quarter and the rise to power of the new Pakistani government, led by Nawaz Sharif, created new expectations. In his election program Sharif said he supported relaunching the peace process between India and Pakistan. After his inauguration Sharif said the country's foreign policy priorities included immediate attention to relations with neighbouring countries. According to Sharif, without peace in the region Pakistan's efforts for growth and development would not be successful. As part of the new roadmap the new president said that Pakistan wished for a gradual normalization of relations with India and for solutions to the outstanding issues, including the dispute over Kashmir. Sources from the Indian Government also expressed interest in maintaining the process alive and being involved with Islamabad in a broad framework of cooperation. This was also the message sent from the Indian government to Pakistan by way of Prime Minister Satinder Lambah's Special Envoy. In addition, in mid-June the Indian Union Minister Farooq Abdullah argued for "softening" the borders between the two countries to improve relations and facilitate the meetings of divided families on both sides of the border. In this respect, in June the faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Geelani (APHC-G) came out against a meeting of the leaders of India and Pakistan in Srinagar –the capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir- or Muzaffarabad -capital of the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan. Depending on the platform, India would use dialogue there to justify its occupation. However, the moderate faction of Hurriyat, led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, proposed holding an Indo-Pakistani summit on both sides of the border, with leaders from both countries and the local population, to address the resolution of the conflict. Mirwaiz emphasized that the solution to the conflict must be political and not merely a question of economic investment and infrastructures, referring to the visit planned for the end of June by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to inaugurate the Qazigund-Banihal railway line in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Despite incidents of violence on in the border area between India and Pakistan that hurt the peace process during the summer months, at the end of the third quarter there was a rapprochement between the parties as a result of a meeting held between the Prime Ministers of the two countries during the celebration of the UN General Assembly in New York in September. Both

sides said they were willing to improve the situation on the Line of Control (as the border between the two countries is known) and to reduce violence in the area. They also acknowledged that there had been repeated violations of the ceasefire agreement. Senior Indian and Pakistani military officers met for the first time in 14 years to negotiate directly on the situation in Kashmir, which is claimed by both countries. The Directors General of Military Operations gathered at the Wagah border crossing to agree on ways to ensure peace on the Line of Control, the de facto border that divides the two states and that in the final months of the year had been the scene of many violent clashes between the two Armies.

In the first months of 2014 no significant progress was made in negotiations between India and Pakistan and relations continued to be marked by rivalry and diplomatic conflict. However, some meetings were held between representatives from both governments that were considered positive. One of the main topics was trade, with the resumption of negotiations between the commerce secretaries from both countries who agreed that the process should continue after the elections in India in late May. Until then there had scarcely been direct trade relations between the two countries and most trade took place with the intermediation of Dubai, which greatly increases cost. Furthermore, in January an agreement was reached on liberalization of the visa system for border trade which facilitated the crossing of trucks and containers. In March the Joint Working Group on Cross-Line of Control Confidence Building Measures met for the first time in 18 months.

At the end of May the new Hindu nationalist prime minister received his Pakistani Muslim counterpart, and in June there was a positive exchange of letters between the two prime ministers in which both stressed their desire to move forward in the peace process and improve relations between the two countries. The letters were sent after the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the inauguration of the newly elected Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, of the BJP party, which had won the Indian elections in May. The dialogue was affected by a serious crisis during the third quarter. The most serious incident took place in August when the Indian government cancelled the planned meeting between the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries in Islamabad. The meeting, was suspended by India after the Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah was received by Pakistan's High Commissioner in Delhi, Abdul Basit. The meetings between Pakistani diplomats and Kashmiri separatist leaders were part of a long-standing practice ahead of any high-level diplomatic meeting between India and Pakistan. However, on this occasion the Secretary of Indian Affairs, Sujatha Singh, had warned Pakistan that dialogue would either be with India or with the Kashmiri separatists. In September direct lower-level diplomatic contacts were resumed and the National Security Advisor, Ajit K Doval, and the Foreign Secretary, Sujatha Singh, met with the Pakistani high commissioner.

In November the Prime Minister of Pakistan requested the good offices of the President of the United States who was going to visit the region in January 2015. In the second half of the month delegates from both countries met during the India-Pakistan Bilateral Dialogue and requested that discussions be launched during the SAARC summit to be held in the Nepalese capital. At the beginning of December there was a lethal terrorist attack in the Indian region of Kashmir. New Delhi held that the militants had come from Pakistan and the Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that the neighbouring country must answer why militants hide in Pakistani territory. The UN Secretary General offered his good offices if the parties so wished, which was welcomed by the Pakistani Government.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, there was a meeting in Islamabad with the foreign secretaries of both countries, in the first meeting of this kind since India cancelled the negotiation process in 2014. Both parties described the meeting as positive, and the Pakistani diplomat, Aizaz Chaudhry, stressed that all the issues of interest to both parties were discussed, including the ceasefire violations on the Line of Control and other affairs such as investigations into the attack against

the Samjhota Express in 2007 and Indian's supposed meddling in the armed conflict in the Pakistani province of Balochistan. The Indian Foreign Secretary, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, also met with the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, with an agenda that revolved around the organisation SAARC, to which both countries belong, and bilateral relations among the two neighbours. This meeting happened despite the fact that in the month of January, the Pakistani Prime Minister asked the Pakistani government to resume talks with the India government in order to resolve the issue of Kashmir in reaction to the appointment of John Kerry as the US Secretary of State.

In May, India and Pakistan entered a dynamic of mutual recriminations which prevented a new rapprochement. While Pakistan incessantly condemned India's human rights violations in Kashmir, the Indian government accused Pakistan of continuing to support several terrorist groups in both its own territory and Afghanistan. The Pakistani prime minister declared that India had not reacted to his proposal for talks. The meeting (March 2015) between the separatist leader of the Tehrik-e Hurriyat party, Syed Ali Shah Gilani, and the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Delhi, Abdul Basit, seemed to be the reason behind the clash in positions.

In July, the prime ministers of these two countries met in the Russian city of Ufa. Soon after, the Pakistani National Security Advisor, Sartaj Aziz, travelled to New Delhi to meet with his Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval. In late September, and in the framework of the UN General Assembly, the Prime Minister of Pakistan proposed to the Government of India a new initiative for peace in Kashmir, based on an indefinite truce, the full demilitarisation of the territory and their joint withdrawal from the Siachen glacier, which would reduce the perception of threats on both sides and thereby avoid an arms race in the region. The Government of India responded by asking Pakistan to renounce terrorism, suggesting that the national security advisers of the two countries held talks on terrorism and that their military high commands resolved the situation on the border. In December, at the UN climate change conference in Paris, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, held an informal meeting at which they exchanged ideas to restart peace talks. After months of cancellations, the two countries' Security Advisors finally met in Bangkok early in the month. Also, days later, at the "Heart of Asia" Conference (Istanbul Process) in Islamabad, the desire to resume dialogue and thus reduce tensions was again made clear. On Christmas Day, Modi telephoned Sharif to congratulate him on his birthday and decided to make a stop-off in Lahore (he was flying from Kabul, where he had attended the inauguration of the new Parliament building, to which India had contributed \$90 million). The two leaders flew together in Sharif's official helicopter from Lahore to Raiwind, where the Pakistani Prime Minister has his residence. There they mainly discussed the processes of dialogue in Kashmir and Afghanistan. No Indian Prime Minister had visited Pakistan since 2004. Modi made gifts of a dress for Sharif's granddaughter, who was getting married that night, and shawls for his wife. The visit lasted only a few hours. Also, on the border between the two countries, members of the countries' armed forces met to discuss security issues. Despite everything, confrontations between the insurgents and members of the security forces continued at a low level.

Most significant events of the year

- During the first quarter a meeting was held in Islamabad of the two countries' Foreign Secretaries. It was the first meeting of this kind since India cancelled the negotiation process in 2014. The Indian Foreign Secretary, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar also met with the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif.
- The meeting in March between Syed Ali Shah Gilani, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat separatist party, and Abdul Basit, the Pakistani High Commissioner in Delhi, cooled relations between the two countries.
- The Pakistani Prime Minister proposed to the Government of India a new peace initiative for Kashmir, based on an indefinite truce, the full demilitarisation of the territory and their joint withdrawal from the Siachen glacier.

- The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, held an informal meeting at which they exchanged ideas to restart peace talks.

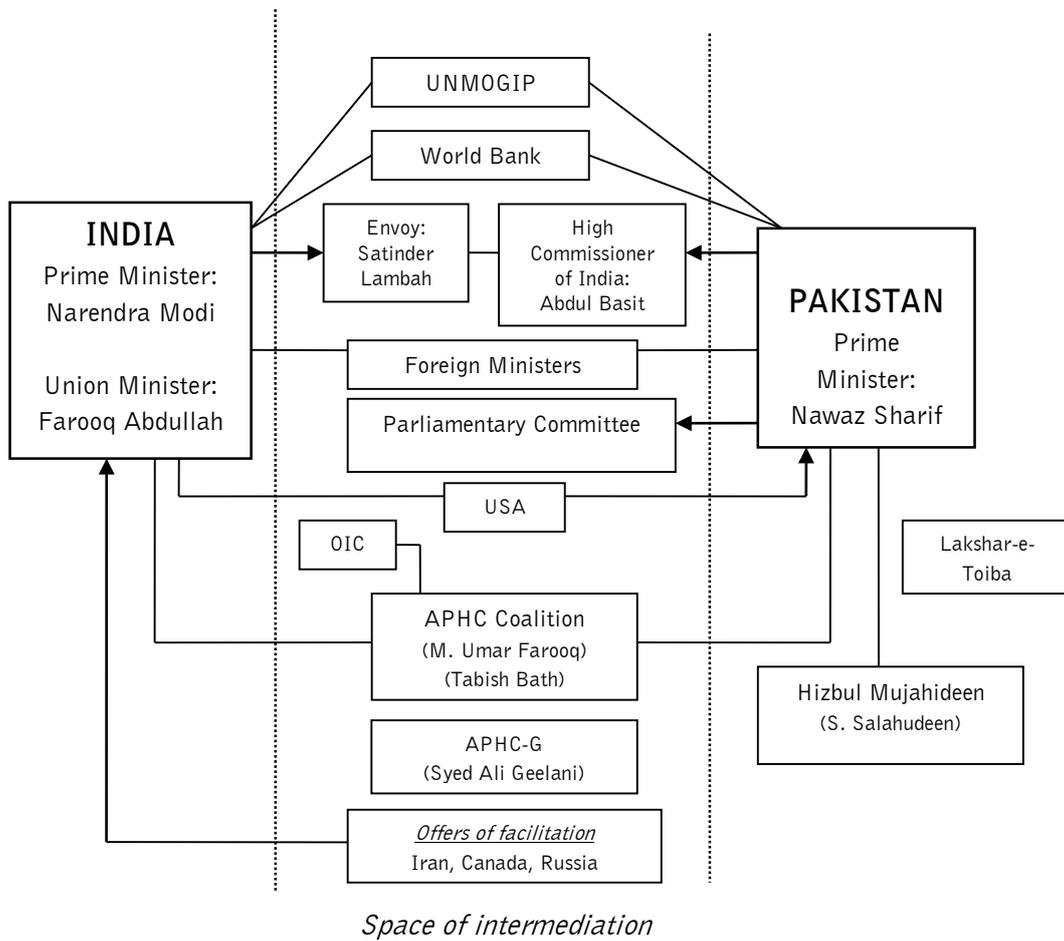
Causes of crises during the year

- The meeting between Syed Ali Shah Gilani, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat separatist party, and Abdul Basit, the Pakistani High Commissioner in Delhi.

Websites of interest

- Asian Centre for Human Rights (www.achrweb.org)
- Human Security Report Project (www.hsrgroup.org)
- ICG (www.crisisweb.org)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- India Government (india.gov.in)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (www.ipcs.org)
- Kashmir Global (www.kashmirglobal.com)
- Kashmir Watch (www.kashmirwatch.com)
- Pakistan Government (www.pakistan.gov.pk)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- SATP (www.satp.org)
- Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org/fast)
- UNMOGIP (www.un.org/spanish/Depts/dpko/unmogip/index.html)
- United States Institute of Peace (www.usip.org)

Main parties involved in the process



PAKISTAN (Balochistan)

Context of the conflict

Balochistan is a large region divided between three countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, with a major diaspora in Oman) inhabited by around 15 million people who are divided into numerous tribes. The Pakistani province is the largest, measuring 347,200 km², but with a population of just 6.5 million inhabitants due to the mountainous terrain and the water shortage. Its capital is Quetta. It has a long border with Afghanistan and is just a short distance from the Afghan city of Kandahar, so the Afghan conflict has direct effects on the events in this region, which is one of the poorest in Pakistan despite the fact that it is rich in gas and oil, as well as minerals (gold and copper). However, its inhabitants have not benefitted from this wealth. Pakistani Balochistan has also been the region where the Pakistani government has performed its underground nuclear tests, specifically in the Chagai region, which is further proof of its marginalisation. Even though it has always been regarded as an unstable region, since 2005 there have been serious clashes among tribal groups and the Pakistani armed forces, with attacks on the gas installations, while the government has simultaneously been making major investments in the region, especially in the coastal area, where it is building a large port with the help of China (the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor", whose exit point will be the port of Gwadar). The Pakistani government uses this argument to show that many of the disturbances reflect interests created by different tribal leaders, who may receive the support of Afghan authorities.

Population: 6.5 million inhabitants
Area: 347,000 km ²
Armed actors: BLA

The Baloch people have inhabited the region for two millennia. In 1947, with the independence of Pakistan, it became the westernmost province of the country, which exacerbated the first major rebellion in the 1950s, with the abrogation of the first Constitution, the declaration of martial law and the 1954 announcement that the (today) four provinces would be joined into one. In 1970s, a separate province was created, a situation which was soon nullified by repressive, centralist measures, which sparked a grassroots rebellion that was harshly repressed, leading to the emergence of a new guerrilla movement. In 1977, with the defeat of A. Bhutto, the situation was temporarily normalised, but in 1990 the new government dissolved all the provincial assemblies, which led to the emergence of Islamist groups and support for the Taliban, a direct consequence of the invasion of Afghanistan and the establishment of the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor". In April 2006, an exiled government of Balochistan was formed, led by Mir Azaad Khan Baluchi, a move that was harshly criticised by the former Prime Minister of Pakistan between 2002 and 2004, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who is Baloch in origin, a member of the Pakistan Muslim League (PLM) and very close to President Musharraf. The Baloch people had traditional ways of solving conflicts, using the Markka or Mairh method, in which notables in the community went to the houses of the people involved and together agreed upon the kind of pardon that should be established for the guilty parties.

Background of the peace process

In 2005, the Prime Minister S. Aziz expressed his determination to solve the conflict using peaceful means and promised major investments in the region. The most important event in 2006 was the assassination of the leader of the Bugti tribe (the tribe that was rebelling at the time), Nawab Akbar Bugti, in a clash with the army. The Loya Jirga was then held at the request of the Khan of Kalat, with more than 350 tribal leaders attending. The government was humiliated because no one wanted to attend the Jirga it had organised. Furthermore, the rebellion had been brutal, Quetta experienced a week of general strikes and upheaval, and the violence spread to Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (then the NWFP). For this reason, when the Senate stated that the problem had to be solved through negotiations, it was admitting the ramifications that the conflict could have.

In late 2006, a commission from the Pakistani Senate visited the region and noted the importance of achieving a negotiated solution to the conflict. The president of the country, P. Musharraf, announced an amnesty for everyone who turned in their weapons, stating that the government was prepared to hold peace talks. In early 2007, the head of the Jamali tribe (the name of the Baloch tribe from the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh), S. Y. Mohammad Jamali, offered to mediate between the government and the tribes of Balochistan and stated that the military operations in the region had to end. The governor of Kandahar (Afghanistan) also offered to mediate between the government of Pakistan and Balochistan. In November, the leader of the armed opposition group Balochistan BLA, Mir Ballach Marri, died of gunshot wounds in Afghanistan, according to the group's spokesman. In mid-December, however, the interim prime minister of the province started holding several meetings with the leaders of the nationalist Baloch and Pashtun parties with the intention of promoting reconciliation in the province.

In mid-January 2008, the prime minister of the interim government of the province, Sardar Mohammad Saleh Bhootani, stated that he was willing to talk with the tribal and political leaders to solve the pending issues. In late February, the new governor of the province of Balochistan, Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Magsi, stated a few days before he was appointed that the problems in the region can only be resolved through negotiations, and that therefore the military operation underway in the province had to come to an end. Furthermore, the governing PPP party set up a committee to organise a conference in which all the political parties would participate with the goal of dealing with the harm suffered by the people of the province. In early September, the most important Baloch armed opposition groups, the BLA, the BRA and the BLF, announced that they were suspending their armed activities for an indefinite period of time, although they denied that this announcement reflected an agreement. The spokesmen of the armed groups noted the unity between these organisations and stated that if the military operation and the billeted troops established in the province were not ended, they would once again take up their weapons. Since the end of the ceasefire, there had been no acts of violence by the armed organisations. In late September, the president of the Committee of the Interior in the Pakistani Senate, Talha Mahmood, asked the government to put an end to the military operation in this province and start peace talks with the armed opposition groups. In mid-October, President Asif Ali Zardari stated that the government would restore peace in the province and guarantee that explorations for gas and oil mining could be carried out. Zardari noted that energy safety was as vital to the country as food safety. The government also announced a roadmap for resolving the conflict in the province and called an assembly in which intellectuals, media professionals and elders would participate with the goal of formulating constitutional reforms which could guarantee the redistribution of resources in the province. Subsequently, an assembly with the participation of the different political parties would be called.

In early January 2009, the armed opposition groups BLA, BRA and BLF, announced the end of the ceasefire declared unilaterally four months earlier. The BLA spokesman stated that the ceasefire had been declared with the goal of getting a response from the government, but that the continuation of the military operation led them to immediately resume armed activities. In mid-March, the US government was also considering the possibility of expanding its military operations in Pakistan and attacking the Taliban bases in Balochistan, the region where the top leaders of the Taliban movement live. In mid-September, the government announced that it was going to withdraw the charges against the Baloch political leaders and approve a general amnesty for political prisoners after the President, Asif Ali Zardari, and the Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani, accepted the recommendations made by the PPP party's Committee on Balochistan. The amnesty would include the leaders of the Bugti tribe. In the second half of November, the government submitted a plan for Balochistan to the Senate and the National Assembly in which it called for constitutional reforms to increase the province's autonomy. The plan also included an extensive list of measures aimed at promoting political dialogue with all the actors in the province. These measures included releasing all the political prisoners who have not committed serious crimes, facilitating the return of exiles, withdrawing the armed forces from Sui, creating a commission to investigate the whereabouts of disappeared persons, investigating the death of

the Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti Shaheed and allowing for greater local control of the benefits generated by the resources in the province, among others. The Baloch and Pashtun parliamentarians from all political parties, including the ones currently at the helm of the government, rejected the proposal by stating that it was clearly insufficient and that without a significant increase in the province's autonomy it would make no sense.

In June 2012, the Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf invited the leaders of Balochistan to start negotiations with the government, stating that this was one of his priorities. One year later, in 2013, the prime minister of Balochistan, Abdul Malik Baloch, announced his willingness to engage in immediate talks with all the groups in the region and to create a committee in charge of the talks, in which members of the Assembly of Balochistan would participate. He also stated that the use of force would yield no results.

The peace process in 2015

In the third quarter, the Government of Pakistan and nationalist leaders from Balochistan recognised the importance of initiating a process of dialogue so as to resolve the Balochi conflict by political means. In the last months of the year a process of rapprochement developed between representatives of the Federal Government of Pakistan in Balochistan and nationalist and separatist leaders as well as sectors of the insurgent forces. Following the announcement of an amnesty for insurgents who laid down their arms and renounced violence (26 June), according to the Government nearly 500 combatants took up the offer, and it was announced that there would also be financial assistance for them. In a particularly striking act for this province, 400 insurgents laid down their arms before government representatives on Pakistan's independence day (14 August). According to several analysts, the veracity of the figures announced by the government could be called into question, since the information block in Balochistan made it impossible to confirm the reports.

Meanwhile, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, minister of Communication and Works, Mines and Minerals, Development and Industries, as well as being a close confidant of the Prime Minister, met with the Khan of Kalat, Agha Mir Suleman Daud Khan, in London in July. Zehri asked him to participate in the dialogue and to return to Pakistan. The Khan made it a condition that the request came from the Grand Baloch Jirga (which had not met since 2006). The government tried to have this assembly meet and convince the Khan of Kalat to participate in the process. The most unexpected turn came from the leader of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP), Brahamdagh Bugti (grandson of the late leader Nawaz Akbar Bugti, killed in a military operation in August 2006). Bugti, exiled in Geneva, gave an interview to the BBC in which he announced that he supported a negotiated end to the conflict and abandoned the demand for the independence of Balochistan. This was a radical change, given that he was one of the state's most wanted exiled leaders. There is however a precedent which should lead us to maintain a cautious attitude towards this process. In 1958, Nauroz Khan Zarakzai, leader of the second insurrection against the government, was convinced by Ayub Khan (the military dictator who ruled at the time) that they should resolve the conflict peacefully. When Zarakzai and a delegation from his group arrived for negotiations, they were arrested. He died in prison, but not before seeing his sons and several of his followers hanged. Something similar occurred in 2006 with Bugti's grandfather, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, who was killed that year in a military operation.

In December, the President of the National Party, Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo declared that the government was trying to open talks with the Baloch leaders.

Most significant events of the year

- The Government of Pakistan and nationalist leaders from Balochistan recognised the importance of initiating a process of dialogue to resolve the Baloch conflict by political means.

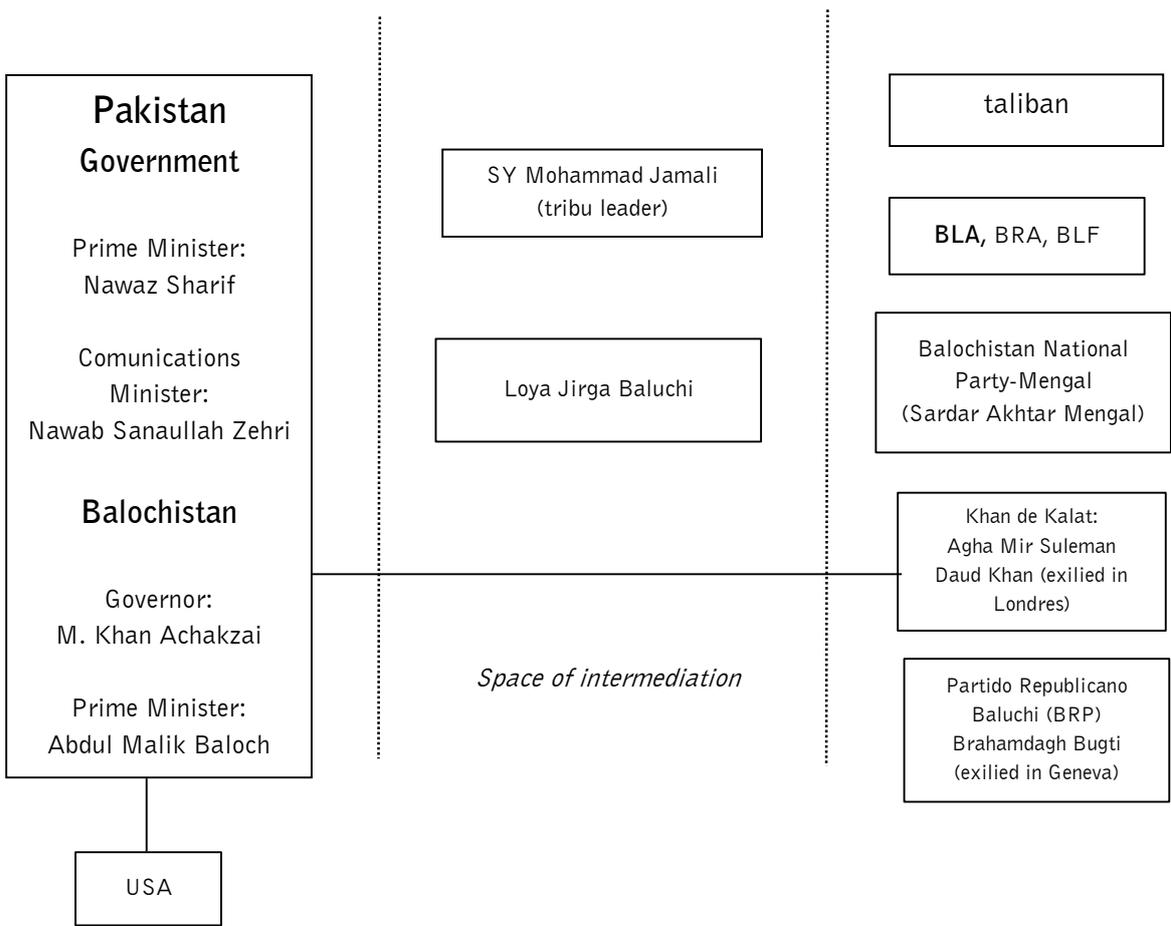
- The government granted an amnesty to those insurgents in Balochistan who abandoned arms and renounced violence.
- The leader of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP), Bugti, exiled in Geneva, gave an interview to the BBC in which he announced that he supported a negotiated solution to the conflict and abandoned the demand for the independence of Balochistan.
- At the end of the year, the Government was trying to open talks with the Baloch leaders.

Causes of crises during the year

Websites of interest

- Asia Times (www.atimes.com)
- Daily Times (www.dailytimes.com.pk)
- FATA Research Center (frc.com.pk)
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (www.ipcs.org)
- Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan (jamaat.org)
- Jamat Ulema-e-Islam (jui.com.pk)
- Pakistan Times (pakistantimes.net)

Main parties involved in the process



b) Southeast Asia

BURMA / MYANMAR

Context of the conflict

There are two types of conflict in Myanmar: one is related to the fight for the democratisation of the country; the other is linked to the rights claimed by the different ethnic minorities. Having gained its independence in 1947, the country had a democratic government from 1948 to 1962, when General Ne Win led a coup d'état. Ne Win was in turn brought down by yet another military coup in 1988.

Population: 53,7 million inhabitants
Area: 677,000 km ²
HID: 148 (of 187)
Per capita income: 1,270 USD
Deaths due to the conflict: 15,000
Armed actors: UNFC, KIO/KIA
Facilitators: --

Myanmar has a population of 53 million people, divided into 135 ethnic groups and subgroups who practise different religions. The military regime is Buddhist. Many of the ethnic groups have their own military apparatus. The main minorities are the Shan (9%) and the Karen (7%). These ethnic groups still fight against the military junta, although less intensely than in previous decades.

The **Karen** people are political organised under the **KNU** (Karen National Union) and are not involved in drug trafficking, unlike many other ethnic groups. Their military activity is via the **KNLA** (Karen National Liberation Army), created in 1947. The group has around 7,000 combatants. In 1995 the Karen reformed en masse in Thailand, with most of these being unarmed. They have stated that they are willing to completely lay down their arms if they obtain political guarantees of a future institutional framework and if they can earn revenues from gas production. The state of Karen covers 28,725 km² and has 1.1 million inhabitants. Even though the majority of Karen are Buddhists, the state also has a high number of Christians (30%) as a result of its past relationship with the British Empire. The Karen have had a ceasefire with the government in place since 2004, and it is currently the oldest conflict in the world (since 1949). The Karen are led by Naw Zipporrah Sein.

The **Shan State Army (SSA)**, created in 1964, reached a peace agreement with the government, but one of its dissidents, the **Shan State Army-North (SSA-N)**, remained active in pursuing an autonomous Shan state within a federal Burma. In May 2007 the negotiations for a ceasefire agreement were suspended after an agreement could not be reached on the venue where the meeting should be held. The leader of this armed group had agreed to negotiate with the armed forces with mediation by members of the Thai military. In 2009 the government invited them to become border guards, which they accepted in April 2010. However, half of their troops (5,000), led by General Parngfa, were opposed to this agreement. There is also the **Shan State Army-South (SSA-S)**, which was declared a terrorist group in 2006. The SSA-S also experienced dissidence this year, and it reached a peace agreement with the government.

The **Chin** are an ethnic group consisting of more than one million people with their own language and culture divided between Myanmar and India. In India they are known as the Mizo people. The Burmese side is the home to almost half a million people, and they account for the majority of the population in the Chin state of Myanmar, which borders on India and Bangladesh and was created in 1974. The Chin were Christianised in the early 20th century, just a few years after the independent Chinland was annexed by British colonialism, and therefore the majority of the population is Baptist. They have a widespread diaspora in India, Malaysia, Canada and the United States. The military junta has persecuted the Chins, regarding them as pro-Western. Since the 1930s, the Chins have been claiming their rights to self-determination, as a continuation of their claims to independence from Myanmar (formerly Burma) in 1948. Forty years later, in 1998, the **Chin National Front (CNF)** was created following the military junta's brutal repression

of demonstrations by students calling for democracy in the country. This group, which demanded self-rule for the Chin people and the creation of a territory called Gran Mizoram, organised on the border of the Burmese region of Shin with the Indian state of Mizoram (from which they receive support) and with Bangladesh, and has around 200 military troops. The Secretary-General of the CNF is Thang Lian. Since 1989 the CBF has been part of the National Democratic Front of Burma (NDF), and since 2001 it has been a member of the United Nations' Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). The Chin National Council was founded in 2006, and includes the CNF and other Chin organisations.

The Kachin people is a coalition of six tribes that are spread across Yunnan, China, northeastern India and Kachin State, Myanmar. The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) is the military arm of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). The KIA was founded in 1961 in response to a military coup by General Ne Win. At the beginning the group fought for independence, but eventually it began to demand an autonomous state within a federal union in Myanmar. In 1994 the KIA signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burmese Junta, but the fighting continued. It is estimated that the group has between 4,000 and 10,000 troops.

The production of opium in much of the country has made many of these groups turn to drug trafficking. Such groups fight among themselves and against the government. In parallel to these conflicts, the country is under an autocratic military dictatorship. In 1990, this regime adopted the name SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council). In 1997, it changed its name to the SPDC (State Peace and Development Council). Since 1985 the junta has signed agreements with many armed groups. In exchange for renouncing their political and separatist demands, the junta has allowed these groups to control their lucrative activities with total impunity. In 1990 the military junta permitted elections, which were won with a majority by Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the **NLD** (National League for Democracy) and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was later arrested. At the end of 2010 Suu Kyi was released and in 2011 a process of transition to democracy began.

Background to the peace process

With regard to the process of democratisation and reconciliation channelled through the dialogue with the Nobel Peace Prize winner and the NLD, the first meetings took place in late 2000 with the mediation of Malaysia and the United Nations. During the period 2001-2004, the Military Junta made a series of gestures in what could be called "visit diplomacy", which translated into the release of political prisoners before and/or after the periodical visits to the country by the United Nations Secretary General Special Envoy to the country, a special Rapporteur on human rights and political leaders from several countries, although there were also periods when the Military Junta did not allow these visits. In 2004, the government promoted a national convention to democratise the country, but the NLD conditioned its participation upon the release of its imprisoned members. Many of these diplomatic manoeuvres to resolve the conflict came via the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, which is headquartered in Geneva but has had an office in the Burmese capital since 2000, which was closed by the Military Junta in March 2006. In 2009, the most noteworthy event was that the new Obama administration gave signs of being in favour of engaging in direct relations with the Military Junta. The Deputy Secretary of State noted the possibility of creating a format similar to the one used in the negotiations with North Korea, via a six-part dialogue in which ASEAN, Japan, China and India would also participate. US representatives from the delegation of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with representatives of the Military Junta. Late in the year, the US government stated that it was hoping to start a dialogue process between the Military Junta and the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after the party she leads, the NLD, had publicised a letter that Suu Kyi had sent to the leader of the Junta, General Than Shwe, in which she expressed her willingness to work with the government to put an end to the sanctions that were harming the country. In 2010, the Military Junta had authorised the reopening of some offices of the main democratic opposition party, the NLD. The opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, met in May with the US Deputy Secretary of

State, Kurt Campbell, and the head of the US diplomatic mission in the country. After the elections, the Military Junta released the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after seven and a half years of house arrest.

With regard to the KNU, the government's first meeting with this Karen group was held in 1996, albeit with no results. The second meeting was in late 2003, and it ended with a verbal cessation of hostilities agreement. In 2007, a splinter of the group and the KNU/KNLPAC was formed, which signed a peace agreement with the Military Junta. Another faction, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, reached an agreement with the Military Junta in 2009 which stated that the members of the group could serve as border guards on the border with Thailand.

In April 2011, General Than Shwe officially dissolved the Military Junta, which had been established in 1988 via a coup d'état, after taking possession of the new government of the union, which replaced the Junta. In July, the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi offered to facilitate ceasefire agreements and peace processes between the government and the ethnic insurgency. In parallel, the coalition of ethnic groups United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), established in February, submitted a ceasefire proposal to EU representatives at a meeting held in Bangkok and issued an appeal for the European organisation to facilitate a dialogue between the Burmese government and the ethnic groups. In August, Suu Kyi met with President Thein Sein for the first time. In August, the leaders of the UNFC assembled a team to hold peace negotiations with the government. In turn, the Parliament approved the creation of a peace committee aimed at mediating with the insurgent groups.

In November 2011, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton travelled to Myanmar and met with President Thein Sein. Clinton announced small concessions from the Burmese regime in response to advances in democracy which had been made, but she asked for more headway. Likewise, five ethnic armed groups met with representatives of the government, and three of them reached informal ceasefire agreements with the Executives. The groups that participated in the negotiations were the KIO, KNP, CNF, SSA-S and KNU.

In 2012, the Burmese government established a strategy for peace with the ethnic groups through a three-stage process. The first stage would include a ceasefire, the opening of liaison offices and freedom of movement when carrying arms, the second stage would entail confidence-building measures, political dialogue and regional development and in the third stage an agreement would be signed before members of Parliament. In January, the armed opposition group KNU reached a ceasefire agreement with the government. In addition to the ceasefire, both parties agreed to possibly permit unarmed patrols in their respective territories and to let the KNU open liaison offices in land under government control. In the second quarter, a KNU delegation met for the first time with President Thein Sein and with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon. In November, the armed group said they were committed to self-government for the Karen people and the creation of a federal government system that would allow greater autonomy, but did not want to be independent from Myanmar. In December, the KNU elected General Muty Say Poe to be their new leader.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the armed group ABSDF held negotiations with government representatives for the first time on the Thai border and agreed to hold more meetings to reach a ceasefire and peace agreement. In early June, informal negotiations were also held with the KIO, a group that repeated their demand for government troops to withdraw from their area of control. They also said that their goal was to end the conflict, and not to sign a ceasefire agreement. The KIO also requested international observers as witnesses to a potential peace agreement. The KIO said that they would not sign a ceasefire agreement until government troops withdrew. Moreover, the KIO and other Kachin leaders announced the creation of a centre for justice and negotiations intended to gather different views of the peace process and all information about the negotiations. In February, the government and the NMSP signed a four-point agreement after three rounds of negotiations. The NMSP said that the government only aimed to maintain the ceasefire, and not to move towards any political agreements. In the third quarter, the PNLO signed a ceasefire

agreement with the government and agreed that peace negotiations would be held in the following three months. Moreover, the armed Karenni opposition group KNPP signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in the second quarter that was a result of the negotiations between both parties in Kayah State.

At the start of the 2013, there was a clear push for dialogue between the government and the sole armed group with which it had not reached a ceasefire agreement, the KIO, so the informal talks that began in 2012 continued. Following an escalation of violence between the Burmese Army and the KIO in Kachin State, on 18 January the government declared a unilateral ceasefire around Laiza, the largest city in the state, to pave the way for political talks with the KIO that were supposed to start the day after, although the violence rendered the truce partially worthless. Meanwhile, Parliament passed a motion calling for a ceasefire and peace talks to put an end to 18 months of conflict. Talks between the central government and the KIO finally took place in the city of Ruili, China, in February, under the impetus of China, which, according to some media, acted as a mediator while others described it as a coordinator and witness. These talks addressed issues such as establishing a channel of communication between the parties, reducing tension and inviting observers and witnesses to subsequent rounds.

This round gave way to the beginning of political dialogue with the Union National Federal Council (UNFC), an umbrella for many insurgent groups like the KIO, KNU, KNPP, SSPP, NMSP, ANC and PNLO, among others. Previously, in January, the UNFC released a statement that announced that its member organisations had decided to maintain a ceasefire and hold peace talks with the government and that they would have to be conducted with the UNFC as the sole negotiator and not with the organisations individually. Thus, in late February the government and the UNFC met to talk about political goals, the framework for dialogue and timetables. According to a joint statement released later, the talks were frank and friendly. The government team was led by former general and peace negotiator Aung Min, who pointed out that tension with the KIO had subsided in recent weeks.

There was a new round of talks in Ruili between the government and KIO delegations in March with the participation of four members of the UNFC, two of the SSPP/SSA, two of the RCSS/SSA, two of the NDAA, four of the Kachin State Peace Creating Group, a Chinese ministerial advisor and two Chinese Foreign Ministry officials. The KIO delegation was headed by a member of the Permanent Committee of the Peace Talk Creation Group. The subsequent joint press release said that the talks had been cordial and that a working agreement would not be reached until both parties agreed on a ceasefire based on mutual understanding, respect and trust in order to start a genuine political conversation. Both parties also agreed to continue coordinating with each others' troops in the conflict zone, in order to reduce confrontation, and to establish coordination and supervision offices if necessary. Furthermore, they agreed to continue to implement the agreements reached in the current round and the one held in February, planned a new meeting for early April and said they would continue coordinating to achieve real political talks nationwide in scope. In March the Government established the Myanmar Peace Center to provide information on and coordinate the peace process. The centre is headed by Aung Ming, the head of the government negotiating team, and has a staff of 120 people. The EU assumed part of the cost.

In May 2013, the chief negotiator of the Burmese government, Aung Min, announced that the government was planning to hold a conference nationwide in scope that would include all the ethnic groups in the country, address the ceasefire issue and give impetus to the subsequent inclusive dialogue. In late May, the government and the KIO reached a seven-point agreement at a meeting held in Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, referring to the KIO's historical demands regarding the need for the separation of forces, the establishment of a monitoring and verification mechanism for the conflict and the start of talks on political issues. The UN Special Envoy for Myanmar, Vijay Nambiar, participated in this new round of talks. Observers from China were also present at the meeting, as well as representatives of eight of the armed groups in Myanmar, including some linked to the Wa, Karen, Shan, Karenni and Mon ethnic groups. This

was the first time that the KIO accepted to participate in negotiations in Myanmar; the previous two rounds of talks had taken place in China.

Myanmar also made progress in its talks with the RCSS (and its armed wing, the SSA), an insurgency with which it had already reached ceasefire agreements in 2011 and 2012. A delegation from the group met with Burmese President Thein Sein for the first time on 10 June. The RCSS/SSA delegation was headed by Lieutenant General Yawd Serk and President Thein was accompanied by the chief negotiator for the Burmese government, Aung Min, and by the Minister of the President's Office, Soe Thane. At the meeting, which was held in the capital, Naypyidaw, both parties agreed to work on relocating troops, reducing hostilities and creating a team to monitor the conflict. Inclusive political talks were planned, according to the road map described by President Thein. The meeting also addressed the internally displaced population, food security, transport issues and the subject of identity cards for the Shan ethnic population. The RCSS/SSA is the second armed group that has met with President Thein since he took power in 2011. Meanwhile, representatives of the Karen National Union (KNU) met with Burmese government officials in Myawaddy in early June to hold unofficial talks on military issues and to develop a "code of conduct" governing how both parties interact.

In July, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) proposed that opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi participate as a mediator (or at least as an observer) in the peace talks that the government was holding with it. One of the main blocks to progress in the peace process was the government's intention to reach a nationwide ceasefire agreement and then address the different armed groups' political demands, while the UNFC thought that talks on the ceasefire and the political causes of the conflict should be carried out at the same time. In August, the government and the All Burma Student's Democratic Front (ABSDF) announced the beginning of a truce, considered the first step to beginning talks that could put an end to 25 years of conflict. The agreement would allow four liaison offices to open in Myanmar.

Mention must be made of the process carried out by the government and the different ethnic insurgent groups aimed at achieving a general ceasefire for the entire country for the month of October. Although the government expressed its readiness to achieve the ceasefire, different armed groups were sceptical about it. However, prominent among the initiatives it set out to achieve was the conference on confidence-building measures held in September that enjoyed the participation of more than 300 ethnic group, political party and government representatives. The conference ended with five objectives to explore in greater detail in the peace process: 1) a national ceasefire; 2) the abolition of democratic laws or laws that are problematic in other aspects, including the law of illegal associations; 3) the establishment of a federal union that guarantees equality and autonomy for the ethnic groups or the country; 4) the organisation of a conference like that of Panglong; and 5) the reformation or redrafting of the 2008 Constitution. Meanwhile, some sources said that the National Defence and Security Council (a high-level government body in which the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces participate) would acquire greater weight in the peace negotiations at the expense of the main government negotiator so far, U Aung Min, who may resign.

The leaders of 18 armed ethnic organisations, including the KIO, KNU and SSA-South, as well as the leaders of the umbrella organisation UNFC, met in Kachin State in October to discuss the government's general ceasefire proposal for the entire country and to agree on positions to take entering negotiations with the government, currently planned for early November. Some leaders pointed out that this meeting was more important than the one for the Panglong Agreement of 1947, which established ethnic autonomy. The armed Wa group UWSA was notably absent, which may have been due to the fact that the group did not feel that its desire to create an autonomous Wa state was sufficiently represented and that had been sceptical that a general ceasefire was possible. However, while this meeting was taking place, clashes continued between the government and the KIO, which caused a large humanitarian crisis because thousands of people were trapped by the armed violence. Days before the outbreak of fighting, the government and the KIO had held talks and reached some partial agreements, but did not sign a ceasefire

agreement. Coinciding with these discussions, the government freed 56 political prisoners, almost all of which had been imprisoned for belonging to different ethnic insurgent organisations.

In November, the government and the main armed ethnic opposition groups agreed to sign a general ceasefire agreement for the entire country, which would establish a framework for conducting and maintaining political dialogue. This decision was made after the armed ethnic opposition groups held another meeting that resulted in 17 armed organisations (out of the 18 participating) agreeing to the general ceasefire as a condition for political talks. Afterwards, a delegation of leaders of the UNFC coalition of insurgent groups visited Rangoon and Naypyidaw for the first time in decades, highlighting the Armed Forces' need to get involved in peace negotiations to give them a more substantive nature, since even though the government was holding talks, the Burmese Army was still carrying out armed operations in Kachin State. The delegation urged the commander in chief, General Min Aung Hlaing, to get involved in the peace process. In addition, the UNFC asked opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to participate more actively in the peace process after meeting with her in Rangoon, inviting her to the negotiations that would be held with the government at the end of the year. Moreover, representatives from 12 different political parties met with the leaders of the UNFC in Thailand to talk about the peace process. Alongside this progress in the negotiations, clashes were renewed between the Burmese Armed Forces and the armed opposition group KIO, forcibly displacing thousands of civilians.

At a two-day meeting, eleven leaders of Burmese political parties, the UNFC and civil society organisations discussed how to structure a future Burmese Army that includes the armed ethnic opposition groups of Myanmar. Organised by the government agency Myanmar Peace Centre, the meeting was the first formal discussion between the political party representatives and rebel leaders. The discussions focused on the creation of a federal Burmese Army that would integrate the armed groups of the different ethnic minorities. Some challenges included how to make the recruitment process more inclusive, how to build trust among the parties and how to grant a certain degree of autonomy to the regions without dividing the military.

In 2014, several of the country's most important businessmen acted as mediators to facilitate the negotiations, by way of the Peace Talk Creation Group. These businessmen wanted the negotiations to be mediated by China and Japan. Throughout the first quarter different draft proposals were discussed. One of them was presented by the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which represented 16 armed opposition groups. Finally in March an agreement was reached to set up a joint committee to work on the final text of the nationwide ceasefire agreement. The committee had 18 people nine of them members of ethnic groups, three commanders of the Army, three members of parliament and three members of the Government who will draft a single text containing the views of both sides. When the agreement is ready the peace negotiations will resume and will be held in Hpa-an, the capital of Karen state. One of the most controversial issues in the negotiations, and which will therefore be left out of the ceasefire talks, is the integration in the Armed Forces of the insurgency and the Government's demand that the armed groups provide information on the number of troops, weapons and ammunition under their control. At the same time the other issue where differences existed between the insurgents and the Government had to do with the rebels' demand for a political dialogue. The Government proposed that the dialogue would start after the signing of the ceasefire, but the insurgencies said they should take place at the same time. Nevertheless, finally the armed groups accepted that the process of political negotiations would begin within 90 days of the signing of the ceasefire.

In the second quarter, with regard to the negotiations with the KIA armed opposition group, after the serious clashes in April both sides agreed to establish a peace oversight commission to monitor troop movements on both sides to establish responsibilities for the fighting. Nevertheless, the issue of the armed clashes with the KIA was excluded from the negotiations for the nationwide ceasefire agreement. In August, the Government accepted to include in the text a commitment to implement a federal system in the country, which was one of the main hurdles to reaching an agreement. Other topics of discussion were the list of groups which would be allowed to participate in the signing of the agreement, since the Government recognized as armed groups

a much smaller number than what the NCCT proposed, or the process of political dialogue that will follow the signing of the ceasefire. The creation of the Federal Armed Forces, one of the sticking points of the negotiation, will also be addressed during the political dialogue. Moreover, the NCCT have proposed a list of third parties that will participate in the signing of the agreement, with observers from the U.S., UK, Japan, China, France and the UN. In addition, the NCCT asked opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to take on a greater role in the peace process between ethnic insurgents and the Government. The Government that succeeded the military junta that had ruled the country for five decades had signed ceasefire agreements with 14 of the 16 major armed groups in the country, but this was not the case with the KIA in Kachin state and the TNLA in Shan state.

In December important initiatives were implemented for the future of the peace process, but also a crisis was triggered after an attack by the Armed Forces against a training school for the KIA armed group. The Government offered to resume negotiations mid-month. In the second half of the month the NCCT appointed delegates for the conversations, which include 5 out of the 14 NCCT members and four people from outside the group for the technical support group. The NCCT said that it wanted to have additional international observers, preferably from the Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG), which includes Norway, Switzerland, the UK, the EU, Japan, the U.S. and Australia. At that time the only observers were the United Nations, China and an ASEAN country. At Christmas a National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was achieved and there was talk of adding three more members to the NCCT.

The peace process in 2015

In late March, the government and the armed opposition groups in the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) stated that they had reached an agreement in Rangoon to achieve a nationwide ceasefire after holding the seventh round of negotiations. The agreement had to be ratified by the different groups before it was signed, and which armed organisations would be the signatories was yet to be decided, given that at that time the government did not recognise five of the 16 organisations in the NCCT as political organisations, nor did these organisations have bilateral ceasefire agreements with the executive. Furthermore, during the negotiations it was stipulated that some of the thorniest issues, such as the formation of a federal army and the creation of a code of conduct, would not be addressed until the ceasefire agreement was signed and a political negotiation process had gotten underway. The gathering had been preceded by major clashes between the armed forces and the different insurgent groups, such as the Kokang group MNDAA, the Ta'ang group TNLA and the Kachin group KIA. In fact, the latter held a bilateral meeting with the executive just days before the start of the negotiating round. In turn, the Wa group UWSA cancelled its participation in the nationwide ceasefire negotiations after being accused of providing support to the Kokang insurgency. The signing of the agreement had initially been scheduled for the 12th of February, Union Day, but an agreement was not possible at that time. The United Nationalities Federal Council had suggested that an agreement be signed on creating a federal union as a step prior to the ceasefire agreement, and in parallel the government had suggested that a Commitment to Peace and Reconciliation Document, which would not be legally binding in nature but would demonstrate this commitment to the process, be signed during the celebrations of Union Day. Only the KNU, the DKBA, the SSA-S and the KNLA-Peace Council agreed to join, while the other insurgent forces expressed hesitation and stated that the most important issues were not addressed in this document, such as the aspiration to a federal union. Furthermore, other armed groups did not even participate in the Union Day meeting.

The second quarter concluded without achieving a definitive signing of the nationwide ceasefire agreement which was initially planned for the month of May. The tensions were constant during the entire quarter as the outcome of mistrust between the parties and the persistence of the armed clashes between the army and several of the insurgent groups. After a three-day meeting in May between the armed opposition ethnic groups to discuss the signing of the agreement, the

insurgencies asked the government to effect constitutional reforms and totally cease all hostilities in the Kachin, Kokang, Ta'ang and Arakan territories. The armed groups stated that the violence in these regions was undermining any chances of achieving peace in the country. The chief negotiator of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT, which encompasses the armed groups) reiterated its support for the three armed groups with which the government was still clashing, the AA, the MNDAA and the TNLA, and stated that it would not leave them behind. Even though the first two are NCCT members, the government of Myanmar refused to recognise them as such, and while the TNLA was a member of the NCCT, it had not signed the bilateral ceasefire agreement with the government. After this meeting, it was announced that the insurgencies would meet again in June, but just days before this meeting the three main armed groups involved in the clashes with the army announced that they were withdrawing from the NCCT, citing mistrust in the government negotiators and the fact that they feel betrayed by the other insurgent groups. This withdrawal led the NCCT to state that it would sign no ceasefire agreement if the groups affected by the armed clashes were excluded from the agreement, and that any agreement would make no sense of those who were currently involved in violence were not part of it. The government expressed its concern with this announcement and stated that it hoped that the agreement could be signed by the end of the year. A new insurgency coordination team had to negotiate with the government regarding both the inclusion of the three excluded armed groups and 15 amendments proposed to the final ceasefire agreement text, which might hinder any headway in the process. The government, in turn, expressed its preference for continuing to negotiate directly with the NCCT, as it had until then, instead of with the new coordination team.

During the third quarter, the differences among the insurgent groups and the government of Myanmar endangered the signing of the ceasefire at a particularly delicate juncture, given that national elections were planned for the 8th of November. Even though there was consensus regarding the text of what was called the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), there was no agreement on the inclusion of the groups that were not disengaging from the armed struggle. These differences led to fears about another postponement of the signing of the NCA or, even more likely, a partial signing, despite the fact that it was scheduled for October. In late September, President Thein Sein met with nine leaders of armed groups, but no agreement was reached. Of the armed groups that were part of the negotiations, only seven agreed to sign the NCA, ten refused to and two had misgivings. Therefore, if it were signed, it would be with a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine groups. The government continued to refuse to include the TNLA, the MNDAA and the AA in the negotiations, given that these groups were continuing their armed struggle in the region of Kokang, where martial law had also been extended for three more months. In July, the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT, an umbrella group that represents 16 insurgent groups, 11 of which the government recognises) was replaced by a 15-member Senior Group led by a KNU leader, Zipporah Sein (who is part of a KNU sector that had expressed greater reluctance towards the negotiations). This new negotiation format was rejected by the armed groups in September, as they preferred the NCCT. The insurgents agreed that all the armed groups should be included in the negotiations. Furthermore, they wanted to discuss a possible political dialogue, a code of conduct and the formation of a joint supervisory committee. The government reported the launch of the political dialogue in January to 78 political representatives, despite the rupture of the agreement.

In October, the government reached a ceasefire agreement with eight armed groups – KNU, KNLA-PC, DKBA, PA-O NLO, CNF, ALP, ABSDF and RCS/SSA – out of a total of 21 insurgent actors in the country. In addition to the signatories, another seven armed groups had been part of the negotiation process with the government. The groups that did not adhere to the agreement included the UWSA, the SSA and the KIA, which controlled broad swaths of land and held a great deal of armaments. The agreement was signed in a ceremony in which representatives of China, the USA and the United Nations participated, but which the leader of the main opposition party, the NLD, and other representatives of this organisation did not attend. The president of Myanmar stated that this signing signalled the start of the pathway to peace. The signing took place after a process riddled with difficulties and even condemnations over supposed pressure

from China on several groups which did not adhere to the agreement. All the signatory groups were removed from the list of illegal associations in the country after the agreement was signed.

In November general elections were held in Myanmar for the first time since the establishment of civilian rule in the country in 2011. The main opposition party, the NLD led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won a landslide victory, winning two-thirds of the seats in dispute. However, 25% of the seats were reserved for unelected military representatives, and they have the power of veto over any constitutional change. This result allowed the NLD to choose the person who will become President, but for the moment it is not possible for Aung San Suu Kyi to occupy this post. In December, the first steps were taken in the process of political dialogue in the country. The Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee presented a draft proposal on the format of this dialogue, which would include the presence of 700 participants: the military, the ethnic armed groups and political parties would each be reserved 150 seats; there would be 75 for the Government; 75 for parliamentarians; 50 for other ethnic leaders not belonging to armed groups and 50 would be reserved for additional guests. One of the most important outstanding issues would be the participation of the armed groups that had not adhered to the cease-fire, and who could be invited as observers. 11 armed groups in this situation would be invited. It was foreseen that political dialogue would begin in mid-January and some of the key areas of discussion would be constitutional reform, the issue of federalism and greater autonomy. In parallel to these steps forward, there continued to be armed confrontations in various parts of the country. The armed group Arakan Army and the state's armed forces clashed in northern Arakan state in late December; there were also clashes between the armed group TNLA and a joint force of the insurgent group Shan State Army-South and the Armed Forces.

Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government and the armed opposition groups that made up the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) announced in Yangon that they had reached an agreement to achieve a nationwide ceasefire. • The Government expressed its preference for continuing to negotiate with the NCCT directly, as it had done so far, and not with the new coordination team. • There was a rejection by the armed groups of the new negotiating format. • The government reached a ceasefire agreement with eight armed groups — KNU, KNLA PC, DKBA, Pa-O NLO, CNF, ALP, ABSDF, RCS/SSA — out of the total of 21 insurgents actors in the country. • General elections were held in Myanmar for the first time since the establishment of civilian rule in the country in 2011. The main opposition party, the NLD led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won a landslide victory. • In December, the first steps were taken in the process of political dialogue in the country. Some of the key areas of debate would be constitutional reform, the issue of federalism and greater autonomy.

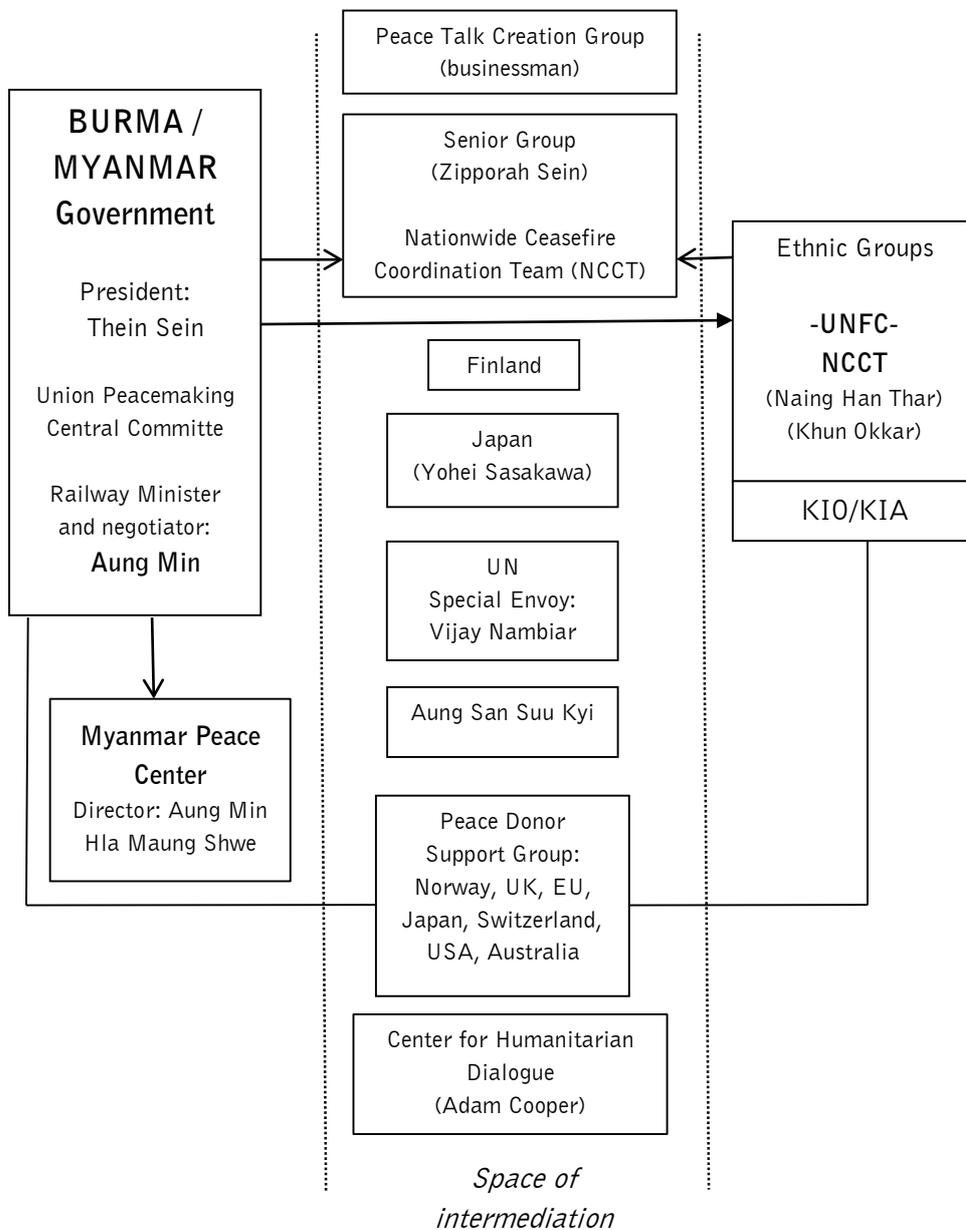
Causes of crises during the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five of the 16 organisations that made up the NCCT were not recognised by the government as political organisations and they did not have bilateral ceasefire agreements with the Administration. • The armed group, the UWSA, cancelled its participation in the negotiations for a national ceasefire, after having been accused of supporting the Kokang insurgency. • Distrust between the parties. • Persistence of armed clashes between the army and several rebel groups.

- The three armed groups involved in the clashes with the army announced that they were withdrawing from the NCCT, indicating their lack of confidence in the government negotiators and the fact that they felt betrayed by the other insurgent groups.
- There was no consensus on the inclusion of groups that did not abandon the armed struggle.
- The rejection by the armed groups of the new negotiating format.
- The UWSA, SSA and KIA groups did not adhere to the September ceasefire.

Websites of interest

- Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (www.altsean.org)
- Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives (peacebuilding.asia)
- Birmania (directory.Birmanialife.com)
- Birmania News.Net (www.Birmanianews.net)
- Burma Issues (www.burmaissues.org)
- Burmanet News (www.burmanet.org/news)
- Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (www.dhcentre.org)
- CNF (www.chinland.org)
- Democratic Voice of Burma (www.dvb.no)
- Ethnic Peace Resources Project (www.eprpinformation.org/en)
- Government (www.Birmania.com) (www.Birmania.gov.mm)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (www.ipcs.org)
- Irrawaddy (www.irrawaddy.org)
- Karen National Union (www.karennationalunion.net)
- Karen News (karennews.org)
- Myanmar Peace Center (www.myanmarpeace.org)
- Myanmar Peace Monitor (www.mmpeacemonitor.org)
- PILPG (www.publiinternationallaw.org/areas/peacebuilding/negotiations/index.html)
- Pyidaungsu Institute for Peace and Dialogue (pyidaungsuinstitute.org)
- The Burma Project (www.soros.org/initiatives/bpsai)
- The Irrawaddy (www.irrawaddy.org)
- The Kachim Post (www.kachimpost.com)
- Transnational Institute (www.tni.org/work-area/burma-project)
- UNPO (www.unpo.org)

Main parties involved in the process



PHILIPPINES

Context of the conflict

Even though the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, 8% of the population is Muslim. However, in recent decades, armed Muslim groups have emerged, as have communist guerrillas. Despite the two popular revolts in the last twenty years (in 1986 to bring down President F. Marcos, and in 2001, to depose President Estrada), the country is still in the hands of a landowning oligarchy with no intention of resolving the serious structural problems in the country: corruption, a lack of infrastructure, rural underdevelopment, a lack of basic services, serious human rights violations with impunity, etc. The expansion of the communist guerrillas, led by the **NPA** (the New People's Army) is linked to the system of land exploitation. The Muslim rebellion, led by the **MILF** (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front), is related to the socioeconomic discrimination against the southern population, and particularly against the people who live on the island of Mindanao and on the Sulu archipelago. This discrimination has led to regional nationalism, since two-thirds of the country's Muslims live in this region. The 1990s saw the emergence of a new radical terrorist group, **Abu Sayyaf**, operating primarily in the Sulu archipelago. The aim of this group is to establish an Islamic state in the south of the country. It is accused of being in contact with Al-Qaeda and has not begun any negotiation process with the government.

<p>Population: 100,1 million inhabitants Area: 300,000 km² HDI: 115 (of 188) GDP PPA: 837,601 million USD Per capita income: 3,500 USD Deaths due to the conflict: 120,000 Armed actors: NPA, MILF, MNLF, Abu Sayyaf Facilitators: MILF: Malaysia NPA/NDF: Norway MNLF: OCI, Indonesia</p>

The NPA was formed in 1969 and is the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (the CPP). It is also part of the NDF (the National Democratic Front), which is the umbrella organisation for several groups and acts as the NPA's political arm and negotiator. The NPA has around 6,000 combatants and is led by J. M. Sison "Joma", who is exiled in the Netherlands. The NPA distanced itself from the popular revolution of 1986, which led to considerable divisions within the group. As a result, many leaders and combatants abandoned the armed struggle. The MILF was founded in 1978 as a result of a division in the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which had been formed in 1969. After several years of negotiations, it reached a peace agreement with the government (the Manila Agreement). Libya initially mediated in this agreement, but it was subsequently replaced by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. The agreement obtained autonomy for the southern provinces. The MILF were opposed to this 1996 agreement and demanded Mindanao's independence. The MILF has around 10,000 combatants. In 2013 they were able to sign a preliminary peace agreement and in 2014 the final agreement was reached.

MILF

Background to the peace process

After rejecting the Manila agreements of 1996, two years later the MILF found support from Libya to start negotiations with the Philippine government, albeit with no results. In 2001, president offered negotiations abroad, suspended military operations and started talks in Malaysia under the auspices of Libya, and reached a ceasefire. Throughout 2004, the government of the Philippines and the MILF also held exploratory talks in Malaysia, which became a facilitating country, in which they agreed to an initial three-point agenda: security, rehabilitation of areas of conflict and protection of the ancestral lands on the island of Mindanao. The MILF gave up on independence but in exchange was demanding formulas of self-government which expressed a greater degree of autonomy in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In 2008, the government and the MILF declared that they would sign a Memory of

Understanding on Ancestral Lands (MOA) in Malaysia, the most controversial aspect of the negotiations in recent years. Both parties also pledged to reach a global peace agreement within the next 15 months that would include the three main points on the negotiating agenda: security, rehabilitation and development, and ancestral lands. In early August, however, as a precautionary measure, the Supreme Court suspended the signing of the MOA hours before the Philippine government and the MILF were getting ready to sign the document in Malaysia. In 2009, the government and the MILF signed the framework agreement on forming an international support group for the negotiation process in Kuala Lumpur; this group would be made up of governments, mainly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and the EU, as well as by international NGOs or eminent individuals. In 2010, while the government was speaking about "reinforced autonomy" which would extend the competences of the Moro people over the zone currently falling with the ARMM, the MILF was advocating the creation of a "Bangsamoro sub-state" which would expand the powers and scope of the current ARMM. In September, the MILF's chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, declared that his group had formally abandoned its petition for independence for certain regions of Mindanao and that it had given the government a proposal to create a sub-state or an autonomous republic that would have all the competences except foreign affairs, national defence, currency and postal service.

On 15 October 2012, in Manila, the government and the MILF signed a framework agreement to resolve the conflict in Mindanao and to create a new political body, called Bangsamoro, which would replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao after a transition period when the basic law of the new body would be drafted. Later, the new law would be subject to a referendum. If approved, elections would be announced to form a government to replace the Transition Commission. According to both parties, the entire process should be finalised before President Benigno Aquino's term ends in 2016. In November, the 33rd round of peace negotiations held in Kuala Lumpur came to a conclusion. This round addressed three main issues: the sharing of power, the sharing of wealth and normalisation (a concept referring to disarmament, demobilisation and the reinsertion of MILF combatants). Meanwhile, tensions between the MILF and certain MNLF factions (especially the one led by Nur Misuari) rose markedly after the peace agreement was signed. Nur Misuari said the agreement was illegitimate and urged the MILF to join the negotiations between the MNLF and the government to fully implement the 1996 peace agreement. Other senior MNLF officials even threatened to return to war and to resume their demands for independence if the group was marginalised from the peace process.

Furthermore, the MILF urged the MNLF to form a united front around the aspirations of the Moro people. Sheikh Muhammad Muntassir, the chief da'wah officer of the MILF, urged the MNLF's leaders not to pursue a "selfish" agenda, but to defend the legitimate aspirations of the population. He made this call after the government and the MILF agreed that the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) would act as an observer in the negotiations. In 2010, the OIC already promoted a meeting between the leaders of the MILF and the MNLF in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), which led to the creation of a coordination body. Through various resolutions, the OIC called for cooperation to achieve peace and development for the Moro people.

In January 2013, the MILF said that huge progress had been made in each of the four annexes. In some of them, including in the one on power sharing, nearly total agreement was reached, while in the others, like the one on sharing financial resources and on "normalisation", the new head of the government's negotiating team, university Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (who replaced Marvic Leonen in the position, now on the Supreme Court), said that the process to disarm combatants would be gradual. The leader of the MILF, Ebrahim Murad, pointed out that the process would only begin under the government of the new Bangsamoro body and warned that it should include government militias active in the Bangsamoro region. However, the MILF ordered its combatants not to wear uniforms or carry weapons in public places, a measure taken as a show of goodwill by the government. The MILF leader also declared that the IMT, which is headed by Malaysia and consists of Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Norway and the EU, could

supervise the implementation of a possible peace agreement signed by the parties during the transition stage. Nonetheless, the Third Party Monitoring Team began its work, a group of observers in charge of supervising the implementation of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 15 October 2012, and its four annexes. In February, the government named the members of the Transition Commission, the body in charge of drafting the basic law of the new political system of Bangsamoro that will replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao around 2016 with more powers and financial resources. The Transition Commission will be led by Mohagher Iqbal, member of the MILF, and will consist of eight members appointed by the MILF and seven members chosen by the government. Four women and two Lumad (indigenous people) will participate. In late April, the Transmission Commission, a 15-person body charged with drafting the Bangsamoro Constitution, which is supposed to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), met for the first time. During the session, agreement was reached on the internal rules of operation and the procedure to establish the working groups, with the participation of external experts on designing constitutions and on strategies of political influence.

The MILF announced its intention to keep the MILF as an Islamic organisation, but also to form a political party during 2013 in order to compete in the 2016 elections once the new Bangsamoro government has replaced the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The government had announced its intention to sign a comprehensive peace agreement with the MILF before July, when Congress would resume activity after the aforementioned elections. However, the fact that the negotiating process did not move forward in the weeks following the elections led to the MILF criticising the government for breaking its word and for the slow pace of the process. Some MILF leaders even declared that they were losing faith in the government. The MNLF said that some MILF commanders were abandoning the group's party line and enrolling in the MNLF because they thought the peace process was headed for failure. Meanwhile, the government's negotiating team justified the delays in resuming the peace negotiations due to the consultations it was holding with representatives of both legislative chambers, including those elected in May. In June, the government finally announced that it would resume peace talks with the MILF in July to tackle the three outstanding points before a comprehensive peace agreement can be signed: power sharing, wealth redistribution and a return to normalcy ("normalisation"). One of the members of the government's negotiating team even said he was confident that the comprehensive agreement could be signed within two months. Finally, the United Nations' and World Bank's launch of a three-year programme to provide technical assistance during the transition process in Mindanao is worth mentioning, especially with regard to drafting the new Bangsamoro Basic Law and to supporting the Transition Commission and the government's and MILF's negotiating teams.

In late September, after the end of the 40th round of negotiations in Kuala Lumpur, the Philippine government and the armed group MILF announced the inclusion of the Italian religious group Community of Sant'Egidio into the International Contact Group and the beginning of the Independent Commission on Policing's work in mid-October, which will be led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Commission's recommendations will be sent to the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, which will assess whether or not it will be included in the future Bangsamoro Basic Law. In December, the government and the MILF signed a power-sharing agreement, one of the last issues pending in the negotiations to reach a global peace agreement. With the signing of this agreement, three of the four annexes of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro of late 2012 have been signed, leaving only negotiations over the so-called "normalisation" (which includes demobilisation of the MILF and the creation of a police force for Bangsamoro, the withdrawal of the Philippine Armed Forces from some regions, the eradication of criminal groups and the creation of mechanisms of transitional justice, among other things), issued that were solved in January 2014.

On March 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed. The agreement was described as historic because it culminated 17 years of negotiations and should bring to an end more than four decades of armed conflict in Mindanao. The agreement included the 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and its four annexes ("Revenue Generation

and Wealth Sharing", "Transitional Arrangements and Modalities", "Power Sharing" and "Normalization"), which had been gradually agreed to in talks since the end of 2012. It had been agreed that once the Philippine Parliament approved the Bangsamoro Basic Law, a referendum would be held during the first quarter of 2015 in the areas affected by the accord. Once the new law had been approved the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) would be abolished and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority would be appointed by the president to serve as the interim government until the 2016 elections. The new president and the Legislative Assembly for the new political entity (called Bangsamoro) will be chosen in these elections. This Assembly will elect the Chief Minister of Bangsamoro, who will in turn appoint the cabinet.

The MILF has already announced its intention to become a political party and participate in the elections. According to the CAB the new entity, Bangsamoro, will have an asymmetrical relationship with the central Government. It will guarantee the recognition of the identity of the Moro people and their aspirations for self-government. It will have control of a larger territory and have greater political and financial autonomy than the current ARMM, which had almost no capacity to levy taxes. Bangsamoro will have Islamic courts for the Muslim population, civil courts for non-Muslims and mechanisms and special courts to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples in the region. In terms of territory, Bangsamoro cover the present ARMM and incorporate the towns of Isabela and Cotabato, 6 municipalities in the province of Lanao del Norte and 39 barangay from the 6 municipalities in Cotabato.

In addition to reactivating the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum, the highlight of the second quarter was the meeting in Hiroshima (Japan) between Philippine President Benigno Aquino and MILF leader Murad Ebrahim. According to some sources the reason for the meeting was the MILF's concern over the delay in the approval by Congress of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which should have been passed by Congress in June. Also in April the MILF announced that it had practically completed the process to formalize the creation of a new party, the United Bangsamoro Justice Party, with the intention of participating in the elections scheduled for May 2016. According to the MILF the central committee of the group would play an important role in the party, but noted that candidates would be chosen through democratic channels and would not be appointed by this committee.

After several months of discussions and some disagreements between the Government and the MILF, on September 10, with a considerable delay with respect to the initial roadmap, President Benigno Aquino urgently sent to Congress the Bangsamoro Basic Law bill for review and approval. The approval of this law should lead to the establishment of a new entity in Mindanao (known as Bangsamoro) before the end of the current president's mandate in mid 2016. In this sense the MILF accused Manila of adopting a conservative and restrictive interpretation of the Constitution, while during the entire negotiating process the Government panel had sustained, according to the MILF, that it was flexible enough to accommodate all of the provisions of the peace agreement. Given this impasse the two sides, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, the International Contact Group and the Government of Malaysia acting as facilitator met in Kuala Lumpur in early July to address the differences between the Government and the MILF. In early August the negotiating panels of the MILF and the Government met for 10 days in Davao to discuss the substantial differences that surfaced in July.

Parallel to the discussion of the Bangsamoro Basic Law both parties decided to implement the provisions of the "Normalization" Annex. Both parties believed that the contents of the agreement should not be included in the Basic Law and did not require new legislation. Thus, in late September both panels met to establish the agencies and mechanisms to launch the process. First, the Joint Committee for Normalization, which will coordinate the overall normalization process and will be headed by a representative from the Government and another from MILF. Second, the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which will propose appropriate mechanisms to address the historical grievances of the Moro people and human rights violations, while simultaneously promoting reconciliation and peace building in the communities affected by the armed conflict. The Commission will be headed by Mo Bleeker (proposed by the Swiss

government at the request of the two peace panels) and will have one representative from the Government and one from the MILF. Third, the Joint Peace and Security Committee (JPSC), which will coordinate peace and security teams that will be created in the different communities, will act as an observer during the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from the area and the disappearance of private armed groups; finally the Independent Decommissioning Body, which will oversee the disarmament and demobilization of the MILF. It will be made up of four people from the Philippines and three from Brunei (Major Muhammad Aiman Syazwi Bin Haj Abdul Rahin), Turkey (Ambassador Haydar Berk) and Norway (Jan Erik Wilhemsen). The "decommissioning" and surrender of arms to the IDB by the MILF forces is a program that will run concurrently with the new Bangsamoro Basic Law and the creation of a new police force in the region, which will be part of the Philippine National Police. It will thus not begin to be implemented until 2015. One of the first steps in this process will be that the MILF must provide a list of weapons and fighters. Although the MILF has never revealed the size of its arsenal or the number of combatants, some estimates put it at about 10,000. The disarmament process would be gradual and will depend on the degree of compliance with the commitments in the March 27 peace agreement. The last weapons will be surrendered once all documents of the peace agreement are signed. It will not be necessary to surrender light weapons, but legalized them, since there is a long tradition in the Philippines of carrying handguns.

The peace process in 2015

The process between the government and the MILF experienced its worse crisis in recent years after around 70 people, 44 of them members of a special police force, died in the town of Mamasapano (Maguindanao province) in late January during a clash involving the MILF, the BIFF and other groups. Despite the fact that both parties asked that progress in the peace process not be affected by this episode, the first serious violation of the ceasefire agreement between the government and the MILF in recent years, both the government and the MILF admitted that trust had significantly deteriorated. In this sense, pressure against the president, the Congress and the government to paralyse or slow down approval of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was stepped up, and after the armed incident some Congress members even expressed their opposition to the bill. In late January, the joint Senate and House of Representatives committee that was debating this bill suspended its deliberations indefinitely until the events were clarified. However, in late March, after both the MILF and the Senate and police had submitted their respective reports on the violent episode, the president of that committee announced that the parliamentary process of the BBL would resume on the 13th of April; according to the peace agreement that the parties had signed in March 2014, the BBL should have been approved in late 2014 or early 2015 (the last date agreed upon was the 20th of March). According to some analysts, the uncertainty over the BBL might lead to delays in the referendum to ratify it and the voting to confirm the new government of Bangsamoro, which was slated to dovetail with the presidential elections in June 2016 to ensure that the peace agreement was implemented under the current president. In February thousands of people demonstrated in Mindanao to demand that Congress reconsider its decision to paralyse the process and to demand that the BBL be processed and thus further delays in its approval avoided. In February as well, the MILF leader sent a letter to Congress in which he asked that the new law not discard or dilute the main aspects of the March 2014 peace agreement. This letter also stated that the MILF understood that the agreements reached during the negotiation process at all times involved and required the commitment of not just the government but of all three state powers. In turn, the head of the government's negotiating panel, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, declared that she would rather the BBL not be approved than having it be approved with substantial changes compared to the peace agreement. It is worth noting that some parliamentarians asked the Presidential Councillor for the Peace Process, Teresita Quintos-Deles, and Miriam Coronel-Ferrer to resign based on the claim that they were partial towards the MILF.

Even though the episode of violence in Mamasapano endangered the continuation of the peace process, in late January both parties signed the MILF's disarmament and demobilisation protocol

on Malaysia, which was to be implemented in four phases and supervised by the International Decommissioning Body (IDB). It would be made up of the former Turkish ambassador to NATO and six other experts (four from the Philippines, one from Norway and another from Brunei). According to the protocol signed, 30% of the MILF's weapons would be turned in once the Bangsamoro Basic Law was ratified; another 35% would be turned in once the government of Bangsamoro and its new security forces had been established; and the remaining 35% once both parties agreed that all the commitments within the peace agreements had been fulfilled. The process was to begin with a symbolic ceremony in which 75 weapons were turned in by the MILF. The protocol also stipulated that the IDB would validate the MILF's list of its combatants and weapons, and that the weapons would be stored in warehouses whose whereabouts would not be made public.

In the southern Philippines, there were positive advances in the second quarter of the year, such as the start of the MILF's disarmament and the approval of a political party led by the armed group, yet there were also major delays and disagreements in the parliamentary proceedings of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (whose name had recently changed to the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region), the cornerstone of the peace process. In April, deliberations in the House of Representatives resumed after the impasse that led to an armed conflict in January in which 44 police officers died. In late May, the committee in the House which was in charge of processing the law approved it, including a clause which allowed the new political body of Bangsamoro to be expanded through a plebiscite in the regions that requested it. However, in early June the House of Representatives ignored the deadline for the approval of the law (11th of June) and postponed it until the month of September. In parallel, during the same quarter the Senate aired objections to the approval of the text as it believed that some of its precepts implied a constitutional reform, and in consequence it was agreed that the clause in question would be eliminated. Several times during the deliberation process in Mindanao there were demonstrations in favour of approval of the text, while the government asked the parliamentarians who were sceptical about the bill to support it. These delays might complicate the implementation calendar of the peace agreement, which was originally scheduled to dovetail with the end of the presidential term of Benigno Aquino in mid-2016. On the other hand, the Philippine Constitution Association filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court asking that both the Bangsamoro Framework Agreement signed in October 2013 and the Bangsamoro Global Agreement signed in March 2014 be declared unconstitutional as the association believed that they clearly violate some of the main precepts of the constitution, that they include concessions that overstep the competences of the president and that the government's negotiation panels conspired to force the reform of the constitution in order to accommodate the contents of both agreements. The government declared that it was willing to comply with any order from the Supreme Court and stated that it found the timing when the lawsuit was filed suspicious because so much time had passed since both texts had been approved.

On a positive note, in late May the United Bangsamoro Justice Party, created by the MILF, submitted a request for accreditation to the electoral authorities so that it could participate in the elections scheduled for 2016 in the region of Bangsamoro. The chief negotiator of the MILF, who was also president of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, Mohaqer Iqbal, declared that the MILF's intention was to become a humanitarian organisation that would promote implementation of some of the social and economic contents of the 2014 peace agreement. The governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, as well as other prominent political leaders, stated that the approval of the UBJP as a political party would be a huge step forward in the peace process. On the other hand, in mid-June the MILF's disarmament process got underway as it turned in 75 weapons, including mortars and rocket-launchers, and around 145 combatants were demobilised. Even though the MILF has not yet revealed how many combatants and weapons it has, the government estimates that it has at least 10,000 combatants. Both Benigno Aquino and the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, stressed the symbolism of the act beyond the number of weapons turned in, along with its importance in creating trust among the parties and progress in the implementation of the peace agreement. The top leaders of the negotiating panels and the bodies created to supervise implementation of the peace agreement concurred, including the Third

Party Monitoring Team and the Independent Decommissioning Body. Finally, worth noting are the two meetings held during the quarter by the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum, which allowed for the exchange and rapprochement of stances with the MNLF; presentations on the current status of the peace process by the MILF leader, Ebrahim Murad, during the 42nd Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC which was held in Kuwait in late May; as well as several MNLF factions' support of the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, albeit conditioned upon the version that the Congress ultimately approves.

In the third quarter, the MILF's unease grew considerably because of the difficulties, delays and future uncertainties regarding approval of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which formally came to be called the Basic Law on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BLBAR). In late September, the presidents of the House of Representatives and Senate announced the Parliament's intention to approve the BLBAR in mid-December. However, some analysts believed that the urgency and importance of the debate on the 2016 budgets, which usually takes place at the end of the year, along with the start of the campaigns for the May elections, meant that there was little time and leeway to approve the BLBAR, which has experienced numerous delays since it began to be processed in September 2014. In the same vein, during September some of the leading Congress members involved in the parliamentary discussions of the bill declared that it was dead. In addition to the difficulties regarding timing, in mid-September the MILF harshly criticised and rejected the BLBAR drafts written by both the Senate and the House of Representatives as they believed that they considerably diminished the contents of the Bangsamoro Framework Agreement and the Bangsamoro Global Agreement, and that they called for a level of self-governance which was even lower than the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), whose institutional design has been declared a failure even by the president himself, Benigno Aquino. Furthermore, the MILF warned that some of the modifications made to the original version of the BLBAR, which had been agreed to by the MILF and the government together, were clearly unconstitutional. In mid-August, the president of the Senate committee in charge of getting the BLBAR through the parliament declared that 80% of the contents of the original version of the law had been modified and that 115 amendments had been added. They were joined by the amendments approved previously by the House of Representatives committee. In the weeks prior to the drafting of the alternative versions of the law by the Senate and the House of Representatives, numerous lawmakers had vehemently opposed the approval of the BLBAR as they declared it as clearly unconstitutional. What is more, several parliamentarians expressed doubts about the sincerity of the MILF's offer to disarm and shared reports that stated that the MILF would still have several installations in the central part of Mindanao where it would manufacture firearms, munitions and explosives. However, the armed forces declared that they had conducted investigations on the ground and later publicly denied these reports.

In view of all these difficulties, in mid-September the MILF issued an official statement in which it declared that if the Congress ultimately approved a law that was substantially different in letter and spirit to the Bangsamoro Framework Agreement and the Bangsamoro Global Agreement, which had been approved respectively in 2013 and 2014, the MILF would stop turning in its weapons and demobilising its combatants, acts which had already begun symbolically in the month of June. The MILF also issued a veiled warning on the possibility that the failure to resolve the conflict in Mindanao would only reinforce the calls for secession in the region, and noted that the international community would hold the Philippine government responsible if war broke out again in Mindanao. Previously, the leader of the MILF, Ebrahim Murad, had declared that if the BLBAR was not approved, the possibilities of radicalisation in Mindanao would increase, while he also admitted that he could not ensure his control over all the armed groups that were opposed to the peace process. Along the same lines, the MILF also announced that it was under a great deal of pressure to leave the pathway of negotiation and that it viewed approval of the BLBAR impossible. Despite all these warnings from the MILF, in late September Ebrahim Murad expressed his optimism regarding the future of the peace process because of the commitment that the president and the political forces near him had repeatedly expressed along with the support for a dialogued end to the conflict from the international community and particularly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Murad also stated that approval of the BLBAR was not

the only important aspects of the peace process in recent years and asked that the importance of the agreement reached in 2014 and the reduction in violence to practically nothing in the past three years be considered as well. In turn, the government negotiation panel also expressed its conviction that despite the difficulties and delays, the BLBAR would end up being approved.

In October, the main leaders of the MILF and MRLF signed a joint declaration in which they rejected the approval of a diluted version of the Basic Law on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BLBAR) and asked the Parliament to approve a law that was in line with what the MILF and government had originally agreed upon, which contained fundamental aspects of the peace agreement signed in 2014.

NPA/NDF

Background to the peace process

With regard to the NPA, it has been negotiating with the government since 1986 via the National Democratic Front (NDF); the negotiations were launched in the Netherlands in 1986. Since 2009, they have been facilitated by Norway, and they seek structural changes on the political, social and economic fronts. In 1992, new talks were held with the government in the Netherlands, at which a four-point agreement was defined, The Hague Joint Declaration on human rights and international humanitarian law, social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and disarmament. In 1993, talks were held in Hanoi and again in 1994 in the Netherlands. In 1995 the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) was reached, which granted immunity to around 100 people with ties to the negotiation process. In 1997 a thematic agenda to be negotiated was established, which allowed the negotiating teams to reach a Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) in 1998. However, this agreement was not validated by the president of the country. In 2004, the government held a meeting in Oslo with NPA delegates, and both parties agreed to establish a joint committee charged with supervising implementation of the human rights agreements. In 2005, the negotiations were broken off, and in 2008 the government and the NDF agreed to meet again and reactivate the joint committee to supervise human rights and international humanitarian law after a three year hiatus. Since then, this committee has met several times. The government and the NDF have expressed their satisfaction with the agreements reached during the first round of formal negotiations held in Oslo between the 15th and 21st of February 2011 with the facilitation of the Norwegian government. The parties reaffirmed their commitment to the agreements signed between 1992 and 2004; they established a calendar of meetings of constitutional groups and of signing agreements (the agreement on social and economic reforms, the agreement on political and constitutional reforms, and the agreement on the cessation of hostilities), and they re-established the joint committee to supervise the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). In June, the NDF's negotiating panel suggested that the round of peace talks scheduled for that same month should be postponed until the government released 17 NDF consultants who, according to the organisation, should be protected under the JASIG.

In May 2012, the NPA and its political wing, the NDF, expressed its willingness to resume peace talks with the government. One of the consultants to the NDF's negotiating team, Edre Olalia, declared that the NDF had proposed a special track to the government (called the Proposal for Alliance and Peace) aimed at streamlining and complementing the negotiating process that both parties had agreed on in early 2011. Some elements in the NDF's proposal included strengthening national independence and promoting industrial development, implementing agricultural reform and signing a truce leading to a lasting peace. Olalia also declared that in October the government sent an emissary of President Benigno Aquino to the Netherlands to talk with the leadership of the NDF, for which he expressed some hope that the dialogue could be resumed in the short or medium term. In December, the head of the government's negotiating team, Alex Padilla, publicly voiced his optimism about the possible resumption and the future of

the peace process. Days before, special government representatives met in The Hague (Netherlands) with members of the NDF's leadership. The governmental delegation was led by the President's political advisor Ronald Llamas, while the NDF's delegation was headed by the leader and founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), Jose Maria Sison. The meeting was facilitated by Norwegian Ambassador Ture Lundh. During the meeting, the NDF said that both parties had agreed to talk about agricultural reform, development, industrialisation, democracy, human rights, national independence and peace.

During 2013 there was no major progress. The talks scheduled for February, which had to be hosted by the Norwegian Government, did not take place because an NDF consultant, Kennedy Bangibang, was arrested. For its part, the NDF accused the Government of boycotting what was supposed to be a historic meeting between the leader of the communist movement, José Maria Sison, and President Benigno Aquino, because it refused to release the NDF consultants and had not complied with its plan for a simultaneous, unilateral and indefinite ceasefire. According to the Government the NDF had imposed unacceptable conditions. In the second quarter the peace process continued at a standstill after the Government decided that the formal negotiations with the NDF, which had been suspended since February 2011, had concluded. The so-called special track, that both parties had agreed to in an attempt to restart the stalled dialog, had also been at a standstill since early 2013. Thus, in June the person that had until then been the head of the government negotiating panel with the NDF, Alex Padilla, was appointed by the Government as president of PhilHealth, a public company in the health sector. Manila stated that the appointment did not mean that the Government was no longer interested in negotiations with the NDF. In this sense, both President Benigno Aquino and the presidential advisor for the peace process, Teresita Quintos-Deles, said that they were working on a new approach to try to resolve the conflict through dialogue, but to date no additional details were provided.

During the third quarter some encouraging events took place, such as demonstrations in favour of resuming the peace talks, several statements by the Government saying it was willing to resume the talks if certain conditions were met, or confirmation by the facilitator of the talks, the Norwegian ambassador Ture Lundh, that the peace process had not ended and it could be restarted during President Benigno Aquino's current mandate, which ends in 2016. In September the head of the government negotiating panel, Alex Padilla, said he was willing to resume the negotiating process if the NDF, in addition to having a clear agenda to negotiate the end of violence and facilitate a peace agreement, showed signs of goodwill and sincerity. Padilla also defended the need for a new negotiating framework to restart the talks. Sometime later, about mid-month, Padilla stated his willingness to recommend the release of some NDF consultants, but always according to the laws of the country. The special track was proposed by the NDF to speed up the progress of the peace talks, and would take place in parallel to the official conversations between the negotiating panels of the Government and the NDF. This proposal included the creation of a national Committee for National Unity, Peace and Development to carry out a program of land reform, rural development and industrialization. The implementation of this agreement would open the possibility of signing a ceasefire agreement. However, both the formal negotiations and the special track were unsuccessful.

In the first few months of the 2014, the peace process between the Philippine government and the NDF continued at a standstill, although some statements were issued which indicated a possible resumption of peace talks. For its part, one of the top NDF leaders in exile, Luis Jalandoni, expressed the group's willingness to hold informal discussions or consultations with the Government in May. The head of the government negotiating panel, Alex Padilla, accused the NDF accepting the dialogue only after the arrest became public of the two main leaders of the CPP and the NPA in the field, Benito Tiamzon and his wife Wilma Austria. In the second quarter, the NDF regretted that the Government considered finalized both the official talks and the so-called "special track" that had been established in parallel to the official negotiations to unblock the peace process as something that had come to an end. According to the NDF, the Government's new approach was to continue the process through "local peace talks", with the aim

of getting the NPA to surrender. In this sense, the NDF issued a document with a number of proposals for restarting talks (including a six-month timeframe to complete the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms, one of the four topics from the agenda accepted by the parties in the early nineties) and suggested an informal meeting between the two, with the facilitation of Norway, to resume peace talks.

In the third quarter, the Norwegian Government, meanwhile, changed its team in the negotiations with the NDF, with Elisabeth Slattum taking over as head. She and Espen Lindbaeck, deputy director of the Peace and Reconciliation Section of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, participated in the round of negotiations held on October 18 in Utrecht (Netherlands). In this round the NDF said that the agreements signed in previous years needed to be ratified.

In December important developments took place. First, the leader of the NDFP, Jose Maria Sison "Joma", said that the negotiations could begin again in mid-January 2015, after Pope Francis' visit to the Philippines. The talks could take place in Oslo or even Hanoi (Vietnam), which would give a more Asian "varnish" to the negotiations, although he reiterated the "precondition" that the group's detained "consultants" must be released. The Philippine Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process, Teresita Deles, said in turn that she had received many requests to resume the peace process with the NDF and to do so using other methodologies. She also said that the old list of NDF "consultants" should be updated, the "aliases" eliminated, and the JASIG agreement should be revised to bring it up to date. At the end of the year the Philippine Government appointed former Congressman Hernani Braganza as an "emissary" with the group. Braganza visited a NDF camp where he met with Fidel Agcaoli, a prominent member of the Front's negotiating panel. The group declared a 13-day ceasefire in Surigao del Norte until January 19, in addition to the 10-day ceasefire declared earlier for the entire national territory, provided that the Armed Forces and the police do not launch offensive actions. The Philippine Armed Forces had already declared a ceasefire for Christmas and for Pope Francis' visit to the Philippines in January. The Government stated that if an agreement were reached to resume talks and both parties show political will, chances were good that a meeting between the president and Sison could take place, just as the NDF leader had requested on several occasions. At the end of the year the Philippine Government had not yet named the new person who would head the negotiations with the NDF.

The peace process in 2015

In the first quarter, both parties showed their willingness to resume the peace talks, although each set their own conditions and both the government and the NDF expressed their scepticism about the chances of reaching a global agreement before the end of the current president's mandate in mid-2016. After several months of discreet arrangements by government emissaries (primarily the former peace negotiators Silvestre Bello and Hernani Braganza), in late 2014 the leader and founder of the NPA, Jose María Sison, publicly declared that the negotiations might resume after the visit by Pope Francis in mid-January, and he once again expressed his wish to meet directly with the president, Benigno Aquino. Both the Presidential Councillor for the Peace Process, Teresita Quintos-Deles, and the government spokesman declared that any resumption of the talks must include a feasible negotiation agenda that is limited in time in order to avoid past mistakes. Quintos-Deles also declared that no meeting between Aquino and Sison was planned, and that whether or not such a meeting was held would hinge upon the resumption of the peace talks. Other members of the government questioned the NDF's sincerity and political will regarding the negotiations. In turn, the NDF demanded the release of 500 political prisoners and consultants from the group. Even though Sison had postponed the resumption of the negotiations until after the 2016 elections, this time he stated that he believed it would be feasible to achieve an agreement on social and economic reforms and a truce and cooperation agreement before the end of Aquino's mandate.

In turn, in mid-January some media reported that the government intended to appoint General Emmanuel Bautista, former head of the armed forces, as the chief of the negotiating panel. The

NDF expressed its reservations with this appointment as they believed that Bautista was the driving force behind the current counterinsurgency strategy, which combined military pressure with the promotion of development policies in the NPA's area of influence. In this sense, in late March a senior army officer declared that the government pressure was working as intended so the NPA was being left without members and was increasingly isolated from its traditional bases of support, such that its only alternative to becoming an irrelevant armed organisation was to embark upon a dialogue process with the government. Despite the fact that many of the statements issued by both parties in late 2014 and early 2015 seemed to indicate a certain willingness to resume talks, and that some journalistic sources even claimed that an informal meeting was planned between Bautista and the NDF panel in February, the political crisis that caused the death of 44 police officers during a clash with the MILF and the BIFF in late January tempered some of the expectations. The government ultimately did not appoint Bautista chief of the negotiating panel and the NDF published criticisms of Aquino and expressed greater reluctance about the possibility of achieving significant agreements during his mandate.

During the second quarter, exploratory or formal talks were not resumed, but both parties did express their willingness to talk several times. In early April, the government received a report from an informal negotiation team led by the former Minister of Agriculture, Hernani Braganza, who had been engaged in exploratory talks with the NDF to test the possibilities of a possible resumption of peace talks. In December 2014, these talks were publicised, and they were also confirmed by the leader and founder of the NPA, Jose Maria Sison. Sison declared to the press that in February 2015 he made a proposal to address the three substantive topics of the negotiating agenda (economic and social reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and the end of the conflict and rearrangement of forces) during an 18-month period, six months for each point. According to sources near the government, Manila believed that there is not enough time to reach a comprehensive agreement with the NDF before the end of Aquino's term in mid-2016, but that substantial headway could be made in the negotiation agenda. Dovetailing with the submission of this report, the House of Representatives assigned a special committee to study the possibilities of resuming the peace talks. In turn, the chief negotiator of the NDF, Luis Jalandoni, currently in the Philippines, declared his willingness to talk and stated that in the past few months he had taken several measures to foster trust, such as the release of some war prisoners. A few days later, in mid-April, the head of the armed forces declared its support for the government's attempts to relaunch the talks with the NDF, but it also asked the NDF to negotiate sincerely and the NPF to put an end to practices such as extortion, abductions and attacks with explosives detonated remotely. In the same vein, the head of the Presidential Office for the Peace Process, Teresita Quintos-Deles, also asked the NPA not to harass civilians or unarmed soldiers who were not in active service.

The climate for resuming the talks became rarefied in late April when Jalandoni, still in the Philippines, reiterated his willingness to dialogue as long as the government released 16 NDF consultants who, he claimed, were covered by the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), as well as around 200 political prisoners, prioritising the elderly, the ill or those who had served sentences longer than four years. In mid-May, President Benigno Aquino publicly declared his willingness to resume the talks, but he asked the NDF to show sincerity in the negotiations and accused the group of making demands that were impossible for the government to act on, especially regarding the release of consultants and political prisoners. The NDF reacted by declaring that Aquino was sabotaging any effort to resume the talks and accused the government of violating several of the agreements signed to date. The NDF also discarded any chances of signing a cessation of hostilities agreement if the government did not previously start structural reforms or if agreements were not reached on some of the points in the substantive agenda. In early June, Sison once again harshly criticised the government after Luis Jalandoni received a court citation for his presumed responsibility for the kidnapping and illegal retention of four police officers in Mindanao in July 2014 and after one of the top leaders of the NPA, Adelberto Silva, was arrested, as the NDF considered he was covered by the JASIG. Despite this, Sison declared that both he and Jalandoni had recommended that the NDF's National Executive Committee authorise the start of exploratory talks in Oslo and expressed appreciation for the

facilitation role being played by the government of Norway. In turn, in late June the government spokesman declared its willingness to explore the resumption of formal talks, even though later a member of the negotiating panel explained that this would only be possible if the NDF abandoned its preconditions.

In the third quarter, the talks were not resumed, nor was there any convergence of positions. The most meaningful development during this period was probably the meeting in Amsterdam in mid-July between the president of the House of Representatives, Feliciano Belmonte, and a 10-person delegation from the NDF led by the founder of the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, and the chief of the NDF's negotiating panel, Luis Jalandoni. Even though Belmonte had no authority to negotiate on behalf of the government, both parties and the government considered the meeting positive, and Belmonte described it as a trust-building measure and a step in the right direction towards the resumption of peace talks. According to Belmonte, who was accompanied in the meeting by other senior parliamentarians, during the formal meeting Sison said that the NDF had expressed its willingness to resume the talks to the government but that it had not yet received a response from Manila. A few days after the meeting in Amsterdam, the head of the Presidential Office for the Peace Process, Teresita Deles, declared that the government's desire to resume the peace talks depended on their being feasible and limited in time and that the NDF must place no preconditions on the talks, in clear reference to the NDF's demand to release several of the group's consultants and political prisoners. In this sense, Deles stated that she believed that it was premature to discuss possible prisoner releases without any knowledge of the conditions under which the talks would resume. A few days after this meeting in Amsterdam, the new head of the armed forces, Hernando Iriberry, expressed his support for any negotiation effort launched by the government. However, some senior officials in the army declared that the NPA's position regarding a potential negotiation process was not sincere. In late July, the Ecumenical Bishops' Forum issued a statement saying that there was still enough time to achieve a peace agreement during the last few months of the mandate of the current president, Benigno Aquino.

In turn, in early August the head of the NDF's negotiating panel, Luis Jalandoni, declared that the responsibility and initiative for a potential resumption of the talks befell the president, Benigno Aquino, whom he accused of failing to respect the agreements reached during the negotiations in recent decades. Along the same lines, Jose Maria Sison accused Teresita Deles and the government as a whole of sabotaging the peace process. Finally, worth noting are the statements issued in early September by the current vice president and presidential candidate in the 2016 elections, Jejomar Binay, in which he pledged to address the deep-seated causes of the armed conflict, including poverty, inequality and injustice. Another person whom several media outlets reported might run in the presidential elections, the current mayor of Davao, Rodrigo Duterte, also declared that the next president had to address the underlying structural problems which gave rise to the armed conflict between the state and the NPA, the armed branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

MNLF

Background to the peace process

With regard to the MNLF, which reached a peace agreement with the government in 1996, in 2007 it reached significant agreements on the application of all the provisions in the 1996 agreement in which it set up five working groups: Sharia and the legal system, security forces, natural resources and economic development, political system and representation, and education. Since 1996, there have been negotiations to implement the agreements signed that year. In May 2010, the government and the MNLF signed a memorandum of understanding in Tripoli, Libya, in order to resolve the issues that had been standing in the way of full implementation of the peace agreement reached in 1996. In November 2011, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), through its Committee for Peace in the South Philippines, started contacts

with the government and the MNLF to resolve the three pending issues in the negotiations in order to fully implement the 1996 peace agreement, which had also been facilitated by the OIC. The three aspects on which no agreement had yet been reached were the division of strategic minerals, the establishment of a provisional government (according to the MNLF, the government did not implement the establishment of a transitional mechanism as called for in the 1996 agreement) and holding a plebiscite to expand the territorial base of the ARMM.

In June 2012, the Philippine government and the MNLF created a 42-point list of agreement during the tripartite review of the 1996 accord, in which the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also participated. However, after the framework agreement between the government and the MILF was unveiled, the leader and founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, declared that the agreement was illegal and could lead to the resumption of armed conflict in Mindanao. In October, during the third round of informal talks held in Davao, the MILF and the MNLF agreed on the creation of a unity committee and an ad hoc joint secretariat to discuss aspects concerning both of them and to promote a joint agenda.

In July 2013 the MNLF announced that negotiations with the Government to fully implement the peace agreement of 1996 were resuming. The talks began again shortly after the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which had already acted to facilitate the 1996 agreement, urge the Government of the Philippines to synchronize and harmonize the negotiations with the MNLF and the Bangsamoro Framework Agreement signed in 2012 between Manila and the MILF. The MNLF declared that it did not see any conflict between the two negotiating frameworks because both were trying to solve the problems of the Moro people, but warned that if an agreement with the Philippine Government is not reached it would ask the OIC to raise the issue at the United Nations.

Serious clashes in September between the Philippine Armed Forces and the MNLF faction led by Nur Misuari interrupted the peace negotiations and brought them what could probably be called a complete halt. The talks had been at a standstill in recent quarters due to Nur Misuari's opposition to the negotiation process between the Government and the MILF. Manila had informed the Indonesian Government on several occasions of its intention to bring to a close the process of revising the 1996 peace agreement and to launch the implementation phase of the different agreements that had been signed since the beginning of the process in 2007. According to the Government, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation's Peace Committee for Southern Philippines shared this diagnosis.

One of the most important events during the first quarter 2014 was the announcement by a faction of the MNLF that Nur Misuari had been dismissed as chairman of the MNLF Central Committee. The Vice President, Abul Khayr Alonto, one of the founders of the MNLF and former president of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had been designated as his successor. According to Alonto, this decision had been supported by 33 of the 39 founders of the MNLF who remain alive (another 51 have died), by the majority of party members and even by the OIC. In one of his first statements Alonto said that the MNLF would support the adoption of the Bangsamoro Basic Law in a referendum, he called for the unity of the Moro people, he announced his readiness to accept an amendment to the Constitution if it were necessary to accommodate the recent agreement between the Government and the MILF and he expressed his commitment to defend the positions of the MNLF in a peaceful and democratic manner. However, a few days after the announcement, Misuari sent a message to the OIC, the EU and the UN stating that he was the leader and founder of the MNLF. Similarly, a spokesman for Misuari said he was unaware of the decision to proclaim Alonto as president of the MNLF; he accused the Government of trying to divide the Moro people and harshly criticized Alonto of collusion with the Philippine government to guarantee himself positions of power in the future new Bangsamoro entity. He also denied that Alonto had the support of the OIC and stated that the organization's new secretary general had even met recently with Nur Misuari. Finally, the Government made public that it had invited 20 representatives from the three factions of the

MNLF (led by Misuari, Alonto and Sema) to attend the peace agreement signing ceremony between the Government and the MILF.

The highlight of the second quarter was the reunification of three of the four factions of the MNLF under the leadership of the group's founder, Nur Misuari, who was wanted for his alleged role in the spiral of violence that took place in the city of Zamboanga in late 2013. The reunification of three factions (one led by Misuari, one by Habib Mudjahab Hashim from the MNLF Islamic Council, and one by Muslimin Sema, former mayor of Cotabato, on behalf of the so-called "Committee of 15") was held in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) in mid-June and was sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which held its 41st Council of Foreign Ministers a few days later. Besides agreeing to reunification and recognizing Misuari as leader, the three factions also agreed to reject the comprehensive peace agreement signed in March between the Government and the MILF. In this sense, the only faction of the MNLF that did not share this opinion and had expressed explicit support for the peace agreement between the Government and the MILF was the one led by Abul Khayr Alonto, one of the founders of the MNLF. Alonto is a former president of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and vice chairman of the Central Committee of the MNLF until his recent unilateral appointment as president when he replaced Misuari. The position of the three MNLF factions generally coincided with the official view made public by the OIC several days later at the end of the conference. Thus, the OIC considered that the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro did not sufficiently recognize or take into account the previous agreements between the Philippine government and the MNLF, the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 Final Peace Agreement. In this sense, the OIC called on the MILF, the Government and the MNLF to work together to achieve greater linkage and integration between these three agreements since, according to the OIC, they contain similar and fully compatible goals.

Also of note was the agreement, in Jeddah, under the auspices of the OIC, between the MNLF and the MILF to revive the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum, a body created in 2010 but thus far practically inoperative due to a series of differences between the two groups. With regard to the OIC's lack of recognition of the Global Agreement on Bangsamoro and the call to integrate the different peace agreements, the Government said it was open to including in the Bangsamoro Basic Law the most important aspects of the 1976 and 1996 accords. However, it refused to consider one of the main points in both agreements –holding a referendum in the 13 provinces of Mindanao to approve or reject their inclusion in the future Bangsamoro region since it believed that this commitment had already been fulfilled in the 2001 referendum.

The peace process in 2015

Even though the whereabouts of its founder, Nur Misuari, was still unknown, during the first quarter several diplomatic efforts were made by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to foster a rapprochement between the MILF and the MNLF and the possibility of resuming tripartite talks between the Philippine government, the MNLF and the OIC on full implementation of the 1996 peace agreement, talks which had been on hiatus for several months. In late April, the secretary general of the OIC, Iyad Ameen Mandani, visited Mindanao and presided over a meeting of the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum, the body created by the OIC to bring the positions of the MILF and MNLF closer together and to harmonise the contents of the peace agreements that the government of the Philippines signed with the MNLF in 1996 and the MILF in 2014. At this meeting, which was attended by 12 representatives from each organisation, it was agreed to establish a permanent secretariat (with three members from each organisation) headquartered in Cotabato, which would receive technical and economic support from the OIC. In October 2014, the Terms of Reference of this organisation were agreed upon. On his visit, the first by a secretary general of the OIC, Iyad Ameen Mandani also met with members of the government and parliament, expressed his support for the current peace process between the government and the MILF and explicitly asked the committee in charge of getting the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region through Parliament to include the MNLF in its

deliberations, a request which was satisfactorily received by the president of that committee. In fact, in mid-May the leader of one of the factions of the MNLF, Datuy Abul Kahyr Alonto, participated in one of these meetings and expressed his support for the Parliament's approval of the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. However, Alonto also stated that the current draft includes a low percentage of the provisions from the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro and sketched out several options through which Mindanao could gain its independence.

The OIC also invited members of the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum to its 42nd Council of Foreign Ministers held in late May in Kuwait, where the leader of the MILF, Ebrahim Murad, made a speech on the current status of the peace process. Some sectors of the MNLF had previously expressed their opposition to Murad's presence at the meeting as they believed that the MILF did not have the status of observing member (as the MNLF does), but the OIC stated that those attending the meeting were doing so as members of the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum, who took advantage of the occasion to hold yet another meeting with the OIC's special envoy for the southern Philippines, Sayed El-Masry, in the presence of a representative of the OPAPP. After that meeting, the leader of the majority MNLF faction, Muslimin Sema, declared that the OIC had expressed its concurrence with the resumption of tripartite talks for the full implementation of the 1996 peace agreement. Likewise, Sema also declared that his faction would support the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region as long as it entailed an advance over the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The leader of another faction, Alonto, also expressed his support of this law and asked the Moro people to be patient until a definitive version of the law was reached.

