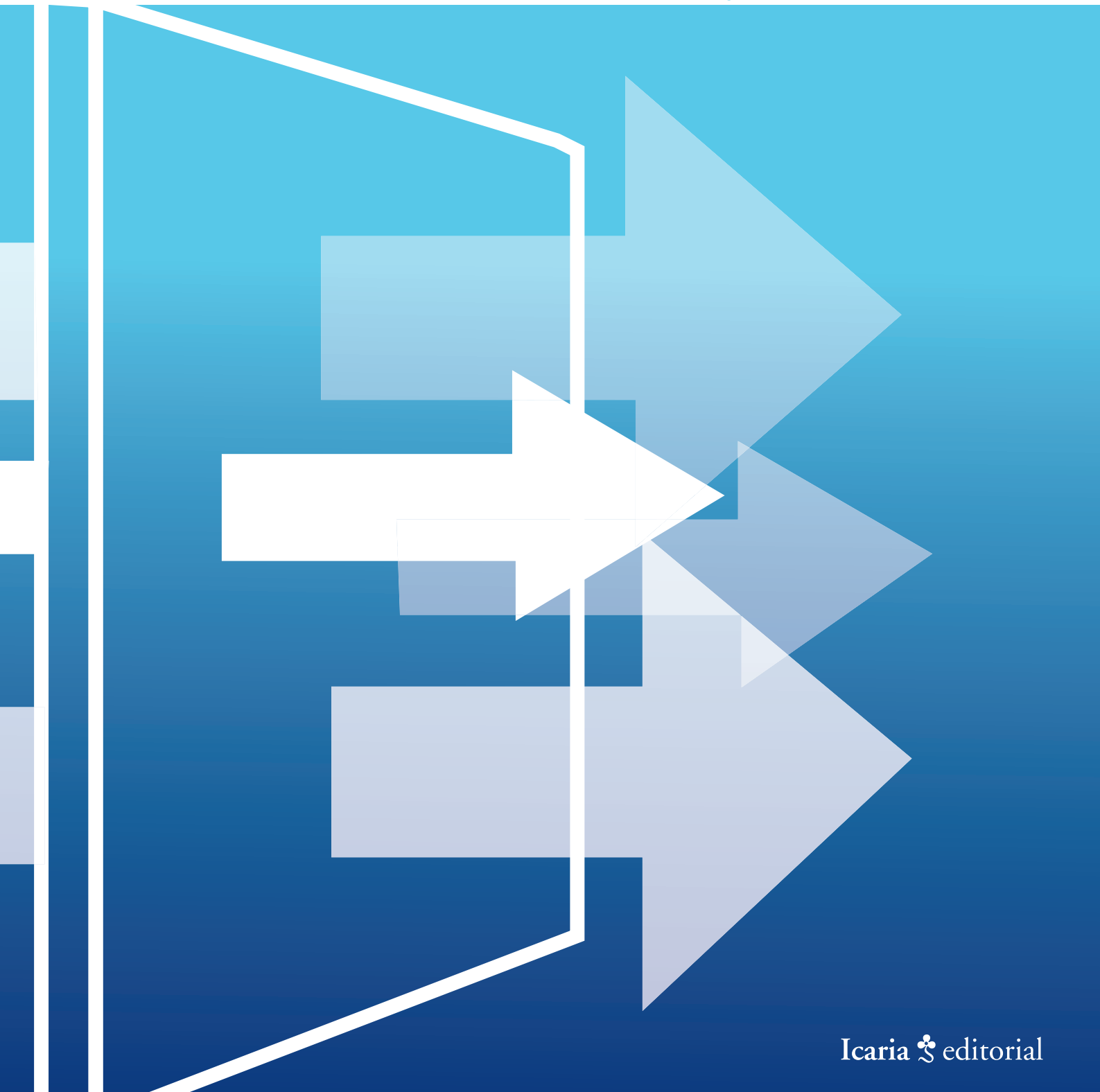


2010

Yearbook on
Peace Processes

Vicenç Fisas



School for
a Culture of Peace

2010 Yearbook of Peace Processes

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Introduction

This fifth edition of the **Yearbook on Peace Processes**¹ the conflicts in which negotiations are being held to reach a peace agreement are analysed, regardless of whether these negotiations are formalised, are in the exploratory phases, are bearing fruit or, to the contrary, are stalled or enmeshed in crisis. It also analyses certain cases in which the negotiations or explorations are partial, that is, they do not encompass all the armed groups present in the country (as is the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, for example). The majority of the negotiations are linked to armed conflicts, but other situations are also analysed in which despite the fact that there are currently no armed clashes taking place, the parties have yet to reach a permanent agreement to put an end to the hostilities and pending disputes. Thus, the negotiations are relevant for preventing the beginning or resurgence of new armed confrontations.

The way of organising the analysis of almost every case follows a standard pattern, namely: 1) a brief synopsis of the context of the conflict, with a short description of the armed groups and the main players participating in the conflict; 2) the lead-up to the peace process; 3) the events that took place throughout 2009; 4) a table displaying the most noteworthy events in the year in summarised form; 5) a list of websites where the conflict can be monitored. and 6) a table to see the relations between the primary and secondary actors in each conflict, signalling the intermediary spaces in each case². In the introduction for each country a small table is included with basic data about that country. In the "armed actors" section of the table governmental armed forces are not included.

The author of this yearbook has tried to limit himself to outlining facts, events, successes, failures and novel proposals, and to limit personal opinions on these events as far as possible.

MODALITIES OR STAGES IN PEACE PROCESSES

Indirect informal contact
Indirect formal contact
Direct informal contact
Direct formal contact
Informal explorations
Formal explorations
Informal talks
Formal talks
Informal negotiations
Formal negotiations
Formal process

Negotiation is understood as meaning the process in which two or more clashing parties (either countries or internal stakeholders from the same country) agree to discuss their differences within an organised framework in order to seek a satisfactory solution to their demands. This negotiation can take place either directly or through facilitation by third parties. Formal negotiations usually have a previous, or exploratory, phase which allows the framework of the future negotiation to be

¹ This yearbook provides more in-depth information than that contained in the *School for a Culture of Peace's* annual publication entitled "Alert 2010" (Icaria Editorial, 2010), which is updated on a quarterly basis through its electronic publication "Barómetro" (www.escolapau.org),

² In these "intermediary spaces" we include not only the more formally defined "facilitators or mediators" (highlighted by the size of the font or in bold), but also the other institutions or individuals that have intervened in some way. Evidently we do not include those actions that have not been made public, even though the author may have some knowledge of them.

defined (format, venue, conditions, guarantees, etc.) **Peace process** is understood as meaning the consolidation of a negotiation scheme, once the thematic agenda, procedures, calendar and facilitators have been defined. Negotiation thus entails one of the stages in a peace process.

The term **ceasefire** is used to refer to a military decision to paralyse all combat or use of weapons for a specific period of time, while an **end to hostilities** includes, in addition to the ceasefire, a commitment not to kidnap, harass the civilian population, threaten, etc.

Depending on the end goals sought and the dynamic pursued in the different phases of negotiation, the majority of peace processes can be classified into one of the following five **categories** or models, although at times a single process may combine several different categories:

- a) Demobilisation and reinsertion
- b) Political, military or economic power-sharing
- c) Exchange (peace for democracy, peace for land, peace for withdrawal, peace for recognition of rights, etc.)
- d) Confidence-building measures
- e) Formulas for self-government or an "intermediate political architecture".

The model of the process usually is primarily related to the type of demands submitted, as well as to the stakeholders' ability to exert pressure or to demand (level of military, political and social symmetry), although accompaniments and facilitations also influence, as do the stakeholders' level of exhaustion, the support they receive and other less rational factors more closely tied to leaders' pathologies, mythological beliefs or historical momentum. On certain occasions, although not many, especially if the process is lengthy time-wise, the process might start in one of the categories listed above (such as "a"), and then demands are stepped up to situate the process in another more complex category. It is also important to recall that not all processes and their previous phases entailing exploration, dialogue and negotiation are undertaken with true sincerity, as they often form a very part of the war strategy and are employed either to gain time, internationalise and become more famous, to rearm or for other reasons.

Finally, we would like to point out that what we commonly refer to as a "peace process" is nothing more than "a process to put an end to violence and armed struggles". The signing of an end to hostilities and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement are nothing more than the beginning of a true "peace process", linked to a stage known as "post-war rehabilitation", which is always difficult. Yet the latter is when decisions are truly taken and policies are devised which, if successful, will overcome other types of violence (structural and cultural) that will later truly enable us to talk about "achieving peace". In this yearbook, however, we shall limit ourselves to analysing the efforts made during the early stages of this long road, without which, however, the final goal could never be reached

.Main conclusions of the year

- More than two thirds of conflicts have open communication channels sufficiently consolidated to be able to have conversations or explorations which may result in to processes of peace.
- 36% of negotiations either went well or ended satisfactorily. A similar percentage of negotiations serious difficulties were encountered and 16% went very badly.
- During the year nine medium or low-intensity conflicts ended, with the peace agreement in Somalia between the Federal Transition Government and the moderate armed opposition faction ARS, as a case in point since it now forms part of the new Government.
- The failure of negotiations in Sri Lanka because of the military victory of the government's armed forces over the Tamil groups in the LTTE should be highlighted.
- One of the most significant aspects of the year has been the beginning of an approach by the Turkish government to the PKK Kurds, as a result of proposals by both sides which may permit direct talks in 2010.
- The most frequent explanations for negotiations crises were, as in previous years, a lack of trust or rejection of some of the mediators, clefs or dissidence within the armed groups, fundamental divergence in the topics on the agenda and mistrust between the parties.
- The "peace temperature index", which measures the state of negotiations, stood at 1.2 out of a maximum score of 3, compared with an average of .1 points last year.
- An analysis of 82 armed conflicts in the last few decades shows that 34.1% ended in peace agreements and 36.6% are yet to be resolved. Only 8.5% ended with military victory for one of the sides.
- According to the figures shown on the table above, the signing of a peace agreement does not always entail an improvement in the world ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI), as might be assumed, as a result of the end of armed violence. Of the 14 countries for which we have complete figures, four of their rankings improved, particularly Angola and Croatia which rose 21 positions, followed by El Salvador (+9) and Rwanda (+7). Contrariwise, ten countries dropped, especially South Africa and Nicaragua (dropping 29 and 27 positions, respectively), along with Tajikistan (-19) and Guinea-Bissau (-17). In terms of the Index, Guatemala and Rwanda are the countries to show the highest annual rise, while Nicaragua, Tajikistan and South Africa have shown the smallest increases.
- The trend for conflicts to start the process of dialogue and negotiations earlier than in the past has continued.
- One Iranian group was taken off the terrorist list of the European Union.
- The number of countries or zones in conflict seeking references from other peace processes with satisfactory solutions increased.
- In relation to the previous point, the number of resolutions by the Security Council linked to open conflicts decreased.
- In Nigeria (The Niger Delta region), a negotiation process began with the armed opposition group MEND, which could lead to lasting peace in the area.
- In Darfur (Sudan) significant progress was made in negotiations with the armed opposition group JEM and work is being carried out for the unification of dissidence of the SLA, which could help to significantly reduce the violence in the region.
- The president of Burundi considered that the war was over. Likewise, the FNL was formally set up as a political party. By the end of the year, around 21,000 members of the FNL had disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into civil society.
- After two days of informal meetings in an Austrian hotel, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front agreed to resume negotiations on Western Sahara, thus unblocking contacts that had been paralysed for the past 18 months.
- The US Government started talks with Taliban groups operating in Afghanistan, at the same time as they increased their military presence ion there.

- All the approaches achieved last year with the groups operating in the Northwest Front of Pakistan were truncated.
- The Prime Minister of China expressed the government's willingness to engage in talks with Taiwan over political and military issues with the goal of achieving peace between both parties. Both countries developed confidence measures throughout the year.
- The government and the MILF signed a framework agreement on forming an international group to support the negotiating process in Kuala Lumpur. The government and the NDF (the political arm of the NPA) announced their intention to resume official negotiations during the month of August in Oslo (Norway).
- The new US administration of President Barack Obama expressed its willingness to hold direct negotiations with the military junta, and several senior administration officials met with the Burmese authorities.
- The Greek-Cypriot President, Dimitris Christofias, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, started the second phase of direct talks to resolve the conflict on the island with a new meeting under UN mediation. Both parties discussed questions related to the election of a president and vice-president of the future unified republic.
- The government continued to develop its package of reforms to encourage resolution of the Kurdish question. The executive was referring to this initiative as a "democratisation package" which would not solely affect the Kurdish people. At the end of the year, the government presented in Parliament the first specific measures in its democratisation initiative to resolve the Kurdish question, as a continuation of the parliamentary discussion begun in November. They include several short-term advances in culture, politics and society.
- The President of the USA expressed his support for implementing political reforms that will lead to national reconciliation in Iraq, with measures that primarily relate to the distribution of oil profits and power-sharing among the different ethnic and religious groups that live together in the country.
- The Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, presented an action programme that called for the creation of a de facto Palestinian state in early 2011, regardless of the course of negotiations with Israel. Fayyad reiterated that the Palestinian government was committed to putting an end to the division with the Islamist movement Hamas.
- Late in the year, a new government was formed with the participation of Hezbollah.

.Peace processes in 2009

This yearbook analyses 66 situations of active conflict at the close of 2009 (as well as a progress report on the Burundi peace agreement that was signed in the previous year and consolidated in 2009), of which 45 (68.2%) are in talk or formal negotiations independent of their positive or negative outcomes, or have reached an agreement. This means that **more than two thirds of the conflicts have open communications channels that are sufficiently well consolidated to enable talks or explorations that could lead to peace processes.** Over the year eight medium-intensity conflicts came to an end, with the **peace agreement in Somalia between the Federal Transition Government and the armed opposition group ARS**, which now forms part of the new Government being one of the highlights. In comparison with 2008, consolidated processes increased, interrupted processes decreased, but the number of cases increased in which the negotiating process wither fell apart or could not be started (32.3% of cases). Especially significant was the **failure in negotiations in Sri Lanka** as a result of the military victory of the Government armed forces over the Tamils in the LTTE.

Status of the negotiations at the end of 2009				
Going well (5)	Experiencing difficulties (19)	Poor (7)	Exploratory phase (5)	Resolved (9)
<i>Cyprus</i> <i>China-Taiwan</i> Philippines (MILF) India (ULFA pro negotiations) <i>Uganda (ADF)</i>	<i>Armenia-Azerbaijan</i> <i>Chad-Sudan</i> <i>Philippines (MNLF)</i> Philippines (NPA) <i>India (NDFB)</i> <i>India – NSCN/IM)</i> <i>India (NSCN-K)</i> India-Pakistan <i>Kosovo</i> <i>Mali (Tuaregs)</i> <i>Moldova</i> <i>(Transdnistria)</i> Nigeria (MEND) <i>Myanmar (NLD)</i> Myanmar (various) <i>Nepal (Terai)</i> <i>Niger (Tuaregs)</i> R. Central Africa Sudan (SLA factions) Sudan (JEM)	<i>Ethiopia-Eritrea</i> <i>Georgia (Abkhazia)</i> Israel-Palestine Pakistan (Balochistan) <i>Palestine</i> <i>Western Sahara</i> Uganda (LRA)	Afghanistan – Taliban) India (ULFA) <i>Israel-Syria</i> Myanmar (KNU) Turkey (PKK)	<i>Chad (National Movement)</i> <i>India (DHD-J)</i> <i>Mali – ATNM)</i> <i>Myanmar (KNI-KNA Peace Council)</i> <i>Niger (FFR)</i> <i>RCA (FDPC)</i> <i>DR Congo (CNDP)</i> <i>Somalia (ARS)</i>

(The italics indicates unresolved conflicts that are not in the phase of an armed struggle or hat at the end of the year cannot be classified as “armed conflicts”.)

In general terms, in 2009 **36% of negotiations went well or finalised satisfactorily.** in a similar percentage of negotiations serious difficulties have tended to arise and 12% went very badly. One of the most significant aspects of the year has been the **start of an approach between the Turkish government and the PKK Kurds, through proposals by both sides which may allow the start of direct talks throughout 2010,** and for that reason this process explained in detail in the Yearbook. Of the negotiations in the previous table, 16 correspond to armed conflicts and 20 to non-armed conflicts.

THE CONFLICTS AND PEACE PROCESSES AT THE END OF 2009			
<i>Conflicts ended during 2005</i>		Indonesia (Aceh), Northern Ireland, Sudan (South)	3
<i>Conflicts ended during 2006</i>		Sudan (East), Sudan (Darfur - SLA Minawi), Nepal (CPN), Israel-Lebanon	4
<i>Conflicts ended during 2007</i>		Côte d'Ivoire	1
<i>Conflicts ended during 2008</i>		Benin-Burkina Faso, Burundi (FNL), Kenya, Colombia (ERG), Sri Lanka (TMVP), Georgia-Russia, Lebanon	8
<i>Conflicts ended during 2009</i>		Mali (ATNM), Niger (FFR), Chad (National Movement), R. Central Africa (FDPC), DR Congo (CNDP), Somalia (ARS), India (DHD-J), Myanmar (KNU - KNLA Peace Council, Thailand- Camboya	9
Conflicts from 2009			
Armed conflicts underway	With a consolidated process	Sudan (Darfur-JEM), India (ULFA-Pro negotiations), India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	3
	With interruptions	Nigeria (MEND), RCA (different groups), Sudan (Darfur-SLA factions), Uganda (LRA), Afghanistan (Taliban), Philippines(MILF), Philippines(NPA), India (ULFA), Myanmar (KNU), Mynamar (different groups), Pakistan (Balochistan), Turkey (PKK), Israel-Palestine	13
	No specific process ³	Algeria (OAQMI), Chad (different groups), Ethiopia (Ogaden), Rwanda (FDLR), Somalia (al-Shabab), Sudan (Darfur, different groups), Sudan (Meridional), Colombia (ELN, FARC, emerging paramilitaries), Philippines (Abu Sayyaf), India (CPI), India (Manipur), Pakistan (Northeast), Thailand (South), Russia (Chechenia), Russia (Ingushetia), Iraq, Yemen	17
	Subtotal		33
Violent conflicts that cannot be categorised as "armed conflicts"	With a consolidated process	Uganda (ADF), Philippines (MNLF)	2
	With interruptions	Mali (Tuareg), Niger (Tuareg), Chad-Sudan, India (NDFB), Nepal (Terai), Georgia (Abkhazia) Palestine	7
	No specific process		0
	Subtotal		9
Former unresolved armed conflicts	With a consolidated process	India (NSCN-IM, India (NSCN-K), China-Taiwan, Cyprus, Moldova (Transdnistria), Armenia-Azerbaijan	6
	With interruptions	Ethiopia-Eritrea, Western Sahara, Myanmar (NLD), Kosovo, Israel-Syria	5
	No specific process	Sri Lanka, China-Tibet, Indonesia (Western Papua), Georgia (South Ossetia)	4
	Subtotal		15
TOTAL 2009	Ended		9
	With a consolidated process		11
	With interruptions		25
	No specific process		21
	TOTAL		66

³ The fact that there is no specific process does not mean that there are no explorations or agreements with some of the armed groups operating in the country, but if so they are not important or far-reaching enough to place the country in the other category.

.Main reasons for crises in the year's negotiations

Very frequent

- Mistrust or rejection of some mediators
- Existence of parallel combats
- Split-offs and dissidence within the armed groups
- Tensions with neighbouring countries
- Fundamental divergences in the issues being discussed (preconditions)

Quite frequent

- Non-compliance with previous agreements
- Violations of the ceasefire
- Difficulties in forming a coalition government
- Terrorist lists
- Internal political crises
- Previous demand for a ceasefire, cessation of hostilities or disarmament
- Previous demand for amnesty by the armed groups
- Intervention by foreign military forces
- Arrest of some of the leaders or intermediaries from the armed groups

Other reasons

- Difficulties in reconciling divided communities
- Mistrust in the leaders or mission of a peacekeeping operation
- Demand for direct negotiations without external mediators or state interference
- Partial demobilisation of an armed group
- Disagreement over the role of the International Criminal Court
- Lack of recognition of the armed group or the demands of the group for their warring status to be recognised
- Absence of meaningful leaders in the negotiations
- Behaviour of trans-national companies
- No recognition of the representativeness of certain negotiators
- Disagreement or fraud in the electoral results or in the terms for holding elections
- Emergence of new armed groups
- Divergences on political power-sharing
- Murder of leaders of the armed opposition
- Withdrawal of the ceasefire monitoring missions
- Fundamental decisions taken unilaterally
- Interference with judicial power
- Delay in the launch of a peacekeeping mission
- Too many mediators
- Lack of safety for the negotiators from the armed groups
- Keeping up the practice of kidnapping or not releasing kidnap victims
- Presence of new paramilitary structures linked to drug trafficking
- Disagreement on the number of troops in the armed group
- Disagreement on whether the name of the political group may refer to the ethnic group to which it belongs
- Problems in the transition from armed group to political group
- Forced colonisation
- Disagreement on the composition of the monitoring missions
- Lack of troops or resources in the peacekeeping operations

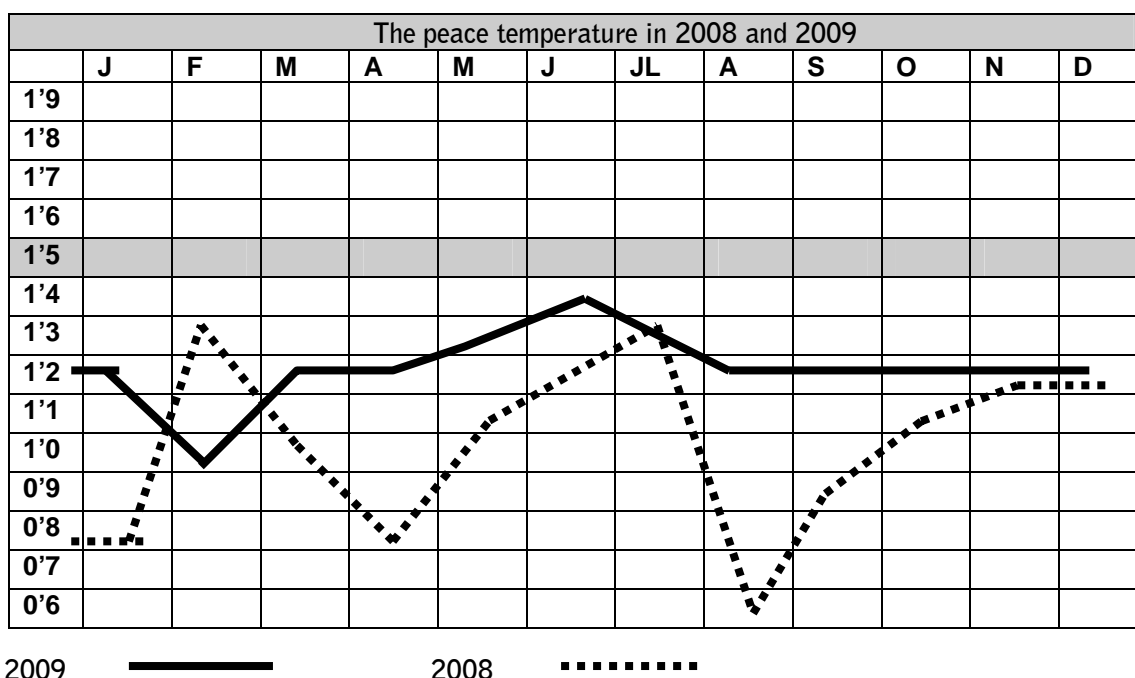
As in previous years, based on a sample of 200 cases, the reasons that prompted crises or paralysis in the negotiations tend to follow a pattern in terms of their frequency, with few differences compared to previous years. **The most common are the problems with the negotiating model**, especially when there are differences with the individuals or bodies charged with facilitating, primarily when more or less sporadic fighting persists. As in other years, **the dissidence that can arise within the armed groups at the time of negotiating is another recurring**

reason, as are differences on the issues that should appear on the agenda, especially when any of the parties places preconditions or “obstacles”. As a new development during 2009, the number of cases of contexts in which the conflict affects neighbouring countries rose, showing the “regionalisation” of many conflicts in which negotiations are opened in one of the countries in the region, without the process being regional.