Worth noting was the meeting held in Makati in early September between the representatives of the government, the MNLF and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (through its Peace in the Southern Philippines Committee) to prepare for the formal tripartite meeting scheduled for November in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). According to the government, at this meeting in Makati the parties had agreed that the agenda of the meeting in Jeddah would include topics like the joint management of strategic minerals, socioeconomic issues like the functioning of the Bangsamoro Development Assistance Fund and the Islamic Development Bank, and tripartite supervision of the implementation of the agreements reached during the process of revising the 1996 peace agreement between Manila and the MNLF. In the weeks leading up to this meeting in Makati, the MNLF had stressed the need to jointly evaluate the 42 consensus points which had been achieved in the successive meetings since the revision process got underway in 2007 with the goal of determining which of them could be implemented. In this sense, the government stated that the advances and consensuses that had been reached in the 1976 and 1996 peace agreements (with the MNLF) and the 2014 peace agreement (with the MILF) should be preserved in the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which was currently going through the Parliament. However, in recent years some of the leading MNLF factions had expressed fears that implementation of the peace agreement with the MILF, which included the eliminating of the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in order to replace it with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, could lead to the de facto neutralisation of the 1996 peace agreement. What is more, other sectors of the MNLF believed that the version of the BBL suggested by both houses of the Parliament included levels of self-governance lower than the current ARMM and did not explicitly mention the inclusion in the law of the consensus points that Manila and the MNLF had reached since 2007. Likewise, in late September, the MNLF offered to help the government to achieve the release of four people (two of them Canadian, another Norwegian and a Philippine) who had been kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf on an island near Davao (Mindanao). According to some sources, the MNLF had asked the founder of the group, Nur Misuari, currently under a search-and-capture warrant, to wield his influence in the region of Parang (Sulu) to achieve the release of these people. According to the same sources, Misuari had asked the armed forces to scale down the intensity of their operations in the region in order to prevent members of the MNLF deployed in the region from being caught in the crossfire. Journalistic sources also reported that the mayor of Davao and presidential candidate Jesus Dureza played a crucial role in convincing Misuari to participate in this matter.

Most significant events of the year

- MILF initiated its disarmament and the registration of a political party led by the armed group, but at the same time there were major delays and disagreements in the passage through parliament of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (which recently changed its name to the Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region-BLBAR).
- The MILF severely criticised and rejected both the draft of the BLBAR prepared by the Senate and that from the House of Representatives, considering that they significantly downgraded the contents of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, and that they offered an even lower degree of self-government than afforded by the existing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).
- The MILF issued an official statement which stated that if the Congress finally passed a law that strayed substantially from the letter and spirit of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, adopted respectively in 2012 and 2014, the MILF would end the handing in of weapons and the demobilisation of combatants, which had already begun symbolically in June.
- The top leadership of the MILF met with the UN Resident Coordinator in the Philippines and asked for the support of his organisation on issues related to the disarmament and demobilisation of the MILF.
- Manila considered that there was not sufficient time to achieve a comprehensive agreement with the NDF before the end of Aquino's mandate in mid 2016, but that it was possible to achieve substantial progress on the negotiating agenda.
- The Philippine Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Teresita Deles, declared that she had received many requests to resume the peace process with the NDF and to do so from different methodological parameters. She was also in favour of updating the old list of NDF "consultants", eliminating the "alias" and revising the JASIG agreement to make it more up to date.
- Deles demanded that the NDF should not lay preconditions for the resumption of negotiations.
- Sectors within the MNLF considered that the versions of the BBL suggested by the two houses of Parliament implied lower levels of self-government than those of the current ARMM and did not explicitly mention the incorporation into law of the points of consensus that Manila and the MNLF have gradually been reaching since 2007.
- Some MILF representatives met with the founder of the MNLF and the current leader of one of its factions, Nur Misuari.

Causes of crises during the year

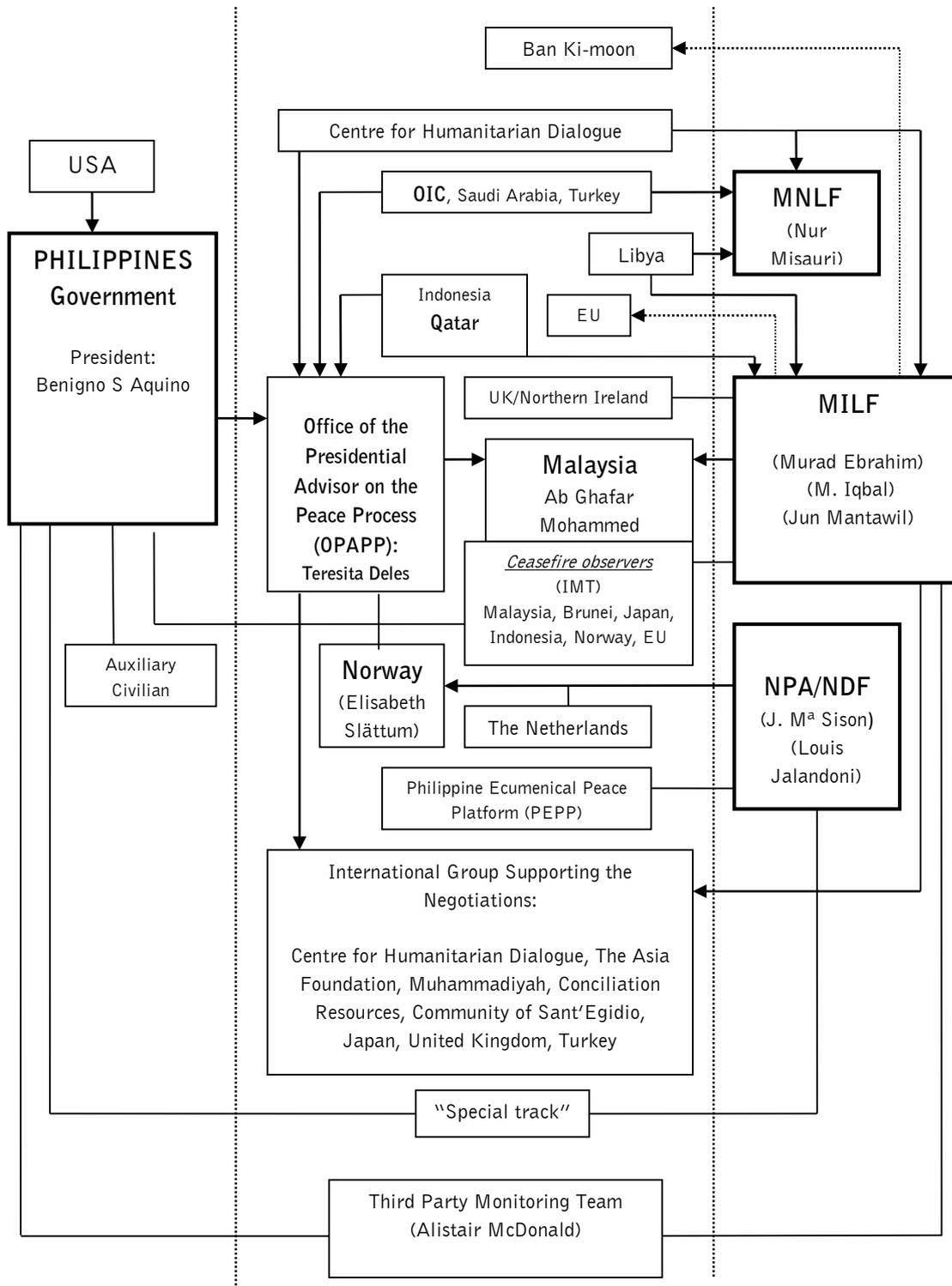
- In January, about 70 people, including 44 members of a special police corps, were killed in the town of Mamasapano (province of Maguindanao) during a clash in which, among others, the MILF and the BIFF were involved.
- There was increasing pressure on the President, Congress and the Government to halt or slow down the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).
- The Senate objected to the adoption of the text on the grounds that some of its provisions implied a constitutional amendment.
- The MILF severely criticised and rejected the draft of the BLBAR prepared by the Senate and also that of the House of Representatives, considering that they significantly downgraded the contents of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, and that they offered a level of self-government that was even less than that of the existing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

- The threat by the MILF to suspend its ceasefire and disarmament.
- Members of the Government questioned the sincerity and political will of the NDF with respect to the negotiations.
- The NDF reiterated its willingness to talk provided the government freed 16 NDF consultants that the organisation claims are covered by the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), as well as about 200 political prisoners.
- The NDF accused the government of violating several of the agreements signed so far and ruled out any possibility of signing an agreement on the cessation of hostilities if the government did not previously initiate structural reforms or reach agreement on some of the points of the substantive agenda.
- Charges were filed against the head of the NDF negotiating team for his alleged role in the kidnapping and illegal detention of four police officers in Mindanao in July 2014, following the arrest of one of the top leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Adelberto Silva, who the NDF considered to be covered by the JASIG.

Websites of interest

- Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives (peacebuilding.asia)
- Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (www.hdcentre.org)
- MILF (www.luwaran.com)
- MNLFF (mnlffnet.com)
- NDF (www.ndfp.net)
- NPA (www.philippinerevolution.org)
- OCI (www.oic-oci.org)
- OPAPP (www.opapp.gov.ph)
- (peacetalkphilippines.wordpress.com)
- Rappler (www.rappler.com/nation)
- www.mindanao.news
- www.philnews.com
- www.theworldpress.com/press/philippinespress.htm

Main parties involved in the process



Space of intermediation

THAILAND (south)

Context of the conflict

The insurgency in southern Thailand is centred in the regions of Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala. The region of Pattani (or Patani in Malay), which borders on Malaysia, is populated by Muslims (Islam reached the region in the 15th century), while Buddhists are the majority in the rest of Thailand. The Kingdom of Siam exercised sovereignty over this region since the 16th century, until the British colonial administration forced the king of Siam to transfer the sovereignty of his land to the United Kingdom in 1909, with the exception of Pattani, which remained under Siamese dominion. During the 20th century, the region was progressively Thailandised, although it has conserved its different religion (Islam) and its own language (Yawi). In 1939, Siam changed its name to Thailand. The region of Pattani is one of the poorest in the country. Even though at least 80% of the population is Muslim, 90% of the public administration positions, including the police and the army, are held by Buddhists. The conflict with the southern regions is linked to the country's centralism and the fact that the representatives in the south receive no recognition. Thus, a significant part of society is demanding a "National Dialogue", similar to other countries.

Population: Thailand (67,2 million); South (2 million)
Area: Thailand (513,000 km ²); South (11,000 Km ²)
HDI Thailand: 93 (of 188)
GDP PPA Thailand: 1,006,886 million USD
Per capita income Thailand: \$5,780 USD
Deaths: 6,000 since 2004
Armed actors: Mara Patani
Facilitators: Malaysia,

In 1968 the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) was founded by Bira Kotanila, exiled in Syria and it has also been led by K. Abdul Rahman, the an armed faction named PULA, whose purpose was to achieve independence in the region of Pattani, offering continuity to the struggles of the ancient Malay sultanates occupied by Siam (currently Thailand). The PULO has its overseas office in Sweden. It embarked on an active period of guerrilla activities between 1976 and 1981, after which is entered into a long period of decline due to military repression, the amnesties granted by the Thai government and the hurdles placed by Malaysia for the PULO rearguard to act on its soil. In 1989, PULO and three other organisations (Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), founded in 1960; the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP) and the Mujahideen Pattani (GMIP), founded in 1986), joined together in an umbrella organisation called Bersatu or the Council of the Muslim People of Patani. In 1995, the PULO suffered from dissidence, and the New PULO was created, which also joined Bersatu. At present PULO has three factions. In 2001, there was another outburst of activities by these separatist groups, with several massacres in the ensuing years, especially in 2004, resulting in a total of 3,000 deaths since then. In 2013, trading activity was concentrated in the talks with Bersatu. Since then there have been three negotiating channels: track 1, the official channel; track 2, with members of civil society, especially business and church leaders; and track 3, with grassroots groups.

Background to the peace process

The attempts to negotiate with insurgent groups in the south of the country have been thwarted several times by the anonymity of many of their leaders. In 2004, however, the government contacted Wan A. Kadir Che Man, one of the Bersatu leaders exiled in Malaysia, who had expressed his willingness to engage in negotiations with the government on some type of autonomy for the region. However, the attempt did not meet with much success due to Wan A. Kadir's inability to stop the ongoing violence. Later, several Bersatu leaders, such as its spokesperson, K. Makhota, expressed their interest in undertaking a negotiating process similar to the one that was taking place in Indonesia (Aceh) and the Philippines (Mindanao) to reach either autonomy or the status of "special administrative region" as held by the island of Phuket, also located in the south of Thailand.

In early 2005, the Thai government created the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), initially led by former prime minister Anand Panyarachun. The goal of the NRC was to achieve peace in the south of the country. Mid-year, the NRC submitted a report in which it recommended introducing Islamic law in the region, accepting Yawi as a working language in the region, establishing a disarmed peacekeeping force and setting up a strategic administrative centre for peace in the southern provinces. In mid-September, however, a faction of the Thai army perpetrated a coup that brought down the prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, when he was in New York. The coup leaders gathered together in the self-proclaimed Council for Political Reform and were legitimised by the king, Bhumidol Aduyadej. According to its authors, the non-violent coup was prompted by the need to put an end to the climate of government corruption and the social division that were being created amongst the Thai people. The goal of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Sonthi Boonyarataglin, was to embark on talks with the separatist rebel leaders in the south of the country. In October, he confirmed that representatives of several armed opposition groups operating in the south, including the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and Bersatu, had got in touch with the armed forces with the intention of starting talks, which it agreed to. He also underscored the fact that these were talks, not negotiations, while also acknowledging the need for a political dialogue to put an end to the conflict. These declarations were issued after the prime minister appointed by the military coup masterminds, Surayud Chulanot, had set resolution to the conflict in the south of the country as one of his top priorities and had apologised for the excesses committed by the state. Before the coup, the current prime minister and the armed forces and the NRC had all publicly expressed their preference for a negotiated solution, in clear opposition to the posture of the deposed prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, who had opted for a police strategy that triggered an escalation in the violence. However, by 16th September, the armed forces that had perpetrated the coup had already issued a truce "signal" via their Security Centre when holding a peace seminar in the central mosque of Yala (south). Likewise, the new government expressed its intention to reinstate the politicians who achieved stability in the region before the arrival of T. Shinawatra, and they also reinstated the South Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), a civilian body that had been dissolved by the previous government. One of the most prominent opposition groups, the PULO, was pleased by the recent changes.

Within this new context, and due to its heavy influence over the Pattani people, Malaysia suggested that it intermedicate in the conflict under terms to be defined by Thailand. In October, it launched several messages along these lines, although many analysts pointed out that any future negotiations should be held in another country, such as Singapore. In any event, in mid-October the new Thai prime minister, Surayud Chulanont, visited Malaysia to study how the two countries could work together. A PULO spokesperson stated that the preconditions for opening up negotiations were that they be facilitated by a third party, that the delegation representing the insurgent movements was regarded as official by the Thai government, and that immunity must be ensured for the members of this delegation. The Thai media also reported that several informal meetings had already been held in several different European cities between members of the Thai government and the Muslims from the south. According to the Malaysian national news agency, these groups had agreed to withdraw their demands for independence in exchange for amnesty, economic development for the region and fostering the use of the Malay language in schools. However, and in spite of the political climate in the country, civilian murders and confirmations between the security forces and armed opposition groups continued. This could be due to the lack of authority over militants in Thailand by the leaders exiled to Malaysia who were prepared to negotiate, given that most of these belong to a previous generation.

The government declared that it was examining the possibility of including certain elements of Sharia law into the three southern province with Muslim majorities as part of its conflict management strategy in the south of the country. Midway through April 2007, the Prime Minister, Surayud Chulanont, publicly declared his willingness to offer amnesty to the members of the secessionist armed groups operating in the south of the country. He also refused the military aid offered by the US government to manage the conflict as it was regarded as an internal matter

that the government viewed itself as capable resolving. The Thai government held exploratory talks with the insurgency in Geneva and Stockholm. The head of international affairs of the PULO, Kasturi Mahkota, lives in Stockholm. After the new government was formed, early in the year the Minister of the Interior declared that it was considering granting a certain degree of autonomy to the southern provinces with a Muslim majority, although he did not outline any specific measure. The minister also declared that the autonomous Chinese region of Xinjiang, which also has a Muslim majority, might serve as a model.

In late May 2009, the Vice Prime Minister, Suthep Thaugsuban, declared that there were between 4,000 and 5,000 insurgents active in southern Thailand and that the solution to the conflict could not solely entail military and police repression; rather what was required is a rise in development and quality of life in the southern provinces. From 2004 until May 2009, more than 8,900 incidents of violence had been recorded, in which 3,471 people had died and 5,470 had been injured. In turn, the head of the armed forces refused to start talks with the armed groups and stated that the government's approach to handling the conflict consisted of promoting economic, social, cultural and educational development in the region. After serious clashes in recent months, a visit by representatives from the United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to learn firsthand about the situation in the south of the country led the government to deny both organisations permission to help resolve the conflict, as the local media had claimed. In late October, the Thai Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, cautiously supported the suggestion made by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak, to grant the southern Thai provinces a degree of autonomy as part of a strategy to put an end to the escalation in violence in the region. The attacks and violent acts continued in the meantime. Likewise, the vice president of the armed opposition group PULO, Kasturi Mahkota, expressed his support for a dialogue with the government on some kind of autonomy for the southern part of the country with the mediation of a third party (which might be Malaysia, according to several sources).

The most important event during 2013 was the rapprochement that took place between the Government and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional armed group (BRN). In March the Government of Thailand and the BRN launched exploratory peace talks with the Malaysian Government acting as facilitator for the first time. According to a joint statement both sides agreed to the terms of reference for the dialogue, exchanged information, and laid the foundation to generate sufficient mutual trust to reduce the levels of violence and resolve the conflict affecting the south. The government delegation was headed by the Secretary General of Thailand's National Security Council, Paradorn Pattanabutra, while the insurgent group was represented by Ustaz Hassan Taib. According to some sources the BRN had proposed the withdrawal of troops from the south, an amnesty for insurgents and the creation of a special southern administrative area, but the Government wanted to focus the discussions on reducing violence.

In late April the second round of peace talks was held. The day before they began in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) the BRN released a video with five demands for the Thai government. These included appointing the Government of Malaysia as a mediator (and not a facilitator), the presence in the talks of representatives from ASEAN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as observers, the release of all of the insurgents under arrest and the withdrawal of all pending charges against them, and the consideration of the group as a national liberation movement. In the video, the insurgent group also mentioned that it would continue its struggle to get rid of colonial domination and oppression, and its desire to create a separate state for the Pattani nation. Some analysts believed that the Government would not be able to accept the BRN demands and that the statement could be considered part of a strategy to end the negotiations, while others felt that the extreme demands were just part of the BRN's negotiating strategy. Bangkok gave the BRN a month to show that it represented and had control over the insurgency and reduce the number of violent attacks. During the month of April the Government stated it was convinced that more insurgents wanted to join the peace talks. Furthermore, the Government of Indonesia ruled out its involvement in the peace process, even though it had played a small role in the past and some stakeholders had requested its participation.

At the end of the third round of negotiations, on 14 June the BRN made public what it would demand in exchange for declaring a ceasefire during Ramadan, which began on July 10. The demand that received the greatest political and media attention was that the Armed Forces should retreat to their military bases. Deputy Prime Minister Chalerm Yubamrung had already clearly ruled out that possibility because the BRN could not control the actions of its members out in the field and the state should guarantee security in the south. Paradorn Pattanatabut said he would wait until he officially received the BRN proposals from the Malaysian mediator before making any public statement about the demands. However, he stated that the Thai government must respond to the demands of the entire population of southern Thailand and not only those of a particular group. The rebel representative, Hassan Taib, urged patience and said that the end of the bloody insurgency could take years, but that negotiations were the only way for the Government to guarantee peace.

Although during the third quarter no rounds of formal talks were held between the Government and the armed opposition group BRN, both parties were at all times in contact with each other and they even agreed to a reduction in violence during the month of Ramadan. In mid-July, and after intense pressure by the Malaysian Government and an appeal from over 640 Imams from the south urging the parties to move forward in the peace process, the facilitator of the talks announced that both sides had reached a "common understanding" (which later became known as the Ramadan Peace Initiative) to reduce levels of violence in the south for 40 days, including Ramadan, which this year was from July 10 to August 18. Also in July the Government of Indonesia stated it was willing to participate in the peace process if the Government of Thailand so requested. In this regard, the Foreign Minister stated that his country would not necessarily be directly involvement in the peace talks, but it would share Indonesia's experience in resolving conflicts, such as the one in Aceh. For its part, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also expressed its full support for the ongoing negotiations, but made no reference to one of the demands made public by the BRN: participation of the OIC as an observer in the peace negotiations.

In early August the BRN released a video in which it announced that it was suspending its participation in the peace negotiations because the Government was not addressing any of its demands. In October it was announced that two other armed groups (the PULO and the BIPP) had stated their willingness to participate in the peace process and that several meetings had even been held between the Government and the PULO leadership in Sweden, where many of the group's leaders are living in exile. Meanwhile, in early October the BRN informed Malaysia, which was acting as facilitator, that it was replacing its representatives in the peace negotiations, but details or reasons for the change were not made public. The Government announced its intention to resume the dialogue with the BRN armed opposition group in November, after having said in mid-October that it was indefinitely postponing the peace talks. In early December, the Government dissolved Parliament in response to the widespread protests in the country that demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister.

The new authorities (National Council for Peace and Order – NCPO-) that took power after the coup in late May 2014 stated they wished to resume peace talks with the BRN with facilitation by the Government of Malaysia. The talks had been on hold for several months, in part due to the country's political crisis and also because of the investigation that led to the dismissal of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. According to some sources the strategy of the military authorities would focus on encouraging combatants to defect and surrender and to minimize or ignore the demands for greater autonomy or even independence. Moreover, in June the National Council for Peace and Order, the body that governed the country under the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, announced a major restructuring of the institutions responsible for channelling and resolving the conflict in southern Thailand. Following this reform the Armed Forces will have clear control over any future peace negotiations, and over the bureaucratic and institutional apparatus. In recent years important discrepancies had been detected between the civilian and military institutions that contended with the armed conflict, as well as between the policies planned by the central Government and their implementation in the

south. Three of the institutions that had previously been in charge of the Government's response to the armed conflict and those most affected by the restructuring announced by the Junta were the National Security Council, the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre and the Internal Security Operations Command. Some human rights organizations expressed concern over the new role that the Armed Forces could play in managing the conflict.

The 5 points proposed by the BRN.

1. The Government must recognize the BRN as the representative of the Pattani people and as a liberation movement, and not a separatist movement. Liberation means the right to freedom to practice religious activities.
2. The status of Malaysia in the peace process should be changed from facilitator to mediator. If this is accepted by the Government the BRN promises that it will stop attacks on security forces.
3. In future peace negotiations representatives from ASEAN countries, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and NGOs should be allowed to attend as observers.
4. The Government must recognize the status of Pattani and the sovereignty of the Pattani Malay people, who should have the right to self-determination in order to manage their territory as a special administrative region within the Constitution of Thailand.
5. All suspects arrested for security reasons should be released. If this request is accepted the BRN is willing to lay down its arms.

During the third quarter the NCPO was establishing the legal and institutional framework for resuming the dialogue, such as the formation of a new negotiating panel that will include people with military, academic and legal backgrounds; the creation of four working groups to devise measures to resolve the situation in the south; a formal request to the Government of Malaysia to continue to facilitate the peace talks or the creation within the Armed Forces of a commission to handle the peace negotiations and an executive committee, led by the Prime Minister, in charge of designing public policies for the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Analysts stated that in general the Armed Forces would have a much more prominent role in the future peace negotiations than they had been given during the peace process initiated by Yanglick Shinawatra's previous Administration. Moreover, on some occasions the Government stated that to ensure the viability of the negotiating process the number of armed groups in the dialogue should be expanded and as far as possible organizations and local communities should participate in the peace process. In this regard, the military junta stated in August that Malaysia had identified and brought to the negotiating table the individuals and organizations with a real capacity to have an influence on the levels of violence in southern Thailand and shape the strategic decisions made by the insurgency.

In December Thailand and Malaysia agreed that Malaysia, which in 2015 would assume the chairmanship of ASEAN, would continue to act as facilitator, under the leadership of Datuk Seri Admad Zamzamin Hashim, and following three principles: an end to violence, the representation of all parties, and the joint agreement on the demands that would be submitted to the Thai Government, which in turn decided to break down the future negotiations into three different committees: one specifically for the political level, guided directly by the prime minister, another to run the negotiations and a third working group to coordinate the local level. The head of the Thai negotiating team will be the general Aksara Kerdpol. The negotiating panel will consist of a maximum of 15 members from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, the National Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council and the Army. Government sources said that the negotiating panel would also have local government officials, relevant academic people and specialist in peace. Six or seven subcommittees were also planned to address issues such as security at the local level, social and cultural issues, and foreign affairs.

Furthermore, the Government stated that some of the BRN demands were unacceptable. The peace process will be divided into three phases: the discussions and efforts to foster communication and trust; an agreement on a code of conduct to reduce confrontation; and third,

a "roadmap" for resolving the conflict using peaceful means. The talks will be confidential, as in the eighties, until a final agreement is reached, and the smallest number of people possible will participate in them. Since September 2014 four meetings have been held in Malaysia. The Thai Government also considered the idea of holding "informal" meetings with each of the armed groups to gain a better understanding of their abilities and skills. The talks would focus on operations by the militants and the rules of engagement, while political issues would be kept separate as part of official and formal negotiating process ("Track I"). A BRN source said that since their group was not participating in the formal negotiating process, its leaders had not ruled out the idea of joining the unofficial talks and seeking more international support. The Government, meanwhile, asked the armed groups to consolidate the demands of all of the armed groups so that it was not working only with those from the BRN.

The peace process in 2015

During the quarter the government declared that it was making all the preparations needed to officially resume the peace talks, foreseeably in late April or early May. According to sources near the government's negotiating team, not only would the BRN be present at the dialogue table, just as in the negotiation process started in 2013, but so would three different factions of the PULO: the "Five-Star" PULO (led by Kamae Yusoh), the "Four-Star" PULO (led by Samsuding Khan) and the faction led by Gusturi Magota. In January, the faction led by Gusturi Magota had called and presided over a meeting in Hamburg attended by the main leaders of PULO, while leaders of the other armed organisations such as the BRN, BIPP and GMP were also invited. This meeting also commemorated the 47th anniversary of the founding of PULO. During the quarter, the government's National Security Council approved the new guidelines for the negotiation process and was working to assemble its negotiating team, of which only the name of the head of the panel is known, General Aksara Kerpol (former head of the armed forces). According to some analysts, the government's intention was to establish two parallel avenues of dialogue, an official one (which would address substantial political issues) and another secret one which would address more operational issues. Regarding the secret channel, at that time it was not known who would lead it on behalf of the government, although there were reports that in December 2014 two meetings were held between two armed groups and senior officers from the armed forces in the south of the country. In mid-March, General Aksara Kerpol travelled to the south of the country and met with religious leaders of the region to address several issues related to reconciliation and to ask them to convince the members of the armed groups to lay down their weapons. Aksara Kerpol noted that there was no need to await the resumption of the peace talks to begin to implement initiatives of this sort.

During the second quarter, the government and the armed forces declared several times that they were working hard to resume the dialogue with some armed organisations that were operating in the south of the country, although ultimately this did not happen. The government recognised that secret meetings had been held between both parties to build trust between them and to recall the procedural aspects of the negotiation. Even though the names of the people to represent the insurgent organisations in the south of the country were not publicised, according to several sources the talks were between the government and a platform known as Majlis Syura Patani (Mara Patani Consultative Council), which grouped together six insurgent organisations: the BRN, the three different PULO factions, the BIPP and the GMIP. The government of Malaysia, which was helping to facilitate the talks, had encouraged the creation of this platform with the goal of bringing the positions of the different insurgent organisations into closer alignment and thus facilitate their interlocution with the government. However, despite the attempts to do so during the quarter, several analysts expressed their scepticism on the likelihood of success of the peace talks because much of the insurgency believed that the government was insincere and lacked will, and also because Bangkok had been incapable of convincing or attracting to the negotiating table the insurgent leaders who had the capacity to take political decisions. In this sense, according to these voices, Mara Patani would not be supported by the military wing of the BRN, the organisation that was presumably responsible for most of the violence waged in

southern Thailand. Likewise, the government believed that Mara Patani did not include all the actors needed to put an end to the armed conflict, nor did it necessarily represent the insurgency's key demands. Sources near the exploratory contacts among the parties noted that in early June there was a secret meeting in Kuala Lumpur between both parties to try to achieve a cessation of hostilities during Ramadan, or even during the course of the potential negotiations, but ultimately no agreement was reached. Finally, in late June a spokesman for the insurgency declared in a media interview that a sign of good political will towards the negotiating process would be the release of a prominent insurgent leader after Ramadan was over. The latest negotiation process included the government and the BRN and lasted from early 2013 until approximately late 2013 or March of 2014 (depending on the source), so that if this happened it would be the first round of negotiations under the current military junta. Finally, in early June the government announced that 473 combatants had accepted temporary immunity from the government in order to meet with their families during Ramadan, with their prior pledge not to commit acts of violence.

There was a major turning point in the peace process in the third quarter because of both the public presentation of Mara Patani and the start of a series of informal meetings between both parties in Kuala Lumpur with the facilitation of the government of Malaysia. Regarding the former, in late August the membership of Mara Patani (an organisation composed of 15 members representing the BRN, the GMIP, the BIPP and the three PULO factions) was made official. According to some journalistic sources, these organisations were made up of more than 9,000 combatants, although the figures vary widely. The president and spokesman of Mara Patani, Awang Jabat, declared the umbrella organisation's intention to use dialogue and other peaceful means to achieve the end of the conflict and a solution that would include the right to self-determination of the Patani people, which would take shape in the independence of the region, greater autonomy or a continuation of the status quo. Mara Patani, which could be translated as the Patani Consultative Council, declared that its minimum demand included the formation of an autonomous region with competences in taxation, local security and natural resource management. Furthermore, it also suggested that the Malay language and Jawi alphabet be officially recognised, that Sharia be applied to the Islamic people and that the Islamic education system be introduced.

The other noteworthy aspect in the quarter was the informal meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in late August between a government delegation and Mara Patani. In late September, both delegations had met three times and had agreed to establish three panels on the justice system, development and security. In the course of those meetings, Mara Patani had brought up several demands, such as security and immunity guarantees for its negotiators, recognition of the 15 members of Mara Patani as legitimate representatives of the six aforementioned armed organisations, official government and Parliament recognition that the peace process was a state policy and was on the national agenda, beyond any changes in government that might occur in the future, and the development of joint security zones. Several times, the government made it clear that until then the dialogue had been in an exploratory phase, that the talks would be long and that the executive was studying how to respond to some of the demands aired by Mara Patani. In late September, the head of the government delegation, General Aksara Kerdphol, expressed his intention to gradually include civil society organisations in the dialogue process in order to design a roadmap, as well as to change the methodology that the peace process had followed until then. Aksara Kerdphol recognised that the militaristic approach of the recent governments had not led to an improvement in the security situation in southern Thailand, but he also asked the insurgent movement to become aware that they were not going to achieve either victory or its objectives through an armed struggle.

Numerous civil society organisations, as well as several analysts, were very positive about the membership of Mara Patani and the start of the exploratory dialogue process, but there were also voices that expressed their scepticism about the future of the peace process. Shortly after Mara Patani was publicly presented, a government spokesman asked the press to downplay the importance of the organisation. According to journalistic sources, the prime minister and state security agencies feared the fact that Mara Patani would be framed as an organisation that

grouped together six armed groups, which would give it international visibility and importance that Bangkok did not want. On the other hand, these agencies were not sure that the members of Mara Patani were truly the leaders of the organisations which were waging the armed struggle. Back in July, several media sources noted, based on intelligence reports leaked to the press, that the two main leaders of the leading armed group in the region, the BRN, were opposed to the negotiations as they believed that the strategy would clearly benefit the government. In this sense, in early September a video was posted in YouTube in which a representative of the BRN declared that the group's main objective was the independence of Patani, and he harshly criticised the government and accused it of manipulation, a lack of political will and sincerity, and terrorism. In this video, the first after the collapse of the official talks in December 2013, he also stated that his group did not trust the peace process currently underway and that the BRN would keep up its armed struggle until the government recognised the Patani people's right to self-determination. It should be stressed that both the president and the spokesman of Mara Patani were representatives of BRN. After this video was posted, some analysts spotlighted the internal division of Mara Patani and the main insurgent group's lack of commitment to the peace process, but other prominent insurgent leaders stated that at no time did the video criticise Mara Patani or the dialogue efforts it was leading. In turn, the government declared that this video should have no impact on the peace talks.

In October, the secretary of the government negotiating team, General Nakrob Boonbuathong, announced Bangkok's intention to hold the first round of official negotiations with the umbrella organisation Mara Patani in mid-November, although he also noted that in order for this to materialise there first had to be several informal meetings between both parties. Nakrob Boonbuathong downplayed the importance of a statement issued by a BRN faction – the main group operating in southern Thailand which has three of the seven members of the Mara Patani negotiating team, including the president Awang Jabat – which criticised the government and expressed its scepticism regarding the negotiations. Among other issues, the statement asked for recognition of the Patani nation (and therefore its right to self-determination) and the presence of international mediators and observers at the peace talks. Previously, both conditions had been rejected by the government, although this time there was no official reaction from Bangkok, and a member of the government negotiating team even declared that this was currently on the negotiating table. The government openly recognised that there were conflicting positions on the peace process within the BRN, but it also claimed that it had fluid contact with the group and that the peace talks would follow their scheduled course.

In mid-November, the last round of negotiations of the year was held in Malaysia. Mara Patani declared that the group had not signed any agreement with the government, contradicting the reports which indicated that they had reached an agreement on "safe areas", which was a proposal that the government maintained active. The group claimed that they were only in an informal stage, to establish confidence-building measures. Mara Patani said its three most important demands were: immunity for their representatives; putting the peace talks on the government's agenda; and the recognition of Mara Patani as the main representative of the insurgency in the south. Furthermore, the BRN did not participate in the negotiations, although it was not opposed to a peace process, but called for international participation in the process and that it be conducted under international standards and norms, in addition to the role that Malaysia was already playing. At the end of the year, the government negotiator, General Aksara Kerdpol stated that the negotiations were divided into three phases: the creation of confidence-building measures; the ratification of the agreements already reached; and agreement on a "road map".

In early January 2016, despite efforts by the Government of Thailand to prevent it, a nine member Mara Patani delegation, headed by its chief negotiator, Muhammad Shukri Hari, had a meeting in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), with the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Iyad Ameen Al Madani. The meeting was also attended by five representatives of Thai civil society organisations.

Most significant events of the year

- Talks were held between the government and a platform known as Majlis Syura Patani (Mara Patani, Patani Advisory Council), which groups six insurgent organisations: the BRN; the BIPP; the GMIP; and three different factions of the PULO. Public presentation of Mara Patani.
- A series of informal meetings between the parties began in Kuala Lumpur with the facilitation of the Malaysian government.
- Mara Patani, which can be translated as Patani Advisory Council, said its minimum demands included the formation of an autonomous region with powers in taxation, local security and the management of natural resources. In addition, they proposed that the Malay language and the Jawi alphabet should have official recognition, that the sharia be applied to the Islamic population and that the Islamic system of education be introduced.
- Mara Patani demanded the recognition of the Patani nation (and with that of their right to self-determination) and the presence of international mediators and observers in the peace talks.
- Mara Patani said its three most important demands were immunity for their representatives, putting the peace talks on the government's agenda, and the recognition of Mara Patani as the main representative of the insurgency in the south.
- The BRN was not involved in the negotiations of November, although it was not opposed to a peace process.
- The government negotiator said that the negotiations were divided into three phases: the creation of confidence-building measures, the ratification of the agreements already reached, and agreement on a "road map".

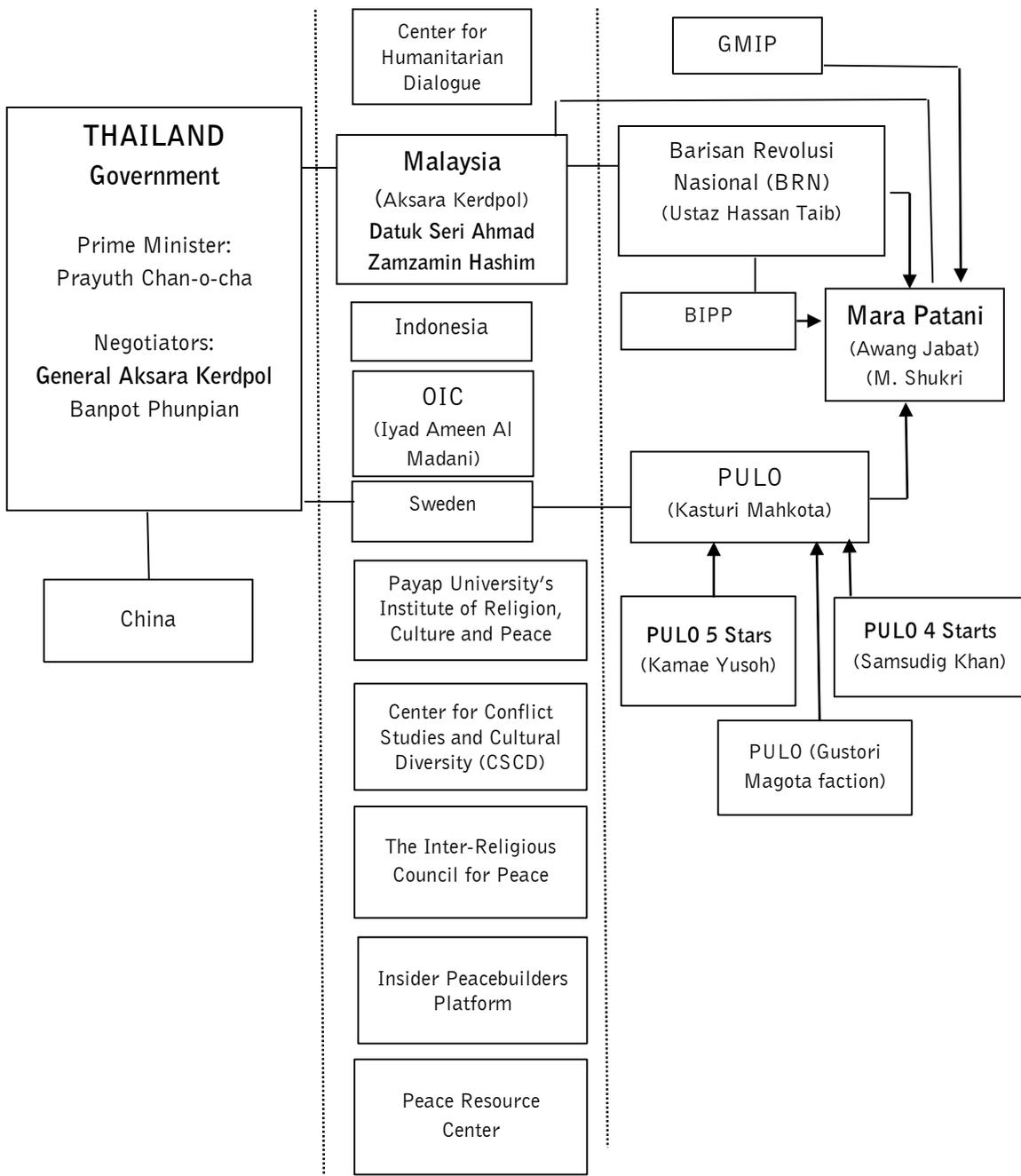
Causes of crises during the year

- Bangkok appears not to have been able to convince nor draw to the negotiating table the insurgent leaders who have the ability to take political decisions. In this sense, according to these opinions, Mara Patani does not have the support of the military wing of BRN, the organisation allegedly responsible for most of the violence that occurs in southern Thailand.
- The Government considered that Mara Patani did not include all relevant actors needed to end the armed conflict nor did it necessarily represent the key demands of the insurgency.
- Possible internal divisions within Mara Patani.

Websites of interest

- Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives (peacebuilding.asia/tag/thai-peace-talks/)
- Asia Times (www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia.html)
- Bangkok Post (www.bangkokpost.com)
- Global Times (www.globaltimes.cn/WORLD/AsiaPacific.aspx)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Khabar Southeast Asia (khabarsoutheastasia.com)
- National Reconciliation Commission (www.ncr.or.th)
- Pataninews (www.pataninews.net/english.asp)
- Payap University's Institute of Religion, Culture and Peace
(ic.payap.ac.th/other-programs/giving/development-projects.php?project=9)
- Perdana Leadership Foundation (www.perdana.org.my)
- PULO (puloinfo.net)
- Research Center for Peace Building (www.peace.mahidol.ac.th)
- Thailand Government (www.thaigov.go.th/en.html)
- The Diplomat (thediplomat.com)
- The Nation (www.nationmultimedia.com)

Main parties involved in the process



Space of intermediation

EUROPE

a) South Eastern Europe

CYPRUS

Context of the conflict

Colonised by many different cultures throughout its history, the island of Cyprus (9,250 sq. km - not much larger than the Spanish Basque Country) came under British administrative authority in 1878. The first revolts in favour of union with Greece took place in 1931, and in the 1950s they were led by archbishop Makarios. The Republic of Cyprus became an independent state in 1960 with Makarios as president (a post he held until 1973, three years before his death) and a constitution that strove to balance the

Population: 1,2 million inhabitants
Area: 9,250 km ²
HID: 32 (of 188)
GDP PPA: 25,448 million USD
Income per inhabitant: 26,370 USD
Facilitators: UN

interests of the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot communities on the island. Enforcement of the constitution however encountered several setbacks, leading to a series of institutional crises, especially at the end of 1963, which culminated in a meeting of the UN Security Council in the wake of Greece's complaints about Turkey's aggression. As a result, in March 1964 the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was set up, with 2,400 troops at first and 930 currently. This force is entrusted with performing the functions of good offices and creating trust-building measures. From the start, these forces laid down 180 km long ceasefire lines spanning the island, as well as a buffer zone between the areas controlled by the clashing forces. This zone has been the site for meetings between the two communities as well as monthly meetings by representatives of political parties organised by the Slovakian embassy.

In July 1974 a coup d'état was staged by Greek-Cypriots and Greeks in favour of union with Greece, which was followed by occupation of the northern part of the island by Turkey. Since then the island has remained divided into two homogeneous communities. In August 1974 a ceasefire came into effect. Throughout almost all these years, Turkey has kept a contingent of 30,000 soldiers in the occupied zone on the island. In addition, the United Kingdom keeps two military bases under British sovereignty on the island. In 2004 Cyprus (as an island) became a member of the European Union, although enforcement of the bulk of EU laws was suspended for the northern part of the island.

Background to the peace process

The Cypriots have been negotiating an agreement that would allow them to resolve the division of the island for over 35 years, and this has come largely in the hands of different UN secretary generals. Between 1977 and 1979, both communities discussed bicomunal, bizonal and federal formulas without any of them actually coming to fruition. In the 1990s, federal and confederal approaches were once again discussed, although no agreement was ever reached on each community's proportion in their participation in the institutions. In view of the stalemate, in 1992 the new secretary of the UN, Boutros-Ghali, presented yet another plan based once again on the principles of creating a bizonal, bicomunal territory, which yet again irritated the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash. In consequence, Boutros-Ghali decided to change tack and began to promote a milder strategy based on trust-building measures, which included a reduction of troops, a decrease in restrictions for people to communicate with each other and similar measures. In November and December 2001, new direct talks were held after a four-year hiatus under the auspices of the UN. In November, the UN Secretary General proposed that a confederal state be created, made up of two cantons and a shared government. This would

definitively become the UN Peace Plan, which has been revised on three occasions, the latest version being the one from February 2003. The plan was rejected by the Turkish-Cypriot leader, but it was supported by the Turkish leader Erdogan.

In July 2006, after holding a meeting sponsored by the UN's Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaders agreed to start a process of technical negotiations on the issues that were affecting the daily lives of the citizens of both communities, and to simultaneously address substantive issues in order to reach a comprehensive agreement for the future of the island. They also agreed to a list of principles, including the commitment to unify Cyprus based on a bizonal and bicommunal federation, as well as political equality, as recommended in the UN Security Council resolutions. In mid-August 2009, the Greek-Cypriot president and the Turkish-Cypriot leader concluded the first phase of direct negotiations to resolve the conflict on the island. The direct talks, which began on the 3rd of September 2008, included discussions on six chapters: governability and power-sharing; issues linked to the EU; security and guarantees; territory; property and economic affairs; and the writing up of the matters agreed to and in dispute. In mid-September, the Greek-Cypriot president and the Turkish-Cypriot leader started the second phase in the direct talks to resolve the conflict on the island, with a new meeting under UN mediation. The leaders of the two communities met for the first time since the trilateral encounter with the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, in late January 2011. At this meeting, the leaders address issues regarding the EU and economic matters. At the next meeting, they were scheduled to discuss governability and power-sharing, as well as the EU and property. The UN Secretary General stated in July that the leaders of the two communities on the island had accepted his proposal to strengthen the UN's role in the peace talks.

In April 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon informed the leaders of both communities of Cyprus that not enough progress had been made in the negotiating process to be able to organise the desired international conference on the reunification of the island. His views were shared by his Special Advisor to Cyprus, Alexander Downer, who said that talks had stalled with regard to the sharing of executive power under the federal framework, as well as the issue of private property lost during the conflict. In the third quarter, direct peace talks were paralysed pending the Greek Cypriot elections of 2013, although dialogue between the parties was kept alive through meetings held by their technical committees.

During 2013 no significant progress was made in the attempts to resolve the conflict. Elections in February and Cyprus' severe economic crisis slowed down even more the negotiating process on the island. The candidate of the conservative party Democratic Union, Nicos Anastasiades, won the presidential election with 57% of votes in the second round. After a deadlock that had lasted for months, efforts were launched in the second quarter to restart the dialogue. Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu met at a dinner organized by the UN envoy to Cyprus, Alexander Downer, on May 30. It was the first meeting between the two leaders since Eroğlu's election in February, but both sides denied that it was a political meeting or a step towards relaunching the negotiating process. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with the President of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, in late September during the UN General Assembly. At the meeting they discussed issues related to the progress made in preparing for the resumption of talks. In turn, Ban Ki-moon praised Anastasiades for his role in managing the island's financial and economic crisis.

Early in the 2014 the peace process was restarted after being on hold for 18 months due to the fact that Cyprus was holding the rotating presidency of the EU, as well as the economic crisis on the island. The process was relaunched four months behind schedule in a meeting on February 11 between the Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and the Turkish Cypriot Derviş Eroğlu, under the auspices of the UN as mediator in the process. The leaders issued a seven-point joint statement of basic principles and in line with the process and principles followed to date. First, the statement said that the status quo was unacceptable and if it continued the consequences for both communities would be negative. Second, the leaders expressed their determination to resume

structured negotiations in a results-oriented manner. In addition, all of the unresolved core issues will be on the negotiating table and will be discussed interdependently with the aim of reaching an agreement as soon as possible. Third, the statement notes that the settlement will be based on a united Cyprus, with a model of bi-communal and bi-zonal federation with political equality, single citizenship and a single international legal personality. Fourth, the agreement states that the federation should be the result of a solution approved in separate simultaneous referenda. Fifth, the negotiations are based on the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Sixth, the appointed representatives are fully empowered to discuss any issue at any time and the leaders of the two communities will meet as often as necessary. Finally, the sides will seek to create a positive climate to ensure the talks succeed.

The leaders of both communities agreed on May 22 to expedite the negotiating process and hold at least two meetings each month. In his report published in early July on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon encouraged leaders to sustain the momentum of the process, build on existing agreements and intensify efforts to achieve a global solution. He also highlighted as positive innovative step taken by the sides to engage in visits of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot negotiators to Greece and Turkey respectively. In addition, the Secretary General called on the parties to explore confidence-building measures. The Turkish Cypriots accused the Greek Cypriots of being unwilling to compromise and reach an agreement, while the Greek Cypriot leader said that the process would remain at an impasse if the Turkish Cypriot side did not agree to address all of the core issues.

In September the parties agreed to move to a phase of "structured negotiations" where they would address the differences that existed on key unresolved issues. That was the result of the September 17 meeting between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders and the new UN special advisor to the Secretary General, the former Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide. At that meeting the parties assessed the status quo, they agreed that the negotiating teams had completed presenting their proposals on all issues, they reaffirmed their commitment to a negotiating process aimed at achieving results as soon as possible and they agreed to increase the pace of meetings and meet at least twice a month. Prior to that meeting Barth stated that since the talks had been restarted in February they had not progressed as expected. In an initiative at the citizens' level, representatives from the chambers of commerce from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, as well as from Greece and Turkey, agreed in mid-September to set up a joint arbitration centre that will deal with trade disputes, which the press saw as a step forward in the efforts by non-governmental actors towards reconciliation and improved relations on the island.

In October the president of the Greek Cypriot community, Nicos Anastasiades, suspended his participation in the negotiations after a Turkish seismic survey ship began exploring for gas in waters that are part of Cyprus' exclusive economic zone, which is under dispute by the two communities. Nicosia's Government had already granted exploration licenses to several foreign multinationals. In late November Turkey proposed to create a joint committee with the Greek Cypriots, to protect the rights of both communities to use the natural resources of the island and create a joint venture to carry out surveys. The U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, who was visiting Turkey, said that tensions needed to be de-escalated and that both parties should return to the negotiating table.

In December the United Nations Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, proposed to open a parallel ("second track") of negotiation and create an advisory panel to study the best way to technically resolve the gas dispute. The proposal was rejected by the Greek Cypriots. The Greek Prime Minister visited Turkey to meet with his Turkish counterpart and, among other things, try to resolve the gas exploration issue, which had become an economic and geopolitical problem because the reserves discovered were of such magnitude that Cyprus could be a competitor of Algeria. Both leaders concluded that they should jointly use the natural resources. Greece had obtained support from Israel and Egypt. Some analysts said that the most reasonable solution would be to transport the gas to Turkey, but the Turkish Government stated that it would

only be possible once the Cyprus conflict is resolved. At the end of December Turkey decided to withdraw the ship that had triggered the dispute, which would make it possible to resume negotiations in January 2015, although the Turks said that Greece should participate without preconditions.

The peace process in 2015

Affected by the paralysis in the peace talks since October 2014, the first quarter witnessed several advances which might lead to a return to the negotiating table, as reported in late March. In January, the prospects were still uncertain and somewhat negative. That month, the UN Special Advisor for Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide, expressed his concern over not having been able to resume the negotiations and stated that the situation was beginning to damage the process, so there was a risk of a deterioration in the forthcoming months. Eide travelled to the region in January to hold meetings with the Greek-Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Dervis Eroglu. In a new resolution approved unanimously in late January which renewed the mandate of the UN's UNFICYP mission until July, the UN Security Council asked the parties to undertake trust-building measures, to take mutually agreeable steps, including the opening of crossing points and military trust-building measures, which could create an atmosphere more favourable to the quest for a solution. In March, there were signals that the situation was improving. Eide stated late in the month that during his last trip to the region he got hopeful signs about the possible resumption of negotiations and was optimistic in this regard. Around the same time, it was reported that the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot authorities were considering halting their unilateral activities to explore hydrocarbon reserves in the Mediterranean in order to facilitate a return to the negotiating table. This also came in reaction to the halt of activities of a Turkish ship, the Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, which undertakes seismic explorations. The cessation of the activities of the Turkish ship was described by Turkish-Cypriot authorities as a gesture of good will on the part of Turkey to support the UN's efforts to facilitate a return to negotiations. The peace process was halted the previous October owing to the Greek-Cypriot administration's decision to stop talks after Turkey sent this ship near the coast of Cyprus.

In early April, the UN Secretary General Special Advisor on Cyprus stated that conditions were in place for the resumption of the talks, and he stressed the need to work based on the Joint Declaration from February 2014. The talks were resumed in May in an atmosphere of renewed local and international optimism, and with a new Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, elected president in the second round of Turkish-Cypriot elections in April. Akıncı had been the driving force behind cooperation projects between the two communities during his stint as the mayor of the Turkish part of Nicosia between 1976 and 1990, and he pledged to adhere to the dialogue process. Preceded by separate meetings on the 5th of May and a joint dinner on the 11th of May, the parties held their first joint meeting on the 15th of May, signalling the formal resumption of the process. The leaders agreed to meet at least twice month, as well as to launch trust-building measures, including the elimination of the visa requirement to cross the island, which entered into force just one day later, on the 16th of May. In line with the political leaders' desire to move the process forward, their negotiating teams met five times in the next two weeks. In late May, the UN Secretary General Special Advisor announced a battery of five commitments adopted by the parties: efforts to open new crossing points, beginning with Lefka-Aplici and Deryneia; practical measures to further interconnect the electrical grid; the start of discussions and proposals on the interoperability of mobile telephony; the prevention of radio interferences; and the establishment of a committee on gender equality. Furthermore, Barth Eide also announced the calendar of joint meetings of the top leaders: the 17th of June, the 29th of June, the 10th of July and the 27th of July.

In the joint meeting held of the 17th of June, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders formulated the mandate for the gender committee and appointed its members. According to the local press, the members were: Xenia Loizidou, Soula Zavou, Mary Papadopoulou, Soula

Hadjikyriacou, Helen Apegitou, Harris Chrysostom, Maria Hadjipavlou, Olga Demetriou and Nicolas Kyriacou. Despite the fact that the committee was created, the European Women's Lobby noted after the negotiation meeting on the 17th of June that the negotiations clearly lacked a gender perspective and that women had not been given an adequate chance to participate in the process thus far. On the other hand, after the meeting of the leaders on the 17th of June, the UN Secretary General Special Advisor stated that after a preliminary evaluation of the situation, the leaders were entering into substantial negotiations on unresolved issues. The last joint session of the quarter, held on the 29th of June, also addressed issues related to property, governance and territorial criteria. According to Barth Eide, the climate was pragmatic and constructive. The Norwegian diplomat expressed his optimism on the course of the negotiations and praised the rapprochement of the leaders of both communities and their negotiation teams. In early June, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, also expressed his support of Anastasiades and Akinci.

In the third quarter, there was major headway, with a swift pace of talks at the highest political level in a positive climate full of progress on some of the most conflictive issues, along with new trust-building measures. The Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders, Nicos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci, met with UN facilitation on the 29th of June, the 10th and 27th of July and the 1st and 14th of September, while their negotiation teams and working groups stepped up the frequency of their meetings. In his official reports, the UN Secretary General Special Advisor, Espen Barth Eide, stressed the positive, results-oriented climate of the meetings of the two leaders and noted that the focal point of the meetings was primarily issues related to governance, property and territorial criteria, economic issues and trust-building measures. After the meeting on the 10th of June, Barth Eide stressed the importance that both leaders attached to ensuring that the comprehensive final agreement embodied the EU's principles and values. In this sense, the working group on EU issues began to meet around this time. Among other functions, it will work on implementing the EU *acquis* on the island. In turn, the EU reiterated its commitment to the process, and the president of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, visited the island in July. On the other hand, at the meeting on the 27th of July the conflicting parties reached an agreement to ensure that individual property rights were respected. As noted by the UN Special Advisor, there would be different alternatives in regulating this right, and dispossessed individuals would have several different ways to claim their properties, including compensation, exchange and restoration. The options would be subjected to agreed-upon criteria. To do this, the parties agreed to create a Property Commission, whose mandate would be to resolve property claims using the agreed-upon criteria. As Barth Eide explained, there would be equal participation of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot members. Likewise, as part of the trust-building measures, Anastasiades and Akinci met on the 10th of September with the religious leaders of the Orthodox Christian church, the Armenian church, the Maronite church, the Catholic church and the Turkish-Cypriot Muslim leader (the Grand Mufti). However, regarding the parties' commitment on the gender dimension in the process, there were no reports on the equality commission that the parties had agreed to create.

A prominent feature of their series of conversations was the agreement between the parties to allow the European Union to adopt, under the auspices of the United Nations, a more prominent role in the peace process. This had different types of consequences. The first was that on 3 October 2015 the parties agreed to establish the Bi-communal Ad Hoc Committee on European Union Preparation so that it could contribute to preparing the incorporation of the *acquis* communautaire of the European Union within the future Turkish Cypriot Constituent State. Pieter Van Nuffel, Personal Representative of the President of the European Commission to the Good Offices Mission of the United Nations in Cyprus, exercised full powers on the island. On 30 October, recognising the work of their respective negotiators and negotiating teams, the leaders announced that they intended to move the talks on to an intensified phase in which they would take on an even more direct role in the negotiations, in order to find mutually beneficial solutions to those issues that continued to provoke divergences. Consequently, throughout November and December the parties intensified the meeting schedule, both of leaders and of negotiators. During the intensification phase they dealt unceasingly with the outstanding issues and they focused especially on the crucial chapter concerning property. They worked on the basis of the agreement

reached by the leaders and announced on 27 July, in the sense that individuals' right to property would be respected and that several alternatives would be available for regulating the exercise of this right. The leaders also agreed that owners who had been dispossessed and the current users should have various options regarding their claims on properties affected, such as compensation, exchanges and restitution, and that this would be managed in accordance with agreed criteria. In addition, on 26 October, the parties formally established a group of legal experts that has met since then to make a start on the important task of drafting the federal laws that will govern Cyprus after the resolution of the conflict.

In late November, the leaders of the two communities met with the UN envoy, in the zone under UN control where the abandoned Nicosia airport is located, in order to step up the pace of talks. The two leaders had met six times during the month of November. They agreed to create a committee of experts to examine the two education systems, so that these could contribute to peace. The Technical Committee on Education is responsible for examining the available research studies and best practice in the field of education, both in Cyprus and abroad, and for undertaking further research on how education could contribute to peace and reconciliation, as well as addressing the development of a mechanism acceptable to both parties to implement measures aimed at building confidence in schools and promote contact and cooperation between students and teachers from the two communities. The Committee will also recommend policy options and procedures so as to coordinate the two educational systems, which will contribute to the creation of a viable, sustainable and working bi-communal federation. Shortly thereafter, the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, visited Cyprus to support the negotiations. The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, also visited the island. Before him, the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmed Davutoglu had visited the northern part of Cyprus to support the United Nations Plan of 2004. Finally, we should note that during their last meeting of 2015, on 20 December, in an unprecedented act the two leaders recorded on video a joint New Year message in which they expressed their common wish for the country to achieve unity in the course of 2016. Both of them spoke in both Greek and Turkish.

Most significant events of the year
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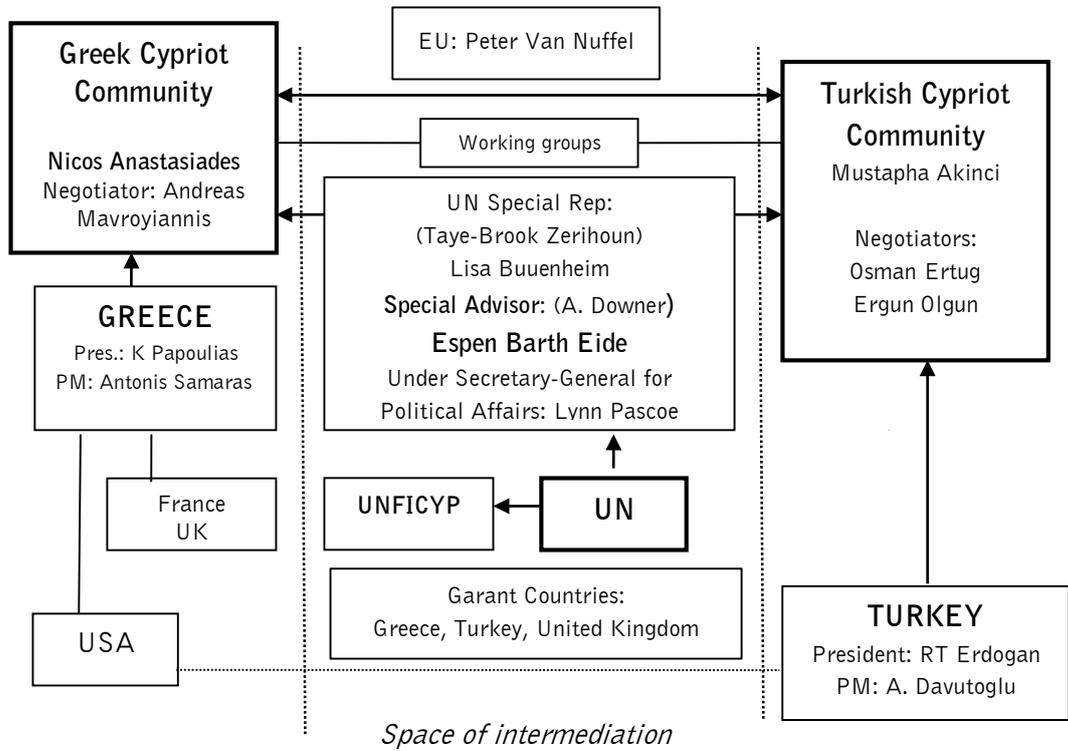
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sides held a first joint meeting on 15 May, which marked the formal resumption of the process. The leaders agreed to meet at least twice a month, to personally conduct negotiations as well to the implementation of confidence-building measures. • The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Nicos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akıncı, met under UN facilitation, on 29 June, 10 and 27 July, and 1 and 14 September, while their negotiating teams and working groups increased the frequency of their meetings. • The working group on EU issues began to meet. • The parties in conflict reached an agreement at their meeting on 27 July for individual property rights to be respected. To that aim, the parties agreed on the creation of a Commission on Property. • The parties agreed to establish the Bi-communal Ad Hoc Committee on European Union Preparation so that it could contribute to preparing the incorporation of the <i>acquis communautaire</i> of the European Union within the future Turkish Cypriot Constituent State. • A committee of experts was established to examine the two educational systems. |
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Causes of crises during the year

Websites of interest

- Cyprus Mail (Cyprus-mail.com)
- FES Cyprus Newsletter (www.fescyprus.org/media/newsletter)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Interpeace (www.interpeace.org)
- PILPG (www.publiinternationallaw.org/areas/peacebuilding/negotiations/index.html)
- PRIO Cyprus Centre (Cyprus.prio.org)
- Todays Zaman (www.todayszaman.com)
- UN Cyprus Talks (www.uncyprustalks.org)
- UNFICYP (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unficyp)
- UN (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)
- UN Peace Plan ((www.cyprus-un-plan.org)
- www.cyprus-conflict.net

Main parties involved in the process



KOSOVO

Context of the conflict

A former Ottoman possession, from the 14th to early 20th century, Kosovo was re-conquered by the Serbs in 1913 as it regarded this land as the cradle of the Serbian nation. The Serbs colonised the region for several years, while the Kosovar elite emigrated to Turkey. In 1945, Tito founded the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, which was made up of six republics, one of them Serbia, which in turn had two autonomous provinces, one of which was Kosovo (or Kosove in Albanian). Kosovo was mainly populated by Albanian Muslims. Two-thirds of the Albanian people living in the former Yugoslavia reside in Kosovo, a small territory measuring 10,900 km² that has higher unemployment rates and is considerably more economically backward than the rest of the former Yugoslavia. Between 1948 and 1966 the local population withstood systematic political repression, until in 1968 Tito allowed an autonomous university in the Albanian language to be created in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. This measure was followed by other decisions that expanded the rights of the Albanian population. In 1981 there were serious clashes between the Albanian and Serbian communities, which were the harbingers of the harsh conflict that was to emerge years later. In 1990, as a reaction to the surge of nationalism in several Yugoslav republics, Serbia abolished Kosovo's autonomous status, dissolved the parliament and the Albanian government, and undertook a process of repression in the region. This only served to further spur several republics to distance themselves from Serbia, which in turn gave rise to a series of armed conflicts starting in 1991, first with Slovenia, and later with Croatia and Bosnia. These conflicts came to an end with the Dayton Agreement in November 1995, after numerous resolutions by the UN Security Council and military intervention by NATO.

Population Kosovo: 1,8 million
Area Kosovo: 10,900 km ²
GDP PPA Serbia: 86,589 million USD; Kosovo: (6,300 million Euros)
Per capita income Serbia: 5,820 USD; Kosovo: (3,940 Euros)
Deaths due to the conflict: 13,400
Armed actors: none currently
Facilitators: UN (UNMIK, SGSE), OSCE, Troika (USA, Russia, EU)

In 1991 the clandestine authorities of Kosovo organised a referendum, and virtually the entire population voted in favour of sovereignty. The following year, clandestine elections were held in which Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), was proclaimed President of Kosovo. Thus began a non-violent strategy of confrontation with Serbia and the creation of parallel structures. Serbia's reaction was to militarise the region by sending 20,000 soldiers and police officers there, in addition to the ultra-nationalistic paramilitary forces that inspired terror among the Albanian populace. In 1997, shortly after the 1995 Dayton Agreements, which did not mention Kosovo, the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) emerged, with broad support from the Albanian Diaspora (around 400,000 people) living in Switzerland, Germany and the United States, and with rearguard bases in northern Albania. The goal of the UCK was to achieve independence for Kosovo. In 1998, when the UCK controlled around 40% of Kosovar territory, Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic launched a major military operation in Kosovo in which over 1,500 people died and many people were forced to become refugees (around 800,000) and were displaced from their homes (500,000). This Serbian operation was followed by a NATO military action that led to the withdrawal of the Serbian troops, Albanian attacks on Serb civilians, and the deployment of NATO troops.

In 2008, the Parliament of Kosovo unanimously approved a proclamation of independence for the hitherto Serbian province. In August 2010, the International Court of Justice, the UN's legal body, issued a non-binding ruling that the declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008 did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

Background to the peace process

In 2006, several rounds of negotiations were started between the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo to debate the status of the latter province. The Serbian Parliament unanimously approved a new constitution which claimed its sovereignty over Kosovo, reaffirming Serbia's position against the option of independence as a solution to Kosovo's status. In the early days of January 2007, the United Nations Special Envoy for the process on the future status of Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, submitted his proposal on the ultimate status to the countries in the Contact Group before it was forwarded to the Security Council to be discussed in April. The plan, which was regarded as independence under international supervision, stated that Kosovo would have its own constitution and state symbols (flag and anthem) as well as its own army, but only with light weapons, and the ability to sign international agreements. Martti Ahtisaari's proposal was initially rejected by Serbia and supported by Kosovo and the EU.

In mid-February 2008, the Parliament of Kosovo unanimously approved the proclamation of independence of what until then had been a province of Serbia. In early April, the Kosovo Parliament approved the new constitution which stipulated that Kosovo was a parliamentary, secular and democratic republic and that it considered Kosovo a sovereign, indivisible state. In a non-binding opinion, the International Court of Justice, the UN's legal body, declared in August 2010 that Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence did not violate international law or UN Security Council Resolution 1244. With this ruling, approved by ten votes in favour and four against, the court responded to the question submitted by the General Assembly at the behest of Serbia. However, the text did not weigh in on whether or not Kosovo had the right to secede. In March 2011, negotiations got underway between Kosovo and Serbia under the aegis of the EU to address, at least in the first phase, issues that were affecting the daily lives of the people. The dialogue was expected to focus on three areas: the rule of law, freedom of movement and regional cooperation. Ever since the negotiation process had gotten underway, Serbia and Kosovo had reached agreements on trade, freedom of movement, property registration and mutual recognition of university degrees.

In February 2012, Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement related to Kosovo's representation in regional forums. According to the agreement, Kosovo will participate in the forums under the name of "Kosovo" and with a footnote in the documents referring to UN Resolution 1244 as well as the non-binding ruling of the International Court of Justice. Alongside these developments, both parties also agreed on a technical protocol for implementing the pact on Integrated Border Management (IBM). In May, Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement related to holding Serbian legislative and presidential elections in Kosovo. Meanwhile, the Pristina government said it was ready to address the past and reconcile with Serbia, but urged Serbia to apologise for the crimes committed before and during the Kosovo War. The Kosovar government authorised the creation of a national working group that will deal with the subject of transitional justice and reconciliation. According to the government, the body will be formed by all stakeholders involved, including the families of missing persons, war veterans and political prisoner associations. In the third quarter, both parties accused each other of not fulfilling the agreements reached as part of the talks still mediated by the EU since March 2011, which then resulted in formal agreements on freedom of movement, the mutual recognition of university degrees, representation in regional forums and border management. Despite the mutual accusations of breaching the agreements, at the UN General Assembly both parties pledged to continue with the technical dialogue mediated by the EU and aimed at normalising relations between both territories. In December, the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement to begin to implement the pact on Integrated Border Management that was signed in 2011. Meanwhile, Serbia and Kosovo also reached an agreement for goods aimed for the Serb-majority northern part of Kosovo to enter Kosovo duty-free.

In January 2013, in the fourth round of the negotiation process, the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo reached an interim agreement on the collection of customs duties, which will be

earmarked for towards the development of northern Kosovo. According to European sources the taxes collected would be put in a fund under the auspices of the EU, but there was no agreement on other technical details. Another step towards improving relations was the meeting that took place in early February, for the first time since the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008, of the Serbian and Kosovo presidents, Tomislav Nikolic and Atifete Jahjaga respectively. The meeting was described as positive by both and they pledged to continue the dialogue process. The meeting was followed by the fifth round of talks at the end of the month between the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, in which the parties agreed to work together to overcome the parallel institutions of the Serbian areas of Kosovo as well as progress towards the establishment of an association of municipalities with a Serb majority, although the parties differed in their interpretation of the agreement. In the second quarter, progress continued in the dialogue and culminated in a key agreement in April for the normalization of relations. It included a solution for the Serbian areas of Kosovo. The 15-point accord recognized the authority of Pristina in the entire territory of Kosovo and contemplated the decentralization of power in Serb areas; the dismantling of the parallel political and judicial structures; the creation of the post of Police Commander for those areas which would be a person from the Serbian community, proposed by the decentralized authorities and appointed by Pristina ; and the establishment of a permanent division of the Appellate Court in northern Kosovo, which would be composed of a majority of Kosovo Serb judges, in addition to others issues. The agreement was ratified by the Serbian and Kosovo parliaments, despite protests by some groups in Kosovo, both Serbs and Albanians.

The May agreement established a roadmap for the normalization of relations and included five areas: legislative changes, the association of Serbian municipalities, the police, the courts and elections. According to Thaçi, the second part of the plan referred to the creation of a community of Serbian municipalities. Progress in the dialogue came in late June shortly before the EU summit where it would be decided whether or not to begin negotiations with Serbia for accession and with Kosovo for association with the EU. In the third quarter progress was made in the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo with the implementation of measures from the agreement reached by the parties in April to normalize relations. As a result, Serbia dismantled local government bodies in four Serb municipalities in northern Kosovo: Mitrovica, Leposavic, Zvečan and Zubin Potok. These bodies operated outside of the control of the Kosovo Government with the political and financial support of Serbia. Police points, police stations and courts were also dismantled. At the same time, and only after several previous disputes, Serbia and Kosovo approved solutions to disagreements with regard to the November 3 local elections in Kosovo, which would be the first held under the control of Kosovo in areas with a Serbian majority. According to the agreement the ballots would not have the symbols of Kosovo. In the round of talks held at the end of August a final agreement on telecommunications and energy was not achieved, and a statement was issued saying that more consultations were required. In this round that there was again no agreement on the ballot issue, but this was resolved by a subsequent decision by the Central Electoral Committee to print them without symbols. Moreover, the Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hajredin Kuci, said that the Kosovo Government was preparing a strategy to take over the responsibilities of the EU EULEX mission once it finishes its mandate in June 2014. In October the prime ministers of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, and Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, met in Brussels (Belgium) in a meeting that was considered historical. The encounter was facilitated by the EU and the high representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, was present.

The prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, Ivica Dačić and Hashim Thaçi, reached an agreement on important issues regarding the Police in areas with a Serb-majority in Kosovo during the 19th round of negotiations facilitated by the EU. Both sides agreed that a person of Serbian origin would be in command of the police in the northern part of Kosovo. Conversely, the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo failed to reach an agreement in the round that took place on December 13, which examined the issue of the judiciary in northern Kosovo. Dačić said the meeting failed due to the Kosovo Government's "unacceptable" demand that the court in Mitrovica have jurisdiction

over Albanian municipalities. According to Dačić that would mean the assimilation of four Serb municipalities in northern Kosovo.

In the first few months of the 2014 the process of negotiations facilitated by the EU continued. Three meetings were held in Brussels (January, February and March) between the prime ministers of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, and Kosovo, Hashim Thacia, with the participation of the EU high representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. At the January meeting, the parties discussed the situation created after the local elections in November 2013 and plans to repeat the elections in North Mitrovica. They also discussed the Serbian parliamentary elections that would be held in March. The rest of the quarter the talks focused mainly on the judiciary issues included in the agreement of April 2013. However, it was not possible to settle on a package of measures on the judiciary during the meeting in late March. Ashton said that the fact that the parties had practically concluded discussions on this matter was a positive step and noted that the remaining adjustments would be finalized in the next round. Meanwhile, one of the Prime Minister's political consultants, Bekim Collaku, blamed Serbia for the delay in integrating the Serbian judicial authorities in northern Kosovo within the justice system for the rest of Kosovo. According to Collaku the April agreement contemplated that the integration should be finalized by the end of 2013.

After the meeting between the parties that took place in late March with EU facilitation, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, said that the parties had almost finished the discussions on the package of judiciary measures and that the remaining adjustments would be finalized during the next round. However, during the second quarter the situation in Kosovo was marked by internal tensions that led to early elections. In April the Kosovo government passed a bill to extend the presence and mandate of the EU mission in Kosovo, including the Special Investigative Task Force (SITF) in response to a request by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton. In the June elections Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won the legislative elections, in which there was a low turnout. Thaçi's election program envisaged the creation of an army with 5,000 soldiers and 3,000 reservists for a country with a population of 1.8 million people and borders with Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia. The Western countries that contribute funds to Kosovo and recognize its independence were reluctant to support the creation of a Kosovar army for fear of the reaction by Serbia and the more than 100,000 Kosovo Serbs living in the country.

In December the new Kosovo administration, with the participation of the two main parties in the country, received the endorsement of the national Parliament, which finally ended the institutional deadlock caused by the inability to reach an agreement to form a government after the June 8 elections. The new Cabinet, with a total of 19 ministries, received the support of 73 MPs, while 38 voted against and two abstained. The formation of the Government headed by Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, leader of the Democratic League (LDK), was made possible after a deal was closed with the Democratic Party (KDP) lead by Hashim Thaçi, the outgoing head of government. According to the agreement Thaçi would assume the duties of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and would be president of Kosovo in 2016 when the term of the current president, Atifete Jahjaga, ends. In 2015 Serbia will assume the presidency of the OSCE.

The peace process in 2015

Serbia held the presidency of the OSCE during the year. During the first quarter, headway was made in the dialogue process between Serbia and Kosovo, which was reactivated after months of stagnation caused by the internal political crisis in Kosovo, which resulted in several agreements. The Prime Ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, Aleksandar Vucic and Isa Mustafa, signed an agreement in Brussels to integrate the judicial structures in northern Kosovo into the Kosovar judicial system. The agreement was signed one day after the first round, on the 9th of February, of talks which had resumed in March 2014. According to the agreement, the new court will cover seven municipalities, including the Serbian-majority North Mitrovica, Meposavic and Zubin

Potok, and would be presided over by a person of Serbian roots while the rest of the court will have a mixed composition. The EU Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini, stated that the agreement closed a crucial chapter in the implementation of the 2013 Brussels Agreement between Serbia and Kosovo.

Despite the advances, in late March Kosovo's Minister for Dialogue, Edita Tahiri, accused Serbia of delaying implementation of the Brussels Agreement in all spheres with the exception of justice, in which an agreement had been reached in February. Among the obstacles, she noted the Serbian municipalities' resistance to the integration in Kosovo, as well as measures by Serbia to prevent their integration, including instructions to towns with a Serbian majority not to adopt municipal budgets in line with Kosovo and blocking their integration in the sectors of education and healthcare. In this sense, during the quarter several Serbian representatives from Kosovo reinforced their positions against the privatisation processes promoted by Kosovo and issued a call to investigate irregularities in these processes. Despite the context of criticism, in late March there were new advances. On the one hand, Serbia participated in a regional ministerial meeting focused on regional infrastructure projects and investment which was held in Pristina and attended by ministers from Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, as well as representatives from the EU. Foreign ministers and ministers of infrastructures from Serbia participated in the meeting, the first visit by a Serbian delegation to a regional event of this kind in the capital of Kosovo. Neither Serbia nor Kosovo used state symbols at the summit, in line with previous participation guidelines in summits in view of the unresolved conflict on the status of Kosovo. On the other hand, the prime ministers of Kosovo and Serbia agreed to establish a direct telephone line to address specific or unexpected issues without having to hold a formal meeting in Brussels under the aegis of the dialogue process facilitated by the EU. Mogherini celebrated the measure, which was used twice during the quarter, including one time for issues related to the marked increase in illegal migration from Kosovo to Europe through Serbia. Finally, in late March Tahiri reported on an agreement between Serbia and Kosovo to dismantle the Serbian security force which had operated de facto in the Serbian areas (Civilna Zastita or Civil Protection, whose main mission was assistance in crises and emergency situation) and its integration into the Kosovo police force. Its dissolution was supposed to be completed by the 1st of September.

In mid-May, the Kosovar Minister for Dialogue stated that there would be no further meetings at the prime minister level until headway was made in implementation of the previous agreements or until the parties reached similar stages, although the working groups would continue to meet. With regard to implementation, the report prepared by BIRN Kosovo, Internews Kosova and Belgrade's Center for Transparency, Research and Accountability stated that of the 17 agreements reached by Serbia and Kosovo since the start of talks in 2011, only four had been fully implemented. The meetings of the working groups in May focused on issues in the integrated border management agreement, the possible opening of two new crossing points between Serbia and Kosovo and vehicle security, according to Tahiri. On the other hand, it was reported during the quarter that the President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolic, was preparing a "platform" on Kosovo, a kind of political document on the region. According to reports in the Serbian press, the document offered Kosovo the status of province within Serbia. The Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, stated that he would have to await for the text to be made public and shared with public opinion, professionals, intellectuals and politicians, and he added that its realism must be weighed. On the other hand, the Serbian Prime Minister also stated that Serbia was being blackmailed internationally with Kosovo, alleging that even though progress had been made in pro-European reforms and the supervision of these reforms, the EU had not yet opened any negotiation chapter of the accession talks as a candidate country. According to Serbia, different EU countries were waiting to see how a variety of issues between Serbia and Kosovo were resolved before opening the accession negotiations.

The dialogue process underwent a new round at the prime minister level in Brussels in late June, facilitated by the EU Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini. According to Mogherini, the parties made progress on the future creation of an Association of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo and

on telecommunications matters. They also discussed energy and the freedom of movement between the Serbian and Albanian zones of the divided city of Mitrovica. Nonetheless, no agreements were reached. According to Serbian sources, no agreement was signed because the Albanian delegation wanted to reach a single agreement on all four issues instead of separate ones. In any event, Tahiri stated that there was consensus on telecommunications, even though it had not been put into a written agreement. The issue of the Association of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo continued to spark disagreement. Serbia wanted this new administration to have executive powers, while Kosovo was opposed to this level of competences, according to the local media.

In the third quarter, headway was made in the dialogue process aimed at normalising relations, and several crucial agreements were reached. After a failed attempt in late June, at a new meeting in August in Brussels the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, with EU facilitation, agreed to a package of four important agreements: on energy, telecommunications, the Association of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo and the bridge dividing the city of Mitrovica. Particularly important is the one that gives the green light to establishing an Association of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo, given the sensitivity of the issue in a context in which towns with a Serbian majority have continued to operate outside the Kosovar system after Kosovo's unilateral proclamation of independence. In the agreement, the parties reached an agreement on the general principles and main features. According to the agreement, the Association of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo will be a legal entity defined by its own bylaws – which should be drafted within four months – to promote the interests of the Serbian Kosovar community in its relations with the central authorities of Kosovo. Despite this, after the agreement was reached there was disagreement on the degree of competences that the entity would have. The Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, stated that the agreement included the possibility of the association having far-reaching powers, including the decision-making capacity on healthcare, education, urban and rural planning, economic development as well as financing of Serbia, and it having a presidency, vice presidency assembly, council and flag. In exchange, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa, noted that the agreement did not include these powers and that it would play the role of supporting Serbian municipalities. The pact sparked criticism and protests among some Albanian-Kosovar political and social sectors. With regard to the other pacts contained in the package of agreements, some issues were left for subsequent negotiations, such as energy. In any event, it was agreed that the Serbian municipalities in Kosovo would have their own energy suppliers through a new company owned by the Serbian state company, EPS. Regarding the bridge in Mitrovica, the parties agreed that the use of the bridge would be defined in a mutually acceptable way. Other agreements were also reached during the quarter, such as on the exchange of textbooks to supply the respective minority communities in early September, although this pact fell apart weeks later. Likewise, there was a new agreement in late September on recognition of secondary and university educational diplomas.

In December, the political and social tension continued in Kosovo with new violent incidents at mid-month of the launching of teargas in the Kosovo Parliament, carried out by MPs from the three Kosovo Albanian opposition parties in protest at the August agreement between Serbia and Kosovo for the creation of an Association of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo and against a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. Following the December events there were further arrests of MPs, bringing the total number under arrest to more than a third of opposition MPs. The Self-Determination (Vetevendosje), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and Initiative for Kosovo (Nisma) parties had for months been demanding the withdrawal of these agreements and with that aim they tried to block parliamentary activity through violent incidents. After a brief suspension of the agreement on the Association of Serb Municipalities of Kosovo issued in November by the Constitutional Court, so as to review its constitutionality, the Court ruled in late December that the pact was constitutional, with the exception of some points on which it demanded changes.

Most significant events of the year

- The prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, Aleksandar Vucic and Isa Mustafa, signed an agreement in Brussels for integrating the judicial structures of northern Kosovo into the Kosovo court system.
- Serbia participated in a regional ministerial meeting in Pristina, attended by ministers from Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, as well as EU representatives, focusing on regional infrastructure projects and investment. The Serbian Ministers for Foreign Affairs and for Infrastructures participated in the meeting, the first visit by a Serbian delegation to a regional event of this kind held in the capital of Kosovo. Neither Serbia nor Kosovo used state symbols at the summit, in line with earlier solutions to participation in summits, given the unresolved conflict over the status of Kosovo.
- The prime ministers of Kosovo and Serbia agreed to have a hotline to address specific or unexpected issues.
- An agreement was signed between Serbia and Kosovo for the dismantling of the de facto Serb security force that had operated in Serb areas and its integration into the Kosovo Police.
- The parties agreed to a package of four important agreements, concerning energy, telecommunications, the Association of Serb Municipalities of Kosovo, and the bridge that divides the city of Mitrovica.

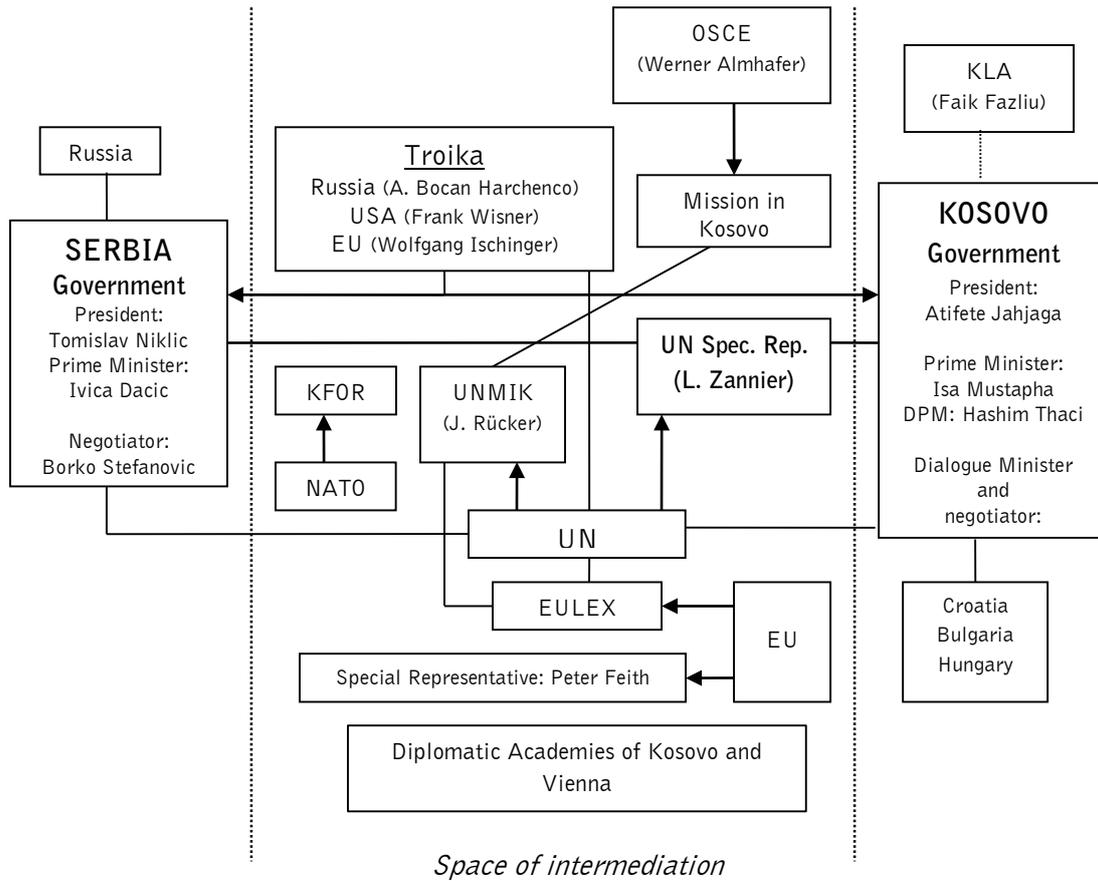
Causes of crises during the year

- Kosovo's Minister for Dialogue accused Serbia of delaying the implementation of the Brussels Agreement in all areas, except justice.
- Several Kosovo Serb representatives recalled their opposition to the privatisation processes promoted by Kosovo.
- The Albanian delegation wanted to reach a single agreement on the four questions and not separate agreements, in the new round of talks at prime minister level held in Brussels in late June, facilitated by Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs.
- Serbia stated that a new administration should have executive powers, while Kosovo was opposed to that level of competences.
- Of the 17 agreements reached between Serbia and Kosovo since talks began in 2011, only four had been implemented fully.
- Disagreement on the extent of powers to be held by the Association of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo.

Websites of interest

- Courrier des Balkans (www.balkans.eu.org)
- EULEX (www.eulaex-kosovo.eu)
- KFOR (www.nato.int/kfor)
- Kosovo Government (www.ks-gov.net)
- Serbia Government (www.serbia.sr.gov.yu)
- OSCE (www.osce.org/kosovo)
- PILPG (www.publiinternationallaw.org/areas/peacebuilding/negotiations/index.html)
- UN (www.un.org)
- UNMIK (www.unmikonline.org)
- UNOSEK (www.unosek.org)

Main parties involved in the process



MOLDOVA (Transnistria⁴)

Context of the conflict

Although internationally the region of Transnistria is considered to be part of the Republic of Moldova (an independent country since the beginning of 1992), most of its inhabitants (predominantly Slavs) have considered themselves to be independent from the Republic since September 1990, when the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic of Transnistria declared its independence and established its capital in Tiraspol, with its own currency, constitution, parliament, flag and media. Most of the population is declared Christian. Several studies indicate that there are high levels of corruption, censorship and organised crime in the region.

Population: 537,000-700,000 inhabitants, over 3,5 million in Moldova
Area: 4,163 km ²
HDI: 107 (of 188)
GDP PPA Moldova: 19,560 million USD
Per capita income Moldova: 2,560 USD
Deaths due to the conflict: 1,000-1,500
Facilitators: OSCE

Situated between the Dniester and Nistre rivers, this region was under the control of the Ottoman Empire from the beginning of the 16th century to the end of the 18th century, when it was handed over to Imperial Russia. After the Russian Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century, the region became autonomous under the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, although during World War II it was annexed by Romania. Later its inhabitants were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan for having collaborated with the German army and its Russian allies. Later, as a result of the Paris Peace Treaties, it was made part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova. Since 1956, the 14th Soviet army has remained in the area to control the enormous military arsenals deployed there, this being one of the reasons for the conflict in Moldova.

The conflict broke out as a result of the August 1989 proclamation declaring Moldovan (written in the Roman alphabet) to be the official language of the country (compared with the Cyrillic alphabet used by a large part of the population in Transnistria), and negotiations began for reunification with Romania (before the fall of Ceausescu in December). This move was rejected by the people of Transnistria, who proclaimed independence the following year, creating paramilitary corps for its defence (the "workers' detachments" which would later become the Republican Guard). The war, which did not last long, began in early 1992 and resulted in some 1,500 dead and 100,000 refugees. Shortly afterwards, in July, a ceasefire agreement was signed, the presence of the Soviet army in the area was made official and a Joint Control Commission (JCC) was set up to supervise the ceasefire in the Security Zone, as well as the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPF), made up of delegations from Russia, Moldova and Transnistria. Since 1994, the OSCE Mission in Moldova has formed part of the JCC as an observer. In December 2006, there was a referendum which overwhelmingly ratified the independence of Transnistria, which aspired to join Russia (the majority of the population speaks Russian) and which had been blocked by the Republic of Moldova since the beginning of the armed conflict. The region, which represents only between 12% and 15% of Moldova, nevertheless produces 35% of the GDP, holds the greatest industrial wealth of Moldova (40%) and produces 90% of the electricity. This has caused significant economic tensions, among other reasons because of the region's capacity to cut off the electricity supply to Moldova. Since 1991, the president of the region of Transnistria has been Igor Smirnov, who renewed his mandate in the 2006 elections with 82% of the vote.

⁴ The region is also called Transdniéster, Transdnitsria or Pridnestrovia (in Russian).

Background to the peace process

In March 1992, the chancellors of Moldova, Russia, Romania and Ukraine met in Helsinki and agreed to principles to peacefully resolve the conflict. They also created consultation mechanisms in order to coordinate their efforts. A few months later, they held several discussions within the CIS to deploy a peace-keeping force in Moldova. In July of that same year, an agreement was signed in Moscow between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation for a peaceful solution to the conflict, which in addition to a ceasefire also agreed to create a demilitarised security zone stretching 10 km on either side of the Dniester River.

Since February 1993, the OSCE has been the body charged with the negotiations to find a solution to the conflict through a mission in Moldova headquartered in its capital, Chisinau. The purpose of this mission is to define the status of Transdniestria through dialogue among the clashing parties. According to the OSCE, the key issues in the conflict are language, Moldova's pretensions of unifying with Romania, the presence of Russian troops in Transdniestria and the definition of the status of this region. Since autumn 2005, the EU and the USA have joined the OSCE's efforts as observers. In April 2008, the presidents of Moldova and the self-proclaimed Republic of Transdniestria met for the first time in seven years and agreed to spearhead trust-building measures that would, in turn, allow the negotiations, which had been stopped for two years, to resume. Moldova has usually stated its support for talks in their 5+2 format (Moldova, Transdniestria, the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, with the USA and EU as observers), while Transdniestria has preferred the 2+1 format (Moldova, Transdniestria and Russia). In March 2011, the government of Moldova created a new structure dedicated to the conflict in Transdniestria, the Reintegration Commission, whose mission is to promote and coordinate the application of a shared policy by all Moldovan institutions in the sphere of reintegration. In July, the Moldovan Prime Minister Vladimir Filat and the leader of Transdniestria, Igor Smirnov, met in the capital of the pro-independence region, Tiraspol, at a football match in what was described as another round of *football diplomacy*. In December, the first official meeting was held as part of the formal negotiations to resolve the conflict in Transdniestria in the 5+2 format, after these negotiations had been suspended for almost six years.

The second round of negotiations in 5+2 format took place in February 2012, which had been restarted in late 2011 after six years of deadlock. Held in the Irish capital, Dublin, the meeting came in a context of optimism and some rapprochement between the parties and was preceded by a series of measures taken by Transdniestria since the new leader of the region, Yevgeny Shevchuk, came to power. These measures, which were welcomed by Moldova, included lifting all taxes on Moldovan goods entering the region, simplifying customs and border procedures and allowing two Moldovan television stations to broadcast in Transdniestria. In April, Moldova and Transdniestria reached an agreement on the main principles and procedures for maintaining negotiations, including the frequency of the meetings and some items on the agenda of future rounds of negotiations, the role of the working groups in strengthening confidence-building measures and the possibilities of consolidating the results of the negotiations. The agenda that would be followed in the negotiating process was subdivided into various dimensions: social and economic issues, humanitarian and human rights issues, security and political arrangement of the conflict. In June, the leaders of Moldova and Transdniestria agreed to re-establish all transport corridors between both regions, including the rehabilitation of a bridge over the Dniester River. In September, a new round of talks was held in Vienna between Carpov, Shtanski and mediators and observers that ended with agreements to intensify talks over human rights and to establish a joint forum for dialogue with civil society and the media in both regions. This new meeting also focused on education.

Representatives from Moldova and the region of Transnistria met in mid-February 2013 in Lviv (Ukraine) as part of the negotiating process and under the 5 + 2 format (Moldova and Transnistria, as parties to the conflict; Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as mediators, and the U.S. and the EU as observers). The leader of the de facto independent region, Yevgeny Shevchuk,

rejected a proposed 1 + 1 meeting with the Moldovan president during the 5 + 2 meeting in Lviv. According to Shevchuk the conditions were not right to discuss the status of Transnistria in the negotiating process. In addition to the difficulties of the negotiating process itself, a political crisis erupted in Moldova with the resignation of the Government after a vote of no confidence passed by Parliament. The motion was proposed by the opposition Communist Party that had formerly held power and was based on allegations of corruption by the Administration. Moldova and Transnistria held a new round of 5 + 2 talks in Odessa (Ukraine) in late May. The parties agreed to a new confidence building measure: to dismantle an aerial ropeway cable that had gone unused for more than a decade to avoid risks to the towns it passes over (Rybnitsa and Rezina); and they discussed several issues including freedom of movement and removal of radioactive waste. In early June the President of Transnistria approved a decree that unilaterally delimited the borders of the breakaway region, and on paper incorporated some areas currently under the jurisdiction of Moldova, which added tension to the context of dialogue.

In late July, an agreement was reached on a joint action plan for the preservation of natural resources. The accord was achieved by the group of experts on agriculture and environmental issues that, like the rest of the joint expert groups in the negotiating process, was established in 2008. Furthermore, the prime minister of Moldova, Iure Leanca, and the leader of Transnistria, Yevgeniy Shevchuk, met in the capital of Transnistria, Tiraspol, on September 23. At the meeting the two leaders signed an agreement that extended the decision to reopen rail freight service through Transnistria. In turn, in a new round of the 5 + 2 negotiations in early October the parties discussed in detail freedom of movement issues. Thus, the two sides stressed the importance of simplifying the administrative obstacles to the movement of people between the two sides, which would improve the welfare of communities and would increase mutual confidence.

In the first few months of 2014, the negotiating process moved along with some limited progress, although it was negatively affected by the uncertainty caused by the impact of the crisis in Ukraine. In that sense, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Ambassador Radojko Bogojevic, who took office in January for a term that would last during the 2014 Swiss and 2015 Serbian presidencies, said in March that events in the region should not affect the peace process. The dialogue process did indeed continue during the quarter. In January Bogojevic held separate meetings with the main political actors in the capitals of Moldova and Transnistria, Chisinau and Tiraspol respectively, and stressed the constructive attitude of the parties and the emphasis on achieving practical solutions to issues affecting both populations and to build confidence. In February the first round for 2014 of the 5 + 2 talks was held (Moldova, Transnistria, the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, as well as U.S. and EU as observers). Again the Special Representative welcomed the constructive climate. As a result of that meeting the parties signed a protocol on free movement that had been launched the previous year.

The negotiating round in May was held despite the growing tension at the time, when the Government of Moldova put its border forces on alert because of the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine. Tension also rose after the signing in June of an association agreement between Moldova and the EU. The accord was strongly criticized by Russia, which warned Moldova of possible consequences as the divide between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic powers (U.S., EU, NATO) and its former Soviet allies (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) continues to grow, especially after the events in the Ukraine conflict.

The dialogue in the third quarter suffered because the new rounds of talks were delayed twice and due to the impact of the deteriorating relations between the West and Russia. The negotiating process continued and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Radojko Bogojevic, held separate meetings with the parties during a visit to the region that ended in early July. Bogojevic met with Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration and chief negotiator in the process, Eugen Carpov, in Chisinau; and with the Transnistrian chief negotiator Nina Shtanski in Tiraspol. Moldova also announced in July that it would participate for the first time in the NATO summit in September. En July

Transnistria and Russia signed several cooperation agreements in the areas of the economy, trade, transport, agriculture and science. Internal tensions also surfaced during this period. Transnistria put its security forces on alert in August because of an alleged military threat from Moldova and Ukraine, in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. Moldova once again demanded that Russia withdraw its troops from Transnistria.

In the parliamentary elections held in Moldova at the end of November the three pro-EU parties won 44% of the vote and the pro-Russia parties received 39%. The turnout was just under 56%. Some analysts said that the Moldovan population was tired of corruption, the lack of judicial reform, the privatization of transport and the economic crisis. Moldova also became part of the geostrategic rivalry between Brussels and Moscow. In 2013 Moldova signed an association agreement with the EU, which angered Moscow. Also of note was the proposal made by the Moldovan Foreign Minister, Natalia Gherman, during the 21st OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers to change the format of the peacekeeping mission in Transnistria, currently controlled by Russia, and make it a mission under international mandate. In turn, the Russian foreign minister announced that if Moldova lost its neutral status Russia would begin the process to recognize Transnistria. The Socialist Party, meanwhile, proposed a federation to resolve the conflict. At the end of the year the Finnish organization Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) organized several talks in Moscow and Brussels with senior experts and the political parties in conflict.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, some headway was made despite the climate of political uncertainty in Moldova. The new prime minister of Moldova, Chiril Gaburici, who had been appointed to the post in February after months of negotiations to form a new government since November, and the leader of Transdniestria, Yevgeny Shevchuk, met on the 14th of March in Chisinau. It was the first meeting at this level since October 2013. Both parties rated the two-hour meeting and its climate of trust as positive. The results included the signing of a protocol that extended the agreement on railway cargo transport until December 2016. Both parties also agreed to give a positive impetus to the talks and cooperation, to hold a meeting of the heads of the working groups on the 20th of March, and to complete the dismantlement of a former cable car between the cities of Rybnitsa and Rezina. Likewise, the OSCE Special Representative for Transdniestrian settlement process, the ambassador Radojko Bogojevic, travelled to the region in early February to meet separately with representatives of the conflicting parties and prepare for the next round of negotiations in the 5+2 format, to be held after the 1+1 bilateral meeting between the leaders of Moldova and Transdniestria. After the bilateral meeting, the Moldovan prime minister stated that his government wanted to generate positive dynamics in the dialogue with Transdniestria. He expressed the need to improve the communication process and reactivate the working groups.

Despite the alerts, there was no significant progress in the negotiation process during the second quarter. The rotating president of the OSCE and Serbian Foreign Minister, Ivica Dacic, met with the OSCE Special Representative for Transdniestrian settlement process, Radojko Bogojevic, in the capital of Serbia in late April. Furthermore, in June Bogojevic held consultations with Ukrainian and Russian representatives (participating in the 5+2 negotiation format) and also took a trip to the region between late June and early July, in which he met separately with the political representatives and negotiators for Moldova and Transdniestria. The special representative asked that preparations get underway as soon as possible for a new round in the 5+2 format. He also stated that periodic constructive talks between the parties were essential in order to make headway in the process. The lack of intensity of the process stood in contrast to the deterioration in the geopolitical context.

Despite the tension caused by the conflict in Ukraine, in late June the deputy prime minister and chief negotiator of Moldova, Viktor Osipov, stated that he noticed differences between the escalation of tension in the Russian media and Russia's official political line. After a meeting with

his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Rogozin, on the 24th of June, Osipov stated that Russia had underscored the need to lower tensions and prevent greater escalations. Likewise, after meetings in late June with government representatives from Ukraine and Russia (participating in the 5+2 negotiating format), the OSCE Special Representative for Transdniestrian settlement process, Radojko Bogojević, claimed that he was heartened by the clear message from both governments regarding the crucial need for the parties to start preparations for the next 5+2 negotiating round as soon as possible. In early July, Bogojević held meetings in situ in Tiraspol with the chief negotiator Nina Shtanski and in with the acting Prime Minister, Natalia Gherman. The Special Representative gave them a letter from the rotating president of the OSCE, the Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, which expressed the group's commitment to supporting the parties as they search for a global, fair and feasible solution to the conflict. Bogojević stressed the importance of finding a way to move forward. Although no major headway was made during the rest of the quarter, the instability in Moldova was aggravated by massive anti-government protests in Chisinau calling for the resignation of the president Nicolae Timofti and senior state officials and early elections, after reports on supposed large-scale bank fraud.

Most significant events of the year

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moldova's new prime minister, Chiril Gaburici — nominated to the post in February, after months of negotiations to form a new government following the elections of November — and the leader of Transdniestria, Yevgeny Shevchuk, met in Chisinau on 14 March. • Russia stressed the need to reduce tension and avoid further escalation. |
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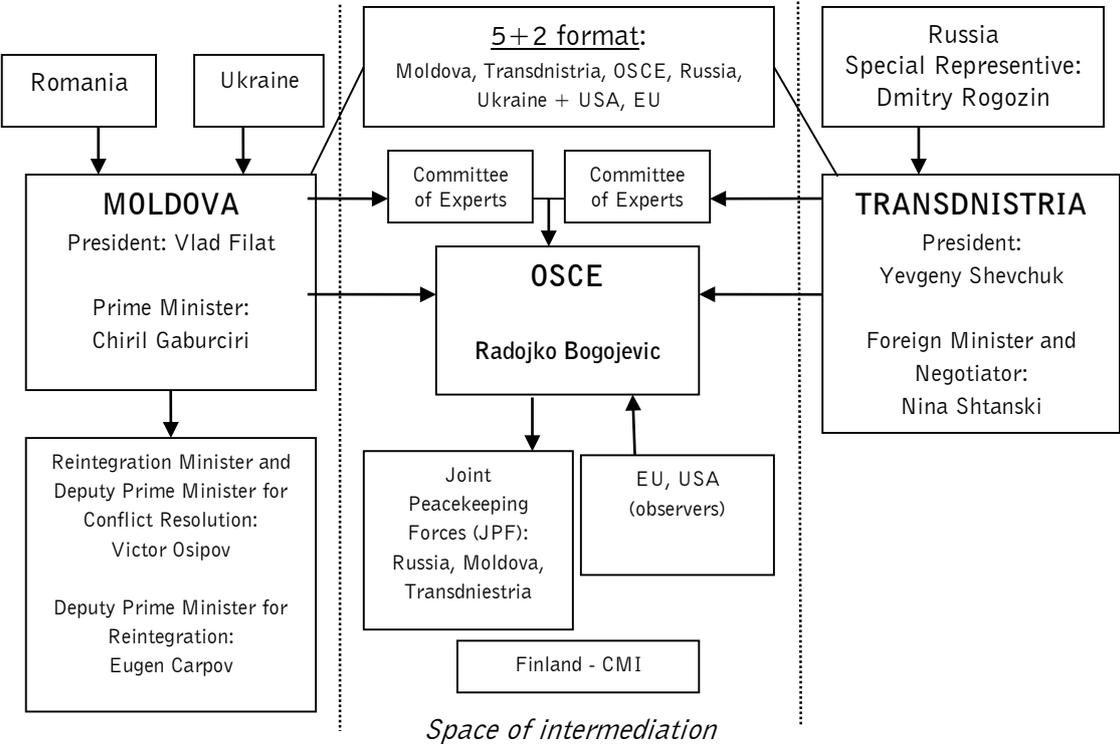
Causes of crises during the year

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of the geopolitical context. • Instability in Moldova. |
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Websites of interest

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Monitor (www.al-monitor.com) • Crisis Management Initiative (www.cmi.fi) • EU Neighbourhood Infor Centre (www.enpi-info.eu/eastportal/news) • Eurasia (www.eurasia.net.org) • ICG (www.crisisgroup.org) • Moldova Azi (www.azi.md/en) • OSCE (www.osce.org/Moldova) • Pridnestrovie (www.pridnestrovie.net) • Transdniestria Parliament (www.vspmr.org/?Lang=Eng) |
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Main parties involved in the process



TURKEY (PKK)

Context of the conflict

Kurdistan, with a population of 33 million, most of whom are Muslims, and a total area measuring 550,000 sq. km, is divided amongst Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. It is regarded as the most populous stateless nation in the world. Over 20 million Kurds inhabit Turkish territory. Their origins go back to the 18th century. In the Middle Ages the Kurds lived in relative freedom, and during the Ottoman Empire they enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. With the fall of this empire, and as a result of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, their land was divided amongst several different states. Shortly thereafter, Kurdistan's immense oil wealth was discovered, especially in the part inside Iraq. In 1924 Atatürk proclaimed Turkey's independence. From that year until 1938 there were fourteen uprisings by the Kurdish people.

Population: Turkey (75,8 million); Turkish Kurdistan (20 million)
Area: Turkey (784,000 km ²); Turkish Kurdistan (220,000 km ²)
HDI Turkey: 72 (out of 188)
GDP PPA Turkey: 1,441,029 million USD
Per capita income Turkey: 10,830 USD
Deaths due to the conflict: 40,000
Armed actors: PKK
Facilitators: ---

There has been an armed conflict between the Turkish government and the **PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party)** since 1984, with a total of 40,000 deaths, most of them Kurds. The PKK was created in 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan ("Apo"). In subsequent years the PKK abandoned its goal of winning independence for Kurdistan and agreed to seek formulas for autonomy for each territory. It is largely financed by donations from the vast Kurdish diaspora around the world, especially in Europe and the United States. It has also received aid from the Greek-Cypriot community. The Kurds have support organisations in several different countries, such as the Kurdish National Congress (KNC) with headquarters in London and offices in the United States. The USA is also home to the KNCA, the Washington Kurdish Institute and the American Kurdish Information Network (AKIN). In the past, the PKK also received periodic support from Iran and Syria. It has around 6,000 combatants. In 1995 the PKK created the exiled Kurdish parliament, with headquarters in Europe.