The peace temperature in 2009

For years now, the *School for a Culture of Peace* has drawn up a monthly indicator of the status of the peace negotiations underway in the world with the purpose of analysing the overall dynamics of these processes. In 2009, this index analysed a selection of 33 negotiations.⁴

This index is based on the average result after granting three points to the processes that have fared well during the month, one point to those that remain at a standstill or have showed no new developments, and zero points to those that have experienced difficulties. The maximum score in a given month would be 3.0 points, and the average 1.5 points.



As can be seen in the above graph, the year ended with a monthly average of only 1.2 points, compared to the average of 1.0 in 2008, 1.1 in 2007, 1.2 in 2006, 1.3 in 2005 and 1.4 in 2004, and in no month was an average equal to or higher than 1.5 points reached. The index enables highlighting of the obstacles to keeping the majority of the processes in positive and sustained evolution, as a result of the enormous difficulties experienced in the processes or explorations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Philippines(NPA), South Ossetia, Israel-Palestine, Pakistan, Western Sahara, South of Thailand, Uganda and Yemen, among other zones.

⁴ Afghanistan, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Burundi (FNL), Chechenia, China (Tibet), Cyprus, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Philippines (MILF, NPA), Georgia (Abkhaziy and South Ossetia), India (NDFB), India-Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, Israel-Syria, Kosovo, Moldova (Transdnistria), Myanmar (KNU, NLD), Nepal (Terai), Niger (MNJ), Nigeria (MEND), Pakistan (Northwest Frontier), RCA (APDR, FDPC), Western Sahara , Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), Thailand (South), Turkey (PKK), Uganda (LRA), and Yemen.

Conflicts and peace processes in recent years

The majority of the armed conflicts analysed in this 2009 Yearbook began between the 1970s and the 1990s. During these years, several armed conflicts have ended, either as a result of a permanent peace agreement (regardless of its quality) or by reaching a provisional cessation of armed hostilities. In any event, an interpretation of most conflicts in the 1990s and the fact that many of them have lasted until today enables us to draw preliminary conclusions on what action has been taken in these conflicts from a perspective of more than 15 years of history. It should be mentioned that some of these conflicts have evolved from an armed phase to an unarmed phase, although all of them will be examined in this section.

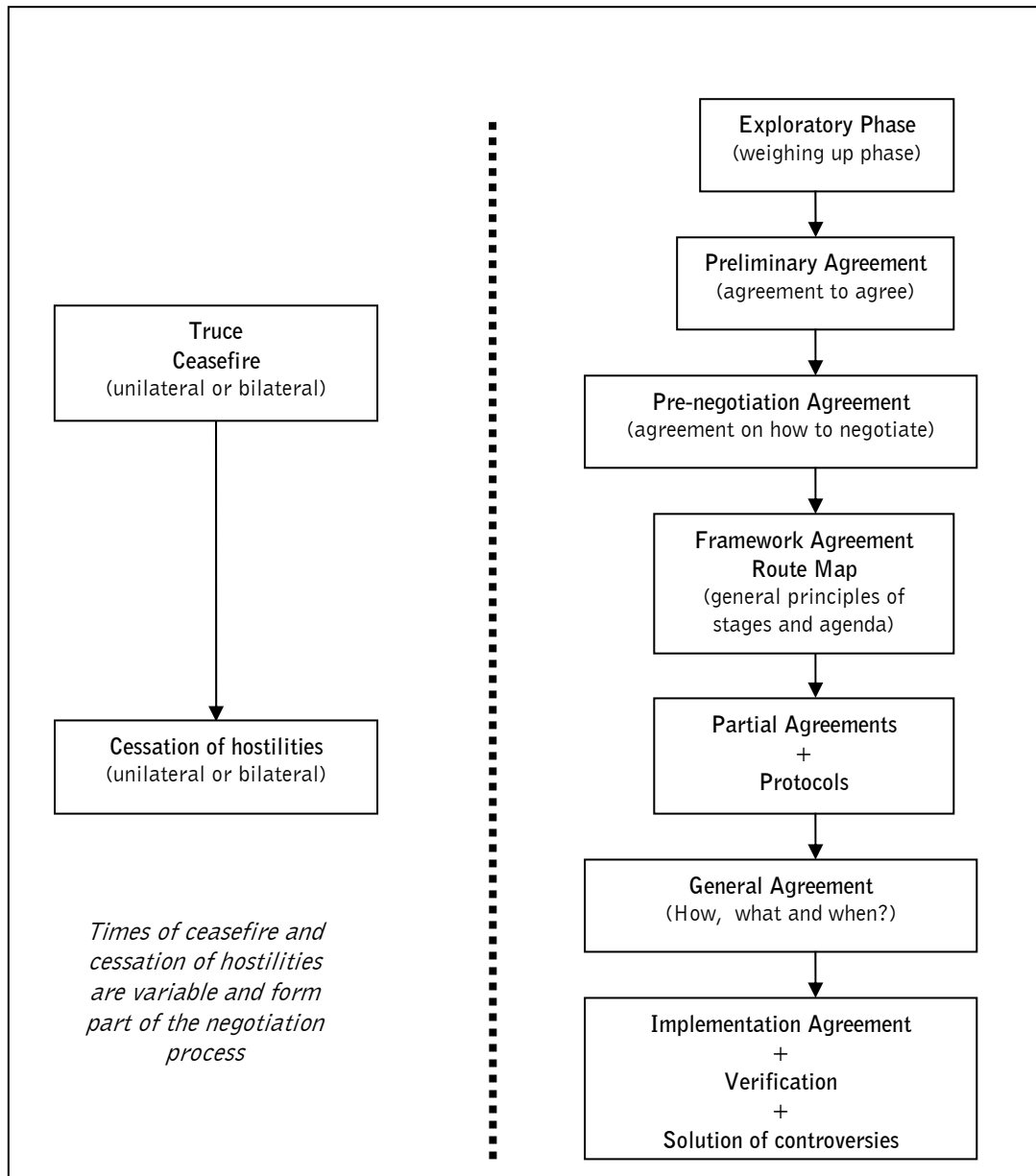
Of the 8 conflicts listed on the table below, around 2% ended by means of a peace agreement and another 7.5% with an "imperfect" peace agreement, either because it was imposed or because it had certain gaps. In any event, **one-third of the conflicts from this period have come to an end by means of an agreement.** Around 18.7% are in the resolution phase or have not been permanently resolved. **Those that have not been resolved and remain active account for 41.2% of the total,** and what is even more significant is the fact that only 7.5% of these conflicts have ended by means of a military victory by one of the sides. In other words, the vast majority of the conflicts are only resolved by negotiations, not military victory, and by embarking on some kind of process that leads to the signing of a final agreement.

The conflicts underway since the 1990s and their resolution up to 2009		
Countries	Period	Resolution
Afghanistan	89-...	Unresolved
Angola – FLEC	75-...	In resolution phase
Angola – UNITA	75-02	Peace agreement
Algeria	91-...	Unresolved
Armenia-Azerbaijan	91-...	Unresolved
Bosnia	92-95	Imposed and imperfect peace
Burundi	97-00	Peace agreement with political power-sharing
Burundi – FNL	79-08	Peace agreement
Colombia – AUC	80's-...	Not definitively resolved (as a result of the emergence of new paramilitary groups)
Colombia – ELN	64-...	Unresolved
Colombia – FARC	64-...	Unresolved
Congo (Ninjas)	98-07	Imperfect peace agreement
Congo, DR (Inter-Congolese Dialogue)	97-03	Imperfect peace agreement
Congo, DR (Kivus and Ituri)	96-...	No permanent resolution
Côte d'Ivoire	02-07	Peace agreement
Croatia	92-95	Imperfect peace agreement
Chad	99-...	No permanent resolution
Chechnya	94-...	Unresolved
Cyprus	74-...	In resolution phase
El Salvador	80-91	Peace agreement
Spain (ETA)	68-...	Unresolved
Ethiopia (OLF)	74-...	Unresolved
Ethiopia-Eritrea	98-...	No permanent resolution
The Philippines (Abu Sayaf)	90's-...	Unresolved
Philippines – MILF	78-...	No permanent resolution
Philippines – MNLF	70-...	In resolution phase
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 (Andra Pradesh) – CPI	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-...	In resolution phase
India (Nagaland) – NSCN-IM	80-	In resolution phase
India (Punjab)	81-93	Military victory
India (Tripura) – NLFT	89-05	Peace agreement
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)	90-...	No permanent resolution
Indonesia (Aceh)	76-05	Peace agreement
Indonesia (Western Papua)	65-	Unresolved
Indonesia (East Timor)	75-99	Peace agreement
Iraq	03-...	Unresolved
Iraq-Kuwait	91	Military victory by a coalition of forces
Iraq (Kurdistan)	91-05	Peace agreement with political power-sharing
Northern Ireland – IRA	69-05	Peace agreement
Israel-Palestine	64-...	Unresolved
Kosovo	98-...	No permanent resolution
Lebanon	89-90	Peace agreement
Lebanon-Israel	06	Imperfect peace agreement
Lebanon – Fatah al-Islam	07	Military victory by the Lebanese armed forces
Liberia	89-96	Imperfect, imposed peace agreement
Mali	90-	No permanent resolution
Mozambique- RENAMO	77-92	Peace agreement
Myanmar – CNF	88-	Unresolved
Myanmar – KNU	48-...	Unresolved
Myanmar – Shan	59-...	Unresolved
Nepal – CPN	96-06	Peace agreement
Nepal - Terai	07-...	In resolution phase
Niger - MNJ	07-...	Unresolved
Nigeria (Delta) - MEND	05-...	In resolution phase
Pakistan (Balochistan)	06-...	Unresolved
Pakistan (Northwest Border)	01-...	Unresolved
Peru – Shining Path	70-99	Military victory by the armed forces
CAR	03-...	No permanent resolution
Rwanda – FPR	94	Military victory by the FPR
Western Sahara	75-...	Unresolved
Senegal (Casamance)	82-...	No permanent resolution
Sierra Leone	91-00	Peace agreement
Somalia	89-...	Unresolved
Sri Lanka – LTTE	72-09	Sri Lankan military victory
South Africa	61-93	Peace agreement
Sudan – SPLA	83-05	Peace agreement
Sudan (Darfur)	03-...	Unresolved
Sudan – East	05-06	Peace agreement
Thailand (Sur) – PULO	68-...	Unresolved
Tajikistan	92-97	Peace agreement
Turkey – PKK	74-...	Unresolved
Uganda – LRA	89-...	Unresolved
Yemen North-South	94	Military victory by North Yemen
Yemen – Zeidi sect	04-...	Unresolved

Status of the 82 conflicts analysed		
	Number	%
Ended with peace agreement	22	26'8
Ended with imperfect peace agreement	6	7'3
In resolution phase	7	8'5
No permanent resolution	10	12'2
Military victory	7	8'5
Unresolved	30	36'6
TOTAL	82	100'0

Common phases in negotiation processes



Special topic: Peace processes and the Human Development Index

When a peace agreement is signed, it is common to think that the stage getting underway will lead to an improvement in the welfare of the majority of the people, a rise in social investment that will improve the basic human development indicators, and a rise in the purchasing power of the population. However, an analysis of 16 countries that signed peace agreements between 1990 and 2000 shows results that often contradict these assumptions, with indicators that reflect a stagnation or worsening of the situation.

Economic variations in the post-conflict period ⁵								
Year of the peace agreement				Situation in 2007		Variation in ranking on the HDI in these years	Total rise in the HDI during the period ⁶	Average annual % of change in PPP in these years ⁷
	Year of the peace agreement	Ranking and percentage of the HDI at that time	PPP per inhabitant (in \$) at that time	Ranking and HDI	PPP per inhabitant In \$			
Nicaragua	1990	(97) 0.655	1,497	124 0.699	2,570	(-27)	12.8	3.2
El Salvador	1992	(115) (0.579)	1,897	106 0.747	5,804	(+9)	39.9	7.7
Angola	1992	(164) (0.291)	751	143 0.564	5,385	(+21)	38.5	14.0
Mozambique	1992	(167) (0.246)	921	172 0.402	802	(-5)	20.7	-0.9
South Africa	1993	(100) (0.649)	3,127	129 (0.683)	9,757	(-29)	9.6	8.5
Rwanda ⁸	1994	(174) (0.187)	382	167 (0.460)	866	(+7)	43.4	6.5
Guatemala	1994	(117) (0.572)	3,208	122 (0.704)	4,562	(-5)	64.5	2.7
Croatia	1995	(76) 0.805	3,972	45 0.871	16,027	(+21)	33.8	(12.3)
(Bosnia) ⁹	1995	---	---	76 0.812	7,764	---	---	---
Liberia ¹⁰	1996	(158) 0.218	843	169 0.442	362	(-11)	28.6	-7.4
Tajikistan	1997	(108) (0.665)	1,126	127 0.688	1,753	(-19)	6.9	4.5
Guinea-Bissau	1999	(156) (0.339)	678	173 0.396	477	(-17)	8.6	-4.3
Timor-Leste ¹¹	1999	---	---	162 0.489	717	---	---	---
Ethiopia	2000	(168) 0.323	668	171 0.414	779	(-3)	13.4	2.2
Eritrea	2000	(157) (0.421)	837	165 0.472	626	(-8)	8.8	-4.1
Sierra Leone	2000	(173) (0.275)	490	180 0.365	679	(-7)	12.4	4.8

⁵ The methodology used to calculate the HDI has changed over the years, so the figures corresponding to the years calculated using different methodologies have been placed in parentheses and therefore do not have the same accuracy and precision as the cases where the figures are shown without parentheses.

⁶ The calculation was made using the difference in the year the peace agreement was signed with the maximum possible HDI rating (1.0) and the evolution of the HDI until 2007. In this way, the possibilities of a rise in the HDI is calculated regardless of whether the country is at the top or bottom of the list.

⁷ The average annual rise in PPP in Colombia between 1999 and 2007 was 5.0%.

⁸ In Rwanda there was no peace agreement, but military victory of one side over the other.

⁹ In 1995, there were still no broken down HDI figures for Bosnia.

¹⁰ There were no HDI figures from 1996, so the 1995 figures were used.

¹¹ In 1999, there were still no statistics on Timor-Leste.

According to the figures shown on the table above, the signing of a peace agreement does not always entail an improvement in the world ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI), as might be assumed, as a result of the end of armed violence. Of the 14 countries for which we have complete figures, four of their rankings improved, particularly Angola and Croatia which rose 21 positions, followed by El Salvador (+9) and Rwanda (+7). Contrariwise, ten countries dropped, especially South Africa and Nicaragua (dropping 29 and 27 positions, respectively), along with Tajikistan (-19) and Guinea-Bissau (-17). Therefore, these figures show the difficulties of the post-war reconstruction phase, as it demonstrates that the countries that have not suffered from an armed conflict and have not had to sign a peace agreement have been able to rise in the ranking more easily.

In 2007, of the 16 countries analysed, two had high HDI rankings (Croatia and Bosnia), six had middle rankings (El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, South Africa and Angola) and eight were ranked low (Timor-Leste, Eritrea, Rwanda, Liberia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone).

In terms of the evolution in the index itself after the signing of peace agreements, the 14 countries can be divided into five groups: The first includes Guatemala, with the highest average annual rise (4.96%) since the agreements were signed in 2007. The second group includes Rwanda, with a noteworthy 3.33% rise per year. The third group includes four countries with rises that range from 2.5% to 3% per year (Croatia, Liberia, El Salvador and Angola). The fourth group is made up of three countries with rises between 1.5% and 2% per year (Ethiopia, Bosnia and Sierra Leone). Finally, the last group is made up of the countries that rose the least in the HDI, between 1.38% and 0.86% per year (Mozambique, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua, Tajikistan and South Africa), which are also the ones that have had the greatest difficulties raising their Human Development Index rankings in the post-war years.

If we analyse components of this index, we will see, for example, that the purchasing power parity (PPP) has risen significantly in two countries (Angola and Croatia), above the average annual rise of 12%, while it has dropped in four countries (Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea and Mozambique).

With regard to life expectancy, it has risen an average of 3.4% and 3.1% in Ethiopia and El Salvador, respectively, while it has dropped in five countries (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste).

With regard to education on the HDI, the most significant rises were in Guinea-Bissau, Croatia and El Salvador, all of which rose more than 3% per year, compared to an average of 1.5%, and on the other extreme, the drop in Timor-Leste and the stagnation in Nicaragua and Bosnia.

						2006	Year of the peace agreement	% annual increase	2006	Year of the peace agreement	% annual increase	2006	Year of the peace agreement
	Year of the peace agreement	Ranking and percentage of the HDI at that time	Position and HDI in 2007	Variation in ranking on the HDI in these years	Increase in HDI during the period	Life expectancy	Life expectancy	Life expectancy	Education Index	Education Index	Education Index	PPP Index	PPP Index
Nicaragua	1990	(97) (0'655)	124 0.699	(-27)	0.044	0.789	---	---	0.774	0.780	0'0	0.553	---
El Salvador	1992	(115) (0.579)	106 0.747	(+9)	0.168	0.776	0.690	3.1	0.798	0.640	3.1	0.668	0.400
Angola	1992	(164) (0.291)	143 0.484	(+21)	0.193	0.285	0'360	Negative	0.535	0.390	1.7	0.633	0.120
Mozambique	1992	(167) (0.246)	172 0.366	(-5)	0.120	0.291	0.360	Negative	0.474	0.330	1.5	0.334	0.050
South Africa	1993	(100) (0.649)	129 (0.670)	(-29)	0.021	0.418	0.640	Negative	0.840	0.800	1.5	0.753	0'510
Rwanda	1994	(174) (0.187)	167 (0.435)	(+7)	0.248	0.346	---	---	0.607	0.520	1.5	0.351	---
Guatemala	1994	(117) (0.572)	122 (0.696)	(-5)	0.124	0.750	0.680	1.8	0.709	0.520	3.2	0.628	0.510
(Croatia)	1995	(76) 0.805	45 0.862	(+21)	0.057	0.842	0.780	2.6	0.915	0.880	2.6	0.828	0.620
(Bosnia)	1995	---	---	---	---	0.827	0.780	(1.9)	0.874	(0.880)	(0'0)	0.704	(0.620)
Liberia	1996	(158) 0.218	169 0'364	(-11)	0.146	0.335	---	---	0.555	---	---	0.202	---
Tajikistan	1997	(108) (0.665)	127 0.684	(-19)	0.019	0.691	0.700	Negative	0.896	0.890	0.6	0.464	0.400
Guinea-Bissau	1999	(156) (0.339)	173 0.383	(-17)	0.044	0.351	0.330	0.4	0.541	0.370	3.8	0.257	0.320
Timor-Leste	1999	---	---	---	---	0.586	0.680	Negative	0.545	0.790	Negative	0.317	0.560
Ethiopia	2000	(168) 0.323	171 0.389	(-3)	0.066	0.454	0.310	3.4	0.390	0.350	1.0	0.325	0.320
Eritrea	2000	(157) (0.421)	165 0.442	(-8)	0.021	0.536	0.450	2.6	0.514	0.460	1.6	0.275	0.350
Sierra Leone	2000	(173) (0.275)	180 0.329	(-7)	0.054	0.285	0.230	1.1	0.396	0.330	1.6	0.307	0.270

Comparison of positions for HDI in 2007 in relation to other indicators, for a total (of 182) countries

	HDI:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Nicaragua	124	74	100	98	130	68	74	100	102	58	119	42	28	90
El Salvador	106	94	96	88	99	63	89	96	88	64	86	8	76	86
Angola	143	172	117	122	101	118	147	117	139	116	--	--	--	--
Mozambique	172	166	141	146	169	127	149	141	147	101	116	153	134	150
South Africa	129	158	80	77	78	85	143	80	56	68	41	79	50	95
Rwanda	167	163	122	153	168	100	140	122	122	98	16	64	102	99
Guatemala	122	100	109	108	111	76	92	109	44	100	96	22	96	137
Croatia	45	42	23	74	52	2	12	23	25	1	29	34	48	50
Bosnia	76	51	39	110	87	5	19	39	27	6
Liberia	169	141	133	142	179	109	121	133	124	107	134	140	100	164
Tajikistan	127	114	9	106	144	74	96	9	117	80	35	40	29	154
Guinea-Bissau	173	169	123	171	178	107	145	123	135	86	147	78	122	172
Timor-Leste	162	134	138	125	173	122	108	138	125	136
Ethiopia	171	151	145	159	171	130	128	145	146	126	133	125	142	157
Eritrea	165	140	124	173	177	103	109	124	130	130	136	49	124	169
Sierra Leone	180	170	144	165	175	128	133	144	138	114	138	124	136	166

Legend:

- 1 – Life expectancy at birth
- 2 – % of illiterate persons from the age of 15
- 3 – % of registered persons
- 4 – Purchasing Power per inhabitant (in dollars)
- 5 – Index of Human Poverty. (This index measures severe health problems in proportion to those who are not expected to live beyond 40. affecting 135 countries)
- 6 – Probability of not living beyond 40
- 7 – % of the illiterate adult population (over 15 years)
- 8 – % of the population does not use drinking water
- 9 – % aged under 5 years underweight for their age
- 10- Index of Human Development by gender
- 11 – Life expectancy at birth. % of women over men. 2004 figures.
- 12- % of illiterate persons from the age of 15. % of women over men. 2004 figures.
- 13- % of registered persons. % of women over men. 2004 figures.

Analyses by country

AFRICA

a) South and West Africa

MALI

Context of the conflict

Having won its independence from France in 1960, Mali has witnessed several different rebellions by its **Tuareg people**, nomads who make up around 10% of its population, mainly living in the north of the country and upholding different economic and social policies than the populations in the south. They staged an important revolt back in 1916, which was harshly quashed by France. The conflicts were aggravated by natural phenomena, such as the serious droughts in 1972 and 1983, which mainly affected the north of the country. Other adverse factors included the attempt to construct a unified country with a single party after independence, which led to the first internal clashes in the early 1960s, which were in turn aggravated by the traditional underdevelopment of the northern area. The gold mining in the country has not brought about an improvement in living conditions for the local population. Mali, **the third largest producer of gold in Africa** which exports 94% of its production, does not have the means to control either its production of this metal nor the impact of the environmental pollution caused by the mining operations. In the 1980s, the north of Mali was influenced by Libya's expansionist policy, a country along with Algeria where a number of Tuaregs had sought refuge in the 1960s, and where they received military instruction at that time. However, the most important clashes between the Tuaregs and the government of Mali took place between 1990 and 1996. These confrontations ultimately left a legacy of more than 2,500 deaths and were muddled by incursions into Mali by the Algerian Islamist group GSPC, linked to Al-Qaeda. This has led to the deployment of US and French anti-terrorist units in Saharan soil since 2004.

Population: 12 million inhabitants; fewer than 100,000 in Kidal
Area: 1,240,000 km ² ; Kidal region: 151,400 km ²
GDP: 6,100 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: 500 \$
HID: 178 (of 182))
Deaths due to the conflict: 2,500 (since 1990)
Armed actors: ATNM, ADC
Facilitators: Algeria, Libya, Tuareg notable

The rebellion got underway in June 1990 with the uprising of the **People's Movement of Azaouad (MPA)**, a Tuareg movement created in Libya in 1988, and the Arabic Islamic Front of Azaouad (FIAA). In 1991, the latter reached an agreement with the government in Tamanrasset (Algeria) which was hotly contested in the south of the country. This agreement stipulated that the peoples in the three northern regions of Mali would freely manage their regional and local affairs through their own representatives. In April 1992, a National Pact between the government and the political movements of the north, unified into a **Unified Movements and Fronts of Azawad (MFUA)**, gave a certain degree of autonomy to the regions in this area, although the key actors in the conflict did not participate in the agreement, so the banditry and criminalisation that prevailed in the region did not come to an end. The agreement did not receive the financing it needed, and the MPA was divided by clan affinities and a period of internal strife began, serving to aggravate the conflict. The rebels divided into four groups: The rebels divided into four groups, the aforementioned MPA and FIAA, plus the **People's Front for the Liberation of Azawad (MLPA)** and the **Revolutionary Liberation Army of Azawad (ARLA)**. In 1994, the **MPGK** was created, a militia made up of Songhoy people who received armament from its Diasporas in Nigeria and Ghana.