In 1987 the Turkish government decreed an exceptional status for eleven Kurdish provinces. President Turgut Özal (1989-1993) began peace efforts by creating a Ministry for Human Rights and promising the Kurdish people a certain degree of autonomy and the freedom to speak their own language. However, Özal's death and the renewed outbreak of PKK offensives put an end to the prospects of a negotiated solution. Since 1995, despite several unilateral ceasefires by the PKK, the government has continued its brutal fight against this group, destroying thousands of towns, displacing around two million Kurds and creating Kurdish militias charged with putting down the PKK and its support bases. In the 1995 offensive, the Turkish government deployed 35,000 soldiers in the Kurdish region. After a serious political crisis between Turkey and Syria in October 1998, the latter country withdrew its support of the PKK and forced Öcalan to leave Damascus, where he had lived for years. In February 1999 Öcalan was captured in Kenya by the Turkish secret services and was later sentenced to death, although this ruling was commuted in 2002. With the wane in the PKK's activities in 2000, the Turkish government began tentative reforms to ease the restrictions on the Kurdish culture.

The Kurdish conflict, just like the one in Cyprus, has been conditioned or influenced by Turkey's negotiations to join the EU. In 1998 the European Commission approved a document stating that a civilian, not military, solution must be found to the situation in southeast Turkey. Both the Council of Europe and the European Parliament (since 1995) have issued declarations to the same effect. In addition, the International Socialist has a Working Group on the Kurdish Question (SIMEC), headed by the Swede Conny Frederiksson, who is also the advisor to a civilian platform that studies the Kurdish question as part of the relations between Turkey and the EU. In

November 2002 the moderate, pro-European Islamists in the Party for Justice and Development (PJD) won the elections with an absolute majority, and their leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, succeeded in being appointed Prime Minister in March 2003 after the sentence preventing him from holding this post was lifted. In view of the invasion and later conflict in Iraq, where much of the Kurdish community lives, the new Turkish government sealed an alliance with Iran and Syria to prevent the Kurdish autonomy already existing in northern Iraq from becoming the start of independence for all Kurdish territories. This move has unquestionably hindered partial agreements with the Kurds from being reached, in this case with those living on Turkish soil.

In 2004 a new armed group appeared, called the Taybazen Azadiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Freedom Hawks, abbreviated TAK), apparently with no ties to the PKK or perhaps made up of dissidents from the PKK. This group is pursuing independence for Turkish Kurdistan, and it was added to the EU's terrorist lists in late 2006. In 2005 the Democratic Society Movement (DTP) was founded, a pro-Kurdish party regarded as the successor of the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP), which was founded in 1997 and was the continuation of a party that was banned because of its ties to the PKK. The DTP has mayors in 55 towns in southeast Turkey, mainly inhabited by Kurds. Its leaders include Leyla Zana, who was imprisoned for three years for having spoken Kurdish in the Turkish parliament. The party is jointly led by Nurettin Demirtas.

Over recent years there have been secret talks between the Turkish government and the PKK leader Öcalan. They were especially reinforced in 2013, and formal negotiations began in 2014.

Background to the peace process

The PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire several times (1993, 1995, 1998, 2006, 2009 and 2010), but without this being reciprocated by the Turkish armed forces, and without it serving as a spur to start a negotiation process. The year after Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was arrested, in February 2000 the PKK announced the end of its armed struggle for Kurdish autonomy, but the Turkish army rejected the unilateral ceasefire. In April 2002, the PKK once again gave up its claims for the independence of Turkish Kurdistan and its armed struggle at its 8th Congress, at which the party changed its name to KADEK (Congress of Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan), or Kongra-Gel. This party was still presided over by Öcalan, who was imprisoned and at that time condemned to death. The Turkish Minister of Defence stated that he would continue to view the PKK as a terrorist organisation and that he would ignore the unilateral ceasefires. In 2005, the PKK created the Koma Komalen Kurdistan (KKK) as a platform to promote the federal process in Kurdistan. In the second half of November 2009, the government presented to Parliament the first specific measures in its democratisation initiative to resolve the Kurdish question, as a continuation of the Parliamentary discussion started in early November. This involved several short-term advances in cultural, political and social issues. In mid-December, the Constitutional Court declared the pro-Kurdish party DTP illegal because of its presumed ties with the PKK, which cast doubt on the government's plan to undertake reforms and motivated the PKK to interpret it as a declaration of war.

In July 2010, the leader of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, proposed the disarmament of the PKK in exchange for political and cultural rights for the Kurdish people. Karayilan stated that he was ready to disarm under United Nations supervision if Turkey accepted a ceasefire and fulfilled certain conditions. In May 2011, the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* stated that Turkey had been holding talks with Qandil (in reference to the PKK troops based in the mountains of Qandil, Iraq). *Milliyet* cited comments from the co-president of the BDP, Selahattin Demirtas, in which he claimed that Turkey had been in touch not only with the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, currently imprisoned in Imrali, but with Qandil as well. The talks held in 2006 and 2007 were followed by the talks in 2008 with the three areas of the PKK (Öcalan in Imrali, the leaders in Qandil and representatives in Europe) with the support of the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, according to *Milliyet*. In July, the leader of the PKK stated that an agreement had been reached with the state delegation, with which it had been

engaged in contacts on the establishment of a Peace Council to achieve a solution to the Kurdish conflict. A recording leaked to the press in September revealed talks between a Turkish intelligence service (MIT) officer and senior PKK officials in Oslo. The leaked talks had taken place in 2010, had reached the level of negotiations, and had continued until mid-2011. The PKK's demands had been accepted by the government, although not formalised. They included issues like education in the native language, constitutional guarantees for the Kurdish identity, self-governance, *democratic autonomy* (a term which the Kurdish movement often uses), and house arrest for Öcalan. The government could not sign a document like that, but it could implement some of its aspects. In late September, in a context of tension in Turkey due to the surge in violence by the PKK, the Turkish Prime Minister himself, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stated that the negotiations had reached a stalemate and that the struggle against the PKK would continue until the group laid down its weapons.

In June 2012, the main Turkish opposition party, the CHP, submitted a proposal to make progress in solving the Kurdish conflict through the Turkish Parliament. In the third quarter, some limited progress was made related to prospects for resolution, despite the seriously deteriorated atmosphere in terms of security. In late September, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that it would be possible to hold new negotiations with the PKK, and even with its imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan. In November, following the end of a hunger strike undertaken by around 700 Kurdish prisoners, Erdogan said that he was not opposed to resuming formal talks with the PKK. Erdogan also said that the Turkish intelligence services (MIT) could meet with the leader of the PKK.

In 2013, for the first time in many years the Turkish Government and the PKK, through its leader A. Öcalan, reached a series of agreements in a process where both sides made concessions, which pointed to positive prospects. The talks were set up between representatives of the Turkish intelligence services and Öcalan in İmralı prison, where he has been since 1999. Some public statements were issued by government officials and the Kurdish movement on their positions and interests and most of them focused on the end of violence, but discrepancies existed with regard to the steps, pace and guarantees needed to achieve peace. According to some sources the group could begin to disarm in the spring. The second visit to Öcalan in February was made by the MP and president of the BDP, Pervin Buldan, and the BDP MPs Sirri Sureyya and Altan Tan. In a message that was considered historic and transmitted through the BDP during Newroz, Öcalan called for a farewell to arms and for the withdrawal of PKK fighters from Turkish soil, without specifying a timetable. Other steps were also taken such as the approval of a law allowing Kurdish to be used by the defence in the courts. In turn, during the second quarter the Government worked on the creation of a committee of "Wise persons" to contribute to the peace process. According to the Turkish press, Öcalan and the BDP were also involved in the preparation of this group. The make-up of the commission was made public in early April. It included 63 personalities from various fields and political views and was divided into seven subgroups, one for each of the seven geographical regions of Turkey. In the spring, as planned, PKK forces began their withdrawal from Turkey to northern Iraq. In early April, on the eve of Öcalan's birthday, a BDP delegation went to see Öcalan once again. The visit was authorized by the Government.

Moreover, in parallel to the talks between the Government and the PKK leader, during the month of May the "wise persons" commission was launched and included scholars, journalists, artists and representatives from the civil society. Also in May, a parliamentary committee was created to oversee the conflict resolution process. The group included ten members from the ruling AKP party and one from the BDP. The two other groups with parliamentary representation, the Kemalist party, CPH, and the MHP Turkish ultranationalist party, said that they would not participate in the new commission. In July and August the process was negatively affected by accusations on both sides that the other party was not moving forward, which led to significant setbacks and statements by the Kurds that the process was over. The Government, in turn, announced that in September it would present a new democratization plan, but its launch was delayed. Meanwhile, in mid-September two representatives from the pro-Kurdish BDP party, co-chairman Selahattin Demirtas and the MP Pervin Buldan, met with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan,

the tenth parliamentary visit authorized by the Government since the beginning of dialogue. After the visit the BDP transmitted a message from Öcalan saying that a new format was needed, that the process should move from the current dialogue to a new stage of substantive negotiations. On September 30 Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan presented the democratization plan, which included a debate on the election threshold, which could be reduced from the current 10% to 5%, eliminated or kept as is; the authorization of education in Kurdish in private but not public schools; the authorization to use Kurdish and other languages other than Turkish in political propaganda; lifting of the ban on toponyms in languages other than Turkish; additional broad changes that would affect other political and social dynamics in Turkey in general, and not only the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish nationalist movement, including the BDP party, criticized the reform plan for being insufficient and said that the Government had not consulted other groups during its development. The Kurdish organization KCK –with PKK participation– denounced on October 1 that the Government was not seeking a solution to the conflict, but had brought it to a standstill, and that it was only interested in winning the upcoming elections, with local and presidential elections on the ballot in Turkey for 2014. A few days later BDP co-chairman Selahattin Demirtas said that the Government had in effect ended the peace process. According to Demirtas the reform plan was not part of the dialogue process, which had been based since the beginning on mutual dialogue, but sought instead to benefit the ruling AKP party. Demirtas said that no dialogue was taking place. The co-chairman of the KCK, an umbrella body for Kurdish nationalist movement organizations, Cemil Bayik, said in late October that the dialogue process between the Government and the leader of the KCK/PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, had come to an end and blamed the Turkish Administration for not responding to Kurdish demands.

The process was given new momentum in November with new gestures by the two sides. The Government authorized a new visit by a delegation of Kurdish politicians to the PKK leader that has been in prison since 1999, Abdullah Öcalan. The delegation included BDP parliamentarians Idris Baluken and Pervin Buldan, in addition to the vice president of the new HDP Kurdish political party and ally of the BDP, Sirri Süreyya Önder. According to Önder, Öcalan had said that the current peace talks were insufficient, the format was flawed and a legal framework was needed. Öcalan's brother, Mehmet, had also visited the PKK leader and highlighted Öcalan's willingness to move into a negotiation phase to overcome the current fragility of the process, but that it must have a legal basis. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the President of the Kurdish region of Iraq, Massoud Barzani, visited Diyarbakir, the symbolic Kurdish capital city in Turkey, where they made a call to support the peace process. During the trip Erdogan visited the local city council where he met with several Kurdish politicians. However, despite these gestures the dialogue process remained fragile for several reasons: Turkey was in a pre-election phase, the regional rivalry between Öcalan and Barzani, and the influence of the civil war in Syria. Indeed, the Kurdish group in Syria linked to the PKK, the PYD, announced in November that it was launching the creation of a provisional autonomous administration in the areas under their control. This was met with criticism by Turkey, the Kurdish government in northern Iraq and Syrian Kurdish groups close to Barzani.

The dialogue continued to be active in the early months of the 2014, after it was launched in December 2013, but it remained fragile and was at somewhat of a standstill in the context of pre-election tension. During the first quarter the PKK leadership, including its supreme leader Abdullah Öcalan, in prison since 1999, warned repeatedly that the process could derail if further steps were not taken after the local elections on March 30. There were additional monthly meetings between Öcalan and Kurdish MPs, who act as intermediaries between Öcalan and the high level Kurdish political-military cadres, with bases in northern Iraq. After the February meeting three requirements from Öcalan regarding the process were made public: the implementation of a legal framework for the negotiations (the Turkish Government prefers use the term "settlement process" instead of "peace process"), the creation of observer bodies and a permanent commission to oversee the negotiations. Moreover, despite the fact that the parties were frustrated by how the process was going, there were some positive steps such as the release in March of all of Öcalan's lawyers, who had been imprisoned since November 2011 as part of the mass arrests of Kurdish politicians, activists and professionals. During the quarter other people

were set free, including five members of the pro-Kurdish party BDP, who were put on trial for their alleged involvement with the KCK.

The dialogue between Turkey and the PKK received a significant boost in late June when the Government presented a bill that sought to give legal guarantees to those members of the Administration involved in the dialogue. It also authorized the Government to take action in the political, cultural, legal and socio-economic spheres, in addition to the steps necessary to facilitate the return of the PKK combatants to society and their reintegration. In April the Turkish Parliament passed -and the Turkish President signed- a law that gave the security services (MIT) greater power and immunity, which was interpreted in some quarters as a step towards providing the legal basis for negotiations with the PKK. However, the KCK –the entity that brings together the PKK and the Kurdish nationalist movement– criticized the law and said it could lead to more repression. Furthermore, in June the PKK demanded direct meetings between Öcalan and the PKK because the visits by Kurdish members of parliament were not enough. On the 26th of that same month the Turkish government submitted to Parliament a bill that attempted to guarantee the peace talks with the PKK. The bill included legal guarantees for the members of the Administration involved in the peace process. The leader of the PKK, A. Öcalan, said that the initiative was a historic step forward. Also in June, a group of intellectuals and Turkish MPs visited the Philippines, Germany, Northern Ireland and South Africa to get a first hand look at their experiences in peace processes. The trips were organized by the British entity the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI).

In early July the Parliament and the Turkish president passed a law proposed by the Government to give the talks a new impetus by providing a framework of legal guarantees for the process, which was considered a positive step by both sides. The law gave immunity to members of the Administration participating in the dialogue, authorized the Government to take steps in the cultural, socioeconomic, political, legal and psychological spheres, and to adopt measures that would facilitate the return and reintegration of PKK combatants. Thus, on August 15, after the August elections, the Chief of Turkey's intelligence community, Hakan Fidan, met with Öcalan to tell the PKK leader that Erdogan as the new Turkish president was willing to continue the dialogue process. On the same day, after Öcalan met with the delegation of Kurdish parliamentarians from the HDP (the co-chairs of the parliamentary group, Pervin Buldan and Idris Baluken, and MP Sirri Süreyya Önder), he stated that the armed conflict was coming to an end and that historical events were on the horizon. Halfway through that month Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay stated that the Government was preparing a roadmap that would be shared with the institutions and with its Kurdish counterparts. He also said that he was in favour of direct talks with the political and military leadership of the PKK when necessary. Atalay also said that a group to oversee the dialogue process could be set up. In recent years the process had been conducted through direct contact by the intelligence services with the imprisoned PKK leader, Öcalan, in what was called the "Imrali table" in reference to the name of the prison. In the second half of 2014, however, both parties agreed to begin formal negotiations. The government negotiating team would be led by Muhammed Dervisoglu, Undersecretary of Public Safety and collaborator of the director of National Intelligence, Hakan Fidan, who until then had been in charge of talking to Öcalan in prison. On the Kurdish side, Öcalan would be chief negotiator together with several MPs from the HDP and several other important figures. Öcalan's goal would be to discuss his "roadmap" before the parliamentary elections were held in June 2015, which might not necessarily be in the Government's interest. He also suggested that the United States should mediate, even though the Turkish Government has always refused to permit external mediation.

Nevertheless, in July it was becoming clear that the dialogue process and the Kurdish conflict were both being jeopardized by the slow pace of the process and the distrust that existed between the parties caused by each others position regarding the advances of the ISIS jihadist group in the Kurdish areas of Syria. In this context, the PKK accused Turkey of slowing down the peace process and of collaborating with ISIS, as well as blocking the passage of Kurdish fighters from Turkey to Syria to stop the advance of ISIS. The highest level organ of the KCK announced at the

end of September that it was bringing to an end the no-conflict period due to Turkey's lack of response in the peace process and its support of ISIS. The KCK also rejected Turkey's insistence on the withdrawal of PKK guerrillas from Turkish territory. Earlier that month Öcalan had stated that dialogue continued, but he was very critical of the Government. Moreover, he had also asked for the urgent establishment of a secretariat, a "democratic" delegation and an oversight committee.

After a pro-Kurdish delegation visited the political-military leaders of the PKK in northern Iraq and Öcalan on 21 October, he was more optimistic and said there was hope of resolving the conflict and that the process of dialogue had entered a new phase since October 15. In late November, Öcalan said that a major democratic solution could be reached in 4 or 5 months. He also said that it was important to have a "reinforced ceasefire" and an Observation Committee to monitor the truce during the new phase of negotiations. Several academics and Kurdish politicians said that it would be a good idea in future negotiations to have a "third eye," a "reference delegation", an "observation committee" or something similar. This suggestion was not backed by the Government, which believes in the principle that the process must be domestic.

In December the Turkish Government and the Kurdish representatives picked up the pace of contacts and meetings in order to reinforce the dialogue process. After the November meeting it was reported that Öcalan had submitted a draft negotiation framework that the HDP would have to discuss with the Government, internally in the party and with Kandil. Subsequently the discussions would supposedly be opened to other public sectors. The document, "Peace and Democratic Negotiation Process Draft" included several sections, including methodology, philosophy, agenda and action plan. The KCK –the umbrella organization that brings together the guerrillas, political parties and civil organizations of the Kurdish nationalist movement said that it fully accepted the document and was ready to implement it if the State also accepted it. The KCK also stated that better conditions were needed for Öcalan, including mechanisms that would allow direct communication between Öcalan and the organization. After initially stating that the document included recognition of autonomy, the HDP later said after it was rejected by the Government that it contained issues related to the democratization of local administrations. In a statement at the end of the month after a meeting with Akdoğan, the Kurdish delegation said that the dialogue process had been through several problematic and fragile moments, and that there had been many causes, but it was mainly due to the two parties' lack of negotiating experience. The statement also said that progress had been made since the October crisis, that the talks would have more depth and be more frequent and results-oriented, and that the timetable would begin "as soon as possible". Moreover, the group would avoid sharing certain issues with the media until the talks were in a more advanced stage. Furthermore, according to reports in the Turkish press, the supposed new phase in the dialogue will include meetings between Öcalan, the Kurdish delegation and the committees established under the umbrella organization of the Undersecretariat of Public Order and Safety. The co-chairman of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, said the official dialogue could begin in early January. Meanwhile, some analysts said the AKP was trying to buy time before the 2015 general elections. On a trip to Russia Demirtas said that Russia should become more involved in the Kurdish issue.

The peace process in 2015

The dialogue process between Turkey and the PKK went through extreme uncertainty during the first quarter, in which the leader of the PKK asked the group to put an end to the armed struggle against Turkey under certain conditions. In January, the PKK accused the government of delay tactics in the peace talks and threatened to publicise the draft negotiation framework if the government did not take steps to move forward in the process. The PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, cited the 15th of February as the deadline for the government and the Kurdish political delegation taking part in the dialogue format to issue a joint statement. The joint statement was viewed by the Kurdish movement as a roadmap and an announcement of the transition to real negotiations. According to press reports, on the 4th of February some initial agreement on the statement was

reached between the Kurdish HDP delegation, Öcalan and representations of the government and the intelligence services. However, significant obstacles arose, including subsequent messages from the government stating that the PKK was going to lay down its weapons, an issue that the PKK did not view as a matter for prior to the negotiations but instead one to be addressed during the negotiation process itself. It was also reported that the government wanted to change the ten points, according to the HDP. Finally, the joint public conference took place on the 28th of February between political representatives of the Kurdish movement (HDP deputy Sürreya Önder, HDP deputy Pervin Buldan) and the government (Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan, and Minister of the Interior Efkân Ala). At the conference, Önder announced the 10 points which Öcalan viewed as central, which were interpreted by several analysts as issues to be addressed in the negotiations.

Öcalan's ten points, February 2015

- Democratic politics
- National and local dimensions of democratic settlement
- Legal and democratic assurances of free citizenship
- Relationship between democratic politics and the state and its institutionalisation
- Socioeconomic dimensions of the settlement process
- Legal assurances pertaining to women's rights, culture and ecology
- Mechanisms for equality in the definition and concept of identity
- Definition of a democratic republic, common land and population in line with democratic criteria
- A new constitution

At the conference, Önder also announced Öcalan's call to hold a congress in the spring to discuss the end of weapons as well as the PKK leader's call for a reinforced ceasefire. In turn, Akdogan stated that a major historical stage in the process had been reached, that they were determined to complete the process with the support of the public, and that silencing the weapons would contribute to the development of democracy.

The celebration of Kurdish New Year, Newroz, in Diyarbakir on the 21st of March was once again the backdrop for a similar call from Öcalan via a message read by the Kurdish movement. Öcalan called on the PKK to hold a congress to debate the end of the armed struggle and to determine the proper political and social strategies for a new period, conditioned upon the government's agreement with the principles of the statement. Some analysts stated that Öcalan's Newroz message did not meet the government's expectations, as it was expecting a clearer message of commitment to disarmament. Subsequently, the co-president of the KCK and co-founder of the PKK, Cemil Bayik, stated that disarmament and the end of the armed struggle against Turkey were two different matters. A few days after Öcalan's message, the Turkish president stated that new steps could not be taken within the peace process with the PKK unless the organisation laid down its weapons, and he stipulated specific measures. On the other hand, divisions arose within the AKP, which were revealed in the discussions on the dialogue mechanisms. On the 18th of March, the Vice President Akdogan had claimed that the government was supporting the creation of a dialogue supervision committee as a third party in the process. However, Erdogan denied that there was agreement on this mechanism, rejecting it and further stating that the joint conference had been untimely, which implied rejection of Öcalan's ten points read at that conference. After these statements, the other Deputy Prime Minister, Bulent Arinc, stated that Erdogan's reaction was emotional, that there were matters that were the competence of the government and that the plans for the observation committee would move forward as expected. In any event, the new expansion of the Kurdish delegation that periodically visited Öcalan and the PKK at its bases in northern Iraq was launched, with the inclusion of Ceylan Bagriyanik as the representative of the Kurdish women's movement.

The process was virtually inactive during the second quarter, in a pre-election period characterised by serious political tensions, an escalation in the rhetoric of confrontation and security incidents. In late March, the KCK – the organisational system which encompassed the different actors in the Kurdish movement, including the PKK guerrillas – listed the following

conditions before it left the armed struggle: the start of negotiations based on the 10 articles contained in what was called the Dolmabahçe Declaration from February, the creation of a local committee to supervise the process, the creation of a truth commission under the aegis of the Parliament, and a negotiation process that would lead to a democratising constitution. The KCK also distinguished between laying down its weapons and stopping armed activity altogether, stating that in the current context of war in the Middle East the former would be tantamount to failing the Kurdish people. Thus, in April the Kurdish movement asked the government and the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to reassess the direction of the peace process. Several times between March and April, Erdogan stated that the government would take no further steps toward peace if the PKK did not lay down its weapons, it denied that a local supervision committee would be established, and it refused to acknowledge that there was a Kurdish question. Erdogan, the government and the pro-AKP press had generated expectations and in February launched the message that Öcalan was going to order the PKK to lay down its weapons, although in the statement in March Öcalan asked the PKK to hold a congress on the end of its armed activity if there was agreement on the basic principles. Thus, the rhetoric of confrontation among the parties increased, and Turkey's new distancing from the dialogue process sparked a great deal of mistrust in the Kurdish movement, which also criticised the lack of references to the Kurdish question in the AKP's election manifesto and in the political roadmap of the governing AKP party, entitled "Contract for a New Turkey, 2023".

After the Kurdish delegation's visits to Öcalan on the 18th of March and 5th of April, the government did not authorise another visit until late May. The parliamentarian from the HDP and member of the visiting delegation, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, did not provide details on this visit, although he did note that the AKP had attempted and failed in its attempt to stop the promising election prospects of the HDP through Öcalan. In May, the KCK reported that it had halted its preparations for a possible congress in which it would put an end to its armed activity in Turkey, and it blamed the ADP for this because of the army's actions against the PKK, Turkey's refusal to have the parties in the conflict involved in the dialogue as interlocutors, and the statements denying the existence of the Kurdish question, among other factors. The KCK left the door open to the possibility that the congress could still be called if the AKP took steps in that direction, including a response to its preconditions (local observation committee, historical memory committee in the Parliament and negotiation process that would lead to a new democratising constitution). It also noted that Öcalan's isolation crossed a red line in the Kurdish movement. After the elections on the 7th of June in which the HDP consolidated its position after overcoming the historical barrier of 10% of all votes (it earned 13.12% of votes and 8 seats in Parliament), while the ADP lost its absolute majority (although it was still the party with the most votes: 40.87% and 258 seats out of 550), the Kurdish movement issued a call to resume the talks, which had been paralysed in the preceding months. Both the Kurdish delegation participating in the process and the co-leader of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, requested authorisation for further visits to Öcalan, the resumption of talks and a push for the issues on the table, such as the establishment of the local supervision committee.

The dialogue process in Turkey remained inactive during the third quarter, in a context characterised by a serious deterioration in security and the political and social climate. In July, the PKK put an end to its unilateral ceasefire since 2013, with an escalation in violent incidents described as retaliation for the attack on Suruç, which it blamed on the AKP, and the military and police campaign against the PKK which the government launched in late July, which affected non-military actors in the Kurdish movement. In view of the grave deterioration in the situation, there were calls to resume the talks and put an end to violence. They included the call by the co-leader of the Kurdish HDP party, Selahattin Demirtas, asking the government and the PKK to put an end to violence with no conditions. The PKK warned that it would not take unilateral steps after its previous experiences and noted that the solution to the conflict had to be political. In turn, the Kurdish delegation that met periodically with the imprisoned leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, blamed the government for the end of the talks, called for the resumption of peace talks under equal conditions and criticised Turkey's refusal to allow further visits to Öcalan since April. In turn, the government maintained its position of demanding that the PKK put an

end to violence and that it disarm. The PKK and the government blamed each other for the failure in the dialogue process. The security situation continued to deteriorate in September, which led to further calls from the HDP for a ceasefire and a return to talks.

In an attack described as the most severe in the history of Turkey, around 100 people died and several hundred were wounded from a double explosion on the 10th of October, before the start of a demonstration in Ankara demanding peace talks and an end to the conflict. The march, which had been called by several unions and NGOs and had the support of the pro-Kurdish HDP party, was attended by many sympathisers and politicians from the Kurdish movement. The government and the Turkish president described the attack as a collective terrorist act and pointed the finger at ISIS, the PKK, the Kurdish forces in Syria and the Syrian regime, while the opposition parties and analysts mentioned ISIS (the HDP primarily blamed the government in connivance with ISIS) and accused the government of a lack of security measures despite the fact that it had information on the presence of pro-ISIS cells in Turkey. In this sense, despite the information blackout imposed by the authorities, information was reported on the family ties between one of the purported masterminds and the perpetrator of the July attack against a Kurdish cultural centre in Suruç (33 deaths and more than 100 injured), as well as ties with the purported author of the attack against an HDP election rally (four deaths). The attack caused a great deal of consternation and took place in a context of a dire decline in the political, social and security climate and rising authoritarianism in the preceding months. Despite the huge impact of the attack on the Kurdish movement, the same day as the attack the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire, a measure planned earlier, stating that it was thus responding to the calls for such a move with the goal of facilitating the elections scheduled for the 1st of November, and as a sign of its desire for the democratisation, peace and stability of Turkey. The government rejected the PKK's ceasefire and continued its military and police campaign against the Kurdish movement, which it had relaunched in late July, including aerial attacks in Turkey and northern Iraq. In October, there were further special operations in cities in the east and southeast of the country, with curfew measures and serious impacts on the civilian population, as well as in several districts in Diyarbakir and in Nusaybin (Mardin). There were also clashes between the security forces and the PKK, with several dozens of mortal victims, although the tallies varied depending on the sources. Among the most serious incidents, 14 PKK members died in the army's bombardments on areas near Lice (southeast) on the 10th of October, according to the security forces. In turn, 14 agents were wounded in a guerrilla attack against a military post in Van early in the month. Likewise, the large-scale arrests against the Kurdish movement continued.

In December the war situation worsened in the Kurdish areas of south-eastern Turkey due to the increasing number and intensification of special operations by security forces laying siege to urban centres, with measures such as prolonged curfews and large scale military deployment (10,000 soldiers and special forces, backed by tanks and artillery), while Kurdish militias maintained their strategy of presenting an armed challenge within the cities. The Kurdish movement, including political parties and organisations, and political representatives such as the co-chairperson of the Kurdish party HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, supported the declaration of autonomy and legitimised the urban insurgency. Demirtas declared during the DTK conference that Kurds had already decided if they wanted to live under tyranny or autonomy, that in the next century Kurdistan would be a reality and the Kurdish people would have their own independent state, the federal state, cantons or autonomous regions. According to police figures for December, some 100,000 people had been displaced by violence. Meanwhile, the PKK urged the Kurdish population not to move from their homes. According to the army, 261 PKK members were killed in the December operations. The pro-Kurdish party HDP calculated 60 civilian deaths in the recent operations and 200 civilian deaths since the start of the military campaign in late July. On the other hand, according to the Turkish presidency, 3,100 PKK rebels were killed in 2015 inside and outside Turkey. The PKK admitted to having suffered 220 losses during the year and stated that 1,544 members of the security forces had died. In turn, the armed Kurdish group TAK — which some experts define as a PKK proxy group — announced at the end of the year the launching of an offensive campaign against the state and its "collaborators" throughout the territory, in retaliation for the military operations in the southeast, also issuing a warning to

airlines and tourists. TAK claimed responsibility for an attack on an international airport in Istanbul later in the month, which killed one worker and injured another. Meanwhile, political tension between the government and the Kurdish movement also escalated. The pro-Kurdish platform DTK adopted a statement endorsing the declarations of “democratic autonomy” that various areas of the Southeast had made over previous months, and stated that the solution to the Kurdish issue could only come through political changes, maintaining as key points the restarting of peace talks and the freedom of Öcalan. In turn, the document contained 14 points which included the call for the formation of autonomous regions, made up of one or more provinces, governed by organs of self-rule. The Turkish government maintained in December that it would continue operations against the PKK and criticised the Kurdish movement’s statements. In late December, Murat Karayilan, a member of the PKK executive, declared that the solution to the conflict depended on the release of Öcalan and autonomy for the Kurdish people, and that he would not accept any other solution. In this situation of violence, the EU’s European External Action Service spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic, insisted that the only way to resolve the Kurdish conflict in Turkey was to resume the peace process. She also said that the EU was ready to support all efforts to reach a positive outcome.

Most significant events of the year

- The PKK leader, Öcalan, called on the group to end the armed struggle against Turkey under certain conditions. He called on the PKK to hold a congress to discuss an end to the armed struggle and determine the political and social strategies appropriate for a new period.
- President Erdogan said on several occasions between late March and April that the government would take no more steps towards peace if the PKK did not lay down its arms; he denied that an oversight committee was going to be created and denied the existence of a Kurdish question.
- Following the elections on 7 June, in which the HDP consolidated its position after overcoming the historic barrier of 10% of votes (it obtained 13.12% of the votes and 80 seats) and the AKP lost its absolute majority, but continued to be the largest party (40.87% and 258 seats out of 550), the Kurdish movement called for the resumption of dialogue.
- The PKK ended its unilateral ceasefire in operation since 2013, with an escalation of acts of violence.
- The very day of the ISIS terrorist attack in Ankara, which caused around a hundred deaths, the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire, a measure it had planned previously. On 5 November the PKK announced the end of the unilateral ceasefire declared on 10 October.
- In the parliamentary election of 1 November, the ruling AKP won 317 of the 550 seats (up from 258 in June) and 49.5% of the vote (40.8% in June), interpreted by the media as a landslide victory. The pro-Kurdish party fell from 13.12% of the vote in June (80 seats) to 10.7% (59 seats), keeping its parliamentary representation, but suffering a significant loss of support.

Causes of crises during the year

- The Turkish president stated he could not take any further steps within the framework of the peace process with the PKK unless this organisation renounced arms and he demanded concrete measures.
- Fractures within the government concerning the negotiations.
- Pre election context of severe political tension, intensification of confrontational rhetoric and security incidents.
- President Erdogan denied the existence of a Kurdish question.
- The KCK reported in May that it had terminated the preparation of a possible conference

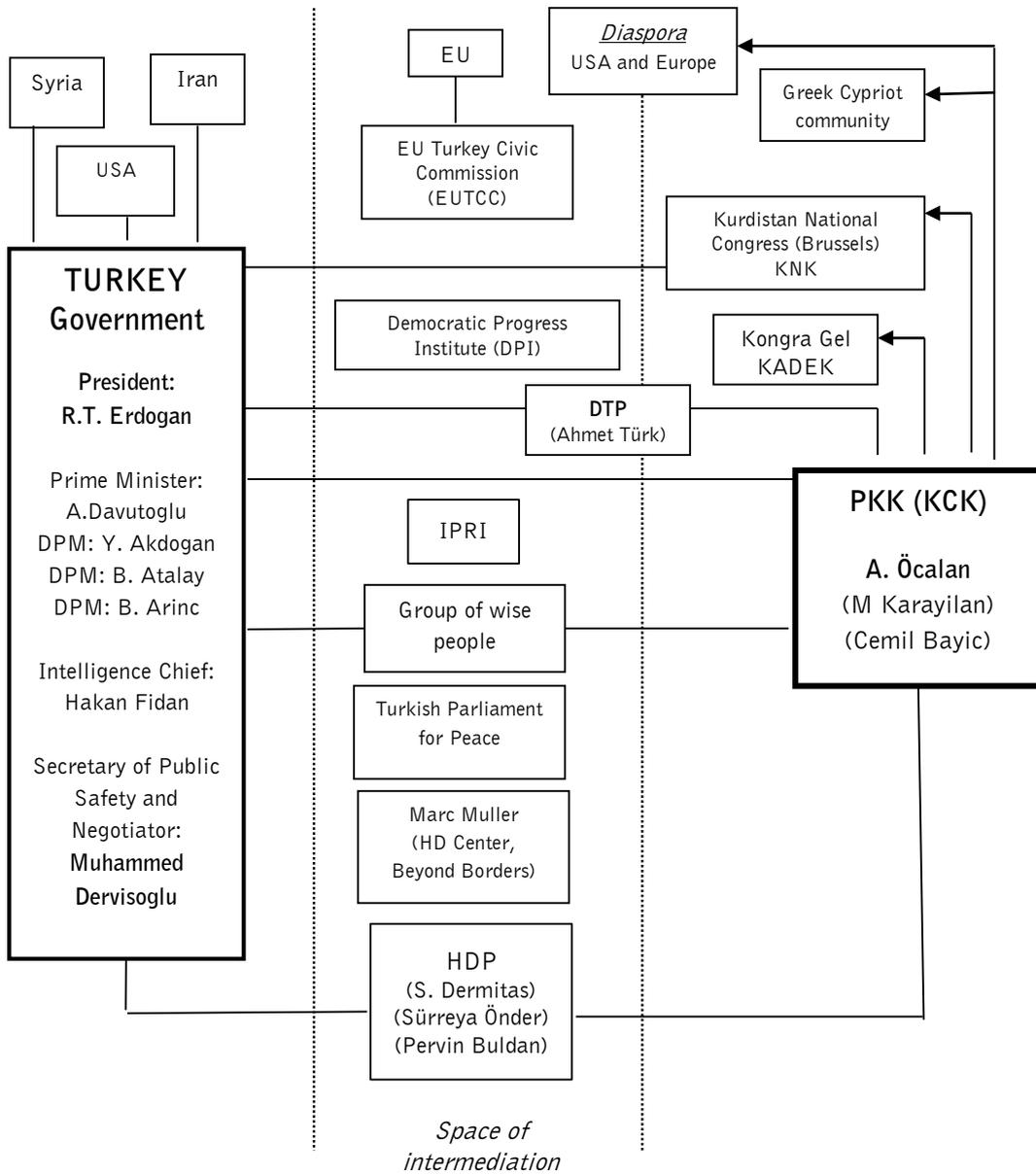
for bringing to an end to its armed activity in Turkey.

- The PKK ended the unilateral ceasefire it had declared in 2013, with an escalation of acts of violence. It subsequently declared a new ceasefire.
- The ISIS bombing in Ankara, which killed a hundred people, and which the Government initially tried to attribute to the PKK along with other terrorist groups.
- On 5 November the PKK announced the end of its unilateral ceasefire declared on 10 October.
- Kurdish militias continued their strategy of armed confrontation within the cities, and the state strongly suppressed this strategy.

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Main parties involved in the process



UKRAINE

Context of the conflict

In the nineteenth century most of Ukraine was integrated into the Russian Empire, and the rest full under Austro-Hungarian control. After a period of wars and several attempts to gain independence, in 1922 Ukraine became one of the founding republics of the Soviet Union. The territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was enlarged toward the west shortly before and after World War II and again in 1954 with the transfer of Crimea, which became part of the Ukrainian SSR. Ukraine gained its independence after the Soviet Union broke up in 1991. After independence, Ukraine declared itself a neutral country. The country maintained a limited military alliance with Russia and

other CIS countries and a partnership with NATO since 1994. It inherited a large military apparatus from the USSR, but it significantly reduced its conventional arsenal, and the nuclear weapons were given to Russia. In the 2000s the Government was leaning towards NATO and greater cooperation with the alliance was established with the signing of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan in 2002. It was later agreed that the issue of joining NATO should be decided in the future by way of a national referendum.

In 2004 the pro-Russian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich won the presidential elections. The results triggered public demonstration in support of the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, who wanted to challenge the results and staged a peaceful revolution that brought Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko to power and forced Yanukovich into the opposition. However, in 2006 Yanukovich became prime minister once again until the 2007 elections to the Ukrainian Parliament brought Tymoshenko back as prime minister. On February 25, 2010 Yanukovich once again became the president of Ukraine, but beginning in late 2012 the country went through a critical period between the Government and protesters who did not accept the change of political model that was approved following Yanukovich's re-election, a model that was more presidential and equally corrupt. On November 21, 2013 President Yanukovich suspended the signing of the Association and the Free Trade Agreements with the European Union, which triggered a wave of permanent demonstrations and riots, known as Euromaidan, that was launched by supporters of strengthening ties with the EU. In mid January 2014 the Government approved a new law criminalizing protests and placed limits on basic rights. This sparked clashes with the police and culminated in the dismissal of the Ukrainian president, who sought refuge in Russia. This led to a clash between the easternmost pro-Russian provinces and the western ones, which were a mix of different groups in favour of joining the EU (including nationalists on the extreme right). The fighting caused over 2,600 deaths until August 2014, and a million displaced persons

The Donbass region represents 15% of the population of Ukraine, 16% of GDP, 25% of the industrial production and 27% of the exports. Both Ukraine and Western Europe depend heavily on Soviet gas and there are no alternatives in the mid-term. Ukraine paid 11 billion dollars for Russian gas in 2013 and received \$ 3 billion in fees for the pipeline that crosses its territory to Western Europe. Ukraine also depends on Russia for remittances, about 3% of GDP, from the numerous emigrants living in that country. The Ukraine conflict should be resolved so that both sides gain, not through a military victory by one of the sides. This means being flexible and getting the support of the populations for the final compromise solution, which must respect the national identities, languages, national affirmations and civil and cultural rights.

<p>Population: 44,9 million; Dombas: 6,6 million Area: 576,628 km²; Donbas: 53,500 km² HID Ukraine: 81 (of 188) GDP PPA: 366,152 million USD Per capita income: 3,560 USD Deads: 5.800 Armed actors: Ukraine military forces and militias Facilitators: Contact Group (OSCE, Russia, Ukraine), Germany, France, EU</p>
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The conflict has taken place against a backdrop of internal struggles for political and economic power, the rivalry between regional political and economic institutions (such as the Association Agreement with the EU), the strategic value of Crimea for Russia since it is home to its main naval base, and Russia's wish to control the Russian-speaking space and promote the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Some analysts also suggested that the Russian proposal to create a free trade zone between the EU and the Customs Union by 2020 could be an opportunity, and they also believed that Ukraine should refrain from joining NATO.

The peace conflict and peace process in 2014

In January the EU's head of Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, visited Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, in an attempt to facilitate a solution to the crisis, and Russia warned the EU not to get involved in local issues. In February the Ukrainian government and the opposition reached an agreement facilitated by a European delegation (Germany, France, Poland). The accord was backed by Russia and ratified by the Ukrainian parliament, and included provisions for a unity government, the restoration of the 2004 Constitution, constitutional reform and early elections at the end of the year. Shortly after it was decided that elections would be held in May. After many protests, the MPs from Crimea dismissed the Local Government and approved a resolution to hold a referendum in May to expand its autonomy. In the meantime Russian military forces in uniforms without markings began occupying some areas and institutions in Crimea, which was finally annexed to Russia following a referendum that was rejected by Ukraine and later by the UN General Assembly. In March Crimea and Russia signed a treaty making Crimea a republic of the Russian Federation and Sevastopol a federal city. Russia maintains a major naval fleet in the Black Sea, which is a passageway to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Faced with this fait accompli, considered illegal by most of the international community, Washington and Brussels announced economic sanctions against Russia. Faced with this fait accompli, Washington and Brussels announced economic sanctions to Russia and, in a military move that harkened back to the Cold War, NATO deployed troops in several of the former Soviet states as a deterrent. The United States pledged 730 million euros in investments to increase military exercises, training, equipment and the presence of American troops in Central and Eastern European countries, without considering that Russia could see the plan as either a threat to its security or a provocation. At the same time, the Russian speaking majority in the eastern regions of Ukraine created self-defence groups and a popular movement that defied Kiev. In April the Donetsk region created the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. In the middle of this month, the U.S., the EU, Russia Foreign Affairs Ministers and the interim government of Ukraine reached an agreement that included the following stipulations: all illegal groups must disarm, all seized buildings and public squares must be evacuated, a Constitution will be drafted with greater powers for the regions and the OSCE will oversee the implementation. As the tension mounted the U.S. and the EU announced new sanctions against Russia in late April.

The U.S. reported in late May that Russia had withdrawn most of its troops from the border with Ukraine. Several European countries feared that if Moscow made good on its threat to cut gas supplies it could have an impact on energy security, given their dependence on Russian gas. In parallel, the authorities of the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk held referendums on self-rule and the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of independence. The votes were not authorized by Kiev and no independent observers were present. On May 25 Ukrainian businessman Petro Poroshenko won the Ukraine presidential elections, which could not be held in several constituencies in the East. The Russian president said that any agreement between Ukraine and the EU would result in restrictions on Ukrainian imports, especially gas.

In early June the OSCE appointed Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini as its representative in Ukraine. She replaced Wolfgang Ischinger, also a Swiss diplomat, who held the position for only one month. The appointment was welcomed by Russia because the expert negotiator was very knowledgeable about the region. At about the same time the G7 held a summit in Brussels and for the first time in 17 years Russia was not invited. During the meeting the group threatened

Putin with more sanctions. However, Putin was invited to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings. On June 20, after two phone calls to President Putin, Poroshenko announced a peace plan ("Steps towards a peaceful resolution of the situation in the Ukrainian regions of the East") to reach a settlement on the conflict. The plan included a unilateral ceasefire by the Ukrainians until June 27, the disarmament of the rebels, the creation of a 10 Kms. "buffer zone" on the Russian border, early parliamentary and local elections in the regions, the return to normal activity by the local government bodies occupied by pro-Russian troops, a constitutional amendment to decentralize power (although he rejected a federal system), consultation with local leaders regarding who should be appointed governor (but he did not offer the regions the right to choose their own administrative leaders) and a guarantee that Russian could be spoken in the Eastern regions. He also announced an amnesty for the combatants who had not committed violent crimes and the establishment of humanitarian corridors so that they could go to Russia. Poroshenko also said that Crimea would once again come under Ukrainian sovereignty. Putin accepted the peace plan and ceasefire proposed by Poroshenko, and he refused to recognize the independence of the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, but he pressed Ukraine to become a federation with local leaders and the right to create their own laws and establish independent trade relations with nations like Russia. He also discussed the peace plan with President Obama. The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, said that the plan lacked a proposal to start a dialogue and it was a departure from the Geneva plan signed on April 17. On June 25 the pro-Russian separatists agreed to participate in peace talks. At Russian initiative the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly set up in June a Contact Group for Ukraine, consisting of Ukraine, the OSCE and Russia, although in some of the meetings representatives from eastern Ukraine also participated.

In late June the Ukrainian leader had a telephone conversation with Putin to make sure that Russia would not enter the Ukraine and would not provide military equipment to the pro-Russian forces. Poroshenko said that Ukraine was fully meeting its commitments to implement the peace plan. Meanwhile, the Supreme Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine began to look at the draft constitution presented by the new president, which provided for decentralization of power, but not a federal system. It did not accept the separatist's demands to make Russian a state language. The 10-day unilateral truce by Ukraine, which the pro-Russian troops in the east also joined, ended on the last day of June. President Putin accepted a new round of negotiations with Poroshenko, which would be accompanied by border controls supervised by the OSCE between the two countries and a bilateral ceasefire. Putin also proposed to the Russian Senate that it revoke the permission that it had granted to the Government on March 1 to use the army in the neighbouring country.

In the second half of July the EU established an Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), a civilian mission with an initial budget of 2.6 million euros for the first phase (until November) and a two-year mandate. The mission was lead by Kalman Mizsei. From 19 to 20 July the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), from Finland, organized in Austria a high-level meeting with experts on Ukraine. The participants included members of the Ukrainian Parliament (Rada) and independent intellectuals. The nation building experiences in Northern Ireland and Finland were analysed. The meeting was funded by the Government of Ireland and the Jane and Aatos Erkkö Foundation from Finland. In mid-August the German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, met in Berlin with his counterparts from Russia, Sergei Lavrov, and Ukraine, Pavlo Klimkin, to negotiate a new lasting ceasefire and effective border controls. At the end of the month when the conflict had claimed more than 2,000 lives and had produced 360,000 refugees, the Government of Finland, with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and IMEMO Moscow, brought together in a meeting near the Finnish capital a group of six American and seven Russian analysts, diplomats and academics to develop a 24-point proposal to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. This included a verifiable ceasefire, the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Mission, the withdrawal of all military forces in the east, a limit to the concentration of military forces near the border, the creation of confidence-building measures, humanitarian assistance, amnesty for fighters not involved in war crimes, the preservation of economic relations between Russia and Ukraine, the protection of the Russian

language and cultural tradition in eastern Ukraine, the protection of ethnic minorities in Crimea, and the maintenance of the non-bloc status of Ukraine.

In a statement to the newspaper *El País* on September 1, the leader of the pro-Russian movement in Sevastopol, Alexei Chaly, said that to end the war the country Novoróssia (New Russia) should be created with borders that would be drawn based on the results of referenda in various regions of Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin urged Kiev to grant eastern Ukraine a degree of autonomy that would take into account the interests of Russian speakers. Putin called for a federal model for Ukraine (which was also backed by several German and Austrian politicians) that would provide to the regions a significant amount of autonomy both in terms of language and the management of their finances. On the political front they should have the right to elect their own officials, including the governors. By then, the number of displaced persons or refugees had reached one million, and pro Russian forces had recovered and were regaining lost ground. Poroshenko repeated that his country had opted for a unitary state, in which there was no federalism, and demanded that the rebels surrender, distancing himself from a possible agreement before the parliamentary elections of October 26, in which Poroshenko would present his own party so that he did not have to depend on other political forces. The only thing that seemed possible at the time was to agree to a ceasefire. On September 2 it looked like the presidents of Ukraine and Russia had agreed on this point, but immediately after Moscow said that Russia was not part of the conflict and that the ceasefire should be negotiated with the rebels in eastern Ukraine. However, Putin outlined a seven-point peace plan and said it was necessary to stop all offensive operations, end artillery and missile strikes on cities, international monitoring of the ceasefire, the exchange of prisoners, the creation of humanitarian corridors and make it possible to repair damaged infrastructures.

Following a telephone conversation between Poroshenko and Putin, on September 5 the central Government in Kiev and Eastern separatist groups signed in Minsk (Belarus) a 12-point protocol for peace that included a ceasefire, which in the first few days was only partially observed. It is important to note that in the ranks fighting for the Ukrainian government there were irregular volunteer forces that were acting on their own. The agreement included several points from the June 20 proposal; the exchange of prisoners; withdrawal of artillery near cities; the creation of humanitarian corridors; all illegal armed formations, weapons, and fighters and mercenaries must abandon the territory (this last point caused the most serious misgivings among the eastern rebels, who said that the armed militias were needed to monitor public order) and a "safety zone in the border regions" must be created; early local elections; the implementation of an economic program for the restoration of Donbas (mining and industrial region of southeastern Ukraine); and guarantees for the personal safety of the participants in the negotiations, which included the former Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma (president from 1994 and 2005) as the representative of the Government of Ukraine, the leaders of the rebel provinces, the ambassador of the Kremlin in Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov, and the OSCE Representative, Heidi Tagliavini. President Poroshenko said that under the Protocol he was willing to decentralize power in Ukraine, to grant a degree of economic independence to the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk (the leaders of these regions want to maintain close economic ties with Russia and with the Customs Union), to ensure that they can use the Russian language and protect their cultural traditions, and to consult with local authorities before appointing governors.

On September 16 the Ukrainian parliament passed a law that granted three years of autonomy to the regions in the East, as well as a partial amnesty and the commitment to guarantee the use of the Russian language. The law conferred a special status to the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, it effectively legalized the armed rebel groups, and it permitted the rebel areas to establish economic relations with the neighbouring Russian provinces. According to the President of Ukraine the condition for this agreement was that within one month the candidates for amnesty must lay down their arms, vacate public buildings and free the hostages in their power. The law also included local elections to be held on December 7 to decide who would be their representatives when dealing with the central Government. The election date was subsequently delayed. At the same time, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the association agreement with the

EU, although it excluded the economic section, which was suspended until 2016. On September 21 Ukraine and the rebels signed an agreement to create a 30-kilometre demilitarized zone where each side would pull back its heavy weaponry at least 15 kms. Both sides agreed to clear the security zone if all mines and to prohibit placing any new landmines. A no-fly zone for military aircraft, including drones, was created and all foreign armed groups would have to withdraw from Ukrainian territory. The OSCE deployed observers along the Russian-Ukrainian border to guarantee the application of the agreement. Finally, the two sides decided to postpone the discussion on the law for self-government. From 15 to 22 September the Finnish organization CMI brought together in the Ukrainian city of Kiev members of political parties and the Ukrainian civil society, including people from the eastern part of the country, to prevent the escalation of the conflict. A few days later there was a meeting in Vienna of negotiators and mediators from several regional and international organizations, invited by the CMI and the co-directors of the OSCE Group of Friends of Mediation (Finland, Turkey and Switzerland).

Tension and violence continued in October, and Ukraine held parliamentary elections. The pro-EU parties, headed by the President's party, the Petro Poroshenko bloc, and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk's Popular Front, held the leading positions in the preliminary results, pending the final count (50% of the 450 seats were elected by closed party lists and 50% to candidates elected in single-member constituencies under a first-past-the-post system). Russia recognized the results of the elections, which took place without any incidents, but could not be held in areas under rebel control in Donetsk and Lugansk. Also in October the presidents of Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement at a meeting in Milan (Italy) over the supply of Soviet gas to Ukraine. In early November elections were held in the Donbass and the pro-Russians won by a clear margin, but the vote was not recognized internationally. Moscow said that it "respected" the results. The turnout was 85% in the province of Donetsk and 68.7% in Lugansk. Subsequently a government with 16 ministers was formed. It must be noted that despite the military support provided, Russia did not formally recognize the self-proclaimed republics in RPD (Donetsk) and RPL (Lugansk), but said it respected the election results. The meeting of the Contact Group for Ukraine, scheduled for early October 2014 as part of the session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, was moved to February 2015 because the U.S., Poland and Ukraine said that they would not attend the meeting.

The National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine made a proposal, at the request of the president, to abolish the concessions made under the fragile dialogue that led to the signing of some agreements in September. The Ukrainian Government introduced two bills, one to end the special status granted to the areas controlled by the separatists and another that revoked the amnesty. In mid-November the German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, urged Ukraine to fulfil the Minsk agreements that had been signed in September since they "could provide a basis on which to stand". He then travelled to Moscow to see if Russia would also accept the September agreements, which included a ceasefire and a line of separation between the two sides. Meanwhile, Russia and Ukraine exchanged accusations of not complying with the ceasefire. The OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier acknowledged that the OSCE monitoring mission was having serious problems moving around. Meanwhile, the Ukraine Defence Minister, Stepan Poltorak, said it was necessary to prepare for military action against "terrorism" from the East. His department signed contracts to purchase weapons for 50 million euros. At the same time, two former Ukrainian presidents (Leonid Kravchuk and Viktor Yushchenko) issued a joint statement demanding an end to the dialogue with the rebels, given the failure of negotiations held to date and the Russian stance of continuing to supply arms. Another former president, Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004), represented the current president of Ukraine in the negotiations. In mid-November the EU Council reiterated its support for the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum, signed in September, as a first step towards a reasonable solution to the crisis. The Council noted the need to intensify the political and economic reforms in Ukraine, including constitutional reform, decentralization, judicial reform, law enforcement, the fight against corruption and ensuring respect for human rights of the country's minorities. The Council considers the elections held in the region of Donbass to be illegitimate, but encouraged new elections be held in this area under Ukrainian law. It underlined the need to intensify the talks within the framework of the

Contact Group with the support of the OSCE, and celebrated the provisional application of the Agreement of November 1 EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. That same day President Putin said that peace was possible, but that no one was complying with the commitments accepted in the September agreements. The German Chancellor, meanwhile, said the new sanctions against Russia would not help resolve the crisis in Ukraine.

Furthermore, at a meeting of EU foreign ministers the new head of foreign policy for the EU, Federica Mogherini, said that the dialogue with Russia should be relaunched. In the second half of November Russia and Germany were particularly active in seeking commitments, after a meeting in Moscow between the foreign ministers of both countries. This forced Kiev and the separatists to sign an agreement, which meant accommodating the interests of both parties within one common state. The Ukrainian Government, however, refused to accept the pro-independence groups as interlocutors, and said it preferred a direct dialogue with Moscow. The Ukrainian Government also began to say that it wished to negotiate in a location other than Minsk since Belarus was an ally of Russia, and there was speculation that a trilateral forum could be held between Poland, France and Germany. Later in the month, however, the President of Ukraine proposed replacing the Minsk format with a Geneva format (Ukraine, EU, U.S. and Russia), which excluded talks with eastern rebel groups and would have left Russia alone. Germany's Foreign Minister, Steinmeier, said representatives of the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (Russia and its economic allies) could hold a first round of meetings on equal footing to improve their relationship. Putin, meanwhile, said that these organizations linking Russia and its post-Soviet allies were fully compatible with the goals of strengthening relations between Russia and the EU. In this context of rapprochement, the Ukrainian prime minister said on November 17 that if Putin had the political will to stop the war the Ukrainian Government was prepared to continue negotiations and proposing direct negotiations with Russia on neutral ground, which apparently had the support of the U.S. and the EU. Heidi Tagliavini said once again that the only path to peace was to recover the September agreements. Meanwhile, Moscow continued to put pressure on Kiev to negotiate with the pro-Russian factions, which the Ukrainian Government rejected, since it considered them to be mercenaries and a direct negotiation would recognize them as equals.

The November G-20 summit in Australia was critical of Moscow, and new sanctions were approved, which visibly annoyed President Putin, who was accompanied to Australia by a major part of his military fleet. At least the Foreign Minister of France, Laurent Fabius, countered that he was concerned about Ukraine's desire to join NATO, a possibility that would always be seen as a threat by Russia, which prefers a neutral Ukraine. Around the same time the Ukrainian prime minister declared that the September agreements were still able to achieve peace in Ukraine. At the end of the month many proposals and diplomatic initiatives were launched. The vice president of the Parliament of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk proposed new wording for the September Minsk Protocol and called for an urgent meeting of the Minsk Contact Group. The German foreign minister visited Moscow to talk with his counterpart. Germany was probably the country that made the greatest efforts at rapprochement with Moscow, at least until December. Both ministers were in favour of exchanging prisoners of war, dismantling illegal military and mercenary groups, an amnesty for fighters and the start of a national dialogue, in which the safety of participants would be guaranteed. In addition OSCE observers would monitor the borders with Russia and Kiev would take steps to ensure the economic revival of Donbas. Russia indicated once again that it would respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as long as the Donbass region was granted a special legal status and the possibility of reaching a federal structure was not rejected. The U.S. vice president, Joe Biden, visited Kiev after seven months. Days later he attended the OSCE summit, where he held talks with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At the beginning of December Ukraine and the pro-Russian factions agreed to a ceasefire beginning the 5th of the month, and to pull back heavy weapons from December 6 onwards. Subsequently it was agreed that the new truce would begin on the 9th, with the mediation of Russia and the OSCE, causing a further one-week delay. On the 5th the Ukrainian President

declared a "day of silence" in eastern Ukraine. Using a "carrot and stick" approach, Russia shelved the project to build a pipeline that was crucial for southern Europe, called "South Stream", because of the "unconstructive" position of the European Commission. Moscow chose Turkey as alternative in addition to lowering the price of gas to this country. The NATO foreign ministers, meanwhile, backed Ukraine and "strongly condemned Russia's continued and deliberate destabilization of eastern Ukraine", leaving aside their ability to act as a mediator. The ministers agreed to create four trust funds to modernize the Ukrainian Armed Forces. NATO launched into a classical military deterrence approach and approved the creation of a rapid reaction force in 2015, which will have about 4,000 soldiers and will be able to deploy in just a few days. The project was headed by Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. The U.S. Secretary of State took the opportunity to ask its European allies to increase their military spending and the crisis in Ukraine thus became not only a frustrated attempt at peace diplomacy, but it also revived the old militarism, although in the OSCE meeting in Basel (Switzerland) on December 4 it was agreed that "there was no military solution to the crisis." Canada also sent a ship with \$11 million of non-lethal military equipment to Ukraine. Canada had previously provided \$ 55 million in aid to Ukraine for the election process.

On December 6, In Paris, in a meeting with President Putin French President François Hollande offered to act as a mediator and said that it was necessary to begin a process of detente, verbal de escalation and limit movements in Ukraine. Hollande had the impression that Russia was seeking a way out given the damage the sanctions were causing. The same day, the President of Ukraine met with OSCE Special Representative Heidi Tagliavini. On the 9th the Contact Group summit with the pro-Russian rebels could not be held, but the ceasefire planned for that day was honoured. Between 10 and 12 December the coordinator of the OSCE in Ukraine met with the Odessa Oblast State Administration and the Odessa Regional Mediation Group to share international peace experiences that could be applied to Ukraine. Experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Israel, Norway and the UK participated, and funding was provided by Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Norway and Japan.

On December 24 the last meeting of the year took place in Minsk (Belarus) between the parties in conflict. It focused on the withdrawal of troops, humanitarian assistance, exchange of prisoners, pulling back heavy weapons and ending the blockade on the Donbass region. When the meeting concluded no agreements had been reached, except to exchange prisoners. Another meeting was planned before the end of the year, but it was canceled at the last minute. The possibility of continuing the negotiations under the so called Normandy format, with the participation of Merkel, Putin and Hollande, was not rejected. On the following day the Ukraine Government reaffirmed its wish to join NATO and thus drop its official status of neutrality. Sources from the organization had warned, however, that this would not be possible until the conflict was resolved. On December 26 President Putin signed a new military doctrine that considered the advance by NATO and the deployment in Europe of the U.S. missile defence system as one of the main threats to the national security. A crucial meeting of the Contact Group that was scheduled to take place at the end of the year in Minsk was postponed until mid-January 2015, and accusations of ceasefire violations were exchanged. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian authorities and the pro-Russian separatists did exchange prisoners of war (150 government soldiers for 222 fighters from Donetsk). It was hoped that the Ukrainian President, the Russian President, the German Chancellor and the French President would participate in the January meeting. The Ukrainian president announced on the last day of the year that he would also try to get Obama to attend the meeting, which could be held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

The peace process in 2015

In 2015 Serbia assume the presidency of the OSCE. The Serbian Government said that its priority would be the Ukrainian conflict.

During the first quarter, there was a serious escalation in violence between January and mid-February which necessitated emergency international negotiations and resulted in the signing of the Minsk II agreement on the 12th of February. The Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE) also postponed their meeting scheduled for the 16th of January. In view of the context of violence and tension (siege in the Donetsk airport, siege in Debaltseve, attacks in Mariupol, international debate on the option of arming Ukraine, among other factors), the chancelleries once again asked the Contact Group to meet as soon as possible. It held an emergency meeting on the 24th of January, which condemned the uptick in violence, especially near Mariupol, and asked for direct talks between the signatories of the September agreements as soon as possible. This gave way to urgent negotiations in Minsk as part of the Normandy Quartet (German Chancellor Angela Merkel; French President François Hollande; Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko; and Russian President Vladimir Putin) and the Trilateral Contact Group, with participation by the representatives of the authorities from Donetsk and Lugansk. This resulted in a new agreement (Minsk II Agreement) as well as a political declaration signed by Poroshenko, Putin, Merkel and Hollande which asked for a revision of the free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine through a trilateral process that would also involve Russia, and responded to issues of concern to Russia. The Minsk II agreement revived elements from the Minsk agreement from September, including a ceasefire to begin on the 15th of February and the withdrawal of heavy weaponry and the creation of a security zone at least 50 kilometres for artillery and 100 mm calibre or more, 70 kilometres for multiple launch rocket systems (MLRSs) and 140 kilometres for the "Tornado-S", "Uragan" and "Smerch" MLRSs and "Tochka U" tactical missiles, to begin two days after the agreement enters into force and end 12 days after it starts. The rebel armed forces must be withdrawn respecting the front at the time of the agreement, and the OSCE would supervise the ceasefire and security zone. The agreement also included negotiations to hold local elections with supervision in the eastern regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation; the exchange of prisoners and amnesty; the withdrawal of foreign weapons and troops; the reform of the constitution with a deadline of late 2015; negotiation on a special status for the rebel areas; and control over the border with Russia by Ukrainian forces.

The agreement led to a de-escalation in the violence, as well as an announcement by the parties in March that the withdrawal of heavy weapons was completed, even though they accused each other of restocking armaments in their positions once the inspections were completed. Likewise, on the 17th of March, the Ukrainian Parliament approved the bill on special status for the areas under rebel control, which would enter into force after the local elections were held in these zones. Russia and the rebel authorities criticised the fact that local elections conditioned upon this status contradicted the Minsk II agreement and that it included terms not discussed in the negotiations. Russia also condemned the fact that Ukraine was not complying with the requirements of the dialogue with the rebel authorities on the organisation of local elections and the special status. Furthermore, the Ukrainian Parliament also approved a request promoted by the Ukrainian president asking the UN Security Council to send UN peace-keeping forces to the rebel areas. The declaration was harshly criticised by the rebel leaders.

The dialogue process faced numerous difficulties during the second quarter in both the military and the police. Thus, despite the Minsk II agreement, which included a ceasefire, there were numerous violations between April and June. The OSCE supervisory mission also identified heavy weaponry movements, which represents a failure to comply with the terms that stipulated a withdrawal of this kind of armament. The call issued by the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine after the talks held in Berlin on the 13th of April to continue the withdrawal of heavy weaponry, which also included weapons under 100 mm calibre, mortars, armoured vehicles and tanks, had no impact on the ground. The Ukrainian government itself stated in June that it had informed the OSCE about its deployment of heavy weaponry to repel pro-Russian attacks in Marynka. At this meeting on the 13th of April, described as intense and riddled with disagreements between the parties, the leaders also asked that the four working groups in the Minsk II agreement on the military, security, political, humanitarian and economic issues be created. After closed-door talks in early May between Ukrainian representatives and the rebel forces, with the participation of Russia and the OSCE, the working groups were established

that same month with a format under the aegis of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia and OSCE with participation by the rebel forces), which would hold decision-making power. The groups are coordinated respectively by Ertugrul Apakan, Pierre Morel, Thomas Mirow and Heidi Tagliavini, the last on an interim basis. Switzerland announced in June that Tagliavini would soon leave her post as the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group.

There was a great deal of contention regarding the political components of implementation of the Minsk II agreement. The pro-Russian authorities criticised the Ukrainian law on the special status for the rebel areas approved in March by the Ukrainian Parliament, alleging that it distorted the Minsk II agreement by making its launch dependent upon the holding of local elections under international supervision which respect Ukrainian legislation. They also criticised the fact that they had not been invited to participate in the Ukrainian commission on constitutional reform and accused the Ukrainian government of a lack of will to engage in dialogue, while Kiev stated that it would not negotiate with the actors in the region until legal elections were held in Donbas. The president expressed his opposition to the possibility of federalising Ukraine and stated that the decentralisation plan would move forward. On the 12th of May, the rebel leaders submitted their proposed amendments to the Ukrainian constitution by sending them to the Ukrainian Parliament and the Contact Group. Some analysts noted that their proposals overstepped the provisions of the Minsk II agreement. That same month, there were further talks between the USA and Russia during Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Moscow, where he held meetings with the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, also met with Putin in Moscow on a visit on the 10th of May for a celebration of World War II, and after the boycott by the West, including Germany, of a military parade the previous day. Ukraine strengthened its position in June by claiming that elections could not be held in Donbas under international supervision until the country recovered its border control and the Russian troops withdrew, while Russia continued to deny its participation in the conflict and asked Ukraine to fulfil the Minsk II agreement. Likewise, Russia opened up a bilateral diplomatic channel with the USA to deal with the Ukrainian crisis, which joined the dialogue spaces under the aegis of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia). In June, the rhetoric of confrontation escalated yet again within the deterioration of the geostrategic context.

Headway was made in the third quarter, primarily by achieving new agreements on both a ceasefire and the withdrawal of weapons, which led to a de-escalation in violence in September. After a meeting in Berlin on the 24th of August between the leaders of Ukraine, France and Germany, in which they called for an immediate, verifiable ceasefire and suggested a new security zone, the Ukrainian government and rebel authorities agreed in late August to a new ceasefire to begin on the 1st of September in order to stop the serious increase in violence witnessed in August. Germany, France and Russia backed the measure. Throughout September, the parties and international actors stated that the ceasefire was mostly being respected. In turn, despite the failure of the Contact Group meetings in early August on the withdrawal of weaponry and a new demilitarisation zone, in late September the parties did reach an agreement. They agreed to withdraw tanks, mortars and artillery less than 100 mm in calibre to a distance of 15 kilometres under OSCE supervision. At the same time, the negotiation process continued to stumble upon numerous difficulties and disagreements on political aspects. In early July, the Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, announced that he would take the constitutional amendments on the decentralisation of the country to the Parliament, but without reference to a special status for the rebel zones, which would be accompanied by a specific law that would establish the decentralisation procedures in some districts. The announcement was criticised by the self-proclaimed authorities in the eastern region of the country as well as by Russia, which stated that they were insufficient and did not bear the proposal of the actors from the southeast into account. The Western partners of Ukraine, including Germany and France, supported the announcement of reforms but stated that the constitutional changes should refer to the special status and thus reflect the Minsk II agreement from February. The final version presented by Poroshenko included references to a law on specific aspects of decentralisation in the transitory provisions

within the constitution. The Ukrainian Parliament approved the proposed constitutional amendment on the 31st of August with 265 of the 368 seats, and it awaited definitive approval in a second round of voting. Russia and the rebel authorities also criticised this new text.

Another of the elements contained in the Minsk II agreement which was present during the third quarter was the issue of holding local elections in the eastern zones under international observation. In July, the Ukrainian Parliament approved the calling of local elections for the 25th of October, but it excluded Crimea and areas under rebel control from this date, as it deemed that the democratic conditions needed for elections were not in place there and that first the international forces – referring to Russia – would have to withdraw and effective control of the Russian-Ukrainian border would have to be restored to Ukraine, as per the Minsk II agreement. In turn, the leaders of Donetsk and Lugansk announced that they were organising their own elections in October and November. In the succeeding months, the differences over the election date were not overcome, and the rebel authorities reaffirmed their determination to hold unilateral elections. In a context of significant disagreements on political aspects, the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France held a telephone conversation on the 9th of September, which partly revolved around the issue of the elections. Likewise, the Foreign Ministers met in Berlin on the 12th of September.

The rebel leaders of the eastern regions of Ukraine announced a delay in the elections they had scheduled unilaterally for the 18th of October and the 1st of October in Donetsk and Lugansk, respectively. The announcement came in the wake of the agreement reached at the summit held in Paris on the 2nd of October between the leaders of Ukraine, Germany, France and Russia (Normandy format), which determined that elections could be held in the eastern regions in early 2016 through a future special election law specifically for this purpose, different to the current election laws for the rest of the state, under whose framework the local elections were held in the rest of Ukraine on the 25th of October. In addition to this new election law, the package of compromises included the completion of an amnesty law and a new constitutional status for the areas currently under rebel control. The details of these issues would be the subject of further negotiations. The de-escalation in tension in Ukraine dovetailed with the launch of the Russian campaign in Syria. The Ukrainian forces and the pro-Russian rebel forces withdrew tanks and artillery less than 100 mm in calibre after the agreement reached in late September. A few isolated incidents occurred. Despite the downswing in violence, however, tensions between Ukraine and Russia continued. As a result of this confrontation, direct flights between the two countries were cancelled.

In early November, the foreign ministers of Russia, Sergei Lavrov, and Ukraine, Pavlo Klimkin, analysed the prospects for peace in the Donbass region. The two ministers met with the mediation of their colleagues from Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and France, Laurent Fabius, in the so-called "Normandy format". In December, the Ukrainian government and the self-proclaimed authorities in the east agreed a new truce to facilitate the celebration of New Year and Christmas, which the mainly Christian Orthodox population of Ukraine celebrates on 7 January. The measure took effect in the early hours of 23 December, with expectations that it could last beyond Christmas. In addition, the parties also agreed to avoid military manoeuvres and minimise the movement of military personnel. However, the fragility of the new agreement was evident from the beginning, with mutual accusations of truce violations. The political leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France reaffirmed their support for the truce in a telephone conversation on 30 December. Meanwhile, in December the UN issued the new balance sheet of the war, which added up to 9,090 dead and 732 wounded since April 2014, including 47 killed in the last period analysed, from late August to mid-November, in which a significant reduction of hostilities was noted.

Most significant events of the year

- A new pact was signed, the Minsk II Agreement, as well as a political declaration signed by Poroshenko, Putin, Merkel and Hollande, which pointed in the direction of a revision of the free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine through a trilateral process that would also involve Russia.
- On 17 March the Ukrainian parliament approved the bill for special status for the areas under rebel control, to take effect after the local elections in those areas.
- Russia opened a bilateral diplomatic channel with the United States to tackle the Ukrainian crisis, adding to the existing spaces of dialogue under the umbrella of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia).
- New agreements were reached both on a ceasefire and on the withdrawal of weapons leading to a reduction of violence.
- A commitment was reached for the completion of an amnesty law and a new constitutional status for the areas currently under rebel control.

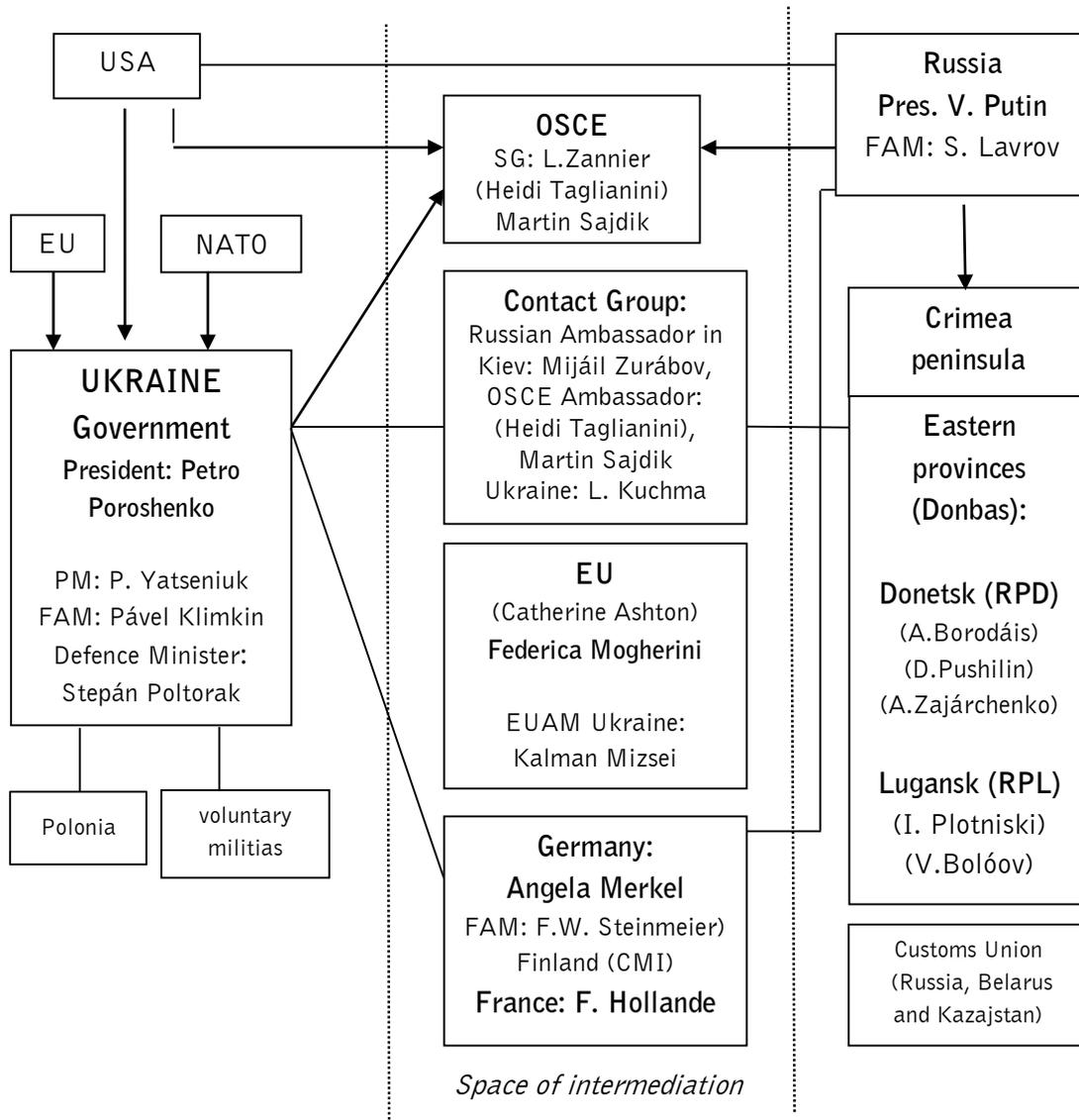
Causes of crises during the year

- Escalation of violence.
- Russia denounced that Ukraine was not complying with the requirements for dialogue with the rebel authorities on the organisation of local elections and on special status.
- Ukraine stated that it was not possible to hold elections under international supervision in the Donbass until the country regained control of the frontiers and Russian troops had withdrawn.
- It was not possible to overcome the differences over the holding of elections and the rebel authorities reaffirmed their intention to organise elections unilaterally.

Websites of interest

- BBC (www.bbc.com/news/world/europe)
- Carrnegie Endowment for International Peace (carnegieendowment.org/regions)
- InfoFax Ukraine (en.interfax.com.ua)
- New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
- OSCE (www.osce.org)
- The New Cold War (newcoldwar.org)
- UKranie Presidency (www.president.gov.ua)
- The New Cold War (newcoldwar.org)

Main parties involved in the process



b) Caucasus

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN (Nagorno-Karabakh)

Context of the conflict

In 1988, after a long period under the Soviet regime, a conflict arose in Nagorno-Karabakh (an enclave with an Armenian majority in the southwest of the country), when the local assembly voted to be administered by Armenia, and the Azerbaijan authorities rejected this decision. The tension over this conflict escalated, with open warfare war eventually breaking out between 1991 and 1994. More than 30,000 people died in this war, and one million people were displaced. A ceasefire was signed in 1994, and peace negotiations have been under way since then. The negotiations address two main points: the enclave's status and the return of territories occupied by the Armenian army.

Currently, the construction of an oil pipeline running between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, at a cost of 2.9 billion dollars, is playing an important role in the peace process. The company British Petroleum has enormous influence over Azerbaijan, an oil-rich country. In recent years, both countries have substantially increased their military spending. According to the 2014 BICC Militarization Index, Armenia was ranked third and Azerbaijan tenth. Despite the many meetings held between both countries, no progress has been made so far.

<p>Population: Nagorno-Karabakh (145,000); Armenia (3 million) and Azerbaijan (9,5 million)</p> <p>Area; Armenia (30,000 km²); Azerbaijan (87,000 km²); Nagorno-Karabakh (4,400 Km²)</p> <p>HID: 85 (Armenia), 78 (Azerbaijan), of 188</p> <p>GDP PPA: Armenia: 25,416 million USD; Azerbaijan: 161,327 million USD</p> <p>Income per inhabitant: Armenia: 4,020 USD; Azerbaijan: 7,590 USD</p> <p>Deaths due to the conflict: 30,000</p> <p>Armed actors: Armed forces in the two countries</p> <p>Facilitators: Minsk Group of the OSCE (France, Russia and USA)</p>

Background to the peace process

The attempts to reach a peace agreement in the past decade have been channelled through the mediation of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, which was created in 1992. This group is co-led by France, Russia and the USA, and it includes the following participants: Belarus, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Its strategy is to reinforce the economic cooperation between the latter two countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In July 1999, the OSCE approved the installation of an office in Erevan (Armenia), which has been operating since February 2000 and conducts political, economic, environmental and humanitarian activities. It operates independently of the Minsk Group. The president of Azerbaijan has often been highly critical of the OSCE's mediation and the role of the UN. What is more, he has always opposed participation by any representative of the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations. Since 1999 the Minsk Group has promoted meetings between the presidents of the two countries and their foreign ministers. The negotiations are confidential.

In December 2006, the self-proclaimed independent republic of Nagorno-Karabakh approved a constitution in a referendum which described the region as a sovereign, democratic and social state with powers over the territory currently controlled by the separatist government, although it did not address issues like citizenship or the thorny question of the return of Azeri refugees in a region with an ethnic Armenian majority. In the second half of January 2010, the presidents of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, and Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, met with the president of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev, in Sochi (Russia) and reached a verbal agreement on the preamble of the latest version of the basic principles for resolving the conflict. This document envisioned a process carried out in phases instead of a "package solution". The steps to follow would be the

withdrawal of Armenian forces from the Azeri districts of Agdam, Fizuli, Djebrail, Zangelan and Gubadli, which border on Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as from 13 towns in the occupied district of Lachin; the restoration of communications; and a donor conference to be held to raise funds for rehabilitation, as well as the deployment of peace observers to ensure the safety of the displaced persons as they return home. In the second phase, according to Mammadyarov, the Armenian forces would withdraw from Lachin and Kalbajar, which would be followed by the return of the Azeri population to Nagorno-Karabakh. After that, a decision would be taken on the status of the territory inside Azerbaijan, without this affecting its territorial integrity. Likewise, the proposal contained in the "Madrid Principles" includes a referendum with participation by the people who used to live in Nagorno-Karabakh before the war, the securing of a corridor between Armenia and Karabakh, the return of the refugees to their homelands and the aid of international forces. In March 2011, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serzh Sarkisian and Ilham Aliyev, respectively, held a tripartite meeting with the president of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev, in the Russian city of Sochi. After the meeting, they issued a communiqué in which they stated their intention to resolve all the controversies peacefully.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, purchases, orders and plans to purchase arms by both Armenia and Azerbaijan could increase the risk of a conflict over Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan has significantly increased its volume of arms imports (especially from Israel, South Africa and Turkey) and Armenia has announced plans to purchase more advanced weapons systems, specifically from Russia.

Relations between both countries deteriorated in the third quarter of 2012, partly due to the tension linked to Azerbaijan's pardon of an Azeri officer accused of killing an Armenian officer in 2004, which also affected the negotiating process. As in previous months, no progress was made during this period, and even the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Araz Azimov, described the negotiations as "suspended". According to Azimov, regular meetings were held with the Minsk Group mediating body at different levels, but no negotiations took place in which specific issues were addressed with a concrete timetable. In turn, according to the Azerbaijani agency APA, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev affirmed that the negotiating group had worked for twenty years and had still achieved no results. According to Aliyev, neither the conditions of peace nor war could go on forever. Thus, he accused Armenia of shoring up the status quo and of refusing to withdraw its troops from Nagorno-Karabakh. Meanwhile, the Minsk Group expressed its concern about the lack of tangible progress in the process. The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met separately with the Minsk Group representatives. In October, Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian accused Azerbaijan of preparing for war in Nagorno-Karabakh and denounced that the Azerbaijani government had been acquiring arms in preparation for a new conflict.

The process continued without any significant progress in the first few months of 2013. The foreign ministers from both countries, Elmar Mammadyarov and Edward Nalbandian, respectively, met in late January in Paris. A statement by the Minsk Group reported that the parties had expressed their support for the peaceful resolution of the conflict and their determination to continue with the negotiations. Subsequently, the Co-chairs of the Minsk Group met separately with both foreign ministers on March 2 and 3 respectively. In May the co-chairs of the Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, met separately with the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia and, in a subsequent trip, with the respective presidents, also separately.

The co-chairs of the OSCE's international mediating body, the Minsk Group, met on several occasions during the third quarter with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Edward Nalbandian and Elmar Mammadyarov, respectively. In one of these meetings, in early July, the heads of the foreign ministries expressed their commitment to the goals outlined in the June meetings to reduce tension between the two sides and create the necessary conditions for a high-level meeting at the end the year. With the talks at a standstill the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev, met in mid-November in Vienna under the

auspices of the OSCE's Minsk Group, the first meeting held since January 2012. Since 2010 the talks have been deadlocked, with no agreement between the parties on the so-called Basic Principles –proposed by the OSCE in 2005 and partially reformulated over the years–, which would be the basis for negotiating a final agreement. The principles include withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh, right of return of the displaced population, eventual decision on the final status through a binding expression of will and international guarantees of security. Even so, the November meeting between the presidents was a show of their support, at least formally, for diplomatic negotiations, in a context of frequent warnings regarding the risks in the region.

The process continued without any progress in the first few months of the 2014 and was affected by the growing number of incidents near the ceasefire line and the chronic difficulties that have plagued the process for years. In early April, the co-chairs of the OSCE's Minsk Group (France, Russia, USA) and Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Andrzej Kasprzyk, met with the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, and Armenia, Edward Nalbadian. At the meeting the parties discussed the possibility of organizing a meeting between the presidents of both countries. The co-mediators reiterated their commitment to a solution based on the principles of the non-use of force or the threat of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and territorial integrity. The settlement of the conflict should include, as emphasized by the co-mediators, the return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh guaranteeing security and self-governance, a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, final status of Nagorno-Karabakh to be determined in the future by a legally-binding expression of will, the right of all internally-displaced persons and refugees to return, and international security guarantees, including a peacekeeping operation. In their statement the co-mediators appealed to the renewal of the dialogue from last November.

In late July 71 Armenians and 14 Azerbaijanis were killed in the fighting on the contact line with Nagorno-Karabakh. The OSCE requested an urgent meeting of the heads of state of the two countries, who met in the Russian city of Sochi. The meeting helped reduce the tension in the area. In the context of escalating incidents in August, Russian President Vladimir Putin organized a joint meeting with the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev. After the meeting, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, said that the meeting had been a success and that the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders had reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue. However, the media reported that there had been no specific results. With regard to the format of the meeting, which took place outside of the negotiating process mediated by the Minsk Group, Putin expressed respect for all of the international negotiation formats, but added that the close relations between Russia and the conflicting parties facilitated a meeting like this. Also in parallel to the official negotiating process, U.S. secretary of state John Kerry met in early September with the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents during a NATO summit. Furthermore, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group said in mid-September that the situation around the so-called Line of Contact had been stabilized, following an escalation in the violence at the end of July and beginning of August.

The presidents of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, met in late October in Paris at a meeting organized by the French president, François Hollande, to lay down the foundation for talks. Hollande first met separately with each of them and afterward a joint meeting was held between the three leaders. The co-chairs of the mediation organization, the OSCE Minsk Group, also attended the meeting. No official statement was issued after the encounter, although the media reported that Hollande had urged the parties in conflict to show political will to achieve a solution to the disputes and indicated that the situation could not continue as is. This was the third meeting between the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents in three months, following the meeting set up by Russian President Vladimir Putin in August in Sochi (Russia) and the one organized by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry during the September NATO summit in Wales. The increase in the number of meetings coincided with growing concern regarding the fragile security situation caused by violence over the summer.

However, no information was provided on the results of the encounter, which is consistent with the deadlock that has existed in the peace process in recent years. In the second half of December the leaders of the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan approved a resolution in favour of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, based on international law and the UN Charter.

The peace process in 2015

By 2015 Azerbaijan plans \$5 billion in military spending, which will be 18% of its total budget. It imports weapons from Turkey, Israel, Russia and the United States.

The process, which had stalled in recent years, was negatively affected in the first quarter by the marked deterioration in the situation near the ceasefire line. In view of the increase in violent incidents in violation of the ceasefire, the co-presidents of the OSCE's Minsk Group issued several statements during the quarter asking the parties to comply with the terms of the ceasefire agreement and to start substantive negotiations as soon as possible in order to reach a permanent solution to the conflict. At the same time, they expressed concern over the existence of criticism regarding the role of the co-presidents of the Minsk Group in the peace process and the purpose of the OSCE's monitors. The co-mediators asked both parties to fulfil their promises, but in their statement from late January they were particularly direct in their references to Azerbaijan, an unusual emphasis according to some analyses. In late February, the co-presidents of the Minsk Group visited the region and held separate meetings with the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the Foreign and Defence Ministers, as well as with the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh. At the meetings, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to a negotiated, peaceful solution to the conflict. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan also agreed to study the Minsk Group's proposals for a future meeting between both leaders this year. Likewise, the OSCE's Minsk Group also called on both presidencies to implement the agreement on the exchange of information on vanished persons under the aegis of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In the second quarter, preparations got underway for a possible meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan which might be held late in the year. Thus, the co-presidents of the OSCE's Minsk Group met in Paris separately with the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Edward Nalbandian and Elmar Mammadyarov, on the 30th of June. The leaders agreed to meet later with the co-presidents of the mediating body in order to prepare the agenda for the future presidential summit. The OSCE's Minsk Group underscored the need to intensify the dialogue and continue the preparations for the future presidential encounter. Likewise, the rotating president of the OSCE and the Serbian Foreign Minister, Ivica Dačić, visited Armenia and Azerbaijan in June. With regard to the participation of women in the peace talks, a group of women from civil society in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine and the northern Caucasus met in the capital of Armenia, Yerevan, between the 4th and 6th of June as part of the third regional conference organised by the Women of the Caucasus Peace Initiative. The participants suggested that a Women's Council be created to promote women's participation in the peace processes in the region.

The negotiation process remained stalemated in the third quarter, while calls for containment increased apace with the rising tension in the conflict zone. The co-presidents of the Minsk Group (made up of France, the USA and Russia) visited Armenia and Azerbaijan in late July, where they met with the respective presidents. They were pleased with the parties' willingness to participate in a presidential summit later in the year. The escalation in incidents in September led the Minsk Group to express its serious concerns over Armenia and Azerbaijan's use of mortars and heavy weaponry in civilian areas, something they deemed unacceptable in a statement on the 25th of September. One day later, as part of a joint meeting between the Minsk Group and the Foreign Ministers of both countries in New York – preceded by separate meetings with each of them – the co-mediators asked the parties to accept the establishment of an OSCE mechanism to investigate ceasefire violations. Armenia agreed to discuss the details on a mechanism of this sort and asked

Azerbaijan to do the same. Azerbaijan, meanwhile, called for a mechanism and plan to withdraw the Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijan territory. In the second half of December, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Switzerland, recognising that the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh had deteriorated.

Most significant events of the year

- The Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents agreed to study the Minsk Group's proposals to strengthen the ceasefire.
- In the third quarter, both sides made use of mortars and heavy weapons close to civilian areas.
- In December, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Switzerland, recognising that the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh had deteriorated.

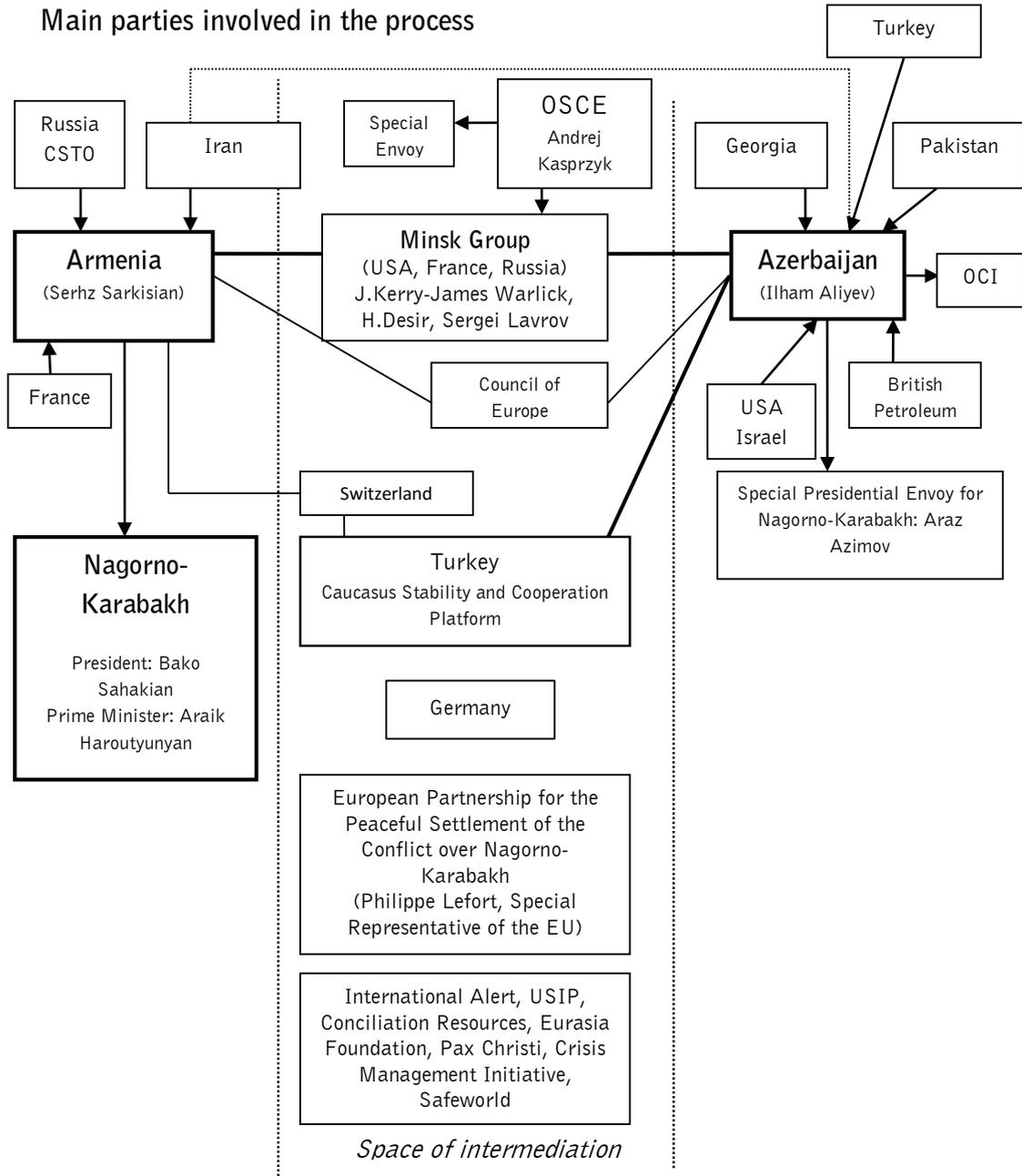
Causes of crises during the year

- Increase in violent incidents, in violation of the ceasefire.
- Existence of critical voices on the role of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group in the peace process and the functions of the OSCE monitors.

Websites of interest

- Armenia Government (www.gov.am/en)
- Azerbaijan Government (www.azerbaijan.az/portal.index_e.html?lang=en)
- Caucas Edition (caucasuedition.net)
- Caucasus Research Resource Centers (www.crrccenters.org)
- Conciliation Resources (www.c-r.org)
- EPNK (www.epnk.org)
- Eurasia (www.eurasia.org)
- Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.ipwpr.net)
- International Alert (www.international-alert.org)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Nagorno Karabakh Government (www.karabakh.net/engl/gov?id=1)
- Nagorno Karabakh President (www.presidentt.nkr.am)
- (<http://karabakhinfo.com/es>) (pro-Azerbaijani)
- OSCE (www.osce.org/yereban) (www.osce.org/baku)
- Peace Building & Conflict Resolution (www.peacebuilding.am/eng)
- PILPG (www.publiinternationallaw.org/areas/peacebuilding/negotiations/index.html)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org)

Main parties involved in the process



GEORGIA (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)

Context of the conflict

There has been a conflict in the **Abkhazia** region of Georgia, in the northeast of the country, since the summer 1992. The conflict began after the local government made several attempts to separate from the Republic of Georgia, and confrontations were caused by the deployment of 2,000 Georgian soldiers, which led to 6,000 deaths. In September 1992, a ceasefire was signed. The Russian Federation was involved in this agreement. The following year, the United Nations peace mission UNOMIG was created to monitor this agreement, and in May 1994, the Moscow ceasefire and separation of forces agreements were signed. In 1999 there was a referendum in Abkhazia, after which it declared itself independent. The former President of Georgia, E. Shevardnadze, promised on several occasions "to broaden Abkhazia's powers" of self-government, as long as it formed an integral part of Georgia. In recent years, Russia has kept 3,000 soldiers on the border as a CIS peace force. In November 1999 Russia and Georgia agreed that Russia would close two of its four military bases in Georgia. More than 20 years after the ceasefire, the situation remains deadlocked, with Abkhazia enjoying de facto independence.

Population: Georgia: 4,3 million inhabitants; Abkhazia, 0,5 million inhabitants. South Ossetia; 70,000
Area: Georgia: 70,000 km²; Abkhazia: 8,400 km²; South Ossetia: 3,900 km²
HDI Georgia: 76 (of 188)
GDP PPA Georgia: 33,822 million USD
Per capita income Georgia: 3,720 USD
Deaths due to the conflict: 6,000 in Abkhazia; 1,000 in South Ossetia
Facilitators: OSCE, UN, EU, Russia

In 1992 the autonomous region of **South Ossetia** was created in Georgia, two years before the former USSR created the autonomous Republic of North Ossetia. In 1990 South Ossetia declared itself a sovereign republic. This led the Georgian parliament to declare a state of emergency in the territory and withdraw the status of autonomous region. All of these factors led to confrontations, until a Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peace force brought about a ceasefire in 1992. The conflict resumed in May 2004, when the President of South Ossetia threatened to use force against any threat from Georgia. Days later, South Ossetia withdrew from the international commission which was monitoring the peace agreement. This measure was followed by clashes between the Georgian armed forces and South Ossetia's armed groups. South Ossetia's authorities intended to join North Ossetia and thus become a part of the Russian Federation. In 2008, after military clashes between Georgia and Russia, this region cut off all links with Georgia and proclaimed its independence.

Background to the peace process

The OSCE has had a mission in Georgia since December 1992, with the general headquarters in Tbilisi and the goal of promoting peace negotiations in the conflicts over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The mission also supported the UN's peace efforts. The mission's mandate is to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to assist in the development of the democratic institutions. Since December 1999, the mandate also includes keeping watch over the border between Russian and Georgia. In 1992, the "Agreement of Principles between Georgia and Russia to Resolve the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict" was signed, which included a ceasefire and the creation of the Joint Control Commission (JCC) made up of representatives of Georgia, Russia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia. This commission has never been warmly received by Georgia, which considers itself a minority before it. In the first half of November 2006, South Ossetia supported the independence of the territory in a referendum, which was not internationally recognised, with more than 90% of the 50,000 voters in favour of secession, and the re-election of the president of the region, E. Kokoity, who cited the independence of South Ossetia and integration with Russia as his political priorities.

The stagnation in the Abkhazia process can be described as a "dynamic process of non-peace", since there is no progress on the key issues: the return of 200,000 Georgian refugees, the ultimate status of Abkhazia and the economic future of the republic. In April 2008, the president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili, announced a new peace plan to resolve the conflict with Abkhazia, which offered the territory what the Georgian leader called "unlimited autonomy" within Georgia and which included the creation of the post of vice president, to be occupied by an Abkhaz representative. The peace proposal was rejected by the Abkhaz leaders. In the same year (2008) the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), which has ties to GPPAC, suggested launching talks using citizen or second track diplomacy based on confidence building measures developed in what was initially called the "Istanbul process", and later the "Geneva process".

Since 2008, talks between Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Russia and Georgia have been held in Geneva on security in the southern Caucasus, with the mediation of the UN, the EU, and the OSCE, and with participation by the USA, which has an incident prevention and response mechanism. The "Geneva process" has two working groups: one on security on the ground, including the issue of non-use of force, and a second group on humanitarian issues, with an emphasis on the refugee population. On the 3rd of July 2010, the government of Georgia approved an action plan to implement the objectives contained in the "State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation", which set forth the guidelines that the government should follow in its relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The government of Georgia's strategy was rejected several times by the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In a speech before the European Parliament in November, the president of Georgia, Dmitry Saakashvili, announced Georgia's unilateral commitment not to use force to restore control over its territory. According to Saakashvili, Georgia would use peaceful means and would retain the right to defend itself only in the event of new attacks and invasion of the Georgian territory under Georgia's control. In recent years, Russia had demanded that Georgia sign agreements not to use force with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while Georgia defended the need for a non-aggression pact with Russia, which it regarded as the main actor in the conflict. In the more recent years, Russia had come to defend unilateral declarations not to use force, although it had discarded the possibility of adopting a measure of this kind itself, as it was asking Georgia to do. In December, the authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia announced their willingness to pledge not to use force, claiming that they would not use force against Georgia, its people, its territory or its armed forces. In March 2011, Russia stressed that it was not a party in the conflict, so it saw no reason for it to sign a commitment not to use force, while it still asked Georgia to sign this kind of agreement with regard to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Also in December, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia asked that the discussions on international security arrangements be removed from the agenda of the Geneva negotiations, one of the key issues that until then had been linked to the question of the non-use of force, a controversial topic and frequently the subject of arguments in the process.

In February 2012, Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze accused Russia of trying to put an end to the Geneva talks by reducing the frequency of the rounds and rejecting key discussions within both working groups that make up the negotiating format: the group on security issues and the group on humanitarian issues. According to Georgia, in the first group Russia explicitly rejected addressing security arrangements and said it would not commit to the use of force because it did not consider itself a party to the conflict, whereas Georgia had already adopted a unilateral commitment in that regard. In April, the former head of the security committee of the region, Leonid Tibilov, took over as the new President of South Ossetia after his second-round election victory that gave him 54.12% of the vote against special envoy for human rights David Sanakoev, who carried 42.65%. In June, the 20th round of the Geneva negotiating process was held and no progress was made. The Abkhazian Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Chirikba, said that the format of the process had to be changed and that it currently limited effective decision-making, although he did not specify in detail what he wanted to change. In October, as part of its programme aimed at conflict resolution, the entering government stressed public diplomacy, joint

economic and business projects and promoting contacts between the populations on both sides of the border. According to the programme, resolving the conflict depends on constructing democratic institutions and fixing socioeconomic problems in Georgia in order to convince the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia of the advantages of living in a unified state. In November, Abkhazian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Chirikba said that the government was ready to sign an agreement on the non-use of force with Georgia as long as the format of the Geneva negotiations changed the status Abkhazian participation to that of a "delegation". Meanwhile, the 22nd round of negotiations on the conflict in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was held in Geneva, the first round for the new Georgian government after the elections in October. The head of Georgia's negotiating team, Deputy Foreign Minister Nikoloz Vashakidze (who is staying on as Deputy Foreign Minister, although he now combines those duties with his leadership of the negotiations), acknowledged some progress related to the first of the two working groups that structure the negotiations, the one devoted to security issues, where steps were taken to prepare a draft on the non-use of force. However, according to the Georgian representative, the second group, focused on the humanitarian dimension of the conflict, was hampered by the attitudes and positions of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia, which attempted to discuss possible changes to the format of the process instead of specific proposals on humanitarian issues in Georgia.

The negotiation moved along without any clear progress during the first months of 2013. The Georgian Minister for Reintegration said that the continuation of the Geneva talks was a priority for his government. Georgia was not against discussing the attempts by Abkhazia and South Ossetia to change the format, but the change could not be a goal in itself. It had to help achieve results. He also warned about Russia's attempts to downgrade the role of the process. Beyond the negotiating process and within the framework of the close relations between Russia and the elites of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in March Russian President Vladimir Putin met in the Russian capital with the leader of Abkhazia, Alexander Ankvab to discuss cooperation issues. The meeting was criticized by Georgia. Moreover, Georgia and Russia continued the rapprochement that began after the change in the Georgian government. Thus, representatives from both sides met in early March. In the period from April to June Abkhazia continued to refuse to participate in the regular meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). This position has been maintained since April 2012 and Abkhazia said that it would be revoked only after the chief of the EU mission, who they considered persona non grata, was replaced. Nevertheless, other dialogue mechanisms between the parties were active with facilitation by the EU, such as a 24-hour hotline, and participation in discussions of the Geneva process, which brings together representatives from Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Georgia, Russia and international facilitators (EU, OSCE, UN). Georgia and Russia showed their willingness to normalize relations, although Russia insisted that its recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was irreversible. Russian President Vladimir Putin met with the Abkhaz leader, Alexander Ankvab, in late September, after the Russians had reduced somewhat the budget earmarked to provide support to the region. Moreover, Georgia reaffirmed its commitment to promote a regional policy based on restoring people-to-people interaction, community connection programs and public diplomacy, as keys to moving towards a political settlement for both conflicts.

In the third quarter the Government of South Ossetia stated that the policy of the new Administration was not very different from its predecessors. South Ossetia criticized Georgia for not being willing to recognize the existing reality, in reference to the independence of the region. According to the Ossetian authorities, Georgia should sign an agreement on the non-use of force with South Ossetia and begin to delimit the border between South Ossetia and Georgia. Moreover, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism continued to be in force through several meetings, including one in July and one in September and an ad hoc meeting in August. Delegations from Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia celebrated the 26th round of negotiations of the so-called Geneva Dialogue on December 18 under co-chairmanship of the OSCE, the UN and the EU, but an agreement was not reached on the non-use of force. Moreover, the Georgian president, Giorgi Margvelashvili, said in late December that the Association

Agreement with the EU, approved at the November European summit and further steps toward Europe will help solve problematic issues with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia with the presence of Russia and mediation by the UN, the OSCE and the EU, as well as U.S. presence continued without progress in the first months of the 2014, although Russia called the climate pragmatic. The main Georgian negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani, said that the crisis in Ukraine highlighted the need for a Russian commitment to the principle of non-use of force, similar to the unilateral pledge made by Georgia in 2010. In relation to the non-use of force, the co-mediators stated that some progress was made during the expert drafting session to prepare a joint text on non-use of force. Also the main Russian negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin, said it was possible to make a little progress. However, generally speaking the parties maintained the positions that they had held to date: Russia says that it is not a party to the conflict and that it will therefore reject making any unilateral commitment not to use force; Georgia is sceptical of the joint text and is in favour of a reciprocal measure by Russia, similar to what Tbilisi committed to in 2010. Moreover, the bilateral Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism continued to be suspended between Georgia and Abkhazia. In contrast, Georgia and South Ossetia continued to use that line of communication to prevent security incidents.

In June the political and social crisis that began in May in the region of Abkhazia ended with the resignation in early June of President Alexander Ankvab and Prime Minister Leonid Lakerbaia. They stepped down after talks mediated by Russia broke down between the Government and the so-called Coordinating Council, an umbrella group of opposition parties that was against issuing Abkhazian passports to the Georgian population in Abkhazia. Also the second quarter saw the continuation of the so-called Geneva Talks, co-chaired by the UN, the OSCE and the EU and with the participation of Russia as well as the U.S. as observer, although the round at the end of June was considered a setback. The delegations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia left the meeting of the working group dealing with humanitarian issues and demanded that the question of the displaced Georgian population be taken off the negotiating agenda. Nevertheless, they participated in the group again in later rounds and the subject had not been completely eliminated. Specifically, in late September Abkhazia demanded changes in the format and agenda of the Geneva negotiations and continued to say that it was in favour of continuing the dialogue.