Background to the peace process

It was not until 1996, and after several years of local and regional efforts by a variety of local, community, regional (such as *Synergies Afrique*), national (especially the National Women's Movement for Peace) and international (including the UN and the Norwegian Church Aid) NGOs that a *national peace agreement was signed in May 1996*. This culminated in a symbolic ceremony featuring the "Flamme de la Paix", where 3,000 weapons were burned (albeit not their munitions) and 12,000 combatants were demobilised. The agreement was possible thanks to the confluence of local actions, the government's policy of "security first" (there is no development without security) and international support. The government defrayed half of the cost of the demobilisation of almost 12,000 former combatants, and the UN the other half. Around 1,500 combatants joined the armed forces, and the remainder joined social reinsertion programmes.

During the second half of 2006, a minor skirmish took place in the north of Mali, when in May a group of several hundred Tuaregs attacked a military base and seized weapons and military vehicles, after which they headed to the mountains bordering on Algeria. In mid-June, this group announced that it was travelling to Algeria to begin talks with the government of Mali, with the **facilitation of a team of four Algerian negotiators** for the purpose of gaining greater autonomy. The Tuaregs had already staged several revolts in the north of the country back in the 1960s and early 1990s, which partly ended with the 1992 National Pact, in which Algeria also acted as mediator. In early July 2006, the government and the Tuareg rebels grouped under the name **"May 23 2006 Alliance for Democratic Change"**, signed the "Algeria Agreements" or "Agreements on peace, security and development of the region of Kidal" in Algeria, which called for a monitoring committee to be set up. These agreements were harshly criticised by many groups in the country as they deemed that the agreements signed back in 1992 were thus discredited since the new ones granted privileges to the northern region of Kidal, gave very high rewards for demobilisation and did not resolve the problem of banditry, while contrariwise it provided incentives for new mutinies. Furthermore, the Algeria Agreements were not signed by some of the most prominent Tuareg leaders. At the end of the year, the Tuaregs engaged in combat with the Algerian fundamentalists grouped under the GSPC.

In mid-February the government of Mali and the armed Tuareg group Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) agreed to begin **implementation of the peace agreement for the Kidal region (northeast) signed the previous year**. The agreement set a calendar for the disarmament of the rebel groups, which are calculated to have around 3,000 troops. In March, the first weapons were turned in through the ambassador of Algeria. However, a split in the self-proclaimed **23 May group or ATNM (Northern Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change)**, led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga announced in the middle of the year the formation of a Tuareg alliance between Mali and Niger with common aims and objectives.

In early January, the president of the country announced that **an agreement had been reached with the Tuareg leader, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga**, to release the soldiers that had been held captive by the Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) faction since August. The government expressed its gratitude for the **cooperation lent by Algeria and Libya as mediators**. In late July, **the government and the armed Tuareg group Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) reached a cessation of hostilities agreement with mediation by Algeria** after almost a year of sporadic clashes. A 200-member team representing both sides was created to supervise the agreement. Algeria had abandoned its former role as mediator since the agreements signed in 2006 after having been harshly criticised by the Malian media and in view of Libya's rising interest in facilitating the negotiations. However, the failure of the most recent ceasefire led the government of Mali to once again request Algerian mediation. Also in September, the Tuareg leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga met Muammar al- Gaddafi and members of the Niger Tuareg in Libya, following which the Libyan leader reiterated his willingness to support the peace process in Mali.

In November, representatives of the armed Tuareg group ADC met in Kidal (north) with the Ministers of the Interior and Territorial Administration. This was the first meeting between both sides on Malian territorial, as the others had been held in Algeria, the mediating country. According to a source present at the meeting, the ADC was seeking appeasement measures before embarking on the process of disarming its members. However, the leader of the faction that since 2007 had once again resorted to violence to back its demands, Ibrahim ag Bahanga, from the famous May 23 faction, sent no representatives to this meeting, thus revealing the divergences inside the group.

The peace process in 2009

Despite the fact that in late December 2008 the Algerian Foreign Minister, Mourad Medelci, confirmed that his mediation efforts between the government of Mali and the Tuareg rebels were still underway, in mid-January Mali's Ministry of Defence announced that the main base of the armed group Northern Mali Tuareg Alliance (ATNMC) led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga had been destroyed in an army operation. After these events, the armed Tuareg group issued a communiqué asking to rejoin the peace negotiations, which was met with a refusal from the Ministry of Defence. In view of the stall in progress, the ATNMC asked the Algerian mediators to rejoin the peace negotiations. Weeks later, **around 600 members of this group turned in their weapons** at a public event held in the northern city of Kidal. The former combatants will be reintegrated into the armed forces or will receive government aid to rejoin civilian life. The leader of the group, however, took refuge in Libya, whose president, **Muammar al-Gaddafi**, issued a call for the Tuareg groups operating in Northern Mali and Niger to give up their armed struggle. In late July, the government gave the Northern Development Agency 1.3 million CFA francs to launch the socioeconomic reinsertion programme that is an element in the effective implementation of the agreement signed in July 2006 in Algeria between the government and the Tuareg alliance ATNM. The programme will benefit 10,000 young adults. Days earlier, representatives of the armed Tuareg groups ATNMC and ADC (led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, currently in exile in Libya) met with members of the government under the mediation of Algeria. During the encounter, the parties discussed the next steps needed to solidify the peace process. In August, the militia of the Songhai community Ganda Koy, which had skirmished with the armed Tuareg groups in connivance with the state of Mali, announced that it was turning into a development association. The formation will retain its name with the addition of: for peace and social integration. Several national media sources claimed that this was a stratagem of the president, Amadou Toumani Touré, to contain this movement by offering its leaders the chance to become a legal association, which would in turn allow them to benefit from the social integration projects and loans offered as part of the peace agreement signed in 2006. The association will be presided over by Abdoulaye Maiga, a commandant of the militia and former member army member accused by the Tuareg organisations of having murdered against civilians. The Tuareg leader, Boubacar Ansari Boubacar, accused the president of Mali of trying to combat the Tuareg insurgency with the cooperation of neighbouring countries, attempting to link the rebel movements to the radical Islamic organisation OQMI.

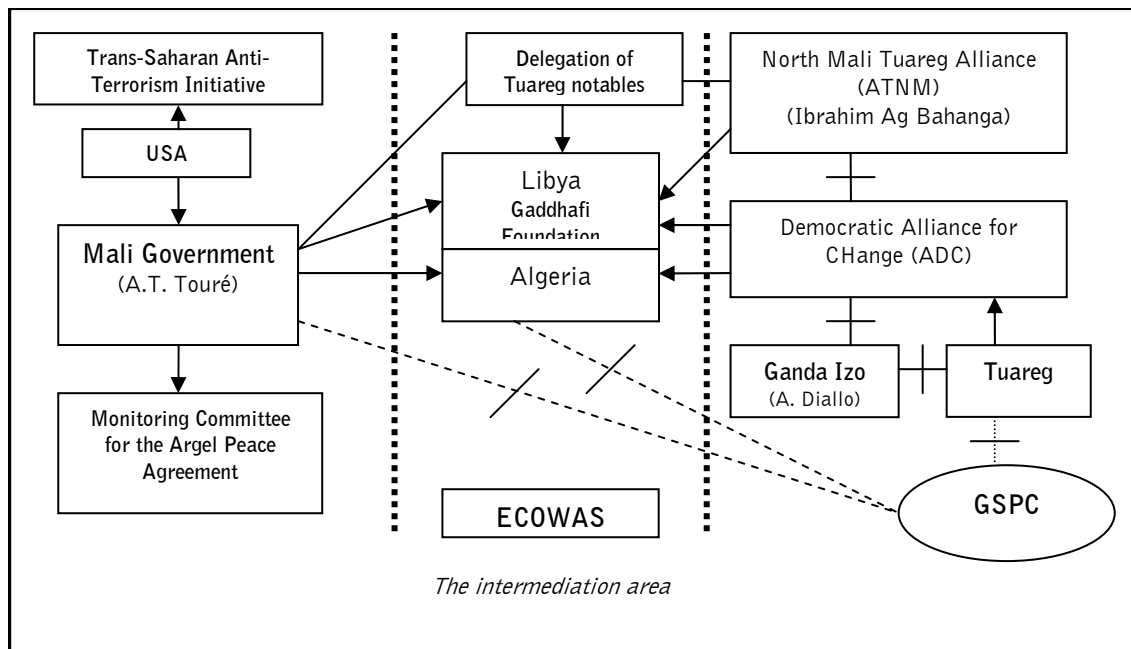
In early October, the leader of Libya, **Muammar al-Gaddafi**, announced that the governments of Mali and Niger had reached a peace agreement with the armed Tuareg groups in which 1,100 combatants laid down their weapons. The official announcement was issued in Sabha during a ceremony attended by representatives of authorities from Mali and Niger along with prominent members of the armed groups, including Ibrahim Ag Bahanga of the **ATNM**, who had recently asked Algeria to be included in the peace negotiations. In November, **representatives of the northern Malinese communities, especially Arabs, Peuls, Tuaregs and Songhai, met for the first time in ten years in Kidal to seal the peace and reconciliation agreement.** One of the decisions adopted at this meeting was to create a permanent structure for dialogue among the communities. The fight against armed Islamism was identified as one of the top priorities. It was also reported that the former Tuareg rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga backed this meeting.

The most important events of the year

- The Libyan president, Muammar al-Gaddafi, issued a call for the Tuareg groups operating in Northern Mali and Niger to give up their armed struggle.
- The militia of the Songhai community Ganda Koy, which had skirmished with the armed Tuareg groups in connivance with the state of Mali, announced that it was turning into a development association.
- Muammar al-Gaddafi announced that the governments of Mali and Niger had reached a peace agreement with the armed Tuareg groups, in which 1,100 combatants laid down their weapons. The official announcement was issued during a ceremony attended by prominent members of the armed groups, including Ibrahim Ag Bahanga of the ATNM.
- Representatives of the northern Malinese communities, especially Arabs, Peuls, Tuaregs and Songhai, met for the first time in ten years in Kidal to seal the peace and reconciliation agreement.

Websites of interest

- AlertNet (www.alertnet.org)
- www.cefib.com
- www.conflict-prevention.net
- www.kidal.info
- www.lerepublicain.net.com
- www.malikounda.com
- www.mailweb.net



NIGER

Context of the conflict

Niger won its independence from France in 1960, proceeded to suffer from several coup d'états, and did not hold free elections until 1993. Almost 10% of the population of this country is Tuareg, although they account for the vast majority of the population living in the northern part of the country, two-thirds of which is desert, where poverty has spurred illegal trafficking in a variety of products. The majority of the population is Muslim.

Population: 14 million inhabitants
Area: 1,267,000 km ²
HID: 182 (of 182))
GDP: 4,000 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: 280 \$
Displaced persons: 11,000
Armed actors: MNJ
Facilitators: Libya

Despite the fact that it is one of the poorest countries in the world in terms of per capita income, one of the lowest ranked on the Human Development Index, and very vulnerable to droughts, pests and natural catastrophes, Niger is rich in uranium (the third largest producer in the world and one of China's main suppliers), oil (it is calculated to have around 300 million barrels in oil reserves), copper, silver, platinum, titanium, lithium, and other natural resources. All of these resources are mostly controlled by foreign companies, namely the French nuclear-mining company AREVA¹², which is the company that provides the most jobs in the country (1,600 jobs), and the China Nuclear International Uranium Corporation (Sino-U), which depends on the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). However, the profits earned from uranium mining, whose price has multiplied by 900% in the past five years, have not directly benefited the people living in the northern part of the country near Agadez, where these resources are found. This has been a constant source of tension between the Tuareg people inhabiting this region and the government. The Tuareg rebellion was especially intense in the period from 1991 to 1995, spearheaded by Tuaregs who had emigrated to Libya and Algeria years earlier. Those who returned to their country reactivated the rebellion in 2007, when attacks were mounted by the **Niger Justice Movement (MNJ)** against the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Saharan Security Units (SSU), especially in the borderlands with Algeria. It is calculated that the recently-created MNJ might have between 7,000 and 2,000 soldiers coming from former armed groups, and that part of its armaments may come from the black market in the Ivory Coast. For over a decade now, both the Tuaregs and the Arabs and Toubou peoples that inhabit the northern part of the country have been calling for greater autonomy. Throughout 2007, the Niger government accused both Algeria (which had acted as a mediator in the past) and Libya of supporting the insurgent groups. In recent months, however, the latter country has been trying to serve as a facilitator between the government and the MNJ.

Background to the peace process

After the Tuareg uprisings in the early 1990s, several groups signed **peace agreements with the government in 1995**, and the High Commission for the Restoration of Peace was created. This body is currently led by Mohamed Anako, former leader of the Tuareg rebellion. Despite this, in early 2007 the aforementioned MNJ emerged, which once again took up weapons as it deemed that the agreements in which the government had pledged to initiate a process of decentralising state power and investing the profits from the uranium mines and oil located in the northern part of the country in that same region had not been fulfilled. The tentative steps taken to soothe the conflict are for now limited to the **good offices of the president of Libya, Muammar al-Gaddafi**, although there is no peace process per se for the time being.

¹² In Niger, AREVA operates through two companies: Somair (in which the State of Niger owns 36.6% of the shares) and Cominak (in which AREVA holds 34% of the shares, the government of Niger 31%, the Japanese company OURD 25% and the Spanish company ENUSA 10%). In the past 36 years, AREVA has extracted around 100,000 tonnes of uranium in this country.

In early June, the government of Niger was dissolved after the parliament approved a censure motion in response to several members of the executive's involvement in embezzling funds. The president, Mamadou Tandja, appointed Seyni Oumarou, a member of the dismantled cabinet, as new prime minister to replace Hama Amadou, who denied any involvement in the affair. The prime minister publicly acknowledged that Niger's people had never benefited from being the world's third largest uranium producer in the world, words that were warmly welcomed by the MNJ, which expressed its willingness to engage in talks with the government.

Summary of the MNJ's demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater political representation. • To consult with the local population before granting mining licenses. • To investigate the pollution caused by the mining. • To place priority on hiring the local population to work in the uranium mines. • To allocate half the profits earned from the mining operation to local groups. • To ensure the Tuaregs' full participation in regional and national public management. • To ensure the Tuaregs' participation in the security and defence forces. • To create regional banks for the agricultural development of the region. • To multiply the number of irrigation systems in the area. • To refurbish the transport infrastructures. • To ensure transparency in the public finances and management of the mining resources. • To ensure that public education is provided in the Tamasheq language and the Tifinagh writing in the region. • To conduct literacy programmes and increase the number of nomad schools. • To train healthcare agents in the region. • To ensure freedom of the press.

Niger and Mali accused the Tuareg rebels operating the territory of having formed an alliance with the Tuareg in the neighbouring country, and this was rejected by the Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC), a group in Mali which had signed a peace agreement with the Government in July 2006. However, a split in the self-named 23 May group announced the **formation of a Tuareg alliance between Mali and Niger (ATNM)** with common aims and objectives. The Tuareg frustration was the result of delays in the socioeconomic reinsertion of ex-soldiers and unfulfilled promises of the local mining companies to recruit from the Tuareg in the region, alongside poor management of the civilian careers of ex-soldiers employed in the public administration and the armed forces.

Early in the , the government continued its refusal to recognise the Tuareg organisation MNJ as a political group, leading the group to continue its attacks and threaten to wage large-scale attacks against the French and Chinese uranium mining companies that operate in the region. **In view of the instability in the zone, ECOWAS agreed to hold a regional conference in Bamako (Mali) on the situation in the Sahel and insecurity in the Sahara**, especially prompted by the Tuareg resistance in northern Mali and Niger. In late May, **there was a splintering within the MNJ with the announcement of the creation of a dissident group called Forces de Redressement (FFR)** made up of the most prominent personalities within the rebellion. The president of this movement is Mohamed Awtchiki Kriska, one of the most important figures in the 1990s Tuareg revolts. In a statement issued by the organisation, Kriska claimed that after one year the MNJ's capacity for action was blocked and that the civilian population had become the main victims of the conflict.

The peace process in 2009

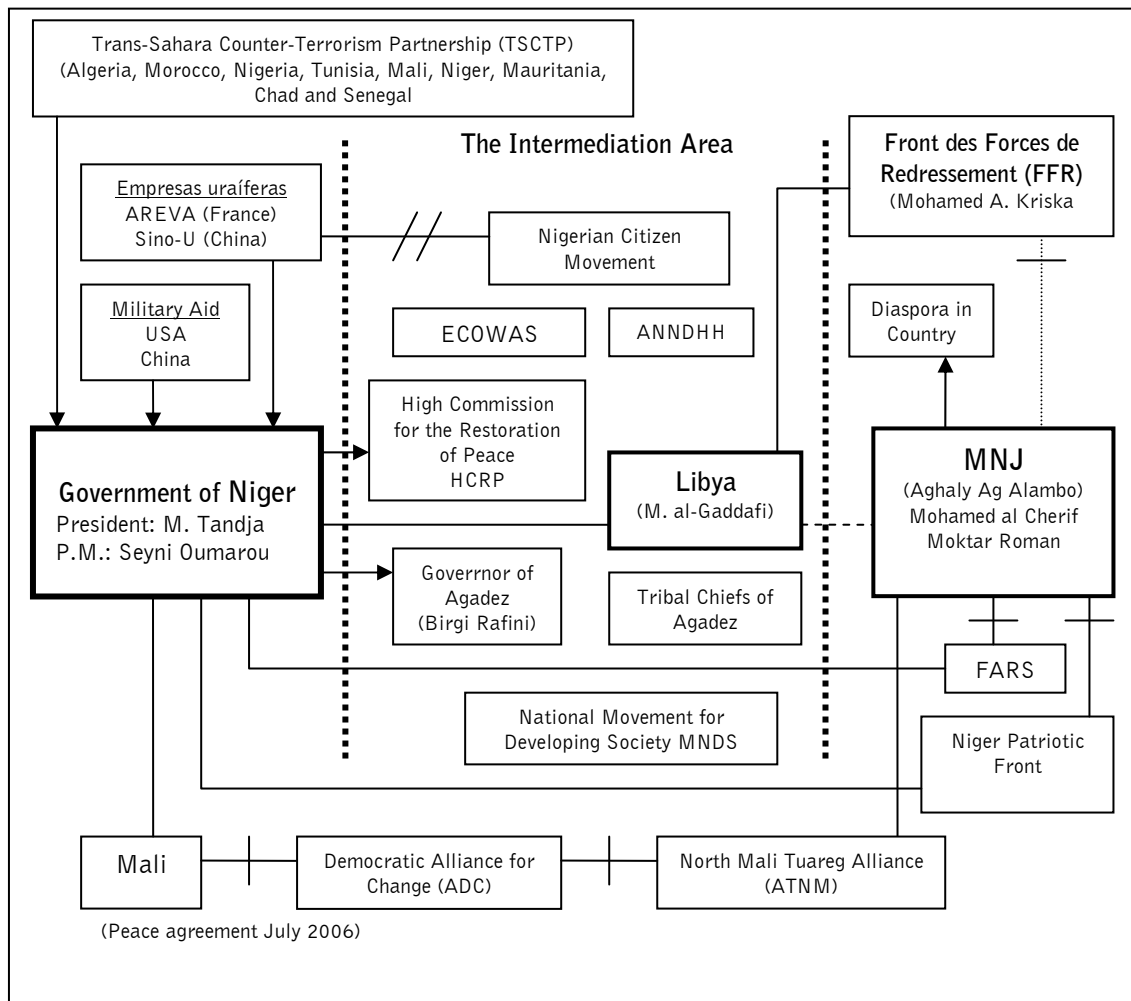
A forum on peace in the Sahara held in Niamey (the capital of Niger), attended by representatives of the governments of Mali and Niger along with prominent members of the Tuareg community, recommended that a **committee in charge of facilitating the contacts between Niger's government and the armed Tuareg group NMJ** operating in the north of the country be created. The meeting was held under the coordination of the High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace in Niger, the former Tuareg rebel Mohamed Anako. This committee would

be made up of people who are trusted and respected by both sides, as well as political leaders, members of civil society, traditional chieftains and religious leaders. The local media claimed that the president of Niger, Mamadou Tandja, had asked his counterpart and current president of the AU, Muammar al-Gaddafi, to fully enforce the resolution on the violent situation. To this end, **the MNJ had to forward its claims to the Libyan mediator within six months.** In mid-March, a new group announced that it was splitting off from the MNJ; it expressed its support for launching a dialogue that would lead to the restoration of peace in the north of the country. The faction, called the **Niger Patriotic Front**, stated that the reasons for its dissidence lay in a lack of agreement as to the leadership of the MNJ movement. In early April, **three armed Tuareg groups, MNJ, FFR and FPN, pledged to embark on a peace process and lay down their weapons** unconditionally after meeting in Libya with a delegation from Niger's government, headed by the Minister of the Interior, under the mediation of Libyan president Muammar al-Gaddafi. The leader of the main group – the MNJ – Aghaly ag Alambo, expressed his satisfaction with the results of the meeting. In early May, President Mamadou Tandja met for the first time with representatives of these armed groups in Agadez (north), offering them total amnesty in exchange for the combatants' laying down their weapons. He then held a second meeting in the capital of Niger, Niamey, with the Minister of the Interior in which the MNJ and the FPN presented their demands. However, the leader of the FFR, Rhissa Ag Boula, decided not to participate in this second meeting as he labelled it a farce. The MNJ, in turn, claimed that it would not hand over its weapons until its political demands were addressed. It also asked that the state of emergency in the north be ended, that its combatants be integrated into the security forces and that a higher percentage of the profits earned from the uranium mining in the north be earmarked to the development of the northern region and to improving the living conditions of the Tuareg people. He further demanded the release of all the combatants arrested since 2007, a cessation of hostilities and a calendar for negotiations. The start of the negotiations with the Tuareg groups came at the same time as the launch of the efforts to build a new uranium mine in the north, Imouraren, which the French company Areva had been given permission to operate in January. This is the largest uranium deposit in Africa and the second largest in the world. In late May, however, President Mamadou Tandja dissolved the Parliament one day after the Constitutional Court decided that holding a referendum to approve a constitutional amendment that would enable him to continue as head of state would be illegal. Mamadou Tandja, in turn, extended the state of emergency in the north of the country for three more months despite the fact that the armed Tuareg groups had conditioned peace negotiations upon suspending this state of emergency.

In early July, a delegation from the armed Tuareg group MNJ led by Aghaly ag Alambo met with members of the government in Niamey to address issues related to a possible disarmament of its combatants and the creation of cantonment zones if a peace agreement is reached. However, the leader of this group was not a member of the delegation. In late August, **the website of the MNJ** announced that Alambo had been removed as the leader, which cast doubt on the efforts conducted in recent months to achieve a peace agreement that would put an end to the instability in the north of the country. Alambo was accused of tricking the organisation and the countries that were participating in the peace negotiations. The MNJ also informed the Libyan authorities and the government that the group would not be bound by the decisions, agreements or pledges that had been reached by Alambo during the peace negotiations. The government had recently announced that it expected the conflict to end through dialogue before 2009 was over. In early October, the president of Libya, Muammar al-Gaddafi, **announced that the governments of Mali and Niger had reached a peace agreement with some of the armed Tuareg groups** in which 1,100 combatants laid down their weapons. The MNJ was not one of these groups. The government declared amnesty for the combatants of the armed Tuareg opposition groups that had pledged to lay down their weapons after signing a new peace agreement. Two factions of the armed groups, including hundreds of combatants who had split off from the MNJ, agreed to disarm, while a third one, Rhissa Ag Boula's FFR, expressed its desire to take part in the peace process, although they were reluctant to turn in their weapons. In late December, however, after negotiating with Libya as the mediator, the FFR did indeed lay down its weapons.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three armed Tuareg groups, MNJ, FFR and FPN, pledged to embark on a peace process and lay down their weapons unconditionally after meeting in Libya with a delegation from Niger's government. • The MNJ announced that Aghaly ag Alambo had been removed as the leader of the group, which cast doubt on the efforts conducted in recent months to achieve a peace agreement that would put an end to the instability in the north of the country. • Muammar al-Gaddafi announced that the governments of Mali and Niger had reached a peace agreement with some of the armed Tuareg groups. • The FFR laid down their weapons.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Time (www.africatime.com/niger) • Afrol News (www.afrol.com) • Agadez Niger (www.agadez-niger.com) • Alertnet (www.alertnet.org) • Areva (www.areva.com) • Commission de Recherche et d'Information Indépendantes sur la Radioactivité (www.criirad.org/actualites/dossiers/2005/niger.somniger.html) • MNJ (m-n-j.blogspot.com) • Occitan Touareg (Occitan-touareg.aver-blog.com) • SATP (www.satps.org) • Tamazgha (www.tamazgha.org) • Temoust (www.temoust.org) • Zentrum Moderner Orient (www.zmo.de/index_e.html)



NIGERIA (Niger Delta)

Context of the conflict

Independent since 1960, Nigeria is the leading oil producer on the continent of Africa, and this wealth is one of the main sources of the various conflicts in the country, affected by constant clashes between the different communities, especially the ones in the Niger Delta region (Ijaw, Itsekeri, Urhobo, Ogoni), and between these communities and oil companies, such as Royal/Dutch/Shell, Chevron/Texaco and Total/Fina/ELF in particular. Most of the country's oil is produced in this region, one of the most polluted regions on the planet, yet it is

one of the poorest zones in Nigeria. The USA gave the Nigerian government two warships to protect the coasts where the oil is produced. In the last four years, 4,000 people have died in different clashes in the region. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) seeks to liberate the Ijaw people. This community is also represented by the militia called the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Defence Force (NDPVF), founded in 1994.

Population. Nigeria: 132 million; Niger Delta: 30 million
Area: Nigeria: 924,000 km²; Niger Delta: 117,400 km².
HDI: 158 (of 182)
GDP Nigeria: 136,300 million dollars
Per capita income Nigeria: \$920
Deaths due to the conflict: 4.000
IDP: between 250,000 and 800,000
Refugee population: more than 24,000
Armed actors: Ijaw and Itsekeri ethnic militias, MEND, NDPVF
Facilitators: Mathew Kukah (Catholic priest), religious leaders, International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR), Pacification Committee, South Africa

The Ijaw are the largest community (between 5 and 10 million people), whilst the Itsekeri are a minority (hundreds of thousands). The Urhobo live in the city of Warri in particular, the base camp of many of the multinational oil companies. Half a million Ogonis also live in the region. The Ijaw community believes that the Itsekeri receive preferential treatment from the central government and the multinationals. However, the disputes may also be due to the struggle to control the illegal oil trade, as oil is systematically stolen. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was formed, led by Ken Saro Wiwa, who was executed in 1995.

Background to the reconciliation process

In August 2003, the Ijaw and Itsekeri communities agreed to a **ceasefire**, although sporadic confrontations and attacks on oil companies continued. The governor of the Delta state, J. Ibori, spearheaded several diplomatic initiatives to resolve the situation and formed a Peace Committee. In the second quarter of 2004, the leaders of Ijaw and Itsekeri ethnic militias agreed to a ceasefire in an attempt to end the six years of confrontations. In September, the country's president, O. Obasanjo, met the leader of the NDPVF militia, Dokubo Asari, in Abuja, with the goal of beginning talks on the violent situation in the region. According to some sources, 500 people had died in just a few months. Subsequently, they agreed to begin a disarmament process, give the region greater autonomy and increase the region's revenues from the oil mining. In October, the NDPVF began the process of surrendering 3,000 weapons in exchange for financial compensation. However, this process was suspended when confrontations with other communities resumed.

At the end of May, the government appointed Nigerian Catholic priest **M. Kukah**, who had been the spokesman for the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (Oputa Panel), as independent mediator. His role was to facilitate negotiations between the transnational company Royal/Dutch/Shell, the activist group Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and other Ogoni leaders. Coventry Cathedral's International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR) in the UK also participated in the mediation. At the end of the year, the government ordered the

deployment of the army, given the sharp increase in tensions in the region. In late July, the president of Nigeria, O. Obasanjo, submitted a new report from the UNDP to the Niger Delta Development Commission about human development in the region. The document mentioned the situation of the communities inhabiting the nine states in this Nigerian sub-region and accentuated seven points to be included on a development agenda:

- promoting peace as a source of development
- achieving effective local governance that meets the people's needs
- improving and diversifying the economy
- social inclusion and improving access to services
- environmental sustainability and conservation of the communities' means of life
- comprehensive action with regard to HIV/AIDS
- and constructing lasting associations aimed at moving forward human development

Still, by late August members of the Nigerian armed forces were burning houses in the outlying neighbourhoods in Port Harcourt, a city in the Niger Delta region, alleging that the people were hiding MEND militants. In April, the new president of the country, Umaru Yar'Adua, declared that one of his priorities would be reaching a solution to the conflict in the Niger Delta region, even though the armed opposition group MEND announced later that it would step up its attacks in the zone as it deemed that the elections were fraudulent. Nevertheless, the president appointed Goodluck Jonathan, from the Ijaw ethnic group, as his new vice president in a gesture of trust-building aimed at contributing to resolving the conflict. In mid-July, however, **seven organisations from the state of Rivers gave up violence** and apologised to the population and the authorities. These organisations were: Niger Delta Vigilant (which, however, perpetrated violent acts at the end of the year), Niger Delta Solidarity Front, Outlaws, Klansmen, Green Landers, Black Axe and Bush Boys/Peace Makers. In late July, after the release of two prominent leaders of the armed groups that were operating in the region (one of the top demands in order to start talks), **25 militias decided to join forces to create a common front that would make peace negotiations with the government possible**, even though MEND was not part of this coalition. At the end of the year, the vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, witnessed the signing of a peace agreement between the government of the state of Bayelsa, the oil companies and several militant groups in the region. Several members of the armed group MEND, however, described this meeting as a farce. With this agreement, the hopes are that the oil companies can once again operate safely within the state of Bayelsa.

Early in the year, Vice President Goodluck Jonathan took over leadership of the negotiations with the armed groups operating in the Delta and met with a council of elders and representatives of the armed and civilian organisations in an attempt to revive the peace talks. The Ijaw Youth Council, a member of the negotiating team, announced that it would once again participate in the talks. However, the armed group MEND refused to take part in the negotiations until one of its leaders, Henry Okah, who was under arrest in Angola, was released, and the group asked for the mediation of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, who was on a tour of the continent at that time. In February, a group of prominent military officers and activists in the region declared that they were willing to resume negotiations with the government in order to implement the roadmap. One prominent member of the group was the rebel commandant Ekpemupolo, leader of a MEND faction and head of the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities. In March, the family of the purported MEND leader, Henry Okah, who was extradited from Angola, reported that **Okah was meeting with Vice President Goodluck Jonathan in South Africa, and set an informal pact so that he could participate in the peace agreements and not be pursued by the security forces**. In April, **MEND asked the government of Nigeria to accept mediation by the former US president, Jimmy Carter**, who had tried to facilitate the negotiations back in 1999. However, the Nigerian government opposed this proposal for mediation, citing internal conflict. In June, the office of the Vice President announced that **Ibrahim Gambari**, a Nigerian and the current Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Myanmar, would lead a committee charged with preparing the future peace negotiations in the Niger Delta.

Gambari's inclusion as the president of this committee was based on the need to give the conflict a global perspective, according to the Vice President, although it could also be based on the request for international mediation submitted by the armed group MEND. The committee would be made up of governors, representatives of the international oil companies, groups from civil society and state security agencies.

In July, Ibrahim Gambari presented his resignation after having been questioned about his neutrality by several representatives of armed groups and civilian organisations in the region. In view of this situation, the government set up a committee of Niger Delta leaders to put forth recommendations that would bring an end to the violence in the oil-producing region so that peace negotiations could be held. This committee, which was christened the **Committee for the Peace and Resolution of Conflicts in the Niger Delta**, is made up of at least three leaders from each of the nine oil-producing states in the Niger Delta region. In its first public statement, the committee recommended that the government set up a fund for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the militias that are active in the region. In late November, the panel of experts created by the government to find a solution to the violence in the Niger Delta region submitted its conclusions. The report stressed that the federal and state governments' lack of political will was behind the aggravation of the crisis in the region. Late in the year, according to the local press **MEND called on the government to start a dialogue to resolve the conflict and begin the disarmament of its combatants in exchange for the release of their leader, Henry Okah.** To do this, MEND entrusted several local religious leaders to embark on the negotiations with the Nigerian executive.

The peace process in 2009

In January, the MEND declared that it was breaking the truce started four months earlier after the army attacked one of its factions, the Niger Delta Vigilante led by Ateke Tom. In the meantime, there were more kidnappings of employees of the oil companies operating in the region. In late March, President Umaru Yar'Adua declared that his government was studying the possibility of offering the Delta militants an amnesty if they would pledge to turn in their weapons. The executive was also willing to discuss measures like the former combatants' rehabilitation and reintegration into society. At the same time, he claimed that the army would be given greater powers to fight the armed groups in the Delta and provided the Joint Task Force with more funds to expand its capacity to ensure that they respect law and order. In response, the MEND stressed that it would not hand in its weapons based on a mere verbal declaration by the president, and that this option would only be considered under a peace agreement reached with the supervision of a reliable international mediator. In late May, the leaders of the Ijaw community, including the Ijaw National Congress, claimed that the soldiers were entering towns and killing civilians. It accused them of collaborating with the MEND, a claim that was denied by the armed forces. In early June, **President Umaru Yar'Adua offered to outline an amnesty programme for the armed actors operating in the Niger Delta region.** MEND stated that it would only consider an amnesty that was clearly defined and negotiated by both parties. The leader of the armed group Niger Delta Vigilante, which has ties to MEND, Ateke Tom, stated that he would consider the president's offer of amnesty if the government pledged to withdraw its troops from the Delta region.

In mid-June, MEND announced that it was establishing a temporary ceasefire for 60 days in order to facilitate the opening of peace negotiations with the government, based on the government's declared amnesty and release of the leader of the armed group, Henry Okah. The amnesty and DDR programme planned by the government, which was to last 60 days and end on the 4th of October, called for the demobilisation of around 10,000 combatants. The militants who agreed to join the programme would receive 444 dollars per month as a per diem during the rehabilitation programme, as stated by the chief coordinator of the amnesty, Lucky Ararile. In early August, one of the leaders of MEND, known as Boyloaf, decided to accept the government's offer of amnesty, but the armed group made it clear that he had been relieved of his position and

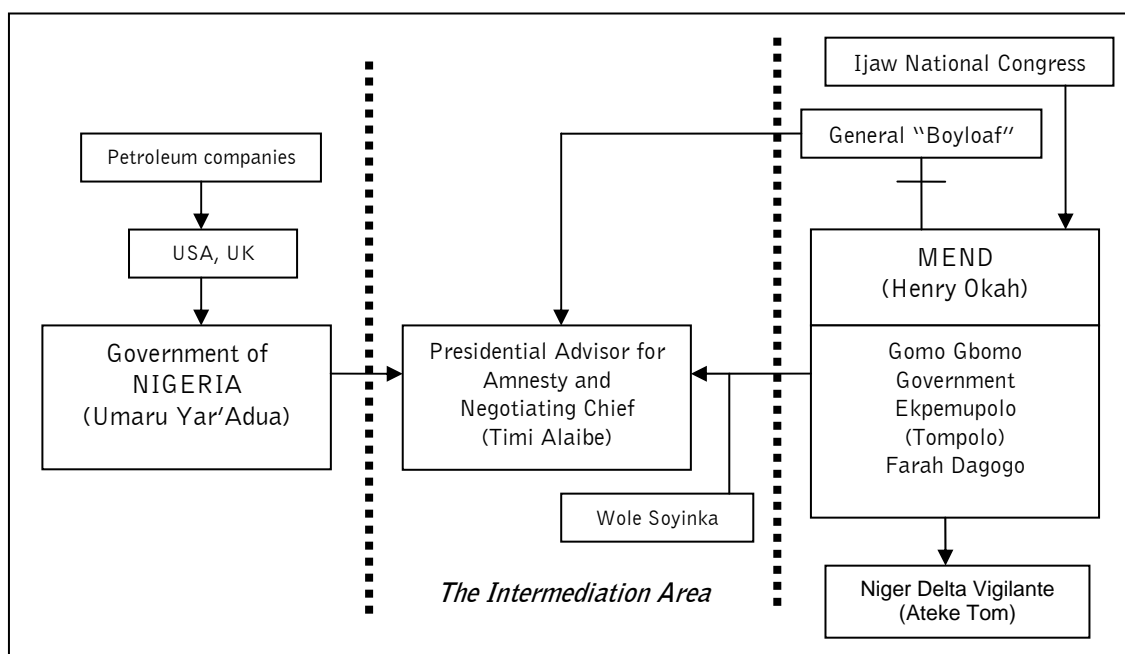
was only pursuing his own interest, and therefore not representing the group's position. The MEND spokesperson, Jomo Gbomo, denied that any representative of the group had been sent to Abuja to negotiate, stressing that no one would meet with President Umaru Yar'Adua until he pledged to take the steps needed to put an end to the conflict. In the meantime, the women's groups in the Niger Delta region, meeting under the auspices of the Women's Action Group, stated that the government's proposed amnesty would not achieve its goal of peace if it did not come hand in hand with a true development strategy for the region. Nevertheless, in late August MEND announced that the amnesty declared by the government served to distinguish those who truly wanted to fight for liberty from those who were only doing so for economic gain.

In early September, the leader of one of the main MEND factions, Government Tompolo, set out the group's demands to put an end to the armed conflict, which included the army's withdrawal from the Delta region. The executive had previously stated the possibility of reaching an agreement with other leaders such as Ateke Tom and Farah Dagogo, who along with Tompolo might be trying to create a negotiating group in which they would invite writer Wole Soyinka to serve as an observer. In an open letter to President Umaru Yar'Adua published in the Nigerian newspaper *The Nation*, Tompolo claimed that the amnesty offered by the government should be viewed as one part in a broader peace process instead of as an end in itself. In mid-September, **MEND agreed to extend the truce – which had begun on the 15th of July and was to expire in September – for another month, although it also warned that this in no way implied acceptance of the amnesty offered by the government.** The group declared that the process launched by the Nigerian authorities did not include the start of a dialogue on the causes of the conflict, and that it would therefore not give up its armed struggle. The presidential advisor for amnesty and chief negotiator for the government, Timi Alaibe, who had recently met with MEND leaders Ateke Tom and Government Tompolo, reported that around 6,000 militants had asked to take refuge in the amnesty offered by the government, and that 3,000 of them had already signed up. **MEND's demands included the withdrawal of the armed forces from the region, plus an extension of the deadlines for amnesty three months beyond the scheduled date, the 4th of October.** The director of the Ijaw Youth Council, however, stated that Tompolo did not understand that turning in weapons would be the first issue at the negotiating table. Despite this, the government insisted that the first step towards dealing with the roots of the conflict had to be the rebel groups' laying down their weapons.

During the second half of October, MEND declared an indefinite ceasefire starting on the 25th of October with the purpose of supporting the peace dialogue launched by the presidency, and Okah accepted the amnesty offered by the government in July on the condition of his being released. The presidential advisor for the amnesty process, Emmanuel Egbogah, claimed that 10% of the profits from oil production in the Delta region will be invested in development of the region and managed directly by the communities living there, thus preventing the funds from being managed by the regional governors. Members of the government also stated that the foreign and domestic companies operating in the region must cooperate in financing the reinsertion of the combatants, as their companies will be the main beneficiaries of the climate of peace. During the second half of November, hundreds of MEND militants who had turned in their weapons held a demonstration in Port Harcourt (state of Rivers) demanding payment of the first month of aid for demobilisation, which had been set by the government at 433 dollars per month. Nevertheless, **the MEND spokesperson labelled a meeting held with the president, Umaru Yar'Adua, as useful, stating that it might signal the start of a serious, positive dialogue to achieve peace.** The presidency talked about the meeting in the same tone, which was also attended by Nobel prize winner for literature, Wole Soyinka, whom MEND had appointed as a member of the mediating team.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Umaru Yar'Adua offered to outline an amnesty programme for the armed actors operating in the Niger Delta region. The MEND leader accepted the amnesty offered by the government on the condition of his being released. MEND agreed to extend the truce started on the 15th of July several times, although it also warned that this in no way implied acceptance of the amnesty offered by the government. Late in the year, the MEND spokesperson labelled a meeting held with the president, Umaru Yar'Adua, as useful, stating that it might signal the start of a serious, positive dialogue to achieve peace.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria (www.fehnnigeria.org) ICG (www.crisisgroup.org.org) ICR (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ogonireconciliation.pdf) Online Nigeria Daily News (www.onlinenigeria.com/nigerianews.com/nigerianews) USIP (www.usip.org.org) The Guardian (www.ngrguardiannews.com.com) This Day (www.thisdayonline.com.com)



b) Horn of Africa

ETHIOPIA-ERITREA

Background to the conflict

Eritrea won independence in 1993 after holding a referendum on self-determination and putting an end to a struggle for liberation that had started back in the 1960s. The government embarked on a policy of territorial claims that caused conflict with Yemen and especially with Ethiopia, unleashing a war between both countries in 1998 which left around 80,000 dead and cost both countries 1,000 million dollars until it ended in 2000. The war also started in the midst of a major drought that particularly affected Ethiopia, whose government accused Eritrea of getting weapons from Somalia through the opposition groups headquartered there.

Population: Ethiopia (79 million inhabitants); Eritrea (5 million)
Area: Ethiopia (1,104,000 km²); Eritrea (118,000 Km²)
HID: Ethiopia (171); Eritrea (165), out (of 182)
GDP: Ethiopia (17,600 million dollars (Eritrea: 1,300 million dollars)
Income per inhabitant: Ethiopia (\$220), Eritrea (\$270)
Displaced persons: 11,000
Refugees: 16,000
Deaths due to the conflict: 80,000
Armed actors: Armed Forces
Facilitators: AU, Algeria, UNMEE, EEBC, SPLM (Sudan), UN

The immediate cause of the conflict was the dispute over 1,000 km of borderland. However, the underlying causes were the divergences in their economic policies, as these are two very economically interdependent countries, as well as the personal antagonism between the President of Eritrea, Afwerki, and the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. In 1999, both countries signed two documents, known as the **Framework Agreement and the Modalities for its Implementation**, with mediation from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). However, this process was ruptured when Ethiopia refused to sign a third document on Technical Arrangements. The UN imposed a weapons embargo on both countries, and since then the border tensions have continued and both countries have reinforced their military deployments on the borderlands, provoking numerous incidents.

Development of the peace process

In August 1998, the first year of the war, the religious leaders in both countries started talks through **Norwegian Church Aid**, which managed to get both countries to meet confidentially in Norway at the end of the year. When the conflict started, the UN Secretary-General appointed an Algerian diplomat and Special Envoy for Africa, Mohamed Sahnoun, to lend a hand in the good offices of the **Organisation of African Unity (OAU)**, later called the African Union (AU). From the start, it officially spearheaded the peace efforts and was responsible for the first steps towards reaching the 1999 Framework Agreement through the OAU Envoy, Algerian Ahmed Ouyahia, with the support of the UN, the USA and the EU Special Envoys. Eritrea felt satisfied with the agreements as it was ensured that a UN peacekeeping force would keep watch over the border, an option that was an improvement on the first proposal that OAU observers would keep watch, Ethiopia's first choice. In May 2000, the OAU sponsored peace talks, which bore fruit in June with the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Algiers, one month after the then acting President of the OAU, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, visited both the capitals and ensured commitments with both countries. In July 2000, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was created, with an office in each country, and the Secretary-General created a "Group of Friendly Countries" to help consolidate the agreements reached. The mission had a radio station that has been broadcasting since 2003. The UNMEE was staffed with observers in view of the plans to create a peacekeeping mission and with the purpose of launching the mechanism to verify the cessation of hostilities. Initially 100 military observers were deployed,

later joined by 4,200 soldiers provided by Canada and Holland. In November 2007, it had 1,676 troops. **In December 2000, a General Peace Agreement was signed (S/2000/1183)** setting up a 25 km Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) along the border. However, the agreement did not resolve Ethiopia's need for a maritime port. In April 2001, Eritrea withdrew its troops from the border as a first step towards peace talks, and weeks later the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) was set up between both countries to delineate the final borderline.

In February 2002, both countries exchanged prisoners. In April of the same year, the International Boundary Commission in The Hague ruled on the border delimitation between both countries. Djibouti and Ethiopia signed an agreement that allowed Ethiopia to use the port of Djibouti and strengthen trade relations between both countries. Ethiopia also embarked on new relations with Sudan, which in turn resumed its relations with Eritrea. A pilot programme to demobilise 5,000 combatants from Eritrea was also launched, with the forecast that another 195,000 combatants would be demobilised within the next two years. In late October 2002, however, the government of Ethiopia issued an appeal to the international community to help stop the hostile attitude that it believed Eritrea was displaying. Ethiopia, Yemen and Sudan then pledged to cooperate to prevent the possible destabilisation of the region after a meeting held in Yemen, especially because all three countries had all sorts of disputes pending with Eritrea. Ethiopia claimed that it would not get involved in internal affairs but it would in any affairs of the Eritrean regime that might destabilise the region.

At the start of 2003, the UN Security Council asked both countries to work more actively with UNMEE and with a Boundary Commission to ensure that the demarcation of their common border worked properly. Despite this, both countries failed to comply with the Security Council mandates. Since October 2005, Eritrea has restricted the efforts of UNMEE and refuses to allow civil servants from the USA, Canada and European countries to work in the mission. UNMEE, whose last annual budget was 118 million dollars, has been unable to hold any meetings with its Military Coordination Commission since July 2006. Despite this, **in late 2007 the government of Eritrea deemed that the border issue had been "legally resolved" as the boundary was delineated in a way that was satisfactory to Eritrea**, while Ethiopia held that the demarcation between both countries made by the Boundary Commission had no legal force or effect, although it did accept the delimitation that the Boundary Commission had made on 13th April 2002. This commission issued a declaration in November 2006 in which it explained that its verdict was definitive and must be binding for both parties.