In October, internal political tension in Abkhazia as well as the mistrust between Georgia and Russia increased based on the proposed Russian agreement on "Alliance and Integration between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia", which sought to further the relations between Russia and Abkhazia and was interpreted by Georgia as an attempt to annexation. The proposed treaty included issues like the creation of a common security and defence area, the establishment of shared defence infrastructures, a combined group of forces, joint border protection mechanisms and a collective defence clause. According to several analysts, this would in practice mean the elimination of Abkhazia's armed forces, border guards and Ministry of the Interior, and in their place the creation of coordination offices and joint military forces under a command appointed by Russia. The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili, issued a proposal on autonomous republic status for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which would include autonomy but within a "united and independent" Georgia. He claimed that Georgia wanted to restore trust between itself and Abkhazia and stated that mistakes had been made in the past. The Russian proposal was partly rejected by the government of Abkhazia in early November, stating that it was not Crimea and did not want to be annexed by Russia. In response, Abkhazia made a proposal in which the term "integration" was exchanged for "strategic partnership", which stipulated Abkhazian control over its armed forces. On the 23rd of November, Abkhazia and Russia signed a new ten-year treaty in Sochi in which they agreed to create joint military forces. The treaty also included measures so that Abkhazia could join Euro-Asian Economic Union projects and aspects of socioeconomic cooperation, in which Russia would shoulder a large portion of Abkhazia's public spending. In December, the 30th round of negotiations was held in Geneva, although no headway was made. The Ossetian leader, Leonid Tibilov, stated that he had asked Russia to consider the possibility of South Ossetia fully adhering to Russia.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, there was no headway in the dialogue process facilitated by the UN, the OSCE and the EU. The 31st round of negotiations, held on the 18th of March, dovetailed with Russia and South Ossetia's signing of an alliance and integration treaty, which rarefied and complicated the climate in the negotiations, as reported by the co-presidents of the Geneva process. Nonetheless, the US delegation, which was participating in the capacity of observer, claimed that there were constructive discussions. In this round, the actors in the conflict in the working group on security issues stressed the climate of tranquillity and stability in the group. The working group on humanitarian issues faced new difficulties in the discussions on the status of displaced persons and the chances of their returning home. The Abkhazian and Ossetian representatives left the session before it was over as they accused Georgia of politicising this issue by pushing a declaration on the right to return of displaced persons through the UN General Assembly every year. However, this working group did address issues on the freedom of movement, disappeared persons, cultural heritage and education, according to the press release issued by the co-presidents in the dialogue process. The next round was scheduled for the 30th of June. As part of the 31st round, according to Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia expressed concern with Georgia's plans to develop a closer relationship with NATO, alleging that this would pose a threat to their security. In this sense, the Georgian Prime Minister's Special Representative for Relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, stated that Russia should not be alarmed by the cooperation between Georgia and NATO and that joining NATO is not on Georgia's short-term agenda.

On the other hand, during the quarter there were further meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) in Ergneti between representatives of Georgia and South Ossetia, with the facilitation of the EU mission and the OSCE. Specifically, there were meetings on the 20th of January, 27th of February and 25th of March which addressed issues like disappeared persons, freedom of movement, the impact of the installation of fences and other obstacles on the border, the status of prisoners and security measures to avoid incidents during farm work. The last round of the IPRM in March discussed the possibility of facilitating visits to places of worship during Easter week. In turn, the co-presidents issued positive reports on the use of the direct telephone line between the conflicting parties. In contrast, the IPRM between Georgia and Abkhazia remained inactive.

Representatives of Russia and Georgia met in Prague on the 26th of February as part of the bilateral dialogue process that got underway in late 2012 despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations. The meeting brought together the Georgian Prime Minister's Special Representative for Relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Grigory Karasin. They discussed issues related to the implementation of the 2011 agreement between both countries on supervision of trade between the two, which implies supervision of trade traffic through Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as other issues on these disputed territories. The Russian representative claimed that the possible resumption of the railway line between Georgia and Russia through Abkhazia was discussed, but it was an issue that required the participation of Abkhazia. In this sense, Abashidze stated that despite Russia's insistence that this issue must be negotiated between Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia's position is that railway transit between Georgia and Russia is not something that needs to be discussed with Abkhazia. At the same time, the Georgian government expressed its openness to discussing with Russia whether it had specific proposals on Georgian territorial integrity.

In the second quarter, the 32nd round of international talks were held in Geneva (30th of June to 1st of July), which were characterised by a constructive climate, albeit with clear differences between the parties and little tangible progress. The negotiation format retained the structure of two working groups, one on security issues and the other on humanitarian issues. The former dealt with issues related to the non-use of force, and preparations for a joint declaration on this

issue carried on. However, this issue sparked chronic divergences between Georgia, which wanted Russia to take steps to reciprocate Georgia's 2010 unilateral declaration pledging not to use force, and Russia and the pro-independent entities, which advocate bilateral agreements between Georgia and these two territories, arguing that Russia is not party in the conflict. According to the co-facilitators of the dialogue process (EU, OSCE, UN), in the 32nd round, the second working group debated issues like the language of instruction in schools in the Gali district (an area with a Georgian majority located within Abkhazia), freedom of movement, the cases of disappeared persons and issues of cultural and environmental heritage. The co-facilitators specified that even though the issue of displaced persons and refugees were on the discussion agenda, there was no substantive dialogue on them. It was a topic that led to clashes between the parties given Abkhazia and Ossetia's refusal to guarantee the right to return, along with their governments' accusations that Georgia was politicising the issue. The co-facilitators had held consultations with the parties in mid-June prior to the negotiation round. Likewise, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) between representatives of Georgia and South Ossetia remained active, while a similar mechanism between Georgia and Abkhazia had not yet been reactivated since October 2012, although consultations on a possible resumption did continue.

In the third quarter, the negotiation process that brought together Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia remained active, which also included the participation of Russia and was operating under EU, OSCE and UN mediation, although no tangible headway was made during this period. In parallel, the heavy tensions that still characterised the relations between Georgia and Russia were palpable. The 32nd round was held in early July in the usual format of two working groups, one on security issues and the other on humanitarian matters. The co-mediators described the debates as constructive. The working group on security was positive about the calm climate on the ground, while it continued to debate the issue of the non-use of force, a perennially sensitive topic in the process, with no conclusions. To this end, they kept working on a draft joint statement on the issue, as in previous meetings. Regarding humanitarian matters, the co-mediators expressed dismay that a serious dialogue on issues related to displaced persons and refugees was not possible. South Ossetia and Abkhazia repeated their refusal to debate their return until Georgia withdrew its annual resolutions on displaced persons and refugees in the UN General Assembly. However, they did address other matters on the language of instruction in schools in the Georgian-majority area within South Ossetia. Likewise, in the Geneva round, too, Russia criticised Georgia's overtures to NATO, including the plan to establish a joint NATO-Georgia centre for training and evaluation, as well as military exercises with US participation. The next round in the process was scheduled for early October. Finally, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) between Georgia and the authorities of South Ossetia remained active.

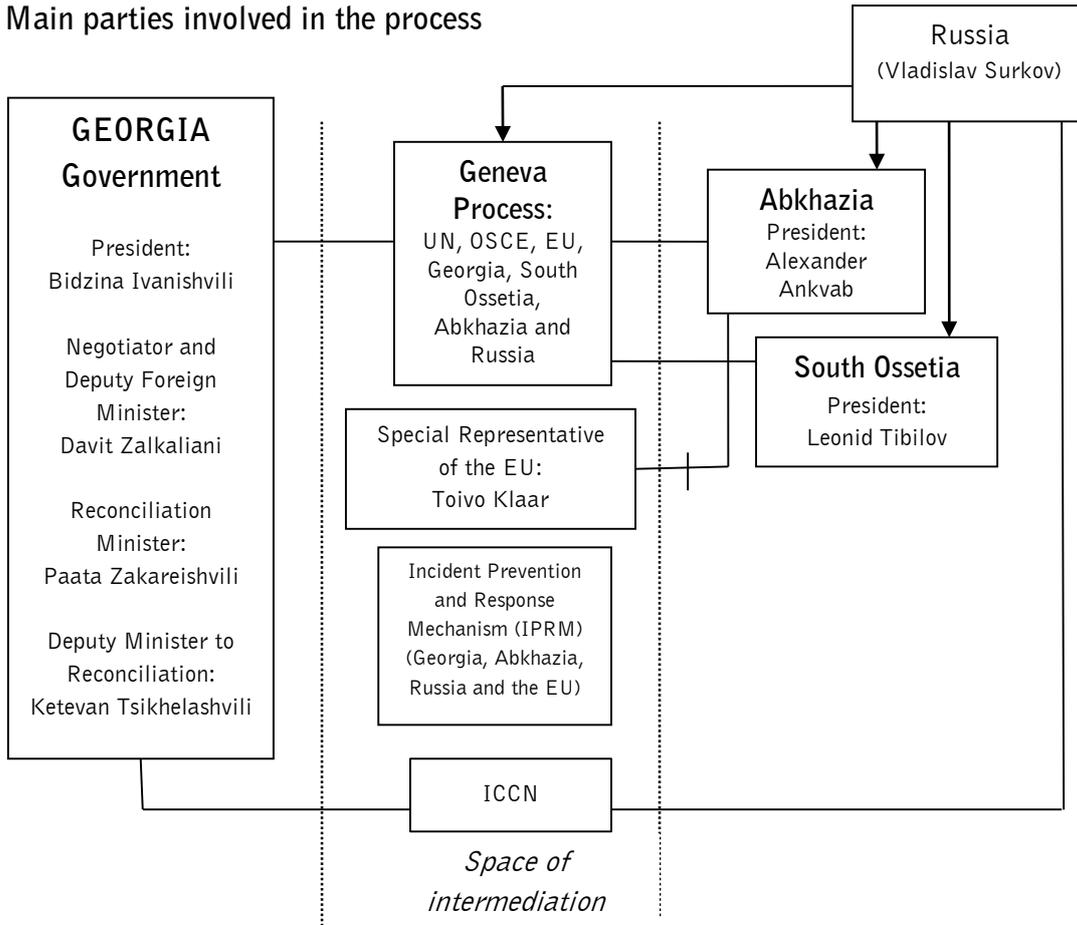
Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The signing of the Treaty on Alliance and Integration between Russia and South Ossetia, bringing tension and difficulties to the negotiating climate. • The refusal of Abkhazia and Ossetia to guarantee the right of return, and the accusations of their governments to Georgia concerning the politicisation of the issue.

Causes of crises during the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Treaty on Alliance and Integration between Russia and South Ossetia was signed, which brought tension and difficulties to the negotiating climate. • Concern over the plans to bring Georgia closer to NATO. • The refusal of Abkhazia and Ossetia to guarantee the right of return, and the accusations of their governments to Georgia concerning the politicisation of the issue.

Websites of interest

- AlertNet (www.alertnet.org)Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (www.cipdd.org)
- Berghof Foundation (www.berghof-foundation.org)
- Caucasian Knot (eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru)
- Caucaz Europeanews (www.caucaz.com)
- Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst (www.cacianalyst.org)
- Civil Georgia (www.civil.ge/eng)
- Eurasia (www.eurasianet.org)
- Georgia Today (www.georgiatoday.ge)
- Georgia Government (www.government.gov.ge)
- Georgia Presidency (www.president.gov.ge)
- Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
- International Alert (www.international-alert.org)
- International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (www.iccn.ge)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Istanbul Process (www.istanbulprocess.org)
- Media News (www.medianews.ge)
- OSCE Mission to Georgia (www.osce.org/georgia)
- Partners-Georgia (www.partners.ge)
- PILPG (www.publiinternationallaw.org/areas/peacebuilding/negotiations/index.html)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org)
- UNAG online Magazine (www.civil.ge)
- UN Association of Georgia (www.una.ge)
- UNOMIG (www.unomig.org)

Main parties involved in the process



Middle East

ISRAEL – PALESTINE

Context of the conflict

The roots of the conflict date back to the end of World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. This led the Palestinian territory to be put under UK administration under the Mandate System adopted by the League of Nations. This mandate lasted from 1922 to 1947. During this time, many Jews immigrated to Palestine, particularly at the time of the Nazi persecution in the 1930s. In 1947 the UK passed the problem on to the United Nations. In the same year, the UN's Resolution 181 declared that the territory under British mandate would be divided into two states with no territorial continuity. This division was never wholly implemented. The partition of the Holy Land by the United Nations and the subsequent declaration of the State of Israel in 1948 were the main factors that sparked the current conflict. Shortly after the British left the area, Israel occupied 77% of Palestinian territory and a large part of Jerusalem. Zionist paramilitary groups massacred many Palestinians and drove some 800,000 Palestinians into exile. There were five wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982) before the present conflict. The PLO was founded in 1959, and soon afterwards Yasser Arafat became its leader. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel occupied the Sinai peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights, establishing a security ring around Israel, intensifying the Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank and triggering a second exodus of Palestinians (half a million). In 1974 the UN General Assembly granted observer status to the PLO. In 1982 Israel invaded the Lebanon, leading to a large-scale massacre in the Palestine refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, and leading to the expulsion of Arafat in 1983, who went into exile in Tunis. In 1987 the desperation of the occupied Palestinian population led to the first "Intifada" (1987-1992), at the same time that Arafat began gestures aimed at bridging the gap with the United States, convinced that it was the only country capable of putting pressure on Israel. The second Intifada began in September 2000. Since then, more than 5,500 people have died, 80% of them Palestinians. In 2002, Israel began to build a wall to separate the two communities, thus spurring increasing criticism from the international community.

<p>Population: Israel (7,8 million inhabitants); Palestine (4,4 million)</p> <p>Area: Israel (22,000 km²); Palestine (6,240 km²)</p> <p>HDI: Israel (18); Palestine (113 of 188)</p> <p>GDP PPA Israel: 269,718 million USD GDP Palestine: 11,262 million USD</p> <p>Per capita income Israel: 35,320 USD; Palestine: (2,385 USD)</p> <p>Armed actors: Israeli armed forces, Hamas, Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, Islamic Jihad, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades</p> <p>Facilitators: USA, Egypt</p>

Background to the peace process

In the past two decades, countless initiatives have been undertaken to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine, with no results. Israel is demanding full security guarantees, while Palestine is asking for the return of refugees, sharing the capital of Jerusalem and an end to the Jewish settlements in its territory. In 1990, the first secret negotiations got underway in Oslo, which led to the signing of the first agreement between Israel and the Palestinians in Washington. In essence, the principles contained in the Oslo Agreement are the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as the Palestinians' right to self-governance in these zones through the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian government would last five years on an interim basis, during which period its status would be renegotiated (starting in May 1996). The issues on Jerusalem, refugees, Israeli settlements, security and the precise borders were not addressed. The interim self-governance would take place in phases. Two years earlier, in 1991, the Madrid Conference was held, which was guided by the principle of exchanging "peace for territories". At this conference, the bases for future bilateral negotiations were laid. In 1995, the so-called "Barcelona Process" was launched to stimulate cooperation among all the countries in

the Mediterranean, including Israel. In 1995, too, the Oslo II process got underway, which called for a zone under Palestinian control, a zone with a mixed administration and another zone controlled by Israel, with motorways that would join the zones under Israeli control. In 1998, this process was totally paralysed.

In 2002, with the conflict in a state of wholesale deterioration, the number of peace initiatives multiplied, including the creation of the International Working Group for Palestinian Reform, the actions of the Diplomatic Quartet (USA, Russia, EU and UN), and most notably, the Quartet's "Roadmap" or peace plan dating from December 2002, which contained three stages that would conclude with the creation of an independent Palestinian state in 2005. In 2005, the conflict between Israel and Palestine took a qualitative leap after the death of Yasser Arafat, the election victory of M. Abbas in the Palestinian presidential elections and the subsequent opening of direct talks with the government of Israel. Throughout 2006, the thorny peace process between Israel and Palestine was initially marked by the victory of the group Hamas in the January elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council and by the subsequent international block of the new Islamist government. In 2007, the peace conference held in Annapolis (Maryland, USA) ended, the first peace talks held between the Palestinian National authority (PNA) and Israel in seven years. The conference defined the beginning of talks based on the Roadmap, which would start on the 12th of December with biweekly meetings of the negotiation teams led by the joint steering committee. Likewise, the communiqué stated that there was agreement to discuss all the fundamental issues, without exception, in an attempt to create an independent Palestinian state. The fundamental issues agreed upon, known as the "final status", were the future of Jerusalem, the borders, water, refugees and the settlements.

During the first week of May 2010, the resumption of indirect talks between the Israelis and Palestinians was announced in an attempt to make headway in the peace process. The round of talks ended without any signs of progress, and with no date to continue the dialogue, which should have spread over the ensuing four months and address key issues, such as Jerusalem and the status of the refugees. The Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, met in Washington on the 2nd of September in a new round of direct talks between the parties, the first in 20 months. Abbas had demanded a total cessation of colony building, including in Jerusalem, as a step prior to talks, but he ended up giving in to the intense international pressures, and Washington announced, at least officially, that the restoration of contacts came "with no conditions". Netanyahu's priorities were security, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state (the refugees could only return to a Palestinian state) and an end to the conflict, without the possibility of admitting further claims in the future. In January 2011, the Qatari television channel *Al-Jazeera* and the British newspaper *The Guardian* started to divulge more than 1,600 internal documents on the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis during the past decade, in which they revealed that the Palestinian negotiators offered Israel sovereignty over most of Jerusalem. The Palestinian representatives gave up the right for the refugees to return, and they accepted instead the return of a symbolic number of between 5,000 and 10,000 of them. The Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu, stated that Israel was willing to make "painful" concessions and to hand over some territories, but it stressed that it would not return to the 1967 borders. What is more, he stressed that Jerusalem would not be divided, that the issue of the Palestinian refugees could only be resolved outside Israeli's borders and that a future Palestinian state must be completely demilitarised. The Israeli prime minister also discarded the possibility of negotiating with Hamas. In September, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, submitted a request to the United Nations to recognise and accept Palestine as member state number 194 in the international organisation, and it asked for recognition of a Palestinian state in the borders prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The Palestinian proposal to the UN was submitted in a climate of total stagnation in the talks with the government Benjamin Netanyahu. On the other hand, UNESCO accepted Palestine as a full member of the organisation in the midst of open opposition from the USA and Israel. With regard to the talks between the Palestinian groups, in April 2011 Fatah and Hamas reached a reconciliation agreement that put an end to the profound gulf between the Palestinian factions since 2007.

At the beginning of January the first direct encounter since September 2010 between senior officials from both parties took place in a meeting held in Jordan between Israeli representative Yitzhak Molcho and Palestinian representative Saeb Erekat. There was no progress during the meeting, according to press reports, but Jordanian sources did say that the Israelis had promised to study a Palestinian proposal on borders and security issues. In June, press reports revealed that in recent months representatives of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel had held meetings in an attempt to find formulas to revive the peace process. In October EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton visited the region in order to restart the Middle East peace process. During her trip Ashton condemned Israel's decision to build nearly 800 new homes in the settlement of Gilo, which Israel considers part of Greater Jerusalem.

On November 2012, Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire agreement in Cairo that had four main points. First, a commitment by Israel to cease all hostilities against Gaza by sea, land and air, including incursions targeting individuals. In turn, all of the Palestinian factions committed to halting hostilities against Israel, including rocket and border attacks. Third, 24 hours after the start of the ceasefire the two sides would begin talks to allow the opening of the border crossings to Gaza and allow the free movement of persons and goods. Finally, Egypt received assurances from both sides that they would respect the accord and that they would look into any incidents that could be considered a violation of the agreement.

The January 2013 elections in Israel led to the formation of a new government, led once again by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. The Former Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, from the Hatnua party, was one of the few politicians during the election campaign that highlighted the need to restart the talks with the Palestinians. Livni took over as Minister of Justice in the new coalition government headed by Netanyahu and was appointed as chief negotiator in any future contacts with the Palestinian authorities. Livni had led the negotiations with the PA during Ehud Olmert's government. The first quarter of 2013 was also marked by the first visit by U.S. president Barack Obama to Israel and the West Bank. The leader did not unveil a peace plan or a specific initiative to resume the negotiations between the two sides, but urged the Palestinians and the Israelis to give talks a chance and advocated a two-state solution. During his visit to Ramallah, Obama asked the PA to drop preconditions for dialogue. During the second quarter the U.S. Secretary State, John Kerry, continued his tour of the region and held a series of meetings with leaders from Palestine, Israel and other countries in the region to revive the peace talks. Kerry announced a 4 billion USD plan to revive the Palestinian economy. The U.S. leader called on Israel to avoid the construction of new settlements, although he did not explicitly mention stopping the construction of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Meanwhile, the Arab League modified one element of its proposal for peace in the Middle East known as the Arab Initiative and drafted in 2002. It accepted the possibility of swapping land with Israel during the definition of the borders of the new Palestinian state. Kerry praised the Arab League for this new proposal and the Israeli negotiator, Tzipi Livni, said that this approach increased the possibility of negotiations. However, in an indirect allusion to the initiative, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the Palestinians' problem was not territorial, but their refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. During the third quarter, and after a three-year impasse in the peace negotiations, Israeli and Palestinian delegates resumed direct talks under the auspices of the United States. The Israeli Justice Minister and chief negotiator, Tzipi Livni, and the leader of the Palestinian negotiating team, Saeb Erekat, agreed on a framework for negotiations following a meeting with U.S. mediators in Washington in late July. A nine-month deadline was set to conclude the dialogue. The U.S. Secretary of State stressed that a two-state solution was the only feasible way to end the dispute and appointed Martin Indyk as the U.S. special envoy for the talks. The first formal meeting between the parties took place in mid-August in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet also approved a bill to hold a referendum on any peace agreement with the Palestinians. Some sectors of the Likud warned Netanyahu that he would have no place in the party if he decided to sign an agreement with the PA and some of Netanyahu's cabinet ministers stated that they were against any agreement that

might lead to handing territory over to the Palestinians. In November Secretary of State John Kerry visited the region again to try to consolidate the peace talks between Israel and Palestine. The delegations met twenty times in three months. Kerry pushed for an agreement based on a two-state solution. A few days later the Palestinian negotiators resigned from their post to protest against the continued colonization by Israel. The Palestinian president did not accept their resignation.

During the first quarter 2014, the deadlock in the negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel intensified, despite diplomatic efforts by the U.S. and visits to the area by the Secretary of State, John Kerry. The diplomat tried to get the parties to move ahead with a framework agreement on key issues in the negotiations with the aim of reaching an initial consensus before April 29, the deadline set for talks. According to information that reached the press, the key points of this agreement of principles consisted of security issues, acceptance of 1967 borders, Jerusalem as a shared capital, and the issue of Israel as a Jewish state. In a public statement Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas insisted that the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state was unviable and stressed that neither Egypt nor Jordan which in the past had signed peace agreements with Israel were forced to comply with a condition of this kind. In an interview with The New York Times the Palestinian president was open to deploying NATO troops in a future Palestinian state that would be demilitarized and only have a police force. Additionally, Abbas agreed that Israel could keep troops in the West Bank for a period of five years and that its settlements in the occupied territories could be dismantled in a similar timeframe. However, the Israeli government insisted on maintaining control over the withdrawal of its forces from the occupied territories and, in particular, it stressed that it would maintain a military presence in the Jordan Valley. Hamas also rejected the possibility of a NATO presence in the Palestinian territories.

Given the difficulties in reaching a framework agreement between the PA and Israel, diplomatic sources said that the deadline for negotiations could be extended beyond April 29. However, towards the end of the quarter the difficulty of the negotiations became more evident because of Israel's insistence on maintaining its policy of building settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and its refusal to release a fourth group of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, a measure that had been agreed to from the beginning of the talks with the PA. In this context, the PA decided to continue with its strategy of gaining international recognition for Palestine and began a process of joining various international treaties in a move that sparked outright rejection by Israel.

During the second quarter the contacts between Palestinians and Israelis under the auspices of the U.S. government were suspended after nine months of attempts at dialogue. After the Palestinian organizations Hamas and Fatah announced a reconciliation agreement and the formation of a consensus government composed of technocrats, Israel decided in April to suspend the talks with the Palestinian Authority (PA), which had been immersed in a profound crisis since the end of March. In response the PA began the process of adhering to more than a dozen international treaties as a way to bolster the foreign recognition of Palestine. In this context, the Secretary of State focused all of his efforts on reaching an agreement between the parties to extend the April 24 deadline to conclude the talks. However, after the announcement of the agreement between Hamas and Fatah, Israel suspended the contacts and insisted that it would not hold talks with an Administration that had the support of the Islamist group. Netanyahu's government maintained this position, while the UN, the EU and the U.S. recognized the new Palestinian government, which was sworn into office in June, and said that they were willing to work with it. The new government was made up of technocrats committed to the non-use of violence, recognition of Israel and respect for previous agreements, the three key principles required by the Middle East Quartet. Of note during the quarter was the visit by Pope Francisco to Israel and the Palestinian occupied territories. The pontiff called for steps to promote the end of violence and achieve peace in the region.

In July there was a major escalation of the conflict in the Gaza Strip. Hamas launched missiles and Israel launched a large-scale bombing campaign that completely destroyed some neighbourhoods and towns. The final toll was 2,600 Palestinians and 64 Israeli soldiers dead. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry travelled to the area to try to negotiate a truce. At the end of the month Egypt temporarily gave up trying to mediate with Hamas, while Turkey and Qatar tried to act as intermediaries. At the end of August Israel and Hamas agreed to an indefinite cease-fire after a 50-day offensive in Gaza. The agreement brokered by Egypt was based on lifting the siege on Gaza and immediately opening the main border crossings with Israel. The southern border of Gaza would be controlled by Palestinian government staff. The fishermen from Gaza could also fish up to six miles offshore. A month later negotiations would begin to rebuild the airport and the port of Gaza, and to release hundreds of prisoners.

During the third quarter the Israeli-Palestinian conflict deteriorated as a result of the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip and rocket attacks by Hamas on Israel. In this period, there were several failed attempts to reach an agreement for a ceasefire. An Egyptian proposal was rejected by Hamas, while an approach put forward by Qatar was rejected by Israel. Although agreements were reached for several truces, they were not respected and violence continued. Finally, on August 26 Hamas and Israel accepted a long-term truce that was brokered by Cairo, which also included a commitment by Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza. However, the most complicated matters were postponed for further discussion as part of the negotiations between the two sides. Thus, issues such as the release of Palestinian prisoners and the construction of an airport or port in Gaza and the Israeli demand to convert the Palestinian territory in a demilitarized zone, were left for future discussions. Negotiations between Hamas and Israel resumed in the form of indirect contacts in late September in Cairo. Similarly, during the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, the president of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas, stated that the Security Council should pressure Israel and set a deadline for the withdrawal from the Palestinian occupied territories. However, Abbas did not specify what the deadline should be. Additionally, the PA again warned that if the blockade in the negotiations with Israel continued Palestine would seek to join various UN agencies and the International Criminal Court.

Jordan, a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, introduced a draft resolution in mid-December on behalf of Palestine and the Arab countries that established a one-year period to conclude peace negotiations with Israel that fulfils the vision of two "democratic and prosperous states" and set 2017 as the deadline for completing the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories. France, United Kingdom and Germany worked on an alternative text that does not establish time limits for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, but does allow the peace process to be resumed. At the end of the year the Security Council voted and the measure was rejected. There were eight votes in favour of the resolution (Russia, China, France, Argentina, Chad, Chile, Jordan and Luxembourg) and two against (the U.S. and Australia), while five countries abstained (UK, Lithuania, South Korea, Rwanda and Nigeria). The resolution required nine votes to pass, which would have forced the U.S. to use its veto. The U.S. Government underlined that its vote against the measure should not be interpreted as support for the status quo, but as a sign of Washington's conviction that the conflict should be resolved at the negotiating table.

Moreover, the European Parliament (EP) joined the movement to recognize Palestine in a joint resolution presented by the major political groups which received 498 votes in favour, 111 against and 88 abstentions. The text said, "We support in principle recognition of Palestinian statehood and the two-state solution, and believe these should go hand in hand with the development of peace talks," and encouraged the head of European diplomacy, Federica Mogherini, to facilitate a common EU position to this end. This initiative comes after other similar actions taken by other States and international organizations in recent months. 135 of the 193 countries in the UN had recognized the Palestinian state by the end of the year. In parallel Secretary of State John Kerry held meetings in Europe with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, representatives from Palestine and the Arab League, and with his French, British and German counterparts. Mahmud Abbas threatened to end cooperation with Israel if the UN

rejected the resolution on the Palestinian state. The President of the PNA made the remarks during a visit to Algeria. Abbas said he was willing to dissolve the Palestinian Authority and let Israel directly manage the millions of people in the Occupied Territories. At the end of the year the president of the Palestinian Authority, Abbas, signed Palestine's application to join the International Criminal Court, plus a request to join 22 other international organizations. The U.S. and Israel threatened Palestine with economic sanctions for taking this step.

The peace process in 2015

During the first quarter, the negotiations between the parties remained stagnated. The Palestinian Authority (PA) upheld its strategy of internationalising the Palestinian cause and made headway in its process of joining the International Criminal Court, which became official on the 1st of April. Israel then responded with retaliation, specifically a suspension of the taxes that it collected on behalf of the PA. The Israeli government did not reverse this measure until after the elections, which confirmed the triumph of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. As a result, Netanyahu would likely form a government with the ultra-right-wing. During the election campaign, Netanyahu claimed that if he were re-elected there would be no Palestinian state. These statements exacerbated the breach between the Israeli government and the US executive, which was displeased with the departure from the two-state formula. Thus, spokespersons from the government of Barack Obama suggested that the USA might re-evaluate its position on this issue, which some observers interpreted as the possibility that it might reconsider its usual unconditional support for Israel within the UN Security Council. However, after his win in the elections, Netanyahu softened his declarations and claimed that he was still in favour of a two-state solution, but that the conditions to implement this solution were not currently in place. The Prime Minister underscored the fact that his posture had not changed from his message at Bar-Ilan University in 2009, when he admitted the possibility of a demilitarised Palestinian state that recognised Israel as a Jewish state.

During the first quarter, there were also reports that France was striving to bring a new impetus to the negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis by promoting a United Nations Security Council resolution that would establish parameters and a deadline for negotiations. The text would include a references to the borders prior to 1967 as the basis of the talks on borders, with the possibility of territorial exchanges, along with a fair solution for the issue of Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem as the capital of both states. France was working on such a resolution when last December the Palestinians – through Jordan – promoted their own resolution, which, however, did not receive enough votes. The USA chose not to opine on the matter until it had seen the definitive resolution that France wanted to promote.

The second quarter was marked by the confirmation of Benjamin Netanyahu as the Israeli Prime Minister after he achieved a majority in Parliament (by one vote). Numerous analyses noted that the prospects of negotiation were not auspicious, bearing in mind that during the election campaign Netanyahu claimed that there would be no Palestinian state as long as he was Prime Minister. The PA, in turn, repeated its conditions for restoring contacts, including a stop to settlement-building, the release of some prisoners, the definition of a timeline for negotiations and the end of the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Late in the second quarter, the Israeli government rejected an initiative set forth by France to reactivate the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, which included a calendar for recognition of the Palestinian state. The plan entailed the resumption of direct talks supported by a UN resolution for an 18- to 24-month period with the assistance of the EU and Arab countries. If an agreement was not reached within the stipulated period, the international community may recognise a Palestinian state. The French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, submitted the proposal in Ramallah, while Netanyahu warned that Israel would not accept any international imposition or borders that the Israeli forces were not capable of defending. Within this context, the PA upheld its strategy of internationalising the conflict and for the first time filed papers in the International Criminal Court documenting the abuses committed by Israel in Gaza, in the settlements and in the treatment of prisoners in Israeli

jails. During the same quarter, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas also met with Pope Francis, and the Vatican announced its recognition of Palestine as a state. In parallel, throughout the quarter rumours of indirect contacts between Israel and Hamas in Qatar continued, supposedly to reach an agreement on a long-term truce to last around five years, which would allow Gaza to be rebuilt. According to press reports, these talks may have been mediated by European diplomats. In late May, the envoy of the Quartet for the Middle East, Tony Blair, resigned after his complete failure as a facilitator during the eight years he held this post.

During the third quarter, the stalemate in the dialogue persisted. Despite this, rumours once again surfaced about indirect contacts between Hamas and the Israeli government to negotiate a long-term truce. Some press reports noted the participation of Tony Blair and Turkey in these talks, while others stressed that the topics being discussed included a lifting or reduction in the Gaza blockade and the exchange of prisoners, since Israel was interested in guaranteeing the return of two soldiers who were still being held in the Gaza Strip. Nonetheless, in August the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flatly denied the versions of the indirect talks with the Palestinian Islamist group. Sources close to the PA and Fatah also criticised the possibility of a negotiation of this kind, stressing that Hamas was not in a position to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people. Late in the quarter, as part of a new annual United Nations General Assembly, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas underscored the fact that Palestine could not commit to agreements that Israel systematically violated and noted that Israel had to fulfil its duties as an occupying power. After the 1st of October, a series of violent acts led to the death of more than 60 people – 55 Palestinians and 11 Israelis – including minors, in addition to multiple injuries in the midst of an escalation in tension which fed speculations on the outbreak of the third Intifada. The escalation started in mid-September because of tensions around the Haram al-Sharif complex (the third holiest site in Islam) located in the Old City of Jerusalem, which Israelis call the Temple Mount. According to a longstanding “status quo” agreement, Jews can visit but not pray in this area. Palestinian sectors accused Israel of trying to change this agreement by allowing an increasing number of Jews into the zone and imposing restrictions on Palestinians’ access. In late October, after arrangements by the US Secretary of State John Kerry, an agreement between Israel and Jordan – the custodian of the complex – to install permanent surveillance cameras in the zone was announced.

At the end of November, Israel suspended talks with the EU on the Palestinian peace process, following Europe’s imposition of labels on imports from Jewish settlements.

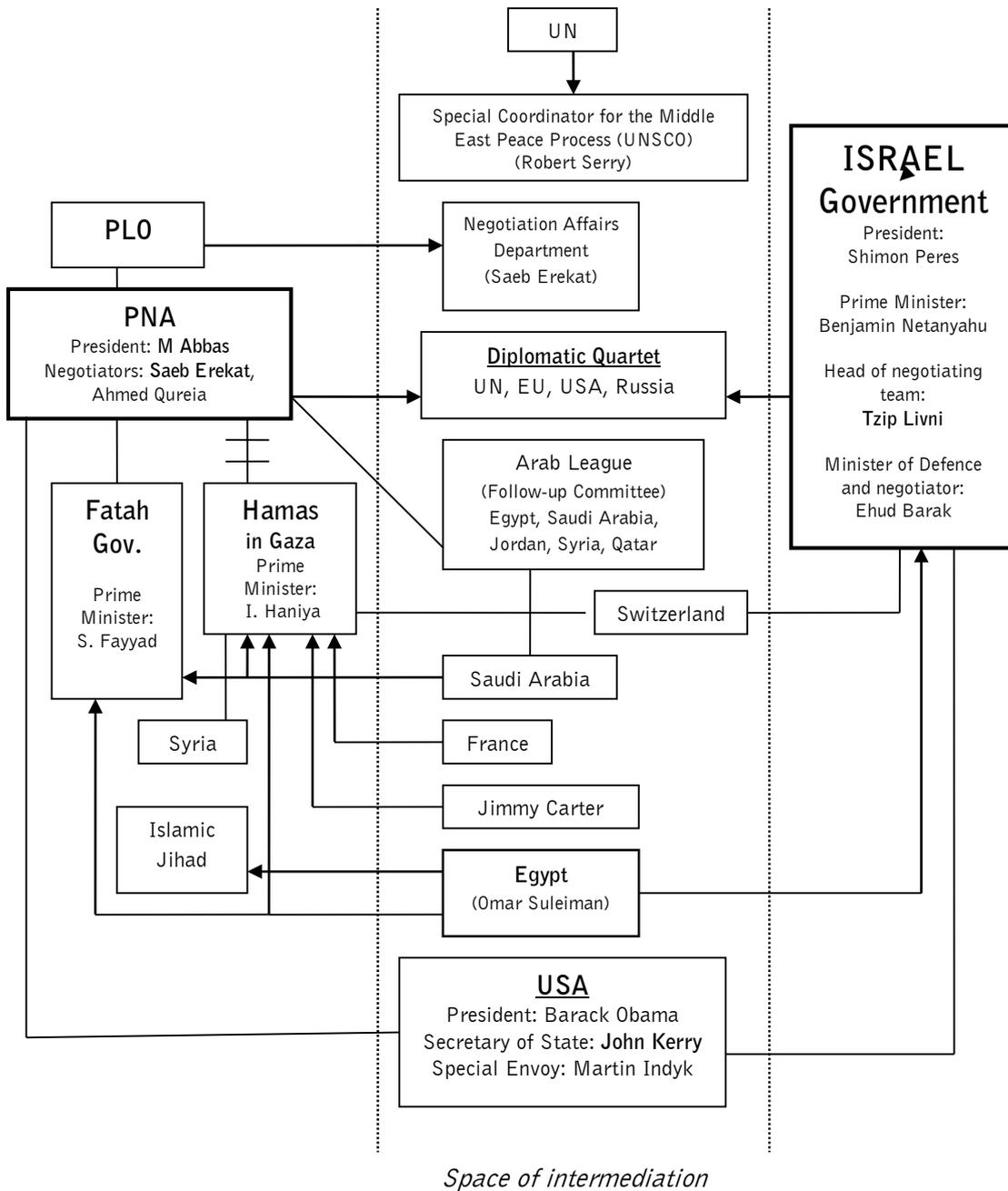
Most significant events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Palestinian Authority (PA) maintained its strategy of internationalising the Palestinian issue and made progress in the process of its accession to the International Criminal Court, which was made official on 1 April. • Following his election victory, Netanyahu affirmed that he was still in favour of the two-state solution, but that at the moment the conditions did not exist to achieve this solution. • The Israeli government rejected a French initiative to revive negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians which included a timetable for Palestinian statehood.

Causes of crises during the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suspension by Israel of the collection of taxes on behalf of the PA. • Distancing between the Israeli and the US governments. • For the first time, the PA presented documents to the International Criminal Court giving the background on abuses committed by Israel in Gaza, on settlements, and on the treatment of prisoners in Israeli jails. • Tensions around the complex of al-Haram al-Sharif (the third holiest site in Islam) which Israelis call Temple Mount and is located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Websites of interest

- Al Monitor (www.al-monitor.com)
- Alternative Information Center (www.alternativenews.org)
- BBC (news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle-east/default.stm)
- Haaretz (www.haaretz.com)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- Interpeace (www.interpeace.org)
- IPCRI (www.ipcri.org)
- Israel Foreign Affairs Ministry (www.mfa.gov.il/mfa)
- Middle East Research and Information Project (www.merip.org)
- Mideast Web (www.mideastweb.org)
- PLO Negotiation Affairs Department (www.nad-plo.org/index.php)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- United Nations (www.un.org/en/sc/documents/sgreports/2015.shtml)

Main parties involved in the process



APPENDIX

Annex 1. Processes analysed in the chapters of the yearbook, from 2006 to 2016

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Africa											
Angola (Cabinda)	X	X	X	X		X					
Ivory Coast	X	X	X								
Mali		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Niger (MNJ)			X	X	X	X					
Nigeria (Niger Delta)	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Senegal (Casamance)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Ethiopia (Ogaden-Oromiya)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ethiopia-Eritrea				X	X						
Kenya				X							
Somalia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sudan (National Dialogue)										X	X
Sudan (South)	X	X	X								
Sudan (Darfur)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sudan (East)	X	X	X								
Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile)										X	X
Sudan-South Sudan								X	X	X	X
South Sudan										X	X
Burundi	X	X									
Burundi (FNL)			X	X	X						
Chad		X	X	X	X	X	X				
R. Central Africa				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DR Congo (East)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Uganda (LRA)	X	X	X	X	X						
Algeria	X	X	X	X							
Libya										X	X
Western Sahara	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Latin America											
Colombia (AUC)	X	X	X	X							
Colombia (ELN)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colombia (FARC)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Asia											
Afghanistan				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
India (CPI)						X					
India (Andra Pradesh)	X	X	X	X							
India (Assam)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
India (Manipur)			X	X		X			X	X	
India (Nagaland)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
India (Tripura)		X	X	X							
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pakistan			X	X	X					X	X
Nepal	X		X								
Nepal (Terai)		X	X	X							
Sri Lanka	X	X	X	X	X						
China -Taiwan				X	X						
China (Tibet)				X	X	X	X				
Philippines (MILF)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Philippines (MNLF)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Philippines (NDF)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indonesia (Aceh)	X	X	X									
Indonesia (Western Papua)				X	X							
Burma / Myanmar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Thailand (South)		X	X	X	X				X	X	X	
Europe												
Armenia-Azerbaijan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cyprus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spain (ETA)		X				X	X					
Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Ireland	X	X	X									
Kosovo		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Moldova (Transnistria)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turkey (PKK)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ukraine										X	X	
Middle East												
Iraq	X	X	X	X	X							
Israel-Palestine	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Palestine				X	X							
Israel-Lebanon		X										
Israel-Syria				X	X	X						
Lebanon			X	X	X							
Syria									X			(X)
Yemen			X	X	X	X					(X)	(X)
TOTAL 67	29	40	46	49	41	35	27	24	29	35	34	

An (X) in brackets refers to a country discussed extensively in "Other attempts at negotiation not covered in the following section of 'countries'."

Annex 2. Peace agreements and ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Since the establishment of the Rome Statute of 1998, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC), a total of 24 countries, 16 of which have signed the Treaty, have had experiences of peace accords with a total of 84 armed groups. Of the latter, 50 related to countries that had signed the Rome Statute.

The ICC has only intervened in one case among the countries that have signed a peace agreement (DR Congo-MLC), and an "ad hoc" tribunal, that for Sierra Leone, has arrested three people in an armed group (RUF), bringing the total affected to 8 persons from the armed groups in these two countries. In none of the other cases, without exception, have people demobilised following a peace agreement been the subject of convictions involving their entry into prison. The usual pattern is of an amnesty for the demobilised groups, and non-interference by the ICC.

Countries	Rome Statute		Peace agreements	
	Signed	Ratified	Year	Armed groups
Northern Ireland (UK)	1998	2001	1998 (2005)	IRA (1)
Burundi	1999	2004	2000	CNDD, FROLIMA, PALIPEHUTU
			2008	FNL
Sierra Leone	1998	2000	2001	RUF (2)
Angola	1998	---	2002	MPLA
Liberia	1998	2004	2003	LURD, MODEL
India	---	---	2003	BLTF-BLT, DHD
			2005	NLFT
			2009	DHD-J
			2010	KNF, KNLF, KCP-MC Lallumba faction
			2011	UPDS
			2012	APA, AANLA, STF, BCF, ACMA, KLA/KLO, HPC, IKDA, KRA, DHD(N), DHD(J)
2013	UPPK, KCP-MC faction			
Indonesia	---	---	2005	GAM
Sudan	2000	---	2006	SLA Minnawi, Eastern Front
			2010	JRM, SLA-FREES
			2011	LJM
			2013	JEM (Bashar)(3)
South Sudan	----	---	2006	SPLA
			2012	SSDM/SSDA
			2013	SSLA
			2014	SSDM-Cobra faction
Congo			2007	Ninjas
Ivory Coast			2007	FN
Nepal	---	---	2006	CPN
			2012	SKTMMM
Mali	1998	2000	2008	ADC
			2009	ATNM
CAR	1999	2001	2008	APDR, UFDR, UFR, MLCJ
			2009	FDPC, MNSP
			2011	CPJP (dissident faction)
			2012	CPJP
Colombia	1998	2002	2008	ERG
Sri Lanka	---	---	2008	TMVP
Niger	1998	2002	2009	MNJ, FFR, FPN
			2010	MNJ
Chad	1999	2006	2002	MDJT

			2009	National Movement
			2010	UFCD faction, UFR, UFDD, CDR, UFDD/F
			2011	FPR
DR Congo	2000	2002	2002	MLC (4)
			2009	CNDP
			2011	FRF
			2013	M23
Somalia	---	---	2009	ARS
			2010	ASWJ
Myanmar / Burma	---	---	2009	KNU-KNLA Peace Council
			2010	SSA-N
			2011	NDAA, KHB
			2012	SSA-S
Nigeria	2000	2001	2010	MEND
Ethiopia	---	---	2010	UWSLF, ONLF faction
Philippines	2000	2011	2014	MILF

(*) This does not include conflicts and peace agreements between countries in which the only military actors have been the Armed Forces.

Sources: For the Rome Statute,

(https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter=18&lang=en); for the groups with peace agreements, School for a Culture of Peace,

"Yearbook on Peace Processes", from 2006 to 2015 (<http://escolapau.uab.cat>); for the cases of the ICC, (http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/situations%20and%20cases/Pages/situations%20and%20cases.aspx)

- (1) The IRA did not finalise the handing over of weapons until 2005, seven years after the signing of the peace agreement.
- (2) The Special Court for Sierra Leone was created in 2002. In 2008 it issued a condemnatory judgment against the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor. In 2003, it formulated thirteen charges, of which only 9 were effective, including those against RUF three leaders (Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao, who were convicted in February 2009). The Court was dissolved in December 2013.
- (3) A faction of the JEM (Collective-Leadership), different to that of Bashar, has had two members (Abdallah Bamda and Bahr Idriss Abu Garda), prosecuted by the ICC. This faction, created in October 2007, did not sign any peace agreement, and therefore does not appear in the table.
- (4) Between 25 October 2002 and 15 March 2003, the MLC, led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, supported the president of the CAR, Ange-Felix Patasse, against the "rebels" of François Bozizé, who became the new CAR's president. Bozizé accused the MLC of widespread abuses during these interventions. In 2008, Bemba was arrested by the ICC. In 2013 the arrests took place of Aimé Kilolo Musamba, Jean-Jacques Mangenda Kabongo, Fidèle Babala Wandu and Arid Narcisse, the latter, a citizen of the CAR. All were members of the MLC.

Annex 3. Facilitation in 2015 of the conflicts analysed

Country	Facilitation
Mali	Algeria
Senegal (Casamance)	Community of Sant'Egidio
Ethiopia (ONLF)	Kenya
Sudan (National Dialogue)	AU, Troika (USA, United Kingdom, Norway)
Sudan (Darfur)	AU, Chad, Berghof Foundation
Sudan (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)	AU (Thabo Mbeki)
Sudan - South Sudan	AU (Thabo Mbeki), UN (Francis Mading Deng)
South Sudan	AU, IGAD (Seyoum Mesfin), Tanzania, CMI (Itonde Kakoma), Ethiopia
CAR	Gabon, International Contact Group, Kenya, Community of Sant'Egidio, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Chad, Congo
DR Congo (FDLR)	Uganda, Community of Sant'Egidio
Libya	UN (Bernardino León, Martin Kobler), Algeria
Western Sahara	UN (Christopher Ross)
Colombia (FARC)	Norway, Cuba (guarantors)
Colombia (ELN)	Ecuador, Brazil, Norway (guarantors)
Afghanistan	Qatar, China, Pakistan
India (Assam)	-
India (Manipur)	-
India (Nagaland)	-
India-Pakistan	-
Philippines (MILF)	Malaysia
Philippines (MNLF)	Indonesia, OIC
Philippines (NPA)	Norway (Elisabeth Slättum)
Thailand (South)	Malaysia (Aksara Kerdpol, Datuk Seri Ahmad Zamzamin Hashmin)
Burma / Myanmar	-
Cyprus	UN (Espen Barth Eide)
Kosovo	Troika (Russia, USA, EU), UN (L. Zannier)
Moldova	OSCE (Radojko Bogojevic)
Turkey (PKK)	-
Ukraine	OSCE (Heidi Tagliavini, Martin Sajdik), Contact Group (Russia, OSCE, Ukraine), Germany, France, EU (Federica Mogherini), USA
Armenia-Azerbaijan	OSCE Minsk Group (France, Russia and USA)
Georgia	UN, OSCE, EU, Russia
Israel-Palestine	USA, Egypt

Annex 4. Women's participation in current peace processes⁵

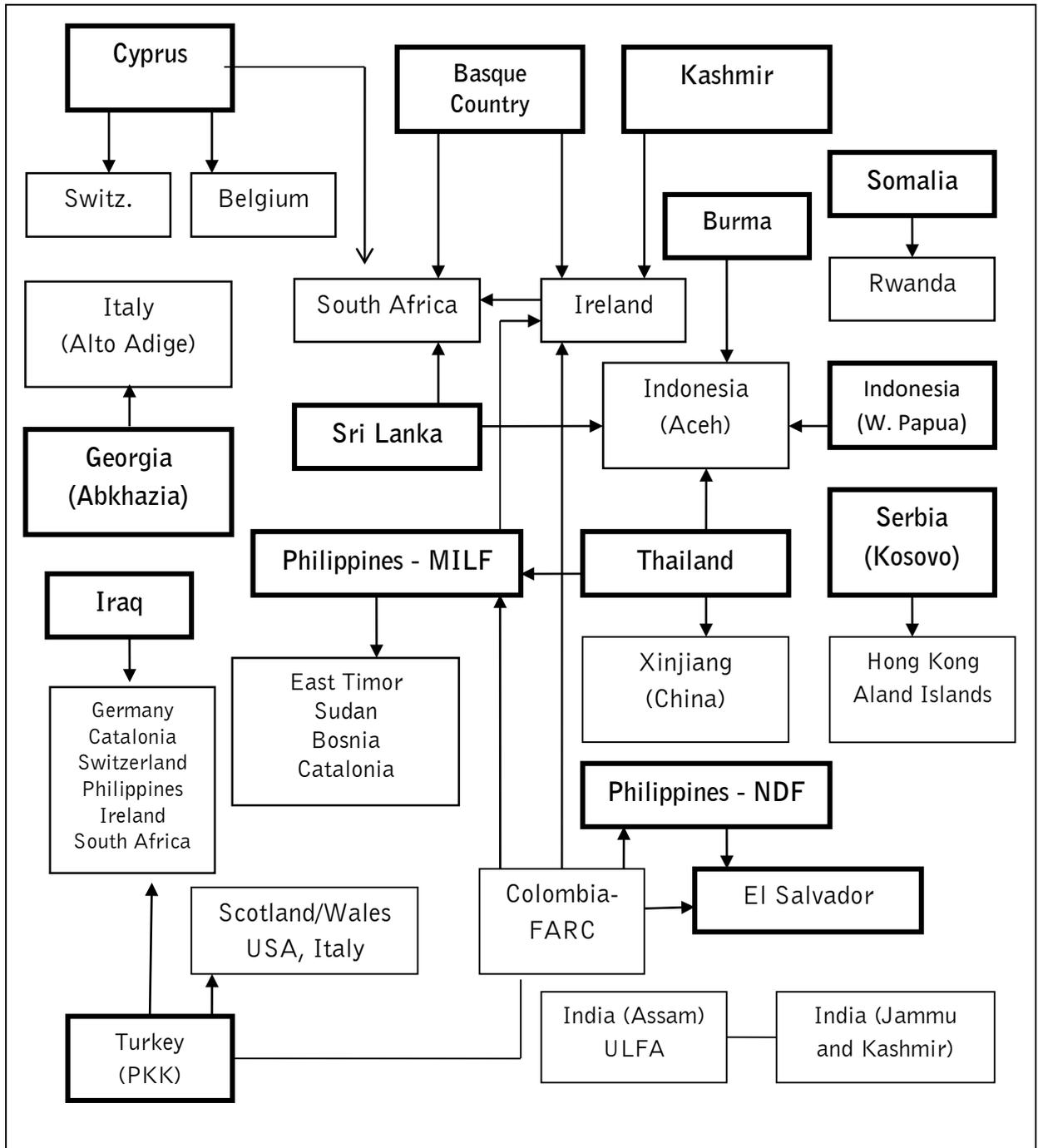
Country / Group	Name	Post
Senegal	Sue Ford Patrick	US envoy
	Amsatou Sow Sidibé	Government peace advisor
Central African Republic	Catherine Samba Panza	President of the country
Western Sahara	Kim Bolduc	Secretary General's Special Representative.
Colombia (FARC)	María Paulina Riveros	Government delegation
	María Ángela Holguín	Advisor to the government delegation
	"Victoria Sandino"	Member of the FARC delegation at the negotiations in Havana, and FARC coordinator in the Gender Subcommittee
	"Camila Cienfuegos"	FARC international press officer in the Havana talks.
Afghanistan	Fawzai Kofi Shukria Barezkai	Afghan MPs who met with various members of the Taliban in Norway.
	Hawa Alam Nooristani Siddiga Balkhi	Members of the High Peace Council
	Zipporah Sein	Representative of the "Senior Group" and leader of the KNU.
Burma / Myanmar	Aung San Suu Kyi	NLD leader and intermediary with the guerrillas
	Teresita Deles	Philippine Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).
Philippines	Miriam Coronel Ferrer	Head of the OPAPP team for the negotiations with the MILF.
	Yasmin Busran-Lao	Member of the government team in negotiations with the MILF.
	Elisabeth Slättnum	Norwegian mediator in the negotiations with the NDF.
	Lisa Buttenheim	Secretary General's Special Representative
Cyprus	Xenia Loizidou Soula Zavou Mary Papadopoulou Soula Hadjikyriacou Helen Apegitou Maria Hadjipavlou Olga Demetriou	Members of the Gender Committee of the negotiations.
	Federica Mogherini	EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs.
	Atifete Jahjaga	President of the country
	Edita Tamira	Negotiator and Minister for Dialogue
	Nina Shtanski	Negotiator for the region of Transdniestria.
	Turkey (PKK)	Ceylan Bagriyanik
Ukraine	Heidi Taglianini	OSCE Ambassador
	Federica Mogherini	EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs.
	Angela Merkel	German Chancellor.
Georgia	Ktevan Tshikhelashvili	Vice Minister for Reconciliation.

The 35 women cited here represent 10.3% of all people mentioned with their full name in the tables of actors in this Yearbook (339). If one were to include all the posts of the large number of associations listed in the tables of actors in which the representative has not been mentioned, this percentage would probably fall by more than half.

⁵ This includes, exclusively, the names that appear in the tables of actors, even if they have not been present throughout the year. Hence, the huge numbers of women and women's groups involved in peace or peacebuilding movements do not appear here. Although the sample is not complete, it is significant, in terms of showing that there are still very few women who hold positions in the decision-making spaces of peace processes.

Annex 5. Tell me what it was like... The mirrors of peace

Even though all the conflicts and their respective peace processes or negotiations are different, there tend to be certain aspects in each of them that explain why they attract attention, such as their methodology, objectives or other reasons. This table illustrates the processes in which the actors, either governmental or armed, have studied, observed or travelled to other regions to find out firsthand how their process unfolded, creating interesting mirrors where inspiration can be found for dealing with their own difficulties.