In late 2007, the south Sudanese SPLM, a group that had reached a peace agreement with the government of Sudan and now shares governing responsibilities, proposed a peace initiative after holding a meeting with a delegation from the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of parties that governs Ethiopia. The UN Security Council decided to terminate the UNMEE mandate starting on 31st July 2008, as a result of the pressure being exerted by Eritrea, which forced the withdrawal of the Blue Berets. The spokesman for the Foreign Minister stated that his government wanted to hold peace talks instead of resorting to the armed route to resolve the border conflict between both countries after the vote to **withdraw 1,700 Blue Berets**, the expected decision after Eritrea cut off supplies to UNMEE in February. The spokesman stressed that the United Nations had allowed Eritrea to humiliate the organisation, leading to the withdrawal of the mission. In early October, the UN Secretary-General forwarded the Security Council the latest **report from the Boundary Commission between both countries (EEBC)**, which highlighted that the institution's mandate had been fulfilled and that all the administrative issues had been resolved. The EEBC had given both parties the deadline of 26th November 2007 to lay the foundations of the boundary delimitation agreed upon. In a letter sent to both countries in June, the EEBC stressed that if there was no notification from the parties, the EEBC would conclude that no further intervention by the Commission was needed, so it would consider its mission accomplished. It should be noted that Eritrea responded to this letter, accepting the demarcation and the EEBC's efforts, while Ethiopia did not respond.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its willingness to engage in a dialogue with Eritrea to resolve the border dispute. Shortly thereafter, the president of Libya and the new president of the AU, **Muammar al-Gaddafi**, announced in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, that he would launch an initiative to resolve the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, although the Eritrean president rejected any effort or kind of mediation. In early June, the Ethiopian government authorised the Eritrean people expelled from Ethiopia as a result of the war between both countries (1998-2000) to reclaim their property, bank accounts and other belongings that had been left or requisitioned as a result of the war, and for the Eritrean people to be allowed to invest in Ethiopia, just like any other foreign investor. In mid-August, the Reclamation Commission of Eritrea and Ethiopia created after the end of the armed conflict between the two countries and headquartered in The Hague ordered both countries to pay mutual compensation for the damages caused during the border war that took place between 1998 and 2000. Ethiopia had to pay Eritrea 164 million dollars, while Eritrea had to pay Ethiopia 174 million dollars, which meant a single payment of 10 million dollars by Eritrea. The ruling covered the compensations for the destruction of both goods and towns. Eritrea pledged to comply with the court's ruling. However, Ethiopia's legal advisor deemed that the resulting figure did not accurately reflect the seriousness of the damages caused to his country during the contention. The border between both countries was still in dispute by their respective armies, which were posted on either side. In mid-October, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, accused Eritrea of sowing chaos in the region and reiterated his call to sanction the Asmara government for its purported support for the Somali rebels. He also stressed that delimiting the boundary was impossible in view of the Eritrean government's current position.

With regard to the conflict between **Eritrea and Djibouti**, in mid-January 2009 the UN Security Council approved a resolution that required Eritrea to withdraw its troops and military supplies from the zone that it is disputing with Djibouti, Ras Doumeira, within five weeks, to recognise the existence of a boundary dispute with Djibouti pending resolution, and to cooperate with the diplomatic initiatives that are currently being conducted by the United Nations, the AU and the Arab League to solve its dispute with Djibouti. In parallel, the Council praised the withdrawal of Djibouti's troops from their positions prior to the conflict, while it also condemned Eritrea's refusal to do the same. The Council deplored the fact that Eritrea had continued to reject a visit by an investigative mission or a UN Secretary-General special representative, who offered his good offices to resolve the conflict. Days later, the president of Djibouti claimed that he would undertake all the diplomatic initiatives possible to forestall conflict with Eritrea, stressing that his country was a victim of this boundary tension due to Eritrea's problems with Ethiopia, which had led Eritrea to use Djibouti as a hostage in the regional situation. In early April, the UN Security Council accused the Eritrean government of ignoring the resolution it had handed down in January. The Council expressed its desire to meet with representatives of the Eritrean executive in order to share their concerns over noncompliance with this resolution. Likewise, members of the Council extolled the mediation efforts of organisations like the AU, the Arab League and the OIC to date. One year earlier, the territorial dispute between both countries had held to armed clashes which left several Djibouti soldiers dead. During the second half of October, Djibouti launched a diplomatic campaign against Eritrea accusing it of meddling with the country's security by supporting anti-government forces and movements.

The most significant events in the year

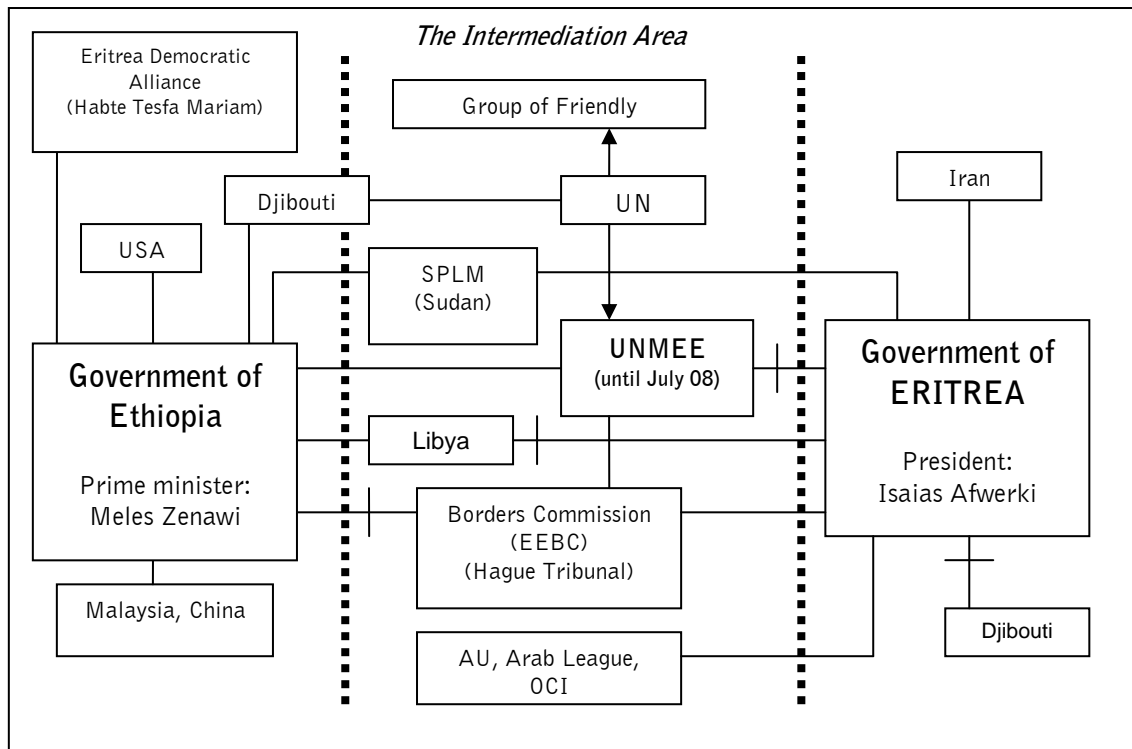
- The president of Libya and the new president of the AU, Muammar al-Gaddafi, announced in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, that he would launch an initiative to resolve the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia,
- The Reclamation Commission of Eritrea and Ethiopia, created after the end of the

armed conflict between the two countries and headquartered in The Hague, ordered both countries to pay mutual compensation for the damages caused during the border war that took place between 1998 and 2000.

- The government of Ethiopia stated late in the year that delimiting the boundary was impossible in view of the Eritrean government's current position.

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Ethiopia (Ogaden and Oromiya)

Context of the conflict

The region of Ogaden is part of what is called the Somali Region in Ethiopia. It measures around 200,000 km², 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, Ethiopia and Somalia waged military clashes for control over this region, which ended in 1978 with the Somali regime seriously debilitated. The Ogadeni/Somali population practices a tolerant form of Islam.

Population: Ethiopia (78 million inhabitants); Ogaden (4.3 million)
Area: Ethiopia (1,104,000 km ²); Ogaden (179,000 km ²)
HDI Etiopía: 171 (of 182)
GDP Etiopía: 17,600 million dollars
Per capita income Ethiopia \$220
Displaced persons: 650,000
Deaths due to the conflict: + than 1,000 in 2007
Armed actors: ONLF, OLF
Facilitators: Oromo Elders Group (OLF)

Since 1984, the **Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)** has been fighting for the independence or autonomy of the region of Ogaden, a desert zone bordering on Somalia. The ONLF was part of the transition government from 1991 to 1995, after the Communist regime, but afterwards it withdrew from government to fight for the independence of what they view 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 for self-rule in Ogaden, an initiative which met with a large scale military attack by the Ethiopian government. Given that 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, where the Malaysian company Petronas also has facilities. Recently, the ONLF has undertaken joint military operations with the **Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)**, which has been fighting against the government since 1973 to win self-governance for the Oromo people in the region of Oromiya. Both are members of the **Alliance for Freedom and Democracy**, a coalition hostile to the Government led by Meles Zenawi, accused by various human rights organisations of committing serious crimes against the civil population. According to government sources, the Islamist group Al-Ijihad group also has operations in the region. The conflict is influenced by the unresolved dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the latter which supported the OLF, as well as by the evolution of the situation in Somalia.

Background to the peace process

In early 1995, just a few months after having rejected the dialogue offered by the elders in the region, the Ethiopian government prepared for a meeting to negotiate with the ONLF, but to no avail. In late 1998, both parties held secret meetings to seek a solution, but the meetings ended when the ONLF asked that an outside organisation participate in the negotiations as a witness. The government also murdered one of the negotiators and captured another, who later died in prison. In 2005, several traditional and religious leaders launched a peace proposal that included direct negotiations between the ONLF and the government, which was initially accepted. The ONLF also demanded that the negotiations be held in a neutral country, clearly hinting that the United States might play this role. In late 2006, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) asked for Kenya to mediate in the conflict, taking advantage of its experience in facilitating the negotiations in South Sudan. It also asked Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa for support.

April witnessed the release of one of the Chinese workers kidnapped by the ONLF, under the auspices of the ICRC, an organisation that was expelled from the region in August. After the release of the kidnapped workers, **the ONLF made an appeal for international mediation that would help to open up negotiations with the Ethiopian government.** In early September, the ONLF asked the United Nations mission that had travelled to the region to analyse the humanitarian situation in the zone of conflict and the civilian population's protection needs to investigate what the rebels regarded as genocide and war crimes by the Ethiopian army. The ONLF, however, criticised the fact that the mission had only visited the zones in the region that the government had let them see. Nevertheless, **the ONLF announced a temporary halt to all military operations against the army during the deployment of the United Nations mission.** Weeks later, the United Nations expressed its concern at the constant deterioration in the humanitarian situation and human rights in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, which could affect 1.8 million people if the right measures were not taken and if the Ethiopian government did not allow humanitarian organisations access to the region.

In the early months of the year, the requests for negotiations submitted by the armed opposition group ONLF met with no success, despite the fact that the zone was immersed in a serious humanitarian crisis, which even prompted a visit by a US delegation. Furthermore, in March the ONLF claimed to have caused the death of 43 armed forces soldiers during two weeks of clashes in the region. During the second quarter, not only did the clashes with the armed group ONLF continue, but in April the Ethiopian government announced that it was breaking off diplomatic ties with Qatar. Ethiopia claimed that Qatar was trying to destabilise Ethiopia and that it had close relations with its enemy, Eritrea. The ONLF criticised this decision, stressing that after Norway, Qatar had become the second victim of the paranoia of the Ethiopian regime in its relations with the international community. **A new armed group called the Somali Islamic Guerrilla emerged,** which took responsibility for some of the attacks. In late July, the ONLF held the fourth plenary session of the organisation's Central Committee. The session analysed the situation in the Horn of Africa and in particular in the region of Ogaden, which was suffering a severe humanitarian crisis. At the session an agreement was reached that the movement had made significant headway towards achieving its goals during the review period, the operational and strategic capacity of the armed wing of the ONLF was praised and so was the support it lent to the Diaspora. Finally, the most noteworthy part of the conclusions was that a great deal of stress was placed on strengthening and promoting cooperation and the coordination of efforts of the peoples living in the Horn of Africa oppressed by the Ethiopian regime, in particular with their Somali brethren.

In late September, numerous United Nations agencies claimed that the region was suffering from a serious humanitarian crisis. The ONLF issued an appeal to the UN Security Council to set up an international humanitarian corridor that would allow humanitarian aid to be supplied to the people living in the region affected by the crisis. In late November, **a mediating team claimed that the Ethiopian government had agreed to hold peace talks with the armed opposition group OLF without any preconditions,** and that the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, had given the green light to hold these talks. As a forerunner to this process, back in January a group of mediators made up of three Oromo elders met with the leaders of the OLF, Dawd Ebsa and Teman Yosuf, in Amsterdam and signed an agreement to hold peace talks with the government, accepting the Ethiopian constitution in principle. After this, the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, got in touch with the mediating team and told them that he was willing to hold talks with the OLF, as claimed by Berhanu Dinka, one of the Oromo elders and former UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. Ethiopia agreed to go to the negotiating table after having analysed what was called the "agreement pact" reached in Amsterdam. Recently, these elders held two-day talks with the 125 most influential elders from different parts of the Oromiya region, who asked the rebel group to listen to the people and pledged to hold peace talks without further delay. Later, the government, on a recommendation from the Pardon Office of the Ministry of Justice, proceeded to release 44 members of the OLF after publicising the government's decision to hold peace talks. However, late in the year the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, denied information

claiming that the Ethiopian government had agreed to hold peace talks with the OLF without any preconditions. In response to parliamentary questioning, he stated that these talks had neither started nor were planned. Despite his denial, a mediation group including Oromo elders claimed that they had met with the Prime Minister and that he was getting ready to hold talks with the group without any preconditions. Zenawi admitted that numerous elders had asked for the government's permission for and support of their efforts to promote peace initiatives, but that the basic precondition for embarking on any peace process was respect for the country's constitution, meaning that if there had been no unequivocal statement along these lines, it would be impossible to start a process. The former leader and founder of the armed opposition group OLF, Ababiya Abajobir, who held several posts within the group, announced that armed struggle was not the right way to achieve the Oromo people's goals. He also stated that representatives of the federal government and the regional government of Oromiya were in favour of political dialogue. Ababiya returned to the country in October.

The peace process in 2009

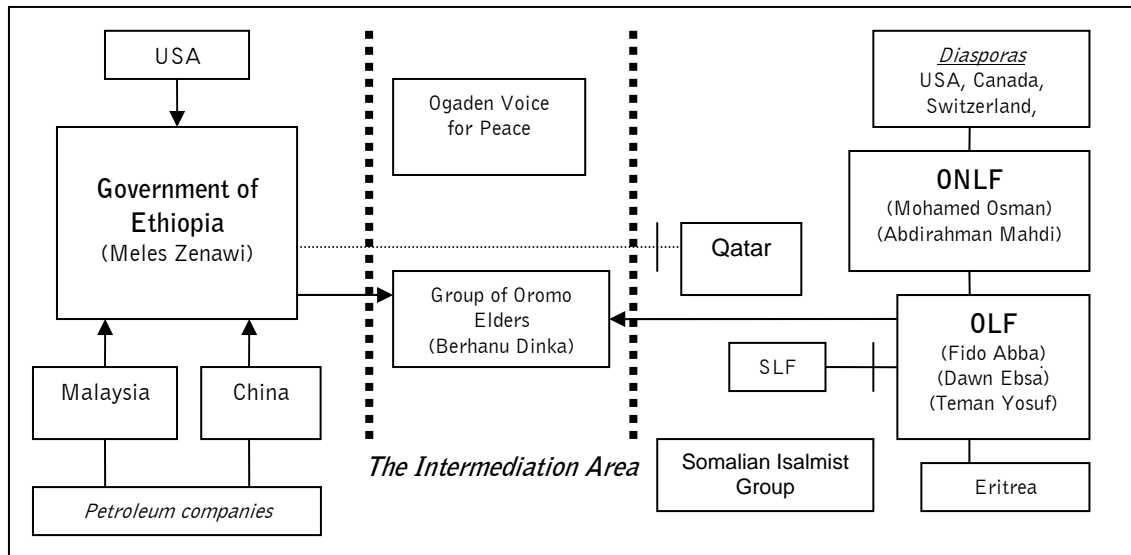
After an attack by the Ethiopian armed forces which led to the deaths of dozens of civilians, the armed opposition group **ONLF**, which operates in the region of **Ogaden**, asked the United Nations to send an investigative mission to the region to ascertain the deeds and tend to the victims. The group also asked the Malaysian oil firm Petronas to launch corporate responsibility measures and stay away from the region while the population was suffering from the consequences of the conflict, and it asked Petronas to try to play a constructive role in resolving the conflict in order to be able to defend its economic interests in a climate in which the company was welcome. In mid-October, the ONLF leader, Mohamed Omar Osman, claimed that the region was a forgotten Arab-Islamic cause, and that the region, which Ethiopia regarded as its province, was actually an occupied zone. In statements to the press, the leader denied that his group received funds from the Arab states to prevent Ethiopia from drilling in the Ogaden region in the quest for oil and gas resources.

With regard to the conflict in the Ethiopian region of **Oromiya**, in early June the opposing media announced that at least 100 people had been killed and dozens more injured as a result of the clashes instigated by the government among the Oromo and Sidama communities. The armed groups OLF (made up of members of the Oromo community) and SFL (made up of members of the Sidama community), along with tribal leaders, launched a call for the clashing Oromo and Sidama people to resolve their conflicts according to local traditions owing to the ties that existed between both communities.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The armed opposition group ONLF asked the Malaysian oil firm Petronas to try to play a constructive role in resolving the conflict in order to be able to defend its economic interests in a climate in which the company was welcome.

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- OLF (www.oromoliberationfront.org)
- ONLF (www.onlf.org)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)



SOMALIA

Context of the conflict

This country is homogenous in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. However, it is separated into five main clans which are in turn divided into sub-clans. In 1969, General Siad Barre led a coup d'état and established a dictatorship. This lasted until he was overthrown in 1991, after three years of armed conflict within the country. The coalition of opposition groups that overthrew the general began an armed struggle for power resulting in the wholesale destruction of the country and the death of hundreds of thousands of people since 1991. This situation brought about US intervention (Operation Restore Hope) and the establishment of a United Nations mission (UNOSOM) in 1992. The mission failed and withdrew from the country three years later. Despite these precedents, the UN Secretary-General recommended establishing a peacekeeping mission on the basis of the communities' proposals. This mission would be focussed on the tasks of disarmament and demobilisation. Some of the country's regions have declared their independence or have agreed to a certain level of autonomy (Somaliland and Puntland).

Population: 9 million inhabitants
Area: 638,000 km²
HDI:
GDP:
Per capita income: ...
Displaced persons: + 1 million
Refugees: 400,000
Deaths due to the conflict: hundreds of thousands; 16,000 since 2007.
Armed actors: GFT militia, Ethiopian armed forces, Al-Shabaab, ARS dissidents
Facilitators: IGAD, Kenya, International Contact Group, Yemen, Libya, Arab League, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, UN (AMISOM)

Background to the peace process

In the last sixteen years, almost twenty attempts at peace negotiations have been made to form a government. However, these efforts have been jeopardised by the chaotic and anarchic situation in the country and the proliferation of militias and warlords who de facto control much of the territory. Different civil society organisations in the country work for peace, notably women's networks (Somali 6th Clan) and the reconciliation work of the elders. These organisations have carried out many mass demonstrations in recent years.

In spring 2000, the new President of Djibouti, who is also president of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD (a regional organisation made up of the Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda) organised a reconciliation conference in the city of Arta in his country. A Transitional National Assembly was elected, despite the fact that many clan leaders were absent. In January 2001, the Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed. However, the TNG was not supported by all of the groups and only controlled part of the country and the capital. At the end of this year, a round of talks between the TNG and opposing factions were held in Kenya and an initial agreement was reached. Finally, in late 2002, a round of peace talks were held in Eldoret (Kenya). These were organised under the auspices of IGAD and led to an agreement to cease hostilities and begin a negotiation process on different issues. In May 2003, an investigative mission was organised by IGAD, the African Union (AU), the Arab League and Somali delegates. This mission visited towns in the country to try to plan the demobilisation of militias and to collect weapons.

The peace process made some progress in 2004. The Transitional Federal Parliament was formed. This parliament elected A. Yusuf Ahmed as the new president of the country (he had been the leader of the self-proclaimed autonomous region of Puntland). Ahmed, in turn, appointed a new prime minister whose task was to form a new government for the country in which Somalia's main warlords would participate. In 2005, both the peace process and the establishment of institutions such as the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) were stalled by divisions within the TFG between those who wanted the government to be located in Jowhar and those who were

in favour of it being located in Mogadishu. In addition to this problem, at the beginning of the year difficulties arose in relation to the countries making up the African Union's (AU) peacekeeping force. In particular, the potential presence of Ethiopian troops and troops from other countries in the region was rejected. Various Somali warlords were opposed to the deployment of this mission. They maintained that their own armed groups would be able to guarantee the TFG's security.

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

This is a global network based in civilian society which is trying to achieve a consensus in peace building and the prevention of violent conflicts. It was created in 2003 as a response to a request by the UN Secretary-General to organise an international conference of civilian organisations working in the field of conflict prevention. The GPPAC works to reinforce the civilian society networks involved in peace and security, linking their activities on local, national, regional and global level, as well as to achieve effective commitments by governments, the United Nations system and regional organisations.

www.gppac.net

What appeared to be the slow recovery of Somalia first became present in January 2006 when a group of political leaders representing the GFT faction based in Mogadishu, accepted the **reconciliation agreement between the two factions that had been reached in Aden (Yemen)**, and was facilitated by that country. Seven other countries also finally managed to deploy a peace force in Somalia under the responsibility of the IGAD and the AU. In March 2006, the process suffered a serious setback because of the struggles being waged by several militias in the capital. It completely fell apart in May due to the clashes between these groups, which were clustered together into the **Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT)**, who received the support of the USA, and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), which managed to wrest control over the main cities, including the capital. Simultaneously, the president of the TFG asked his Libyan counterpart, Muammar al-Gaddafi, to personally intervene to create a commission to monitor the peace process in the country. In mid-June, the **heads of the Islamic militias and the interim government accepted Yemen's offer to mediate in resolving the conflict**. At around the same time, the recently created **International Contact Group for Somalia**, made up of representatives of the USA, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, the EU, Tanzania and the Norwegian mission to the United Nations met for the first time. Later, **delegations from the TFG and the UIC met in the capital of Sudan to initiate reconciliation dialogues under the auspices of the Arab League, and managed to reach a seven-point agreement**. The agreement acknowledged the legality of the TFG and the presence of the alliance of Islamic courts, and it called for a dialogue without preconditions within the framework of mutual recognition.

In October 2006, the peace talks between the TFG and the SICS that were to be held at the end of the month under the sponsorship of the Arab League had to be postponed because both delegations refused to hold a direct encounter. The main obstacles cited included the **presence of Ethiopian troops in the country** and Kenya's co-leadership of the facilitation, as the SICS accused Kenya of not being neutral and of favouring the interests of the TFG. In December, Ethiopia's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs finally held direct talks with SICS representatives in Djibouti. Despite the efforts, in mid-December new confrontations were unleashed, leading the EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, to try to mediate in the conflict, with the backing of IGAD. Early in the year there was a **swift defeat of the militias of the Islamic courts (SICS)** as a result of the superior military capabilities of the TFG, which was bolstered by Ethiopian air and land support. The USA also participated in pursuing and bombarding the last redoubts of the Islamist militias. However, the TFG removed the president of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, from office, a decision that meant closing the doors to dialogue with its adversaries in the DICS, as the president of the

TFG had tried to build bridges between both parties, according to many analysts. Ethiopia began to withdraw its troops from Mogadishu, but it announced that some of them would remain in the country until the arrival of the AU peacekeeping mission. The president of the TFG visited Rwanda to meet with his Rwandan counterpart with the purpose of learning from this country's reconstruction and reconciliation experience. As an upshot of international pressure, the TFG claimed that as of mid-April it would undertake a two-month reconciliation and dialogue process. It further stated that it planned to invite the religious groups, clan leaders and different segments of the population of the country, although it rejected the presence of the Islamist leaders from the courts, who still had to appear before the justice system. The TFG chose the former warlord, Adan Mohamed Nur, who had previously served as Minister of Justice, as its new president to replace Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden. Days later, the UN Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1744, which allowed for the **deployment of an AU peacekeeping force (AMISOM)** for an initial six-month period, which would act under the mandate of Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, with a maximum of 8,500 troops. In June, the Somali Islamist leader Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and former vice prime minister and ex-warlord, Hussein Aideed, formed an alliance opposing the presence of Ethiopia. This alliance was headquartered in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, and the TFG announced that it would declare a general amnesty. In the third quarter, the most noteworthy event was the thrice-proposed **peace and reconciliation conference**, which was finally held in July and August in the outskirts of the capital. The gathering was called the National Governance and Reconciliation Commission (NGRC). However, it was boycotted by the Islamists from the UIC (Union of Islamic Courts), who demanded that the conference be held in a neutral country, because doing otherwise would be tantamount to legitimising the Ethiopian occupation. Parallel to the conference, around 400 opposition figures gathered in Eritrea agreed to create an alliance opposing the TFG, adopting the name **Alliance for the Liberation of Somalia (ALS)**. In mid-September, several Somali leaders who were members of the TFG met in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) under the **facilitation of King Abdullah**. There they reached a reconciliation agreement in which they pledged to replace the Ethiopian troops that were supporting the TFG with a mission made up of Arab and African troops operating under the auspices of the United Nations. The UN Secretary-General named Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah as his new special envoy for Somalia. **Uganda, for its part, announced in October that it was facilitating peace talks** between the president of the TFG, Abdullah Yusuf, and the opposition in the country, including the entire armed opposition and the Union of Islamic Courts that had recently gathered in Asmara. The goal of these talks was to reach a reconciliation process and stability in the country. In view of the ongoing disputes among members of the state, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia invited the three top leaders of the TFG, the president, Abdullah Yusuf Ahmed, the prime minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi, and the president of the parliament, Adan Mohamed Nur, to meet with him in his country and try to reconcile their differences after several disputes within the TFG that paralysed the government and threatened to undermine all the progress made until then. In late November, the president of the TFG appointed colonel Nur Hassan Hussein (known popularly as Nur Ade) as new prime minister, to replace Ali Mohamed Gedi, who resigned in late October.