Annex 6. Conflicts, peace processes and UN Security Council resolutions in 2015

	Resolution number
Mali	2227
Senegal	
Nigeria (Boko Haram)	
Ethiopia (Ogaden-ONLF)	
Somalia (al-Shabab)	
Sudan (National Dialogue)	
Sudan (Darfur)	
Sudan (Kordofan and Blue Nile)	
Sudan – South Sudan	2200 – 2205 – 2206 – 2223 – 2228 – 2230 – 2241 – 2251 - 2252
South Sudan	
CAR	2196 – 2212 – 2217
DR Congo (East)	2198 – 2211
Algeria	
Libya	2208 – 2213 – 2214 – 2238 - 2259
Western Sahara	2218
Colombia (FARC)	
Colombia (ELN)	
Afghanistan	2210
India (Assam)	
India (CPI-M)	
India (Nagaland)	
India (Jammu and Kashmir)	
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	
Pakistan	
Pakistan (Balochistan)	
China (East Turkestan)	
Philippines (NPA)	
Philippines (Abu Sayaf)	
Philippines (MILF)	
Philippines (MNLF)	
Burma / Myanmar	
Thailand (South)	
Cyprus	2197 – 2234
Kosovo	
Turkey (PKK)	
Ukraine	2202
Armenia- Azerbaijan	
Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)	
Moldova (Transdniestria)	
Russia (Dagestan)	
Iraq	2233
Egypt (Sinai)	
Israel-Palestine	
Syria	2209 – 2235 – 2254 – 2258
Yemen	2201 – 2204 - 2216

(Armed conflicts are bold)

Annex 7. Managing the past in recent peace agreements

Country	Year of peace agreement	Initiatives	Year	Delay
El Salvador	1992	Creating a Truth Commission and subsequent general amnesty	1992	0 years
South Africa	1994	Creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission	1994	0 years
Guatemala	1996	Creating a Historical Clarification Commission	1997	1 year
		Creating an International Commission against Impunity	2007	11 years
Tajikistan	1997	Creating a National Reconciliation Commission which approved a law on mutual pardon and a draft amnesty law	----	---
Northern Ireland	1998	Creating a Consultative Group on the Past , which has not found the support to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission	2007	9 years
Angola	2002	---	---	---
Sierra Leone	2002	Creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the existence of a Special Court for Sierra Leone	2002	0 years
Liberia	2003	Amnesty after the peace agreement and later creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission	2005	2 years
Indonesia (Aceh)	2005	The peace agreement granted amnesty to the members of the GAM and called for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be set up, which has not yet been done.	---	---
Southern Sudan	2005	---	---	---
Nepal	2006	In 2009, there was a verbal commitment to create a Commission on Disappeared Persons and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.	---	---
Burundi	2008	The peace agreement contained provisional immunity for the FNL members and its transformation into a political party. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission has yet to be created.	---	---
Kenya	2008	Creation of a Truth, Justice and Reparation Commission .	2008	0 years
Côte d'Ivoire	2010	A Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up.	2011	1 year
Sudan (Darfur)	2011	The Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) created the Justice Committee and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee .	2014	3 years
Mali	2013	Parliament created a Truth, Justice and Reparation Commission .	2014	1 year
DR Congo (M23)	2013	Creation of a National Reconciliation Commission .	2014	1 year
Philippines (MILF)	2014	A Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission will be created.	?	?
<i>Colombia (FARC)</i>	--	In June 2014, in the talks in Havana, it was agreed to create a Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-repetition	?	?
South Sudan	2015	Commitment by the Transitional Government to set up a Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing	?	?

Annex 8. Peace processes in recent years

This appendix summarises the peace processes that have taken place in 13 countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Angola, South Africa, Liberia, Tajikistan, Sierra Leone, Southern Sudan, Burundi, Indonesia (Aceh), Nepal and Philippines (MILF). It encompasses processes begun between 1984 (El Salvador) and 2014 (Philippines), which lasted between four years in Nepal and 21 years in Northern Ireland. The majority had mediators (four by the United Nations), and as for the underlying causes, four were the democratisation of the country, five were political power-sharing and four were self-governance. In two of the processes (Guatemala and South Africa), there was widespread participation by society, while the remaining processes were conducted in a more pyramidal fashion. Once the agreements were reached, an amnesty for combatants was called in all the countries, although Truth Commissions were created in only some of them. All the opposition groups that fought in the conflict ended up holding positions of responsibility in the new governments that emerged after the peace agreements.

	Negotiation period	Years	Mediation	Underlying cause
El Salvador	1984-1994	10	UN	Democratisation of the country
Guatemala	1985-1996	11	UN	Democratisation of the country
Northern Ireland	1987-2008	21	-	Self-governance
Angola	1988-2002	14	Portugal, Russia, USA	Political power-sharing
South Africa	1989-1994	5	-	Democratisation of the country
Liberia	1990-2003	13	ECOWAS	Political power-sharing
Tajikistan	1992-1997	5	UN	Political power-sharing
Sierra Leone	1994-2002	8	UN	Political power-sharing
Southern Sudan	1998-2005	7	IGAD	Self-governance
Burundi	1998-2008	10	Tanzania South Africa	Political power-sharing
Indonesia (Aceh)	2000-2005	5	CDH Finland	Self-governance
Nepal	2002-2006	4	-	Democratisation of the country
Philippines (MILF)	2001-2014	13	Malaysia	Self-governance

The reasons for engaging in negotiations and starting the peace processes were diverse, but in all cases the people's weariness with war and desire for peace were crucial. In the cases of El Salvador and Guatemala, the regional context favourable to talks (Contadora Group) played a key role, as it did in Tajikistan. In Guatemala, the presidential elections that fostered a change in the political scene were influential, while in Northern Ireland and South Africa the economic need to achieve peace was an important factor. In Tajikistan and South Africa, the fact that the guerrillas no longer had a safe rearguard was a determining factor. External pressure exerted an influence in South Africa, Angola, southern Sudan and Burundi. The humanitarian crisis was the trigger in southern Sudan and Indonesia (Aceh); in the latter country, a natural catastrophe, the tsunami, catalysed the process. Finally, in Nepal, popular demonstrations against the monarchy paved the way for the negotiations that led to the definitive peace agreement.

The process in El Salvador

A civil war broke out in 1980 which led to the death of 75,000 people, as the FMLN guerrillas clashed with the country's repressive militaristic government. In 1983, the Security Council approved a resolution in which it stated its support for the peace-building activities of the Contadora Group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela), which had embarked on a series of consultations in five Central American countries. Between 1984 and 1987, the first four exploratory dialogue encounters were held, to no avail, between the government and FMLN representatives. These talks were mediated by the archbishop of El Salvador, Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas. At the last meeting, the Nunciature Round in October 1987, a communiqué was issued that expressed the desire to reach a ceasefire and to back the decisions taken by the Contadora Group. This was a stage in which both parties' positions matured and became more flexible. The Esquipulas Process gained prominence in 1986, which used the efforts of the Contadora Group and was joined by the Support Group (Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) with the backing of the OAS and the UN. Between 1987 and 1990, the Central American presidents called for a negotiated political solution.

In September 1989, the Secretary General of the United Nations conducted his first good offices spurred by a request by President Cristiani and the FMLN made in Mexico. The Secretary General appointed Peruvian diplomat Álvaro de Soto his special representative. The agreement signed in Mexico between the government and the FMLN included a decision to embark on a dialogue process with the purpose of putting an end to the armed conflict. However, in November, the FMLN launched a general offensive to demonstrate its strength. The offensive was contained by the armed forces, leading both parties to reach the conclusion that they were militarily tied.

In April 1990, a dialogue meeting was held in Geneva sponsored by the United Nations and in the presence of the Secretary General. At this meeting, an agreement was signed that laid down a series of rules to be followed in the negotiation process and stated both parties' desire to reach a negotiated, political solution. The goals were to end the armed conflict via political means, to promote the country's democratisation, to ensure unlimited respect for human rights and to reunify Salvadoran society. In May of the same year, a meeting was held in Caracas where a general negotiating agenda and calendar were drawn up. The process was divided into two phases: in the first, political agreements would be reached in areas that enabled the armed conflict to come to an end; and in the second, the guarantees and conditions needed for the FMLN to rejoin the country's civil, institutional and political life would be set forth. In July, the San José Agreement (Costa Rica) was reached, which outlined both parties' commitment to respect human rights and called for a UN verification mission (the future ONUSAL) before reaching a ceasefire.

In April 1991, an agreement was reached in Mexico City in which the negotiations on land tenancy were considered closed and constitutional reforms on judicial, military, electoral and human rights matters were included. The Truth Commission was created to investigate the serious violent deeds that had taken place since 1980; the commission received more than 22,000 grievances. In May, UN Security Council Resolution 693 was approved, which stipulated the formation of a United Nations Observers' Mission for El Salvador, whose initial mandate was to verify compliance with the San José Human Rights Agreements. Later, its mandate would be expanded. The mission had a three-fold organisation: a human rights division, a military division and police observers. In September, the UN Secretary General intervened directly by seating the parties in New York (New York Agreement) at a summit at which they agreed to the minimum security guarantees for a ceasefire. These guarantees were later verified by the nascent National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ), made up of all the political forces in the country. In December, final negotiations were held at the UN headquarters in New York, and on the 31st of this same month an agreement was reached.

In January 1992, a general amnesty was declared and the Chapultepec Peace Agreement was signed, which led to a change in the armed forces (elimination of officers involved in the dirty war

and reduction in troops), the creation of the National Civil Police force, the dissolution of the military intelligence services, the elimination of the paramilitary corps, a change in the judicial system, the defence of human rights, the creation of a Truth Commission, changes in the electoral system, the transformation of the FMLN into a political party, the adoption of economic and social measures and the expansion of the ONUSAL mandate (Military and Police Division). February witnessed a cessation of the armed clash and the start of demobilisation. In December, the FMLN was legalised as a political party, and the next day, the definitive end to the conflict was officially celebrated.

There were several determining factors in reaching the agreements: the Salvadoran people's desire for peace, changes in civil law, the de-legitimisation of the armed forces, the murder of six Jesuit priests, the military standoff between the armed forces and the FMLN, more flexible positions, United Nations mediation, the efforts of friendly countries (Spain, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela), the positive role played by the Catholic Church and the National Reconciliation Commission, the new geopolitical scene (end of the Soviet empire, defeat of the Sandinistas), pressure from the United States late in the game and the influence of the Contadora Group. The process lasted ten years.

The process in Guatemala

Just like many peace processes, the one in Guatemala needed many years, more than one decade, to transform the earliest contacts into the agreement signed in 1996. The origins date back to 1983, when Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela formed the Contadora Group with the purpose of stimulating democratic changes in Central America and generating, in little time, regional pressure in favour of peace in the region. The Contadora Group is an example of how an external factor can become a driving force in creating an atmosphere that is friendly to dialogue and negotiation, to such an extent that these processes would not have existed in Guatemala, nor in El Salvador and Nicaragua, without this initiative.

Furthermore, the regional pressure dovetailed with the first steps towards civility taken inside the country shortly thereafter. Guatemala had been enmeshed in years of conflict and militarisation, and it was not until 1984 that Guatemalan military officers gave the first signs of agreeing to transfer power to civilian hands. These signs materialised in the 1985 presidential elections, which Vinicio Cerezo won. He became the president who launched the much-awaited transition to democracy after years of military dictatorship. Cerezo was also the first to make overtures to the guerrillas, specifically in Spain at the headquarters of the Guatemalan embassy, in an initial exploration of the URNG guerrilla's willingness to embark on a negotiation process. Even though the right conditions were not in place at that time, the encounter was decisive for starting a maturation process which would bear fruit years later. In any event, without the courage to take this first step and in the absence of Cerezo's vision of the future, peace would never have been achieved in Guatemala.

In 1986 and 1987, there was yet another regional push with the Esquipulas I and II Agreements, with the slogan "peace for democracy". The upshot of these meetings was the creation of the National Reconciliation Commission in Guatemala, which in the ensuing years would play a prominent role in achieving peace. In parallel, pro-peace social and religious groups also blossomed. They would end up being the hallmark of Guatemala's experience: the decisive contribution of its civil society in a scope of involvement rarely seen in peace processes. At that time, the contribution by a single person, the U.S. Lutheran pastor Paul Wee, was also crucial. Wee was the former Secretary General of the Lutheran World Federation whose good offices fostered the earliest encounters between the URNG and the military. While in South Africa the human factor is discussed in reference to the decisive contribution by Nelson Mandela, the history of Guatemala must pay tribute to the crucial figure of Paul Wee, as without his efforts the process would have taken another pace and a different course. Paul Wee fostered the creation of a favourable atmosphere, which paved the way for the Grand National Dialogue called in 1989.

In 1990, an extremely important process got underway that was dubbed the "Oslo Consultations", as the first meeting between the URNG and the National Reconciliation Commission (CNR) was held in that city, which enshrined Norway as one of the most active countries in peace diplomacy. That encounter ushered in a series of meetings between CNR delegates and the URNG in different countries: in El Escorial, Spain, with the presence of the political parties; in Ottawa, Canada, with the business sector; in Quito, Ecuador, with the religious groups; in Metepec, Mexico, with representation of the people and trade unions; and finally in Atlixco, Mexico, with the representatives of educational organisations, small business owners and university colleges. These meetings laid the groundwork for the start of direct negotiations between the URN and the government in 1991. These negotiations lasted five years. President Serrano, who replaced Cerezo, launched the Total Peace initiative, which made it possible to sign an agreement in Mexico in April with an eleven-point negotiation agenda. The main items included strengthening civil society and the role of the army, indigenous peoples, constitutional reform and the election system, resettling the displaced population, socioeconomic conditions and agricultural reform. A second round of negotiations was held in Querétaro, Mexico, in July, at which the principles for the democratisation of the country were discussed. As can be seen, much of Guatemala's process was conducted outside the country.

In 1993, under the presidency of Ramiro de León, institutional reforms were undertaken in Guatemala and the National Reconciliation Commission was disbanded. However, a permanent peace fund was created to give the people a voice, and at the end of the year, more formal negotiations were launched with the URNG after several "ecumenical encounters" organised by pastor Paul Wee. The following year, negotiation rounds were held in Mexico, and UN mediation got underway with the Framework Agreement for Resumption of the Negotiation Process; this entailed a series of rounds that lasted until the final agreement, signed in 1996. The figure of "friendly countries" was launched, which included Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States and Venezuela. These countries provided diplomatic and economic support to the project. The United Nations created MINUGUA (United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala), whose mandate lasted until 2004. In March, the important Global Agreement on Human Rights was signed by the government and the URNG. It is worth noting that this agreement was signed without a ceasefire, that is, in the midst of the hostilities, but with the purpose of "humanising" the war. It was agreed to ask that a Standing Civil Society Assembly be created, which started in April of that year and lasted until 1996. Its mandate was to debate the underlying issues addressed in the bilateral negotiations. With the ASC, Guatemala's process provided a hugely enriching model of citizen participation, as it is one of the processes in which civil society had the most chances to influence the negotiating table under an operating scheme in which ten delegates were appointed for each social sector represented. These delegates were charged with adopting "least common denominator" proposals to be brought to the negotiating table.

Finally, a peace agreement was signed in 1996 that put an end to 36 years of armed conflict. It consisted of 13 agreements and 300 commitments, not all of which were fulfilled, partly because they were overly ambitious and partly because a referendum which was supposed to ratify some of them failed to pass in 1999. Thus, the process in Guatemala is criticised for having overly high aspirations, which sheds light on the dilemma of which is better: a less ambitious but more realistic agreement, or the opposite. In any event, the agreement put an end to the armed violence and enabled an International Commission against Impunity to be created years later in 2007.

The process in Northern Ireland

The peace process in Northern Ireland lasted a little over a decade. Its immediate origins date back to the mid-1980s, when the atmosphere was conducive to peace, either because of weariness with war, contagion from other processes, the economic need to achieve peace, support from the new US administration or the people's fervent desire for peace. In 1987, the first secret talks were launched between John Hume, leader of Northern Ireland's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the British government. Eleven years later, Hume was awarded the Nobel

Peace Prize for his contributions to peace in Northern Ireland. In 1990, the channel of communication was opened with the leaders of Sinn Féin, and in December 1993 the British government issued the Downing Street Declaration, which accepted Northern Ireland's right to self-determination and pledged to facilitate an agreement with the Irish people, as well as allowing Sinn Féin to join the political dialogue. This led the IRA to declare a ceasefire in 1994, which lasted until February 2006. In January 2005, the loyalist paramilitary groups declared a ceasefire, and in November of the same year, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, travelled to Northern Ireland, which amounted to an enormous boost to the peace process.

In June 1996, inclusive multi-party negotiations were held, initially without Sinn Féin, with the mediation of former US Senator George Mitchell. These negotiations operated under the principle of "sufficient consensus", that is, the decisions were taken by simple majority, as long as the main parties participated. Decision-making also included what was called "parallel consent", in which a majority of both nationalist Catholics and unionist Protestants was needed. The negotiations were conducted under the principle that "nothing was agreed until everything was agreed"; that is, the partial agreements would not be valid until everything had been agreed to. Under former Senator Mitchell's mediation, it was stipulated that only peaceful and political means would be used in the process. This was called the "Mitchell principles". At this time, the British Minister for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, demonstrated her courage by visiting prisons to meet with prisoners from the IRA and protestant paramilitary groups with the purpose of convincing them to take part in the peace process. In 1997, the IRA declared a second truce, which allowed Sinn Féin to rejoin the multi-party talks. Finally, a peace agreement called the Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement) was signed in April 1998. This agreement called for police reform, reform of the institutions of Northern Ireland, the formation of a British-Irish Ministerial Council, a North South Ministerial Council and a Human Rights Commission. Seven years later, in 2005, the IRA gave up its armed struggle. In 2007, a government shared between Catholics and Protestants was started, and the IRA was officially, permanently disbanded in 2008. Reconciliation will take many years and the wounds will probably not be fully healed for another generation, but at least headway can be made in the absence of attacks.

The process in Angola

The civil war in Angola started in 1975 and lasted 26 years, causing half a million deaths. It pitted the government forces of the MPLA, who received support from the USSR, Cuba and Eastern bloc countries, against the rebel forces of UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi and initially supported by the United States, South Africa, Zaire and other African governments. The first attempt at negotiations came in December 1988, when an agreement was forcibly signed in New York; however, it did not address the causes of the conflict or entail an interruption in foreign interference. The first important official agreements (the Bicesse Agreement in May 1991 and the Lusaka Agreement in November 1994), both reached under the auspices of the international community, did not manage to put a halt to the military clashes, while the third one, the Luena Memorandum from 2002, in which the international community hardly played a role, enabled a cessation of hostilities to be reached and put an end to the war.

The official negotiations began in Portugal in 1990 under the auspices of the Troika made up of Portugal, the USSR and the United States. This led the MPLA to agree to turn Angola into a multi-party state. In May 1991, the Bicesse Agreement was signed in Portugal with mediation by the government of that country in the presence of President Dos Santos and Savimbi. This agreement stipulated that elections had to be held with UNITA's participation and United Nations supervision, although neither of the sides had given up its aspirations to achieve a military victory. A second UN mission was set up in Angola (UNAVEM II) with the mission of observing and verifying the disarmament process and backing the creation of a single new national army. In the meantime, the non-military social and political forces were left on the sidelines of the process. The MPLA won the elections, which were called too hastily in September

1992, and UNITA declared them fraudulent; as a result, the hostilities resumed without UNAVEM II unable to do anything. The United States stopped supporting UNITA and recognised the government of Angola, leading the UN to open sanctions against UNITA, which in October 1993 was forced to recognise the Bicesse Agreement and resume the talks. For one year, in the midst of combats that substantially curtailed UNITA's capacities, both parties held a dialogue mediated by the United Nations Special Representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, and the representatives of the troika. This led to the signing of the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994, which stipulated that UNITA had to disarm in exchange for participating in the National Unity and Reconciliation Government. UNITA, however, did not disarm and continued to exploit the diamond resources in an effort to continue the war, which led the Security Council to step up its sanctions against UNITA in June 1998. Under the Lusaka Protocol, both parties had to conclude the electoral process under UN supervision, in addition to a cessation of hostilities, the cantonment of UNITA troops and disarmament. In February 1995, the United Nations Mission UNAVEM III was created with the mission of helping the government of Angola and UNITA restore peace and achieve national reconciliation on the basis of the Bicesse and Lusaka Agreements. Savimbi met with President Mandela in May 1995, and shortly thereafter the MPLA offered Savimbi the Vice Presidency of the country. In March 1996, Savimbi and Dos Santos reached an agreement to form a coalition government. When the UNAVEM III mandate expired in June 1997, MONUA was created with a contingent of 1,500 troops, but in 1999 the Angolan government, which felt militarily strong enough to defeat UNITA, asked for it to be closed, so it moved from Luanda to New York. The permanent truce between the MPLA and UNITA was only reached in 2002 when the leader of the latter, Jonas Savimbi, was murdered from several gunshots on the 22nd of February, which allowed a ceasefire to be reached with the new leader, the Secretary General of UNITA, Paulo Lukamba, and a National Unity Government to be formed. UNITA abandoned its armed struggle and became a political party. It officially demobilised in August 2002. The peace agreement became official in the Luena Memorandum dating from April 2002. The negotiation process had lasted 14 years.

The process in South Africa

The process in South Africa, which lasted less time, also emerged as the result of a nurturing atmosphere. In the late 1980s, South Africa was experiencing governability problems. There was a great deal of outside pressure regarding the policy of apartheid, the country was suffering from a major economic crisis and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) was losing outside support as the result of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Empire. In 1989, all of these factors conspired in favour of negotiations, which the recently appointed President De Klerk would transform into major reforms. De Klerk opened up secret negotiations with Mandela, who was now the mastermind of a process that would shake the world and become a benchmark for other countries seeking a model of transition to democracy and reconciliation. Mandela used his extraordinary powers of persuasion to earn the trust and respect of his opponents and turn the secret talks into formal negotiations. He was released in 1990, at the same time that all the political groups were legalised and the transitional period got underway. In March of the following year, the churches called a peace conference, which was warmly welcomed by the business community. Indeed the business sector became one of the most fervent in its support of change, to such an extent that a consultative business movement was created. In April, President De Klerk announced a peace summit, and shortly thereafter a Civil Facilitating Commission and a National Peace Convention were created. From then on, a parallel process unfolded: first, the National Peace Accord was launched from 1991 to 1994 as the instrument of citizen participation, and secondly the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was orchestrated, made up of five working groups, along with the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum (MPNF) as a formal negotiation mechanism between the government and the political parties, including the ANC.

The instrument for citizen participation, the National Peace Accord, worked with two kinds of structures: a National Peace Commission (made up of 60 people) and a National Peace

Secretariat (made up of seven people), as well as regional and local structures. The latter were made up of 11 regional peace commissions (with representatives from political parties, business, trade unions, local authorities, police, local commissions and other sectors), 260 local peace commissions (which reflected the composition of each community and reported to the regional commissions) and 15,000 peace monitors. This civic structure, which bears deep-down similarities to the Civil Society Assembly in Guatemala, debated the issues on the negotiation agenda for three years until general elections were held in 1994. Nelson Mandela won, and a transition government was sworn in, which gave rise to the Constituent Assembly and the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which operated until 1999. In December 1996, the new constitution was approved, ushering in the new South Africa of the 21st century, full of challenges yet free of apartheid. All of this was thanks to the courage and mass appeal of President Mandela, the miraculous "human factor" in South Africa, a process which, along with its charismatic leader, has given the world a participatory model with a unique experience of reconciliation, in which forgiveness was conditioned upon revelation of the truth. The peace process lasted five years.

The process in Liberia

In 1980, Samuel Doe took power after the popular uprising. The civil war got underway in 1989, when Charles Taylor left Doe's government and met with a group of rebels from the NPFL in the Ivory Coast and attacked the capital. The UN responded to this in 1990, when the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) undertook several initiatives to resolve the conflict, including the intervention of a regional ceasefire observer force (ECOMOG), which became an opposition faction in the conflict. Taylor was supported by Libya. Another dissident, Johnson, captured and killed Doe in 1990. ECOMOG declared an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) with Amos Sawyer as the President and with Johnson's support. In 1992, ULIMO, made up of Doe sympathisers, started a guerrilla war. The Security Council imposed a weapons embargo on Liberia, and the Secretary General appointed a Special Representative to facilitate talks between ECOWAS and the conflicting parties. A coalition government was formed in 1993. With mediation by ECOWAS, a peace agreement was reached in Cotonu (Benin), after which the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was established with the goal of consolidating the ceasefire. The next year, it was impossible for elections to be held due to skirmishes, but several complementary peace agreements were negotiated to join the Cotonu Agreements. In August 1995, after numerous negotiations and a dozen failed peace agreements, the Abuja (Nigeria) Agreement was signed, which included the leaders of the clashing factions in a transitional government and required the disarmament of the guerrillas for the elections.

In 1997, Taylor formed the National Patriotic Party and won the elections. He was elected President and promoted a policy of reconciliation and national unity. Even though the main militias had been dissolved in order to become political organisations, rebel groups continued operating from Sierra Leone and Guinea, giving rise to a second civil war. UNOMIL ended its mandate, and the United Nations Security Council created the United Nations Office in Liberia (UNOL), which managed to reach an agreement with the rebel groups to share power in the country. In 1999, ECOMOG withdrew from the country. In 2000, groups opposed to Taylor were formed, such as LURD (with support from Guinea), which began a war financed by diamond resources. In February 2000, a meeting sponsored by the King of Morocco was held in Rabat, in which the heads of state of the Mano River Union countries participated. At this meeting, the leaders pledged to resolve their differences and agreed to set up a Joint Security Committee on a sub-regional level. However, the dialogue process was suspended when President Taylor decided not to attend the September meeting, alleging concerns over his personal safety. Days later, a ten-member International Contact Group on Liberia was set up in New York under the joint presidency of ECOWAS and the EU with the purpose of securing greater participation by the international community in the efforts to resolve the crisis.

In early 2003 MODEL was formed with the support of the Ivory Coast; this group opposed Taylor and fought alongside LURD. By May, both rebel groups had seized control of two-thirds of the country and were threatening to take the capital, so the government and the rebels were forced to negotiate an agreement to put an end to the civil war. In June, negotiations were held among all the parties participated in Accra under the sponsorship of Ghana and ECOWAS facilitation. Taylor said that he was willing to resign if this would contribute to achieving peace. Days later, a ceasefire agreement was signed, which was violated by LURD several times. In July, spurred by intensified combats and in view of the threat of a humanitarian crisis, the Secretary General decided to appoint Jacques Paul from the USA his Special Representative for Liberia with the mandate to support the incipient transition agreements. He also proposed that international troops be deployed and that the UNOL be closed. In early August, the Security Council authorised the establishment of a multinational force, and due to pressure from the USA, UN and EU, Taylor resigned because of his involvement in the war in Sierra Leone and harassment from LURD. On the 18th of August, the Accra Agreement was signed by the government, LURD, MODEL and the political parties as part of the ECOWAS peace process. The militias disarmed and a National Transitional Government was instated until the 2005 elections. The peace agreement also stipulated an amnesty and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Through this agreement, the parties asked the United Nations to deploy a 15,000-member force in Liberia (UNMIL) to support the National Transitional Government and ensure implementation of the agreement. The war ended in October when the United Nations and the US military intervened and banished Taylor to Nigeria. He was later transferred to The Hague to be tried by the International Criminal Court. The conflict, which lasted 14 years, had taken 250,000 lives and left one million displaced persons. The negotiations lasted 13 years.

The process in Tajikistan

In 1992, one year after Tajikistan proclaimed its independence from the USSR, a civil war broke out which led to 50,000 deaths. In May, the Tajik opposition, an informal coalition of Islamic groups and other forces, took power after two months of demonstrations. The United Tajik Opposition (UTO), led by Abdullo Nuri, took refuge in Afghanistan after being defeated in December.

In September of that same year, the first United Nations exploratory mission was conducted based on an appeal from President Rakhmonov to the UN Secretary General. A second United Nations exploratory mission was held in November, with the active participation of four countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. In April, Ismat Kittani was appointed the Secretary General's special envoy. In January 1993, Kittani was replaced by Ramiro Piriz-Ballón. In March 1993, the "non-official inter-Tajik dialogue" got underway when seven individuals from different factions in the war gathered round the same table in Moscow. The talks continued after a peace agreement was signed in 1997, and they exerted some influence on the outcome of events. In September 1993, the CIS Council of Ministers deployed collective peace forces, made up of contingents from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The hostilities had waned considerably.

In April 1994, the first round of negotiations was held in Moscow with an inclusive agenda (political agreement, the problem of refugees and consolidation of the state). In June, a second round of negotiations was held in Teheran with participation by the OECD as an observer. In September, a consultative meeting took place in Teheran, where a provisional ceasefire agreement was signed, prepared by the United Nations teams. At that meeting, the Russian and Iranian chancellors played a prominent role in convincing the UTO. In October, the third round of talks was held in Islamabad with participation by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) as an observer. This round concluded with a protocol that set up a joint commission to supervise the ceasefire. In December, the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was created with the mission of supervising the situation and backing regional peace initiatives.

In May 1995, the fourth round of talks was held in Almaty with an agreement to exchange prisoners and repatriate refugees. The UTO submitted a proposal for a transition government, which was rejected by the government. In July and August, the United Nations team flew between Dushanbe and Kabul five times to hold "consultative negotiations" between President Rakhmonov and the leader of the UTO, Nuri. In August, President Rakhmonov and Nuri signed a *Protocol* on the *Fundamental Principles* for establishing *Peace and National Accord* in Tajikistan, which became the roadmap and stipulated that a "continuous round" of negotiations be held. In November, the first phase in the continuous round was held in Asjabab, Turkmenistan, where the discussion topics included how to integrate representatives from the opposition into the government and representatives from the opposite military units into the armed forces. In July 1996, the third phase in the continuous rounds was held in Asjabab, Turkmenistan, and Ramiro Piriz-Ballón was replaced by the representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Gerd Merrem. In December, Rakhmonov and Nuri met in Afghanistan and agreed to a cessation of hostilities.

In January 1997, the Protocol on Refugees was signed in Teheran with key participation by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Velayati. From January to May, rounds of talks were held in Teheran, Moscow, Meshed (Iran) and Bishkek, in which both parties agreed to the modalities of the DDR, the integration of the armed forces, the legalisation of the Islamic Renaissance Party and a 30% share in the power structure for UTO representatives. The Protocol on Political Affairs was signed in the Bishkek round with the good offices of the President of Kyrgyzstan. In March, the Protocol on Military Affairs was signed, which enabled the CIS armed forces to accompany the units of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) from Afghanistan to the gathering zones supervised by UNMOT. The Russian Foreign Minister, Primakov, played a key role in this process. Finally, on the 27th of June, the General Peace Agreement was signed at the Kremlin. In July, the first meeting of the National Reconciliation Commission was held in Moscow, which approved a mutual forgiveness law and a draft amnesty law that was approved days later by the Parliament. In November, a donor conference was held in Vienna, where 96 million dollars were pledged. The Security Council extended UNMOT's mandate and changed its mission so it could cooperate with the National Reconciliation Commission, supervise the DDR and coordinate the United Nations' assistance during the transitional period. In 1999, peaceful elections were held and Rakhmonov was re-elected president. The peace process lasted five years.

There were several key factors in the negotiations: weariness of war; Russia's and Iran's interest in peace (the last few rounds were held in the capitals of both countries); the moderating influence of Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the Tajik opposition; the advance of the Taliban in Afghanistan (with the loss of the rearguard for the Tajik opposition); the fundamental role played by the United Nations and its Department of Political Affairs; the skilful handling of the process by the friendly countries; the Security Council's clear mandate; the adept coordination of the four CIS countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia); the participation of Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan as observers; the role of the OSCE and the OIC, who were allies in the process and guarantors of the peace agreement; the negotiations, which were not interrupted despite the surrounding conflict and noncompliance with the ceasefire (the negotiations were part of the war strategy); the personal relations between the Tajik President Rakhmonov, and the Tajik opposition leader, Nuri, who took the helm of their respective delegations seven times; the confidentiality of the process; the usual format of consultations between the leaders of the delegations and the United Nations mediators, who always wrote the first drafts, which were accepted 95% of the time; and the existence of the "non-official inter-Tajik dialogue", which bore a positive influence on the course of the negotiations.

The process in Sierra Leone

A civil war broke out in 1991 in which 75,000 people died. It was triggered by a rebellion against President Momoh led by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) with Foday Sankoh at the

helm. Momoh was defeated the next year in a military coup. Captain Strasser became the President, and the RUF issued new demands, leading the conflict to continue. In October, the RUF took control of the diamond mines, which also prolonged the conflict.

In 1994, President Strasser asked for the good offices of the UN Secretary General to encourage the RUF to negotiate with the government. The Secretary General sent a civil servant to try to forge contacts with the RUF, but to no avail. In view of this development, the Secretary General appointed Berhanu Dinka his Special Envoy for Sierra Leone, with the mission of engaging in contacts with the RUF. In 1995, the UN, ECOSAP and the OAU tried to negotiate a solution, and in December of the same year the international British organisation Alert helped to set up a meeting between the UN and the RUF in Abidjan (Ivory Coast). In March 1996, presidential elections were held and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected. The RUF did not participate and forged ahead with the conflict, but on the 25th of March the outgoing government and the RUF signed a ceasefire agreement. They also agreed to hold negotiations with a view to solving the conflict. These negotiations were held with mediation by Ivory Coast, the United Nations, the OAU and the Commonwealth. In April, Kabbah and Sankoh met face-to-face in the Ivory Coast; they agreed to a ceasefire and to set up working groups. The OAU decided to get more actively involved and appointed a special envoy. The negotiations ended with the signing of the Abidjan Agreement in November, which initially put an end to the conflict. The agreement called for amnesty, the conversion of the RUF into a political party and a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process. The agreement also called for electoral, judicial and police reform. Between December 1996 and January 1997, an evaluation group sent by the UN Secretary General visited Sierra Leone, and on the 3rd of January this group managed to meet with the leader of the RUF.

In March 1997, Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria, and in May of the same year, Paul Koroma led a military coup with the support of the RUF. He created the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, with which he fought the ECOMOG (Military Observer Group) troops in the country. In October, talks were held in Conakry and a peace plan was signed that called for a cessation of hostilities, an ECOMOG verification mechanism, the DDR, immunity for participants in the coup, the return of Sankoh and the reinstatement of President Kabbah's constitutional government. In February 1998, in response to a joint attack by the RUF and the army of the junta, ECOMOG launched a military attack that led to the dissolution of the junta and its expulsion from Freetown. President Kabbah once again occupied his post and appointed a new government. The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was also created. Foday Sankoh, who had been arrested, issued a call for surrender, but the skirmishes continued, partly due to Liberia's support of RUF members.

In 1999, new negotiations were held between the government and the rebels. In May, the Lomé Convention was signed and a dialogue got underway between the government and the RUF. The government transported Sankoh from Freetown to Lomé with a promise of amnesty. The government of Togo facilitated the negotiations. A ceasefire was declared and the prisoners of war were released. The main provisions in the agreement were the transformation of the RUF into a political party, the establishment of a national unity government, the granting of the vice presidency to Sankoh, the establishment of a Council of Notables and Religious Leaders to act as mediators, an amnesty, the scheduling of elections, the start of a DDR and a restructuring of the armed forces, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the gradual withdrawal of ECOMOG forces. It was agreed that Togo, the United Nations, the OAU and the Commonwealth would serve as the guarantors of the agreement. In October, Sankoh and Koroma returned to Freetown and UNAMISIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) was created to fulfil the Lomé Convention. In November, a ceasefire agreement was signed in Abuja, which called for UNAMISIL to perform a supervisory function and for the DDR to immediately resume. This agreement triggered divisions within the RUF.

In May 2000, 500 UN troops were kidnapped by the RUF, which prompted a British military intervention, the disbandment of the RUF and the arrest of Sankoh. However, in November the

Abuja I Accord was signed, which declared a ceasefire supervised by UNAMSIL and the handover of weapons by the RUF, as well as DDR programme and the restructuring of the armed forces. Given the fact that the fighting continued, in 2001 the Guinean troops conducted an offensive against the RUF. However, in May the Abuja II Accords setting out a DDR programme were signed between the RUF and the government. The war finally came to an end in January 2002. Sankoh died in prison. The peace process, with all its ups and downs and incidents of non-compliance, lasted eight years.

The process in southern Sudan

The start of the conflict dates back to 1983, when the armed opposition group SPLA from the south of the country rebelled against the Sudanese armed forces, which were opposed to independence for the south of the country, which the SPLA was advocating. The conflict led to the death of more than one million people. The first explorations were conducted in 1988, and the following year the government and the SPLA signed a tentative Declaration of Principles of IGAD, the mediator, to hold a referendum on self-determination in the south of the country.

In July 2002, a theoretical agreement was reached under the auspices of IGAD, which established autonomy in the south before a referendum was held in 2011. The first direct meeting between the President of Sudan and the SPLA leader also took place. Between 2002 and 2004, several rounds of negotiations were held in Kenya, in which headway was made on an extensive agenda of issues. These rounds made it possible for a definitive peace agreement to be reached on the 5th of January 2005, in which the north and south would keep separate armed forces, a joint force would be created for the more disputed areas, autonomy would be set for six years, a referendum on self-determination would be held in 2011, the oil profits would be equitably split and a National Unity Government would be formed, with one vice presidency set aside for the SPLA. Likewise, it was agreed not to apply Islamic law in the south of the country and that each territory would have its own flag. The process lasted a total of 13 years, and seven went by before a peace agreement was signed.

The process in Burundi

The start of the conflict in Burundi dates back to 1983, when the country's Hutu prime minister was assassinated, triggering a cycle of violence that led to the death of 300,000 people. The first peace talks did not start until five years later, in 1998, in Tanzania. They were initially facilitated by the president of that country, Nyerere, and later by Nelson Mandela. In August 2000, the Arusha Agreement was signed with the participation of 17 political parties and the majority of Hutu organisations in the country, which led to the formation of the first transition government. Between 2002 and 2003, agreements were signed with two other major groups, the CNDD-FDD and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL, which left pending the agreement with just a single group, the FNL, whose leader, Agathon Rwasa, did not sign a peace agreement until six years later.

The first negotiations with Rwasa's FNL were held between 2002 and 2004 in Gabon, Tanzania, Switzerland, Kenya, the Netherlands and South Africa, although they were fruitless. In 2004, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was created with the mandate to help to implement the efforts to restore peace and reconciliation. Its mandate lasted until 2006, when a General Ceasefire Agreement was signed with the FNL in September in Tanzania, which along with South Africa was a mediator in the conflict. This agreement stipulated the following: a) rectification of the ethnic question, already identified as one of the causes of the conflict; b) provisional immunity for FNL members and its transformation into a political party; c) the repatriation of refugees and the return of the displaced population; and d) a revision of the composition of the security and defence forces. In October of the same year, a United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) was created, which took over the baton from the ONUB with the mandate of supporting the government in its efforts on behalf of peace and stability.

Finally, in December 2008 a peace agreement was signed with the FNL, with the presence of the South African mediator, Charles Nqakula. The next step was political power-sharing, with 33 posts set aside for the FNL and the launch of the group's disarmament. The process had lasted ten years.

The process in Indonesia (Aceh)

The conflict in Indonesia (Aceh) started in 1976, when the armed opposition group GAM claimed independence for Aceh. The conflict led to the death of 15,000 people. The earliest talks were held in 2000 with the facilitation of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, headquartered in Geneva. These talks led to the signing of a Framework Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. However, both parties were still clashing because they were unwilling to give up armed activity. Another influential factor was that Timor-Leste had just won independence and the Indonesian army was unwilling to lose another region. The second round of negotiations was held in May 2002, also in Geneva, and the third in May 2003 in Tokyo. However, the GAM was insisting on independence for Aceh, an option that was rejected outright by the government. As a result, martial law was instated and the hostilities resumed. Yet during this same period, a 46-year-old Finnish financial consultant, Juha Christensen, managed to keep up discreet contacts with the clashing parties, which would come to be of vital importance to the future of the negotiations.

A tsunami hit in December 2004, leading to the death of 170,000 people in the region, which was devastated. This natural catastrophe, which required the government to open up Aceh to the international community, totally altered the situation and triggered reactions that helped spur the resumption of the negotiations. The first contacts occurred in January 2005 with the mediation of the Crisis Management Initiative, driven by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. Several noteworthy events took place within the space of a few months: a bilateral truce, a meeting in Sweden with GAM exiles, the withdrawal of the arrest warrant against GAM leaders and a change in GAM criteria, as it ceased to demand independence and instead agreed to advanced autonomy. Thus, a special autonomy was negotiated, and the facilitator set a deadline for reaching an agreement (summer). Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding between the GAM and the government was signed in August 2006, which put an end to 30 years of conflict. The agreement was based on the end of hostilities and the disarmament of the GAM, the withdrawal of the military and police forces, amnesty for GAM members and their participation in politics, as well as the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In December of the same year, the GAM candidate was proclaimed governor of the region of Aceh. The peace process, in all its stages, lasted five years.

The process in Nepal

The conflict got underway in 1996, when the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), a Maoist guerrilla force, opposed the forces of the Nepalese monarchy. The conflict led to 10,000 deaths. In 2002, the first secret talks were held and a tentative and temporary bilateral ceasefire was reached. The next year, formal talks were held, but to no avail. In November 2005, the CPN reached an alliance with seven Nepalese parties, pledging to establish a democracy, respect human rights, call UN-supervised elections and embark on a UN-supervised disarmament. One year later, in June 2006, an agreement was reached between the government and the CPN, and in November the peace agreement was signed that put an end to ten years of conflict. This agreement was comprised of the following points: 1) to implement the 12-point agreement reached on the 22nd of November 2005 between the CPN and the seven political parties, as well as the ceasefire code of conduct signed by the government and the CPN on the 22nd of May 2006; 2) to conduct their respective activities peacefully and mindful of the commitments of a multi-party government system, civil liberties, the fundamental rights, human rights, freedom of the press, the rule of law and the democratic norms and values.; 3) to ask the United Nations to assist in managing the armed forces and weapons of both parties, as well as to observe the impartial elections for the Constituent Assembly; 4) to guarantee the democratic rights

established by the grassroots movement in 1990 and 2006, based on the commitments expressed in the 12-point agreement, in the preamble of the ceasefire code of conduct and in the draft of an interim constitution, and consequently to set up an interim government, set a date for the election of a Constituent Assembly and dissolve the congress and the Maoist government through an alternative agreement based on consensus; 5) to deem that these issues are of national importance and must be fulfilled based on understanding; 6) to guarantee that the fundamental rights of the Nepalese people are part of the process of creating a new constitution, without their being influenced by fear, threats or violence. International observation and monitoring will be needed for the elections; and 7) to restructure the state gradually in order to resolve the problems associate with class, race, region and gender, through elections for a Constituent Assembly. This includes a commitment to transform the ceasefire into lasting peace and to resolve problems through dialogue, with special attention to democracy, peace, prosperity, progress, independence, the sovereignty of the country and self-esteem. In 2008, Nepal ceased to be a monarchy and became a democratic federal republic. In accordance with the peace agreement, the United Nations will supervise the cantonment and reintegration of the Maoist forces, while the government will restructure its armed forces. The peace process lasted four years.

The process in the Philippines (MILF)

The MILF was founded in 1978 as a spin-off of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), created in 1969. After several years of negotiations the group reached a peace agreement with the Government (Manila Agreement), with initial mediation by Libya, and subsequent efforts by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. The agreement granted autonomy to the southern provinces. However, negotiations continue to implement the Manila Agreement. The 10,000-strong MILF was against this 1996 agreement and had demanded Mindanao's independence, but eventually settled for an advanced autonomy. In 2013 they were able to sign a preliminary peace agreement and in 2014 the final agreement was reached.

In 2001 President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo offered to hold negotiations abroad, military operations were suspended and talks began in Malaysia under the auspices of Libya, which led to a ceasefire. Throughout 2004 the Philippine Government and the MILF also held exploratory meetings in Malaysia, which became the facilitator. They agreed on an initial 3-point agenda: security, rehabilitation of the areas in conflict and protection of the ancestral domain of the island of Mindanao. The MILF gave up their independence, but at the time it demanded a form of self-government that provided for greater autonomy in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In 2008, the Government and the MILF declared in Malaysia that they would sign the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA), the most controversial negotiation issue in recent years. Both parties also committed to reaching a comprehensive peace agreement in the next 15 months that would include the three main points of the negotiating agenda: security, rehabilitation and development, and ancestral domains. However, at the beginning of August, hours before the Philippine Government and the MILF were ready to sign the agreement in Malaysia, the Supreme Court temporarily suspended the signing of the MOA. In 2009 the Government and the MILF signed in Kuala Lumpur a framework agreement for the creation of an international support group for the negotiation process, which would be composed of governments, mainly the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the EU, in addition to international NGOs and eminent personalities. In September 2010 the MILF chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, said his group had formally abandoned its request for independence for certain regions of Mindanao and had made a proposal to the Government to create a sub-state or autonomous republic which would have power over all areas except foreign affairs, national defence, currency and postage.

On October 15, 2012 the Government and the MILF signed a framework agreement in Manila to resolve the conflict in Mindanao and to create a new political entity called Bangsamoro. The new entity would replace the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao after a transitional

period in which the Bangsamoro basic law would be drawn up. Subsequently, the new law would have to be ratified in a referendum and, if approved, elections for the formation of a government would be held to replace the Transition Commission. On March 27, 2014 the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) was signed. The agreement was described as historic because it culminated 13 years of negotiations and brought to an end more than four decades of armed conflict in Mindanao.

Good lessons from the processes	
El Salvador	Delegitimation of the armed forces Positive role of the United Nations and the countries in the region Human rights agreement in the midst of the conflict Role of the National Reconciliation Commission
Guatemala	Participation of civil society Regional pressure Role of the National Reconciliation Commission Good offices of Paul Wee The guerrilla's consultations with civil society
Northern Ireland	Role of prisoners Methodology of the negotiation (sufficient consensus, parallel consent, Mitchell principles)
Angola	Security Council sanctions on diamonds
South Africa	Participation of civil society (National Peace Agreement) Truth and Reconciliation Commission Persuasive, conciliatory role of Nelson Mandela
Tajikistan	Good mediation by the United Nations Good help from the countries in the region Continuous rounds of negotiations in the midst of the conflict
Southern Sudan	Direct encounter between the guerrilla leader and the President of the country Continuous rounds of negotiations
Indonesia (Aceh)	Speed of the process Flexibility of the parties Taking advantage of a natural and humanitarian catastrophe (tsunami)
Nepal	United Nations verification
Philippines (MILF)	The international community's interest in a moderate Islam Failure of the previous process in 1996 MILF leadership open to dialogue Personal meeting between the leader of the MILF and the president of the Philippines Business interest in peace Influence of Indonesia's peace process (Aceh). MILF's decision to abandon demand for independence.

Appendix 9. Websites of interest

- African Union (www.peaceau.org/en)
- Alertnet (www.alertnet.org)
- Armed Conflict Database (acd.iiss.org)
- Armed Conflict Location and Even Data Project (www.acleddata.com)
- Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives (peacebuilding.asia)
- Berghof Research Center (www.berghof-foundation.org)
- Center of Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (graduateinstitute.ch/home/research/centresandprogrammes/ccdp.html)
- Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (www.hdcentre.org)
- CICDM (www.cidcm.umd.es)
- Clingendael Security and Conflict Programme (www.clingendael.nl)
- Conciliation Resources (www.c-r.org)
- Conflictbarometer (hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer)
- Crisis Management Initiative (www.cmi.fi)
- Crisis Watch (www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/crisiswatch)
- Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford (www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace)
- Dialogue Advisory Group (www.dialogueadvisorygroup.com)
- EEAS Mediation Support Team (eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict_prevention/index_eu.htm)
- Escola de Cultura de Pau (escolapau.uab.cat)
- European Centre for Conflict Prevention (www.haguejusticeportal.net)
- European Forum for International Mediation and Dialogue (www.themediateur.eu)
- European Peacebuilding Office (EPLO) (www.wplo.org)
- FEWER (www.fewer.org)
- Folke Bernadotte Academy (www.folkebernadotteacademy.se/en)
- FriEnt (www.frient.de)
- Geneva Call (www.genevacall.org)
- Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (www.gplatform.ch)
- German Working Group on Development and Peace (www.frient.de)
- Gleencree. Center for Peace & Reconciliation (www.gleencree.ie)
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (www.gppac.org)
- Human Security Report (hsrgroup.org)
- ICTJ (<http://ictj.org/news/ictj-forum-series-truth-commissions-and-peace-mediation>)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- Insight to Conflict (www.insightonconflict.org)
- Inter Mediate (www.inter-mediate.org)
- Irene Institute for Research and Education and Negotiation. ESSEC Business School (sites.google.com/a/essec.edu/essec-irene-english)
- Iterpeace (www.interpeace.org)
- International Alert (www.international-alert.org)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- International Dialogue on Peacebuilding & Statebuilding (www.psbdialogue.org)
- International Peace Academy (www.ipacademy.org)
- IPI Global Observatory (theglobalobservatory.org/tag/peace-processes)
- Kreddha (www.kreddha.org)
- Life & Peace Institute (www.life-peace.org)
- Mediateur (www.themediateur.eu)
- Mediation Support Network (mediationsupportnetwork.net)
- Mediation World (www.mediationworld.net)
- Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (www.peacebuilding.no)
- OSCE (www.osce.org)

- [Peace Accords Matrix \(peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/topic\)](http://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/topic)
- [Peace Direct \(www.insightonconflict.org\)](http://www.insightonconflict.org)
- [Peace and Justice Update \(peace.sandiego.edu/reports/updates.html#bottom\)](http://peace.sandiego.edu/reports/updates.html#bottom)
- [Peace Mediation Project \(peacemediation.ch\)](http://peacemediation.ch)
- [Peace Negotiations Watch \(www.publicinternationallaw.org\)](http://www.publicinternationallaw.org)
- [Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission \(www.peaceau.org/en/\)](http://www.peaceau.org/en/)
- [People Building Peace \(www.peoplebuildingpeace.org\)](http://www.peoplebuildingpeace.org)
- [PRIO \(www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict/current\)](http://www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict/current)
- [Project Ploughshares \(www.ploughshares.ca\)](http://www.ploughshares.ca)
- [Public International Law & Policy Group \(www.publicinternationallaw.org\)](http://www.publicinternationallaw.org)
- [Relief Web \(www.reliefweb.int\)](http://www.reliefweb.int)
- [Responding to Conflict \(www.respond.org\)](http://www.respond.org)
- [Saferworld \(www.saferworld.org.uk\)](http://www.saferworld.org.uk)
- [SIPRI \(www.sipri.org\)](http://www.sipri.org)
- [Swiss Peace \(www.swisspeace.org/fast\)](http://www.swisspeace.org/fast)
- [The Conflict Resolution Information Source \(www.crinfo.org\)](http://www.crinfo.org)
- [The Joan B. Kroc Institute \(kroc.nd.edu\)](http://kroc.nd.edu)
- [Today's Mediation News \(www.crinfo.org/news_feeds/v2_negotiation.cfm\)](http://www.crinfo.org/news_feeds/v2_negotiation.cfm)
- [United Nations \(www.un.org\)](http://www.un.org)
- [United States Institute of Peace \(www.usip.org/library/pa.html\)](http://www.usip.org/library/pa.html)
- [UN Peacemaker \(peacemaker.un.org\)](http://peacemaker.un.org)
- [Uppsala University \(www.ucdp.uu.se\)](http://www.ucdp.uu.se)

Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace)

The Autonomous University of Barcelona's Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace) was created in 1999 for the purpose of organising a variety of academic and research activities related to the culture of peace, conflict analysis, prevention and transformation; the promotion of human rights and monitoring and intervention in the peace process.

The Escola de Cultura de Pau's main activities include:

- The **post-graduate diploma in the Culture of Peace** (208 classroom hours)
- The **Peace Processes Programme**, which monitors and analyses different countries with peace processes or formalised negotiations underway, as well as countries with negotiations still in the exploratory phase. It includes awareness-raising initiatives to facilitate dialogue amongst the stakeholders involved.
- The **Education for Peace Programme**, which strives to promote and develop knowledge, values and skills for peace education.
- The **Conflict and Peace-building Programme**, which monitors international events related to armed conflicts, situations of tension, humanitarian crises and the gender dimension in peace-building in order to draft the annual *Alert!* report, monthly reports and quarterly publications.

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**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

This eleven edition of the Yearbook on Peace Processes analyses conflicts in which negotiations are being held to reach a peace agreement, regardless of whether these negotiations are formalised, are in the exploratory phase, are faring well or, to the contrary, are stalled or in the midst of crisis. It also analyses some cases in which negotiations or explorations are partial; that is, they do not include all the armed groups present in the country (such as the case of India, for example). The majority of the negotiations refer to armed conflicts, but we also analyse quite a few contexts in which, despite the fact that there are no considerable armed clashes today, the parties have not reached a permanent agreement that would put an end to the hostilities and conflicts still pending. In that sense, the negotiations make sense in an effort to fend off the start or resurgence of new armed clashes.

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