In early January, the new Transition Federal Government (TFG) formed by Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein, which is made up of 2008 minister and five adjunct ministers, was sworn into office. The AU Peace and Security Commissioner, Said Djinnit, in turn, announced a **roadmap to achieve peace** in Somalia, consisting of four main points: a strengthening of the political process through reconciliation, a higher increase in international participation in peacekeeping efforts, the creation of a secure area for delivering humanitarian aid, and the construction of the institutions of the TFG so that they can cope with the situation. In March, **the USA decided to formally include the group of militant Islamists Al-Shabaab on its list of terrorist organisations** in order to step up pressure on what Washington defined as al-Qaeda's main link in the Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab is the military wing of the Union of Islamic Courts, which controlled Mogadishu and much of the central and southern parts of the country during 2006 until Ethiopia invaded Somalia to support the TFG, whose Prime Minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, announced in

mid-March his willingness to embark on a political dialogue with the opposition in order to put an end to the armed conflict in which the country was enmeshed.

During the second quarter of the year, after an April full of clashes that led to hundreds of victims, in mid-May peace talks got underway in Djibouti between representatives of the TFG and the opposition Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS), based in Eritrea and formerly called the Alliance for the Liberation of Somalia (ALS). However, the opposition expressed its disagreement with the fact that direct talks were not being held with the TFG, as they were taking place with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah. Several times the ARS repeated its opposition to the talks with the TFG before the Ethiopian troops had withdrawn from Somalia. However, in April they agreed to start a dialogue via a third party with the goal of reaching a solution to the Ethiopian problem, according to opposition sources. **Between 31st of and 9th June, the TFG and the ARS met in Djibouti with facilitation by the United Nations and reached a cessation of hostilities and political cooperation agreement between both parties.** Nevertheless, the hard-line of the Eritrea-based ARS, led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys and Sheikh Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki, both of whom are on the USA's terrorist lists, declared that they would carry on with their holy war against the Ethiopian troops and against any foreign army on their soil. The agreement did not set a clear calendar for Ethiopia's withdrawal, one demand that had been a prerequisite for any agreement. In this sense, several observers announced that the clashes would continue due to the fact that the moderate faction of the ARS present in Djibouti did not control the Islamist groups in the country, such as Al-Shabaab.

Agreement between the TFG and the ARS in Somalia, 9th June 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To resolve the crisis via peaceful means. • To put an end to the armed clashes. • The cessation of clashes will enter into force after 30 days. • The cessation of clashes will last for 90 days, which may be extended. • The agreement authorises the deployment of an international UN stabilisation force in which neighbouring countries may not participate. • Once enough troops from this international force have been deployed, the Ethiopian military forces will withdraw from Somalia within three months. • A Joint Security Committee would be set up within 15 days, which would be charged with implementing the security agreements. • A High Level Committee presided over by the United Nations would be set up within 15 days in order to monitor the political cooperation between the parties and everything related to justice and reconciliation. These issues will be discussed in a conference to be scheduled for late July. • An International Conference for the Reconstruction and Development of Somalia would be held within six months.

During the third quarter, the President of Yemen, Ali Abdallah Saleh, invited both factions of the ARS to meet in his country in order to resolve the differences that separated them, as the leader of the ARS faction that opposed the signing of the agreement, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, proclaimed himself leader of the Alliance. However, the UN Special Envoy for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, confirmed that Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was still the President of the ARS and that Aweys only had the support of the most radical Islamist sector, which was equivalent to 20% of its members. Aweys confirmed that he would not negotiate with the faction led by Ahmed, which planned to reach a final agreement with the TFG to be formally signed in Mecca. In August, the President and Prime Minister of the TFG reached an agreement after ten days of discussion in Addis Ababa under the mediation of the Ethiopian government, to try to resolve the differences between the two and put an end to the serious governability crisis within the TFG in recent months. Together with the insecurity and the humanitarian situation, this crisis had put the TFG on the brink of collapse.

In September, the peace talks were resumed in Djibouti between the TFG and the moderate faction of the ARS, led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, which resulted in an agreement on 26th October under mediation from the United Nations. This agreement called for an immediate ceasefire and the start of the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. However, the radical militia Al-Shabaab, headquartered in Eritrea, announced that it would not heed the agreement and would instead continue to fight against the moderate ARS militia headquartered in Djibouti. In view of this declaration, Ethiopia threatened to withdraw its troops from the country unless the political forces reached an agreement to resolve the country's problems, just like the AMISOM troops. Likewise, the leader of the moderate faction of the opposition ARS, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, asked the international community to send an international force that would be deployed once the Ethiopian troops left the country. **Representatives of the TFG and the ARS agreed to power-sharing and an expansion of the Parliament as a possible way of achieving peace.** In the last round of negotiations held in Djibouti, the results of which were rejected by the most radical faction of the ARS and did not lead to a decline in violence, both parties agreed to extend the TFG's mandate for two more years, since it was due to expire in one year. The Parliament would be enlarged by 200 more seats which would be occupied by the ARS, and the TFG would come to be called the Unity Government. Another 75 seats would be earmarked for civil society, including women and members of the business community. Currently the Parliament, headquartered in Baidoa, has 275 seats. This agreement, as well as the request for troops, was also rejected by the radical faction of the ARS. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in turn, appointed elder Kenyan minister Kipruto Kiowa as the chief mediator for the peace process in Somalia. He was charged with coordinating all the initiatives currently underway. Despite all these efforts, the new Prime Minister Mohamed Mohamud Guled resigned late in the year, after having been sworn in the week before, in an effort to facilitate the peace process in the country. Days later, as yet another sign of the crisis within the government, the **President of the TFG, A. Yusuf Ahmed, tendered his resignation before the Somali Parliament, to which assigned the responsibility for guiding the country.**

The peace process in 2009

In early January the Ethiopian government announced that it was starting to withdraw 3,000 soldiers stationed in Mogadishu. Islamist militias in favour of the moderate faction of the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS) occupied several police stations vacated by Ethiopia's withdrawal with the goal of preventing an outbreak of violence. Days later, in view of the impossibility of starting a peacekeeping operation, the UN Security Council approved a new resolution in which it praised the African Union's extension of the mandate of its mission, AMISOM, until the 16th of March 2009. It also issued a call for the AU member states to step up the volume of troops in the mission (3,500 of the 8,000 originally slated). In parallel, **peace talks were held between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the moderate faction of the ARS in Djibouti with facilitation by the United Nations, which was trying to form a government in which all parties participated.** In late January, the **Transitional Federal Parliament, which was operating out of Djibouti, chose a new president of the TFG in a second round of voting, namely the leader of the ARS, the moderate Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed,** after the candidacy of the then-prime minister, Nur Hassan Hussein "Nur Adde", was withdrawn and replaced by Omar Abdirashid Shamarke, who in one of his early statements said that he was willing to talk with the radical insurgency. The authorities from Somaliland refused to participate in this process, as they regarded themselves as independent from Somalia. The Transitional Federal Parliament was extended to 420 parliamentarians; this reform was conducted while trying to respect the "4.5" formula agreed to during the Nairobi peace process (held between 2002 and 2004, which gave rise to the TFG), that is, \ proportional representation of the four major clans in the country and all the minor clans. **After having captured Baidoa (the former headquarters of the Parliament) after the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops,** the leader of the radical group Al-Shabab, Sheikh Mukthar Robow, expressed his opposition to the new president and prime minister, accusing them of having sold out to the West and the Ethiopian

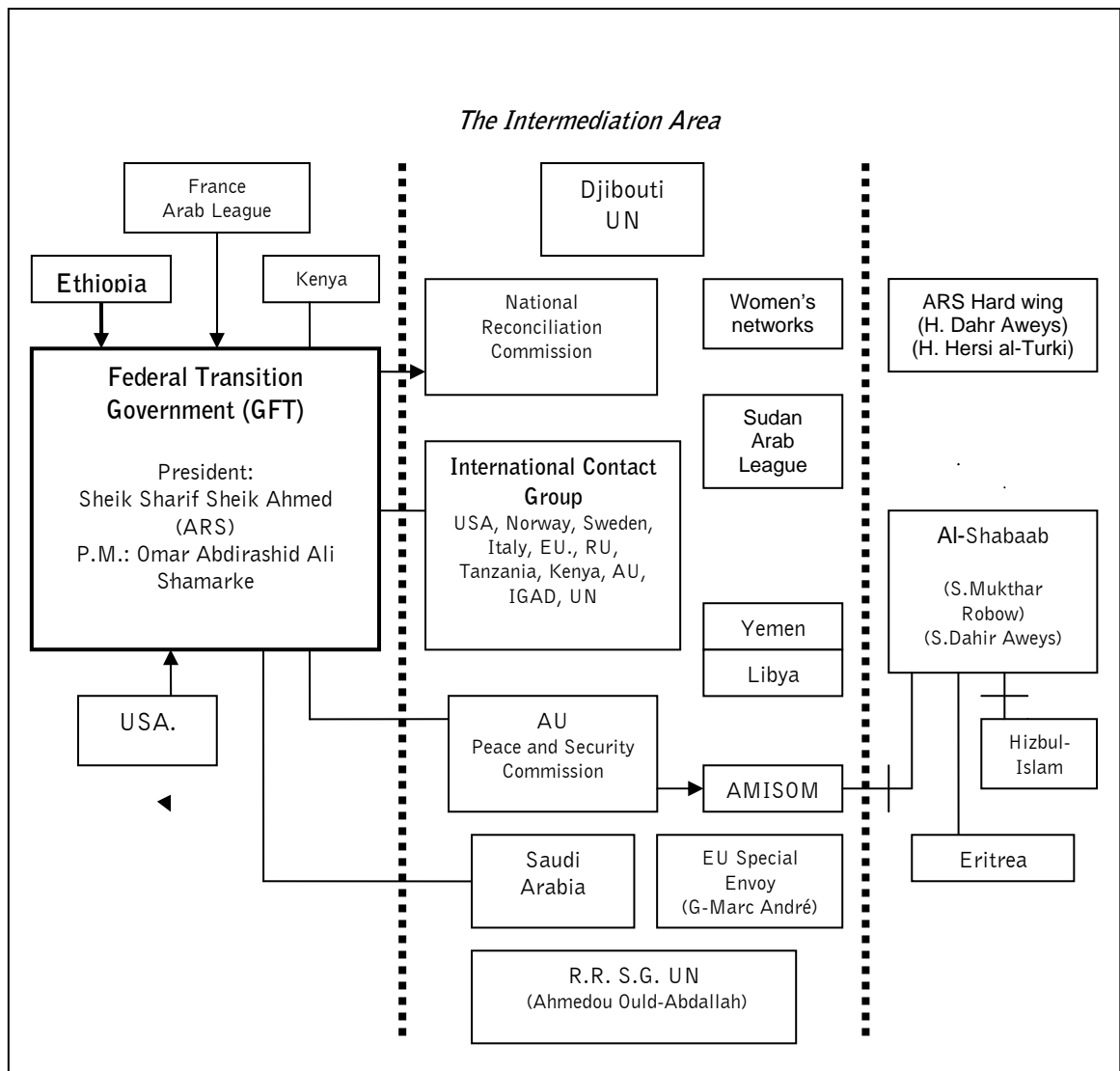
enemy. As a result, he asked the country to step up its attacks against AMISOM, which was trying to fill the power void left after the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops. In late February, the president of the reformed TFG, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, agreed to declare a truce and introduce Sharia (Islamic law) in an attempt to dampen the clashes with the leaders of the different clans and militias. The agreement was reached after the talks held between the new TFG and opposing sectors of some Somali clans with the mediation of regional religious leaders.

In the second quarter, the TFG received around 213 million dollars from the international community to deal with internal security issues. This figure, which was more than the 160 million dollars originally requested, was approved during a donors' conference held in Brussels on the 23rd of April. The participants agreed that the funds would be earmarked to strengthening the Somali security forces over the next 12 months (31 million), as well as to support the AMISOM troops (135 million). In early May, however, a joint offensive conducted in Mogadishu by the armed Islamist groups Al-Shabab and Hizbul-Islam led to the death of hundreds of people and the displacement of around 70,000 civilians. Spokesmen for Al-Shabab, a group that already controlled much of southern Somalia, publicly announced the defeat of the government of Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. However, the fierceness of the operation was leading numerous soldiers to desert the army (estimated at around 4,000) to join the rebel groups (which now had around 6,000 troops), which some people saw as severely weakening the TFG. Many thought that **this offensive proved a major hindrance to the chances of resuming peace negotiations and setting up an inclusive government** which would encompass the Al-Shabab forced led by Sheikh Dahir Aweys, who along with the current president of the TFG had led the so-called Islamic courts in 2006. Nevertheless, Sheikh Ahmed claimed that his government was still trying to find a negotiated solution to the crisis. The leader of the TFG also denounced the support that Al-Shabab was receiving from "foreign governments", in reference to the role of Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others according to the United Nations. Since 2007, an estimated 16,000 civilians might have been killed due to the resumption of hostilities and that another million people might have been displaced. Human rights organisations denounced the high number of civilian victims and asked all the parties to comply with international law. According to some sources, **the TFG had offered to start negotiations with the Islamist groups, a proposal that they had rejected as they still regarded the TFG as an illegitimate government.** The Eritrean government, in turn, rejected accusations from the UN Security Council that it was supplying weapons to the Somali armed opposition groups with the goal of trying to destabilise the TFG. In early June, a meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia was held in Rome, presided over by the United Nations and made up of 33 countries. The ICG issued a communiqué requesting support for the TFG and condemning the insurgency's attempts to overthrow the government, which was recognised by the international community. The prime minister of the TFG, Omar Abdirashid Ali Shamarke, who participated in the meeting, stated that the TFG would not negotiate with the opposition unless it laid down its weapons. In the third quarter, **members of the TFG asked that the AU mission be replaced by a stronger United Nations mission.** Furthermore, the Joint Security Committee was set up in order to support the Somali institutions; it was made up of the TFG, AMISOM and the United Nations Political Office in Somalia (UNPOS). The leader of Djibouti stated that his country would assist the TFG and asked insurgent Somali groups to participate in a reconciliation process that would put an end to the armed conflict besieging the country for the past 20 years. Both France and Djibouti provided the TFG with military support, with financing from the Arab League.

In early November, the armed Islamist group Al-Shabab rejected the proposal for dialogue made by the prime minister of the TFG, Omar Abdirashid Ali Shamarke, arguing that it would not promote dialogue with those who did not want to implement Sharia or Islamic law. Days later, the serious clashes between the Al-Shabab militia and its former ally, Hizbul Islam, continued in the region of Lower Jubba in the south of the country. Both groups, formerly allies, had been clashing since October for a variety of reasons, including control and management of the lucrative port of Kismayo in the south.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transitional Federal Parliament, which was operating out of Djibouti, chose a new president of the TFG in a second round of voting, namely the leader of the ARS, the moderate Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. • Peace talks were held between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the moderate faction of the ARS in Djibouti with facilitation by the United Nations. • The TFG offered to start negotiations with the Islamist groups, a proposal that they had rejected, as they still regarded the TFG as an illegitimate government • Late in the year there were serious clashes between the Al-Shabab militia and its former ally, Hizbul Islam, in the region of Lower Jubba in the south of the country.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEWARN (www.cewarn.org) • Government (www.somali-gov.info) • Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk) • IGAD (www.igad.org/Sudanpeace/index.htm) • InterPeace (222.interpeace.org) • International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) • SATP (www.satps.org) • Somalia Support Secretariat (www.somaliasupportsecretariat.info) • Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org/fast) • www.somali-civilsociety.org/partners/partner_socsis.asp



Sudan (Darfur)

Context of the conflict

Several different conflicts have been superimposed in Sudan in recent years: one in the south of the country, started in 1982, and ended with the peace agreements signed in January 2005, although some tension persists; another one located in the western region of Darfur, began in early 2003, which has only intensified over the years and is analysed in this chapter; and a third, lesser conflict in the east of the country, which erupted in 2005 and ended in late 2006 .

Population: 39 million (7.5 in Darfur)
Area: 2,506,000 km²; (Darfur, 503,180 km²)
GDP: 36,700 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$950
HDI: 150 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 300,000
Displaced population and refugees: 3,000,000
Armed actors:
SLA, JEM, SLM, Janjaweed militias, NMRD, GSLM, NRF, UFDL and several factions of these groups.
Facilitators:
CDH, Chad, Libya, Nigeria, UN, UA, Eritrea, Tanzania, SPLA (Sur-Sudan), Qatar.

Background to the peace process

In February 2003, while talks between the government and the SPLA advanced in the south of the country, a new armed group arose in the Darfur region: the **SLA**. 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 this conflict. In October, a new armed group arose in the region, called the **JEM**. This group initially refused to negotiate with the government and criticised the Chadian mediation. 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 villages. Shortly afterwards, both the EU and the USA tried to mediate in the conflict. The JEM wanted the following preconditions to be fulfilled: the disarmament of the Janjaweed pro-government militia, a ceasefire, the end of air attacks, and an international investigation of the crimes committed in the region. Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation worsened, to the point that the United Nations classified it as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Tens of thousands had died and hundreds of thousands had been displaced. 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)**, initially made up of 465 observers from ten countries, which in October was expanded to a total of 3,320 troops, 815 of which were police officers.

At that time, the talks involved not only the SLA, which ultimately joined forces with the JEM, but also the **NMRD**, a group that appeared at a later date and wished to become part of the negotiating table in Abuja (Nigeria). In the first quarter of 2005, talks between the government and the armed opposition groups the SLA, the JEM and the NMRD remained stalled. The situation did not improve, despite the fact that another round of negotiations was held in Chad in February under the auspices of Chad and the AU and an agreement had been made to hold further negotiations in Nigeria with the explicit support of the USA government. In mid-April, the government of Chad suspended its participation as mediator in the peace negotiations, as it believed that the Sudanese government was supporting members of armed opposition groups in Chad. 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. Ahmed Salim. At the end of June, there were serious tensions between the two armed groups' negotiating teams, as they both suffered schisms

and leadership battles. Finally, the parties signed a declaration of principles in Nigeria which addressed a new security plan, the return of the population displaced by the conflict, respect for religious and ethnic differences and a fair distribution of the country's resources. This declaration was issued despite the tension created by the presence of the governments of Chad and Eritrea in the meeting of representatives, which had been rejected by both the armed opposition groups and the Sudanese government. The EU named Finnish P. Haavisto, as the EU's Special Representative in Sudan. He was charged with coordinating the peacekeeping mission in Darfur. 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, free prisoners and re-establish trust and coordination. In mid-September 2005, the Sudanese government and the two armed groups began the sixth round of peace talks in Abuja (Nigeria), focusing on issues relating to power-sharing and resources, along with upholding security. In this negotiation round, the JEM agreed to cooperate with the Chadian government and accept Chad's role as a mediator.

On 5 May 2006, the Sudanese Government and most of the action of the SLA armed opposition group led by M.A. Minnawi, signed a peace agreement in Abuja (Nigeria), under the auspices of the AU. Nevertheless, at first the minority faction of the SLA (main representative of the Fur ethnic group led by A. al-Nour) and the armed opposition group JEM (according to the mediators, less important to the future of the negotiations) did not wish to join the arrangement. In the first half of July 2006, the new armed opposition alliance, the National Redemption Front (NRF), attacked a city in the northern region of Kordofan, put an end to the truce that had been declared in Darfur in April 2004 and informed about its intention to reach Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. The group was made up of the JEM and several dissident commanders from the SLA, the most influential opposition group in the region, as well as by the political party called Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA). Also in July, the armed opposition groups that refused to sign the peace agreement for Darfur back in May met in Libya with president Muammar al-Gaddafi with the purpose of getting the Libyan leader to intercede on their behalf with the government of Sudan. Meanwhile, the Sudanese government appointed M. Minawi, president and commander-in-chief of the SLA faction that signed the peace agreements, as Presidential Council. Minnawi, President and Commander-in-Chief of the SLA faction that signed that peace agreements. Eritrea, finally held talks at the end of the year between the Sudanese Government and the SFDA led by A. Diraige, one of the three forces that make up the NRF.

The spokesperson of the SLA-Minawi, M. Hussein, the faction of the SLA that signed the peace agreements became leader of a new breakaway group, resulting from the lack of progress in the peace process and the inability of M. Minawi to stabilise the region of Darfur. The new armed group, called the Great Sudan Liberation Movement (GSLM), threatened to extend its actions to Khartoum, and it deemed that the SLA had lost its legitimacy to represent the population of Darfur. During the second quarter of the year, the government offered the armed opposition groups operating in Darfur a two-month truce. Days later, an international gathering held in Libya with the presence of representatives from the United Nations, the AU and Sudan, along with 14 countries and international organisations, finished drawing up the "Tripoli Consensus on the Darfur Political Process". The leaders of several different armed opposition groups in Darfur expressed their willingness to hold talks in South Sudan to reach a common stance in view of the forthcoming negotiations with the government. In parallel, five rebel groups unified under the name of the United Front for Development and Freedom (UFDL) and expressed their interest in participating in the Arusha talks. In September, after a visit by the UN Secretary-General to the region, most of the armed groups decided to meet once again in Tripoli (Libya) under the auspices of the UN and the AU even though at that time the presence of the SLM led by Abdul Wahid Mohammed Nur, who lived in Paris and did not take part in Arusha, had not been confirmed as he stated that he would not participate in the talks until the joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission was deployed. In early November, the phase of consultations leading to the outline of a new peace agreement got underway in the Libyan city of Sirte. In the end, only seven of the 16 armed groups and factions operating in the region participated. The majority of the opposition groups asked for

more time to reach a joint position for the negotiations with the government, while others expressed their mistrust of the Sudanese executive after the SPLA left the government in view of its non-compliance with the global peace agreement for South Sudan. Likewise, **the choice of Libya as the country to headquarter the talks was criticised by certain armed opposition groups**, as they did not view it as a neutral country in the conflict. In mid-November, **six factions from the SLA and two other armed opposition groups meeting in Juba (capital of South Sudan) signed a unification agreement** with the purpose of showing a joint position before the Sudanese government in the forthcoming peace negotiations. The most representative leaders to sign the agreement included Jar el-Neby and Ahmed Abdel Shafie. Several civil society organisations, including the Darfur Peace Block (led by Hassan Iman Hassan) and the Community Development Association, offered to act as mediators to talk with the rebel leaders who had not attended the peace conference in Sirte (Libya) and try to get them to join the process.

At the beginning of 2008 **the joint peace mission of the AU-UN (UNAMID) began**, although with only 9,000 of the 26,000 anticipated troops, relieving in the AU mission, AMIS. The French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, later reported that his government had made it possible for **the leader of the main SLA faction exiled in France, Abdel Mohamed al-Nur, to meet with the mediators in Geneva**, and that this could serve as a first step towards this leader's participation in the peace talks. In early June, the AU and the United Nations were considering appointing a single joint mediator for Darfur after the attempts by the UN and AU special envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, had not managed to get both parties seated at the negotiating table. In late June, the UN Secretary-General and the President of the AU appointed the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, Djibril Yipènè Bassolé, to be the joint mediator for Darfur.

In early July, **Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo from the International Criminal Court asked for an arrest warrant for the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir**, whom he accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, alluding to his responsibility for the crimes perpetrated in the region during the past five years. The Sudanese government warned that this would undermine the peace process in Darfur. It also reminded the ICC that the country did not recognise the ICC's authority, and it labelled Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo a criminal. The situation arising from the request of the CPI caused the **division in the UN Security Council**. In August, **the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, announced a new peace initiative for Darfur called the Sudan People's Initiative**, with which he aimed to gather together representatives from all the nation's political parties, from civil society and from the different political forces and traditional groups in Darfur, including the armed groups that had not signed the peace agreement in Juba. The initiative involved creating a Ministerial Committee charged with stepping up the efforts to reach peace in Darfur. The body would be presided over by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, and the President of the AU Commission, Jean Ping. To this end, the Secretary-General of the SPLM, Pagan Amum, met in London with delegations from the JEM and the SLA-Abdel Shafi with the purpose of informing them about the new peace initiative launched. Both armed groups refused to participate as they viewed the new strategy as a trap, while attacks against the civilian population continued in Darfur. In late September, however, **the JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim, stated that he was initially willing to accept mediation by Qatar to resolve the Darfur crisis**, but that his group needed more time to study the proposal.

In mid-October, President Omar al-Bashir announced **before representatives of the Arab League, the African Union, Egypt, Libya and Qatar the launch of a peace initiative in Darfur** that would include an end to the violence, the voluntary repatriation and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people and better cooperation with UNAMID by the government. The chief joint mediator from the African Union and the United Nations reacted optimistically to this initiative, about which the government of the USA expressed serious reservations. In turn, **the armed opposition groups JEM and SLM announced that they would not participate in this initiative**, as they considered it a manoeuvre by the Sudanese President to buy time and get the International

Criminal Court to not issue its arrest warrant for the President for genocide. A few days later, the group of representatives from the Sudanese SPLM that was acting as a facilitator met with the leader of the JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, to get this group involved in the peace negotiations being facilitated by Qatar. The Secretary-General of the SPLM also travelled to Paris to meet with the leader of the SLA, Abdel Wahid al-Nur, to convince him to participate in the negotiations as well. In November, President Omar al-Bashir announced a unilateral ceasefire, which was not fully adhered to, and he appealed to the armed groups from Darfur to pledge to cease hostilities. He also guaranteed that he would set up a mechanism to monitor compliance with this ceasefire and would initiate the disarmament of the pro-government militias. In turn, the President expressed his willingness to compensate the victims of the conflict, for which he created an 18 million dollar fund. Bashir took this decision after hearing the recommendations issued by the forum from the Sudanese People's Initiative (SPI). However, the armed groups refused to participate in these meetings and denied that the ceasefire declared by Bashir had any credibility whatsoever. The armed group JEM stated that it would only recognise a move towards a true cessation of hostilities when it arose from dialogue and was endorsed by the United Nations and the African Union. Despite this, the **JEM expressed its willingness to discuss the peace proposal for Darfur being promoted by Qatar**, and it stated that it would send a delegation to Doha in order to hold consultations with the Qatar leaders, a shift from the position that it had held one month earlier. Likewise, the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, met with Bashir in Khartoum to further align their positions in the Arab peace initiative. At the year's end, an organisation that included more than 50 Sudanese NGOs, Sudan Consortium, published a report in which it denounced the kidnapping of thousands of people of non-Arab ethnicities in Darfur who were later forced to work for members of the army and the *janjaweed* militias.

Apart from Darfur, it is worth mentioning that the lack of implementation of substantial aspects of the overall peace agreement for the south of the country, which had been signed in 2005, heightened the tensions in the oil-producing region of **South Sudan**, where the SPLA clashed with militias from the Arab Misseriya tribe supported by troops from the Sudanese army in Abyei in May. This situation led the presidential party, NCP, and the SPLM, the political wing of the SPLA, to resume the dialogue on delineating the north-south border. Finally, the decision was taken to **create an interim mission for Abyei managed jointly by representatives of the SPLM and the NCP**, in addition to shifting the decision on the border delineation to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. However, both sides bolstered their military presence on the ground and their recruitment activities in South Kordofan, thus contradicting their stated desire to use dialogue as the only mechanism for resolving the disputes. Late in the year, the government confirmed that it had increased its military presence in the province of South Kordofan in order to prevent possible attacks by the armed group from Darfur, JEM, after rumours spread about the incursion of rebel forces in the zone. Several analysts warned about the rising tensions in the zone, which could trigger the onset of a new armed conflict.

The peace process in 2009

In January, the president of Chad, Idriss Déby, met in Paris with the leader of the SLA, Abdel Wahid al-Nur, to try to get him involved in the Qatari initiative to reopen the peace negotiations between the Sudanese government and the armed groups from Darfur. Nur stated that his group had a series of preconditions before sitting down at the negotiating table again, specifically that the government must pledge to effectively disarm the *janjaweed* militias and to respect the ceasefire agreement reached in 2004. Likewise, in January the US embassy in Khartoum confirmed that **a delegation from the armed group JEM would travel to Washington as part of the US government's initiative to support the peace process in Darfur**. Representatives of this group also travelled to Norway where the authorities stressed the importance of their participation in the peace process under Qatari mediation. Minni Minnawi's majority faction of the SLA, the signatory of the 2006 peace agreements and militarily at odds with the JEM, asked to participate in the future peace negotiations in Doha (Qatar) with the purpose of ensuring his role in the future of Darfur and Sudan. In mid-February, the JEM reached a principled

agreement with the government after meeting for one week under the mediation of Qatar in Doha, although this did not put an end to the skirmishes. According to the good faith agreement, prisoners would be exchanged, with the release of some of the people who were arrested in Khartoum the past year in connection with the attack perpetrated by the JEM at the entrance to the city. Likewise, both parties pledged to cease violence against the camps of displaced persons in the region of Darfur. However, the parties did not manage to agree to a ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities. Despite the fact that both the JEM and the Qatari mediators – headed by the Foreign Minister, Ahmed Ben Abdallah al Mahmud - insisted that the current negotiations were merely a step prior to holding a peace conference which would be open to all the groups and factions operating in Darfur, the remaining armed actors harshly criticised the dialogue started in Doha. Both parties (JEM and the government) pledged to continue with the dialogue under Qatari mediation, in which the United Nations and AU mediator, Djibril Bassolé, was also taking part. The JEM delegation was headed by its leader, Khalil Ibrahim, while the government delegation was presided over by Nafie Ali Nafie. Qatar invited Chad to also take part in the negotiations, as it regarded this neighbouring country as vital for peace-building in Darfur. In early March, **the International Criminal Court (ICC) handed down an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir, whom they accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since 2003 in the region of Darfur.** The court dismissed the accusations of genocide which prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo had also filed due to a lack of proof that would support the commission of this crime. The announcement of the arrest warrant was hailed by international human rights organisations and Western countries, while the AU, the Arab League and China deplored the ICC's decision, claiming that it could negatively affect the country's stability and the progress in the peace negotiations in Darfur. Egypt asked for an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council to delay the court's decision.

In early April, the armed group JEM claimed that 90% of the members of the SLA-Unity faction had deserted this group to join theirs in an attempt to join forces and unify their stances in view of possible negotiations with the government. However, the faction denied this, stating that only 19 soldiers had left its ranks to join the JEM. One of the leaders of SLA-Unity, Suleiman Jamous, known for leading the humanitarian talks for the SLA, left the faction to join the JEM. Likewise, the JEM linked its return to the Doha negotiations with the return of the NGOs expelled from Darfur, and it rejected the regional initiatives that had recently emerged from Egypt and Libya in a new attempt to mediate in the conflict. The spokesperson for the group, Ahmed Hussein Adam, stated that these initiatives only aimed to prevent Bashir from being judged by the ICC, in accordance with the stance displayed by the members of the Arab League and the AU. In turn, the SLA faction led by Minni Minnawi that had signed the peace agreements in 2006 announced its intention to form a political party in order to take part in the general elections scheduled for February 2010. However, the Council for Political Party affairs denied the application submitted by the group one month earlier, and asked the SLA to submit a letter to the committee on security affairs confirming that the faction's combatants had been duly demobilised. The council also asked the group to pledge in writing not to use force to achieve its objectives and to change the symbols on its emblem in order to eliminate any military reference. Shortly thereafter, Qatari newspapers announced that **delegations from five armed groups from Darfur had arrived in this Persian Gulf state to discuss their joining the peace process launched in March by the armed group JEM.** The groups met with the mediating team in Doha and with the joint AU-United Nations mediator. The groups that signed an agreement in March to participate in these talks in Libya were SLA-Unity, the SLA faction led by Khamis Abdullah Abakr; the URF, the faction led by the JEM's Idriss Azrag; and SLA-Juba. In early May, there were clashes between the armed group JEM and the SLA faction that had signed the 2006 peace agreements, led by Minni Minnawi, in Umm Baru (northern Darfur), but the Qatari state news agency reported that the Sudanese government and the armed group JEM had resumed peace negotiations in Doha. UNIFEM and the UNAMID police force in turn announced a joint initiative to ensure gender equality and promote women's participation the quest for peace in Darfur. An article by the IRIN news agency analysed how the armed groups operating in Darfur had once again begun to concentrate there in recent months. Small factions were absorbed by larger armed

groups, in what was defined as a merger through attrition. However, different analysts indication the problem of focussing on the JEM as the only group that needed to be present in the negotiations; firstly, because of its marked Islamic tendency, compared with the more lay proposals of the SLA; secondly, for leaving out other groups that had managed to form alliances such as the recent one in Libya formed by the Unity, Juba and Abakar factions of the SLA, the JEM faction of Idriss Azraq and the URFF.

In early June, the JEM declared that it would release around 60 soldiers that it had kept hostage as a unilateral gesture of good faith towards the government in view of the resumption of negotiations in Qatar. The mediation would focus on creating a framework for agreement among the parties that includes a cessation of hostilities and a calendar for negotiations. In mid-June, the head of UNAMID, Rodolfo Adada, reiterated that there was no military solution to the conflict in the region after holding a meeting with the leader of the armed group JEM, Khalil Ibrahim. Adada urged the JEM and all the armed parties to pledge to a total cessation of hostilities, expressing his concern with the recent clashes between the JEM and the SLA faction led by Minni Minawi that signed the 2006 peace agreement. Both agreed to a mechanism for improving communication between UNAMID and the JEM. Furthermore, Ibrahim declared that he was ready for a cessation of hostilities, but he asked that the humanitarian situation in the region be improved. Finally, the peace negotiations between the government and the armed group JEM which were being held in Doha (Qatar) were postponed for two months. The armed group alleged that the executive had implemented none of the trust-building measures agreed to, such as the release of prisoners of war. In turn, the executive stated that the prisoners would be released as the peace negotiations progressed.

During the third quarter, the efforts focused on talks with the JEM, the main armed group in the region, in a period that witnessed an overall drop in hostilities in the zone. In mid-July, the International Committee of the Red Cross declared that the JEM had released 60 prisoners (55 soldiers and five police officers), the largest release of prisoners since the armed conflict had started in 2003. The JEM declared that this act responded to the Good Faith Agreement reached with the government in Doha (Qatar) and stated its willingness to release more prisoners if the government did the same. However, the JEM threatened to withdraw from the peace talks with the Sudanese government if the other armed opposition groups joined the negotiations separately, as the Sudanese, Libyan and Qatari governments (the latter two acting as facilitators in the process), the chief mediator, Djibril Bassolé, and the US special envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, all wanted. The JEM proposed that the armed groups who wanted to join the negotiating process do so within the JEM or the government panel. In this sense, the government of Egypt hosted the "Cairo Consultative Forum", a meeting in which seven armed groups addressed two options for participating in the peace negotiations with Khartoum: merging their organisations or adopting a shared negotiating position. The armed opposition group SLA (called SLA-Juba) led by Ahmed Abdel Shafi refused to participate in the Cairo meeting despite the fact that the other two factions (led by Mohamed Saleh Harba and Mohamed Ali Nassir) did. In mid-August, the JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim, informed the Libyan authorities of his political scheme to achieve a negotiated agreement that would put an end to the armed conflict. According to the JEM spokesperson, Ahmed Hussein Adam, Khalil's presentation addressed issues including sharing wealth and political power, security agreements and humanitarian aspects of the conflict. The JEM expressed its opposition to including tribal leaders in the negotiations, due to the complexity of managing the more than 80 different ethnic groups that live in the region. Likewise, in an attempt to salvage the stalled negotiations in Doha (Qatar), Libya, which presided over the AU, held a series of meetings with the armed groups in the region. In late August, as a result of these meetings, six armed groups decided to join together under a single group called Sudan's Liberation Revolutionary Forces. The groups that reached the initial agreement were SLA Field, SLA Unity, Mohamed Saleh Harba's SLA-Juba faction, SLA General Line, Khamis Ababakar's SLA and the URFF. However, four of the six groups refused the unification proposal at the last minute. Idriss Abu Garda's URFF, Ahmed Abdel Shafi's SLA-Juba and a faction of SLA-Unity

formed a second group under the auspices of the USA and Egypt, signed in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

In early October, the JEM participated in a meeting with United Nations experts in Nairobi (Kenya) with the purpose of fostering humanitarian agents' safe access to the region and protecting the people. The meeting was sponsored by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva with the support of the OCHA. In turn, the JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim, met in N'djamena (Chad) with the joint AU/UN mediator, Djibril Bassolé. At this meeting, Ibrahim reaffirmed his commitment to the Doha peace process and agreed to hold a consultative meeting in the Qatari capital of Doha on an overall strategy for the peace process. Abdel Wahed Al-Nur's SLA, which according to numerous sources is widely supported in the camps of displaced persons in Darfur, refused to participate in the Doha peace talks, demanding greater security before the peace process got off the ground. Likewise, the joint AU-United Nations mediating group called all the civil society movements in Darfur to a four-day consultative meeting to be held in the second half of November with the purpose of analysing the measures to support the peace process. More than 100 organisations representing the different tribes, traditional powers, young people, women and displaced persons met in Doha (Qatar). However, the armed groups of Darfur condemned the prevailing presence of organisations close to the presidential party, NCP, and asked the mediators to bear this factor in mind when drawing conclusions from the meeting.

The most significant events in the year en Darfur

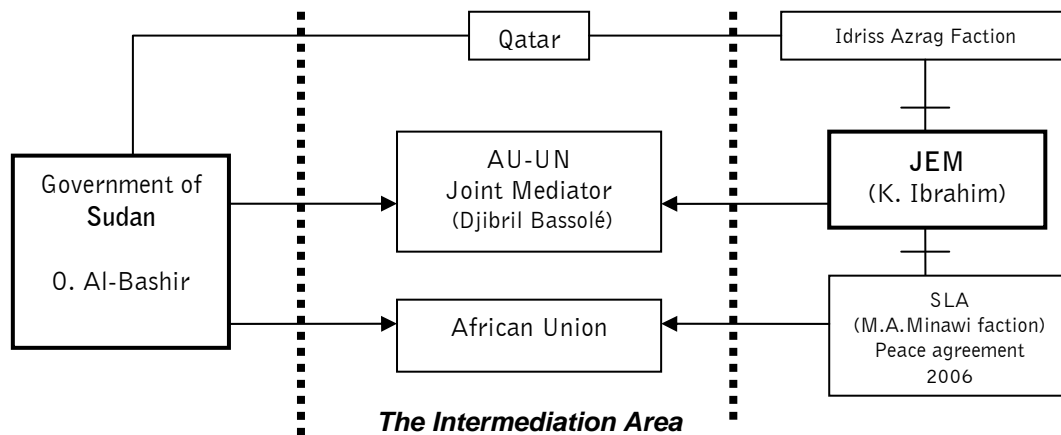
- In mid-February, the JEM reached a principled agreement with the government after meeting for one week under the mediation of Qatar in Doha. Later, however, the JEM threatened to withdraw from the peace talks with the Sudanese government if the other armed opposition groups joined the negotiations separately.
- The International Criminal Court (ICC) handed down an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir, whom they accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since 2003 in the region of Darfur.
- The SLA faction led by Minni Minnawi that had signed the peace agreements in 2006 announced its intention to form a political party in order to take part in the general elections scheduled for February 2010.
- Small factions were absorbed by larger armed groups, in what was defined as a merger through attrition.
- The government of Egypt hosted the "Cairo Consultative Forum", a meeting in which seven armed groups addressed two options for participating in the peace negotiations with Khartoum: merging their organisations or adopting a shared negotiating position.
- The JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim, met in N'djamena (Chad) with the joint AU/UN mediator, Djibril Bassolé. At the meeting, Ibrahim reaffirmed his commitment to the Doha peace process.

Websites of interest

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- Berghof Center (www.berghof-center.org)
- Coalition for Darfur (coalitionfordarfur.blogspot.com)
- Darfur Information Center (www.darfurinfo.org)
- Darfur Peace and Development (www.dpado.org)
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- IGAD (www.igad.org)

- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre (www.peacebuilding.no)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Save Darfur Coalition (www.savedarfur.org)
- SLA (www.sla.tk)
- Sudan Tribune (www.Sudantribune.org)
- JEM (www.sudanjem.com)
- African Union (www.africa-union.org)
- UNMIS (www.unmis.org)
- USIP (www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings)
- www.sudansupport.no/english_pages/peace-processes.htm)

Main actors in the process



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Note: The complexity of the groups and the continued divisions of the SLA prevent a complete map of all agents operating in Darfur to be drawn up.

c) Great Lakes and Central Africa

BURUNDI

Context of the conflict

Since Burundi's independence from Belgium in 1962, various outbreaks of violence have occurred, notably in 1965, 1972 and 1988. These outbreaks were suppressed by the armed forces controlled by the Tutsi minority (13% of the population). In 1993, a Hutu president, M. Ndadaye, was elected for the first time. However, he was assassinated the same year, which led to violent incidents between the Hutu opposition armed groups (the FDD and the FNL) and the government (controlled by Tutsi elites with the participation of a few Hutu sectors). Since then, the country has been beset by a war that has caused over 300,000 deaths, half of them during the first year of the confrontations. In 1996, a new coup returned Pierre Buyoya, president back in the 1987 coup, to the presidency. In 2008 only the **National Liberation Forces (NLF)**, founded in 1979 by Hutu refugees in Tanzania, led by **Agathon Rwasa** since 2001, with between 1,500 and 3,000 soldiers, remained active militarily against the coalition government although there was a process of negotiation at a very advanced stage which culminated in 2009.

Population: 8 million inhabitants
Area: 28,000 km ²
GDP: 900 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$110
HID: 174 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 300,000 people
Displaced population: 100,000
Refugee population: 260,000
Armed actors: FNL
Facilitators: South Africa, Tanzania, UN, Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi

Background to the peace process

In 1998, peace talks began in Arusha (Tanzania). These were initially facilitated by the president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, and subsequently by Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa. The talks resulted in the **Arusha Peace Agreement in August 2000**, which addressed constitutional reforms and the establishment of a 36-month transition period. Two major armed opposition groups, the CNDD-FDD and the FNL, rejected the agreement and continued the armed struggle. Both groups suffered from schisms, which made it more difficult to negotiate with them. Several rounds of negotiations took place between 2000 and 2003, culminating in peace agreements between the different armed groups, mainly between the CNDD-FDD and the transition government that had been established by the Arusha agreements. However, the **FNL** still maintained their position and did not accept the peace agreements, despite the initial attempts made by Gabon. In October 2002, talks were held in Tanzania, followed by a meeting in June 2003 in Switzerland, talks in Nairobi in December 2003, the first direct talks in January 2004 in the Netherlands and a meeting in Tanzania in April 2004. At this meeting, the FNL declared that they were ready to hold talks with UN, EU and US facilitation. In June 2004 another meeting was held in South Africa, after which the FNL held a meeting with the vice president of South Africa. The negotiators offered the FNL a three-month period in which to begin formal negotiations. If the FNL did not comply, the negotiators threatened to include the group on the list of terrorist organisations. In April 2003, the African Union Mission in Burundi (**AMIB**) was created, and in May 2004, the Security Council approved the deployment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (**UNOB**).

On 27th September, the government and the FNL finally signed a General Ceasefire Agreement in the capital of Tanzania. The definitive agreement, backed by the UN, was based on the Agreement on Principles for Lasting Peace, Security and Stability reached on 18th June, which stipulated the following: 1) correction of the ethnic question, identified as one of the main causes

of the conflict; 2) provisional immunity for the members of the FNL and its conversion into a political party; 3) repatriation of the refugee population and the return of the displaced and regrouped populations; 4) review of the composition of the security and defence forces. Weeks later, the mediators in the peace process met in the capital to outline how and when this cantonment and disarmament of the FNL would take place. Representatives of the FNL arrived in Bujumbura to prepare for the return of their leaders after signing the peace agreement. Hundreds of members of the group began to emerge from their hideouts as part of the ceasefire, and it is estimated that around 3,000 members were quartered in the different camps before deciding whether to join the security forces or to demobilise. However, the process got delayed a few weeks. Days later, the facilitator of the peace process in Burundi, South African minister C. Nqakula, officially presented the **Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM)** without the presence of the FNL representatives, due to the fact that one of their representatives on this committee had been arrested in Bujumbura. Also in October, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a resolution that set up an **United Nations Integrated Office** in the Burundi (BINUB) for an initial period of one year, which would relieve the UN's peacekeeping mission whose mandate ended at the end of the year. In November, the parliament passed a law guaranteeing the immunity of FNL members, except for crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. This immunity would remain in force while waiting for the UN-backed Truth and Reconciliation Committee to get up and running as part of the peace process.

In June 2007, the president of the country pledged to release all the political and war prisoners from the FNL (between 2007 and 2,000) by means of a general amnesty that would be followed by a demobilisation process. In September, the **FNL accused South Africa of not being impartial and asked for a change in mediation**. According to some sources, an FNL faction in favour of implementing the ceasefire agreement might have been trying to expel Agathon Rwasa from his leadership of the group. In October, even though the end to hostilities remained in place, the two parties had not yet reached an agreement on the cantonment of the combatants, the release of prisoners and the design of the roadmap for the integration of the FNL leaders. The much-awaited creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court of Burundi, was the subject of a debate that triggered major political and social tension. The spokesman of the FNL, Pasteur Habimana, claimed that Agathon Rwasa would be willing to travel to Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) upon invitation from the Tanzanian government. Thus, even though Tanzania was working in conjunction with South Africa in facilitating the process, in parallel it was undertaking **separate mediation efforts**.

There were also tensions within the FNL between those who had already demobilised and those who had not, but despite this the FNL rejoined the ceasefire verification mechanism and agreed to a two-phase plan with the South African mediator. During the first six months, they would focus exclusively on completing the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of the FNL combatants into the security corps and forces. In parallel to the continuation of sporadic fighting on the hills surrounding the capital, a delegation of 12 FNL leaders decided to heed the government's ultimatum, and they returned to the country from their exile in Tanzania. However, Agathon Rwasa, the leader of the group, did not follow suit until a few days later, accompanied by the mediator, South African minister Charles Nkaqula, and only after the **ratification of the cessation of hostilities**. In early December, the Burundian government and the FNL reached a peace agreement as a result of the regional summit held in Bujumbura. In addition to President Pierre Nkurunziza and the FNL leader, Agathon Rwasa, participants in the summit included the President of Uganda and leader of the Regional Peace Initiative (which encompasses a total of 20 countries), Yoweri Museveni, along with other leaders from the region and key stakeholders in the peace process such as the President of Zambia, Rupiah Banda, the Prime Ministers of Rwanda and Tanzania, the Vice President of Kenya and participant in the mediating process, Kalonzo Musyoka, the President of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, and the chief South African mediator, Charles Nkaqula, among others. According to the communiqué issued after the summit, both parties pledged to a permanent ceasefire, to a modification of the name of the armed group in order to avoid ethnic connotations as a requirement for the FNL to be able to register as a

political party as set forth in the constitution, and to power-sharing and the disarmament of the armed group. The communiqué also highlighted that President Pierre Nkurunziza pledged to integrate the FNL, to grant 33 government posts to FNL members, and to release all the political prisoners and the combatants among them, who should go to the cantonment zone. The communiqué added that implementation of the agreement reached should begin by the 31st of December, as shown in a previous calendar set by the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi. This initiative threatened to sanction either stakeholder in the conflict that might be responsible for blocking the process.

The peace process in 2009

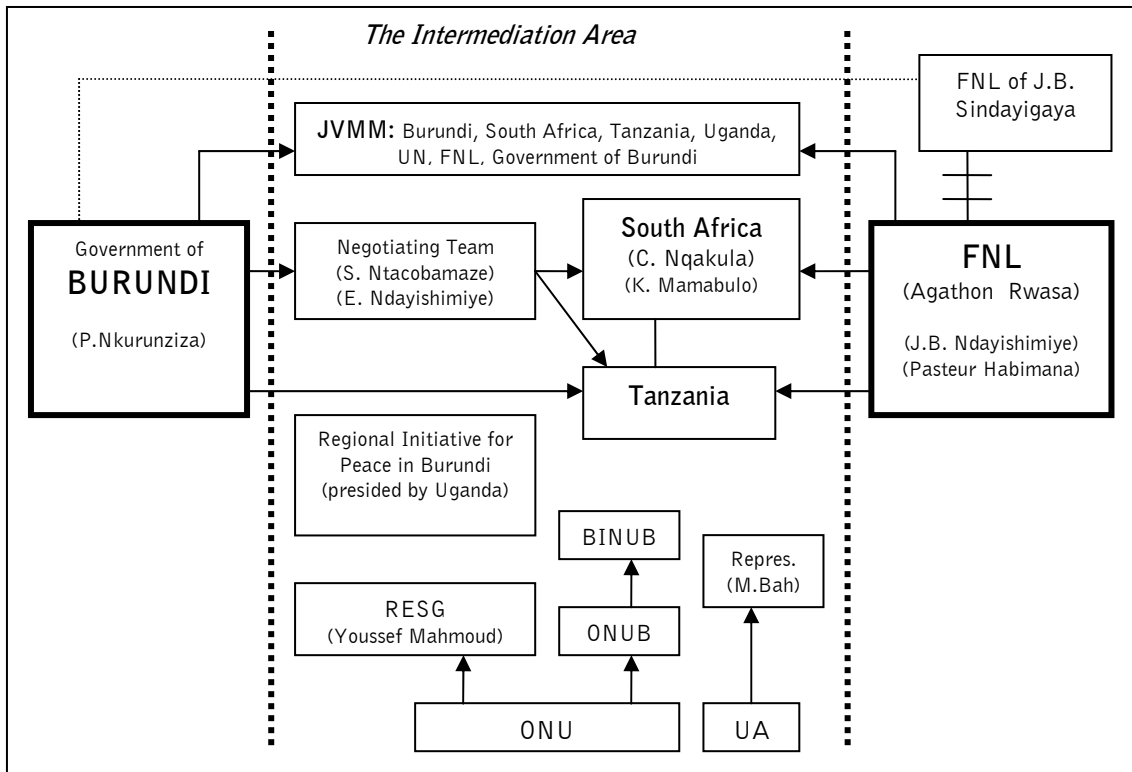
In early April the leader of the FNL, Agathon Rwasa, announced his intention to give up the armed struggle at a symbolic disarmament and demobilisation ceremony of thousands of former combatants from that group, attended by representatives of the mediating team from South Africa, the United Nations and the AU. In turn, the president of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, expressed his satisfaction with Rwasa's announcement and declared that the war was finally over. Likewise, the FNL was formally set up as a political party. The agreement was signed in Pretoria and aimed to reintegrated 3,500 rebels into the state security forces (60% into the army and 40% into the police). In other matters, a Senate majority approved the appointment of General Godefroid Niyombare, a former Hutu rebel, as the army Chief of Staff. This was the first time in the history of the country that someone belonging to the Hutu ethnic majority held such an important post. The leader of the FNL, which officially turned in their arms and uniforms to the AU, claimed that there were around 21,000 troops belonging to the FNL that were to join the demobilisation process, although for the time being only 8,500 had been identified, meaning that more than 10,000 former combatants theoretically remained outside the process. Likewise, the amount granted to the demobilised troops (around 80 dollars) was deemed insufficient among the group members, while others claimed that some members had not received anything yet. In turn, local civilian organisations like APRODH claimed that the expectations generated by the disarmament process had contributed to exaggerating the number of beneficiaries, and they stated that there were internal differences in the group. Another of the principal concerns of the process was related to the low number of weapons (around 722) handed over to the authorities. In early June, 24 leaders of the armed group were appointed to posts in the state administration. The Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi set up a new structure for monitoring and implementing the peace agreement that had been signed in 2006, ratified in December 2008 and implemented since April 2009. The new structure was called the Partnership for Peace in Burundi (PPB), and it would remain in force until December 2009. However, in mid-June, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme for the former combatants triggered a grievance among the thousands of militants from the FNL due to the different routes set up for the combatants to secure the compensations agreed to by the parties.

During the third quarter, there were major internal divisions among the FNL ranks. Having recently become a political party, in August the FNL decided to expel its spokesperson, Pasteur Habimana, from the group, whose role had been crucial during the peace negotiations, along with other leaders from the new political party. The president of the group, Agathon Rwasa, accused Habimana of catering to the party in power and embezzling FNL funds. In mid-September, former leaders and representatives of the FNL who had been excluded from the party and accused of treason condemned the authoritarian leanings and illegitimacy of the head of their former party, Agathon Rwasa, as he excluded members of the party who held critical stances and did not reconvene another ordinary congress despite the fact that its last meeting had been held in 2004 and its bylaws said that the congress had to be held every three years. The discontented, excluded sector of the party included the former spokesperson and chief advisor of the FNL, Pasteur Habimana, the former Secretary of External Relations of the FNL, Jacques Kenese, and the president of the Benelux section, the most important in Europe, Willy Nyotori. The new FNL spokesperson, Jean-Bosco Habyarimana, accused these three former leaders of working for the Documentation Nationale (presidential police) and accused the presidential party of promoting

destabilisation in view of the forthcoming elections in 2010. By the end of the year, around 21,000 members of the FNL had disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into civil society, a figure that included more than 1,000 female combatants and 500 child soldiers. Around 4,000 FNL combatants had joined the country's security forces, and the FNL had been registered as a political party.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader of the FNL, Agathon Rwasa, announced his intention to give up the armed struggle. The president of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, expressed his satisfaction with Rwasa's announcement and declared that the war was finally over. Likewise, the FNL was formally set up as a political party. • Former leaders and representatives of the FNL who had been excluded from the party and accused of treason, condemned the authoritarian leanings and illegitimacy of the head of their former party, Agathon Rwasa. • By the end of the year, around 21,000 members of the FNL had disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into civil society.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alertnet (www.alertnet.org) • All Africa (allafrica.com) • BINUB (binub.turretdev.com) • Burundi Information (www.burundi-info.com) • Burundi Online (www.burundi-online.org) • Government (www.burundi.gov.bi) • ICG (www.crisisgroup.org) • UN (www.un.org) • ONUB (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/onub) • Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)



CHAD

Context of the conflict

Ever since its independence in 1960, Chad has experienced numerous conflicts, both internally and with neighbouring countries, with an accumulated figure of 50,000 casualties. The experience of initiating its independence with a single political party and an authoritarian regime led to the 1966 creation of the National Liberation Front of Chad (**FROLINAT**) and later of numerous armed groups. These groups are highly divided, and most of them lack a political agenda and have the sole objective of wresting

power. In 1982, Hissène Habré gained power with the international support of an expansionist Libya, ushering in several years of major political repression. Between 1975 and 1990 numerous conflicts took place between the north and south of the country, with the participation of several foreign countries. Libya occupied the northern part of the country, supporting one of the clashing factions, while the USA and France provided military support to the other side.

Population: 11 million inhabitants
Area: 1,284,000 km²
GDP: 5,800 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$540
HDI: 175 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 7,000 since 1990
Displaced population: 173,000
Refugee population: 236,000
Armed actors: MDJT, FUC, SCUD, CAR, RFC, CNT, UFDD, UFR
Facilitators: Libya, Gabon, Saudi Arabia, Contact Group, Senegal

In 1990, several military officers led a coup d'état, and Idriss Déby took power with the backing of Libya and Sudan. Despite certain advancements, and being elected president in the 1996 and 2001 elections, Déby's regime entered a serious crisis in the late 1990s. In 1998, a former minister of defence, now deceased, created the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (**MDJT**) with the backing of Libya, thus ushering in a period in which the presidency was contested. In 2003, the presidential party, the MPS, decided to amend the constitution, which only allowed for two consecutive presidential mandates, so that the president could be re-elected once again. Chad also became an oil-producing country in 2003.

In 2004 there was an attempted coup d'état, and in 2005 a referendum was held on the constitutional reform which was boycotted by the majority of the population. The year 2005 also witnessed the creation of **FUC**, a federation of the leading insurgent groups with over 3,000 troops including the **RDL**, led by Mohamat Nour, a young military officer who was highly contested by members of his own group. In late 2005, several Chadian military officers joined the RDL, bringing with them their vehicles and heavy weapons. Other important groups include **SCUD**, a splinter group of the FUC led by Yaya Dillo Djerou, and the Rally of Democratic Forces (**RAFD**). In the latest stage in this series of conflicts which took place throughout 2006, the rebel groups were poised to occupy the capital of the country.

The current crisis is spurred by the confluence of several factors: one is the current war in Darfur (west Sudan) begun in 2003, which has led to tensions with Sudan and the Central African Republic (**CAR**). Also featuring prominently in this conflict is the antagonism between the Arab tribes and the black peoples, especially the Zaghawa, which is the tribe of the president of Chad. This tribe lives off political clientelism and the lucre of power despite being a minority tribe in this country, as it accounts for a mere 3% of Chad's population. Given that there is a large Zaghawa population in Darfur, the president of Chad is faced with the dilemma of either contributing to ending the conflict in Darfur by helping the Sudanese government, or keeping his clan loyalty with the more than 200,000 Sudanese refugees who have moved to Chad, mainly Zaghawa. Chad's relations with Sudan seriously deteriorated at the outset of the Darfur crisis, as both countries accused each other of supporting the armed groups in their respective countries. The Sudanese rebels in Darfur recruit Zaghawa combatants in the refugee camps located in Chad,

which has prompted the armed conflict between the two countries and the respective attempts at negotiation.

A second factor in the crisis is the **internal division within the Zaghawa of Chad**, who are enmeshed in internecine battles to gain the presidency and are totally unwilling to share power with other ethnic groups, and are thus not in favour of political openness. A third factor of instability is the **country's tax and social crisis**, with the state's consequent loss in legitimacy, which is only aggravated by the lack of a democratic tradition. The last factor playing a key role in the current situation is the **management of petroleum resources** which have begun to be exploited in recent years, and which led to a confrontation with the World Bank. Finally, it is worth pointing out the key role that different countries have played at different times, especially Libya (which now wants to play the role of regional mediator), France (which has 1,200 troops deployed in the country and stands behind president Idriss Déby), Sudan (due to the Darfur conflict) and the USA (which has major oil interests in the country).

Petroleum as a factor of both conflict and development
<p>In late 1999, a consortium of oil companies was created to exploit the resources in Chad. This group included the US companies Exxon Mobil (40%) and Chevron (25%) and the Malaysian company Petronas (35%).¹³ This consortium chose to build an oil pipeline from the oil-producing region of Doba (south of the country) to the Atlantic coast, running through Cameroon. The investment in this 1,070 km-long oil pipeline totalled 3,700 million dollars, an astronomical amount for the Chadian economy equivalent to six times the total amount of foreign investment in this country since its independence in 1960. The per capita income in Chad is around 540 dollars per year.</p> <p>In October 2003, the oil began to be pumped. Reserves are estimated at around 900 million barrels, which can be used over a 25-year period. Petroleum exports led Chad's GDP to rise around 40% in 2004 and an even higher percentage in 2005.</p> <p>Under pressure from numerous NGOs, the World Bank imposed strict conditions on Chad's use of the petroleum revenues in an unprecedented programme of transparency. Specifically, it stipulated that 80% of the revenues earned (actually referring to the royalties paid by the oil companies, which account for 53% of the revenue earned) be earmarked to financing education, healthcare, environmental, water and infrastructure projects. Around 10% of the direct revenues would be placed in an overseas bank account for the benefit of future generations. These conditions were staunchly opposed by the Zaghawa sectors that benefit from political clientelism. The Zaghawa is the president's ethnic group, and they wanted to profit directly from these resources. This stance unleashed a crisis with the World Bank in late 2005, which managed to be resolved by July 2006.</p>

Background to the peace process

During the 1990s, president Idriss Déby tried to neutralise several of the armed groups in the country through either military means or negotiations. **In 2003, the government signed a peace agreement with one of the main rebel groups in the country, the ANR**, which resulted in an immediate ceasefire and amnesty for the members of this group. **In 2005, a moderate faction within the MDJT also signed a peace agreement with the government**, but the hard-line faction of this group, led by Aboubakar Choua Dazi, did not. However, in October, **the government and the last MDJT group signed an agreement** in which the 2006 members of the group could rejoin the armed forces, while the government pledged to develop the region of Azouzou. In the middle of the same month, **the leader of the armed group FUC, Mahamat Nour**, held a reconciliation meeting with the president, Idriss Déby, putting an end to the clashes in recent months and reaching a peace agreement on 2006th December. Nevertheless, the other rebel groups (UFDD, RAFD and SCUD) remained at odds with the Chadian government.

¹³ China is likely to try to enter this consortium, as it also exploits oil in southern Sudan. Many analysts agree that the future of southern Sudan, Darfur and Chad all depend on how their oil resources are managed.

In the early days of January, the president of Chad, Idriss Déby, and the leader of the armed opposition group FUC, Mahamat Nour, elevated the Tripoli peace agreement to official status with facilitation by the president of Libya, Muammar al-Gaddafi. The agreement called for a ceasefire, amnesty for the rebels, representation in the government, the integration of its members into the Chadian armed forces and the release of prisoners on both sides. However, the climate of uncertainty prevailed after the agreement, as this group was dividing into factions. Several sources estimated that before the group imploded it had between 3,000 and 4,000 combatants, of whom almost 1,000 had not joined the peace process. The two main **factions emerging from the FUC** were the coalition of groups called the **Rally of Democratic Forces (RFD)** led by brothers Tom and Timane Edrimi, the **Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD)**, led by the former Minister of Defence Mahamat Nouri, and the **National Chadian Convention (CNT)**, led by H. Saleh al-Jinedi. These three groups reached a military coordination agreement to join forces under a central command. In late February, **the former leader of the armed opposition group FUC, Mahamat Nour, was appointed new Minister of Defence** as part of a ministerial shake-up. Two other members of the rebellion, Idriss Ismael and Longa Gong Raoul, were named Secretary of State for Foreign Relations (in charge of African integration) and Secretary-General of the government (in charge of relations with the National Assembly), respectively.

In May, the Sudanese president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, and his Chadian counterpart, Idriss Déby, finally reached a **peace and reconciliation agreement** that would put an end to the tensions between both countries under the auspices of the Saudi king Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. However, the Chadian president claimed that he rejected the possible deployment of an international mission on the country's border with neighbouring Sudan. During July, **the EU began preparations to send a military contingent made up of 4,000 troops** to protect the refugee population from Darfur, which would complement the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping mission approved by the Security Council in early September. The armed group UFDD expressed its opposition to sending this European force. Likewise, in Gabon representatives of former Chadian president Goukouni Weddeye agreed to a roadmap for the peacekeeping mission, turning Gabon into a new facilitating country in the negotiations with the armed groups.

In September, the **UN Security Council approved the deployment of an international mission in the east of Chad and northeast of the Central African Republic. Central Africa.** The international force was to be made up of a European contingent of around 4,000 soldiers which were charged with ensuring the safety of the zones around the refugee camps. **In early October**, the government and the four main armed opposition groups in this country reached the start of a peace agreement with the facilitation of Muammar al-Gaddafi in Tripoli. While the Chadian authorities claimed that this was a definitive agreement, however, the armed groups viewed it as simply a declaration of principles, and claimed that they were not willing to immediately join the Chadian armed forces. The four armed groups that signed the agreement were the UFDD, the UFDD-Fundamental (UFDDF, a schism of the former), the RFD and the CNT. In late October, however, a definitive peace agreement was reached in Sirte (Libya) with the facilitation of Libyan president, Muammar al-Gaddafi. The agreement called for an immediate ceasefire, the release of prisoners, amnesty for the members of the armed groups, the creation of a committee to integrate the members of the rebellion into Chad's state structures, the right to form political parties and the disarmament and integration of the members of the rebellion into the state security corps. One month later, however, serious clashes were unleashed between the armed forces and the armed opposition groups present in the country after the **breach of the peace agreement by two of the four armed groups** that had signed it and the government's expulsion of the former leader of the armed opposition group FUC and the Minister of Defence, Mahamat Nour.

In early January, **the main opposition groups in Chad joined forces and created a Joint Military Command** which was willing to dialogue with the government and declare a cessation of hostilities. In parallel, the EU military organs gave **the green light to the EU peacekeeping**

mission on the frontier between both countries (EUFOR RCA/TCHAD) with a delay of more than three months after the supplementary contributions from France, Belgium and Poland in equipment, primarily helicopters. In February, **President Déby** once again asked his **Libyan counterpart, Muammar al-Gaddafi**, for help in restoring peace in the country – an initiative that was not supported by the rebel groups at that time. In other news stories, **the governments of Chad and Sudan signed a new peace agreement in Senegal** on 13th March (Dakar Agreement) under mediation with the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade. The goal of this agreement was to stop the cross-border attacks by the respective armed opposition groups. The agreement created a contact group made up of the foreign ministers of diverse African countries, led by Libya and Congo, who would meet monthly in order to guarantee that the Dakar Agreement was being implemented.

During the second quarter, the situation was marked by the onset of serious clashes between the Chadian armed forces and the rebel groups. On 15th April, however, contacts were initiated in Tripoli between the Chadian government and a delegation from the armed opposite group RFC led by Timane Erdimi, a nephew of the president and one of the three forces that had tried to bring down Déby's regime in February. Timane Erdimi refused to be part of the new rebel coalition led by General Mahamat Nouri, and instead named three conditions for negotiating with his uncle, President Idriss Déby: indemnification of the RFC combatants, power-sharing with the launch of a national unity government, and assembling a forum which would include all the stakeholders involved. In late November, the rebel movements in eastern Chad decided to join forces in a new structure called the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR). In a manifesto signed by the different leaders, they promised an 18-month transition period after the fall of the Déby regime. According to the manifesto, the transition government should have the mission of guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms; the safety of goods and people and free movement all around the country; the continuity of the state and public services; political pluralism; and the reorganisation of the central and local administration. The UFR would have a president and four vice presidents.

The peace process in 2009

The armed opposition groups that joined forces against president and created the **Union des Forces de la Résistance (UFR)** spent six months in negotiations to forge this alliance due to divisions and rivalries about its leadership. The groups that belong to the UFR include the UDC (led by Abderraman Koulamallah), the FSR (led by Ahmat Hassaballah Soubiane), the RFC (Timane Erdimi), the UFDD (Mahamat Nouri), the UFCF (Adoum Hassaballah), the UFDD-F (Abdelwahid Aboud Makkaye), the CDR (Albadour Acyl Ahmat Achabach) and the FPRN (Adoum Yacoub Koukou). A new armed group was also formed in Cameroon with the goal of bringing down President Idris Déby; this group, called the **Forces Progressistes pour l'Indépendance et la Renaissance (FPIR)**, was created by the Forum for Exiled Chadians in Central Africa, known by its acronym in French, FECAT. The proliferation of new armed groups seriously jeopardised the security and respect for human rights in the country and augmented the rising tensions on the border between Chad and Sudan, as the rebel armed groups and militias supported by Sudan launched major offensives in the last three dry seasons, including the 2006 and 2008 attacks against the capital of Chad, N'Djamena. These tensions led the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to visit N'Djamena in February to hold talks with the president of Chad, Idriss Déby, and to discuss relations between Chad and Sudan. In fact, the Chadian-Sudanese mission that was supposed to get underway in early 2009 to supervise the situation on their shared border had not yet been established, and the government of Sudan announced that the ministerial meeting of the Dakar contact group charged with normalising relations between Chad and Sudan was being postponed for a second time and indefinitely. The group was to discuss the launch of a joint mission of 1,000 Chadian soldiers and another 1,000 Sudanese soldiers along with a Senegalese and Congolese detachment. Libya pledged to contribute two million dollars to underwrite the costs of the operation. In the meantime, **the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1861** in which it authorised the replacement and expansion of the EU mission (EUFOR RCA/TCHAD, made up of 3,200 soldiers) on the 15th of March with

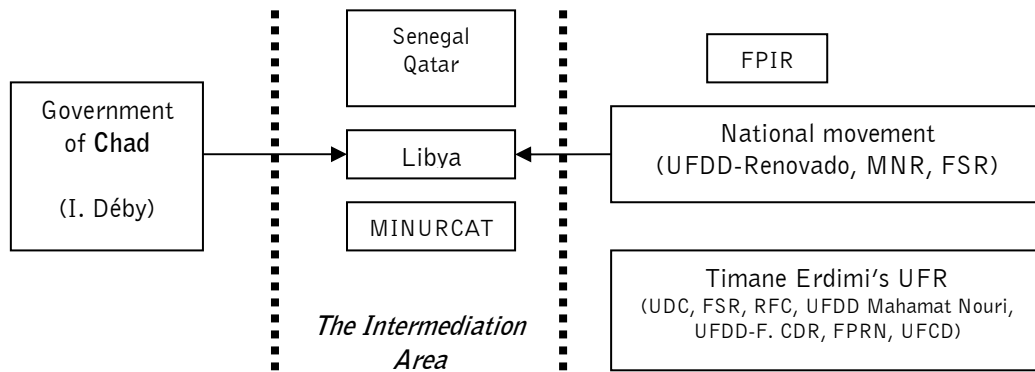
the MINURCAT peacekeeping mission, which included 5,200 soldiers and 300 police officers. The goals of this mission were to take all the measures needed to protect the civilian population, facilitate the arrival of humanitarian aid and protect the United Nations staff and property. He will have an initial mandate of one year. Its area of action will be the frontier regions of R. Central Africa and Chad with the Darfur region.

In early April, the Sudanese government denied the accusations of Chadian authorities claiming that Khartoum was providing refuge for Chadian armed opposition groups. The relations between both countries remained extremely fragile despite the three reconciliation agreements reached to date with the mediation of several countries. Similarly, the Dakar peace agreement, the last one reached, stipulated the formation of a contact group charged with supervising the implementation of the commitments adopted, which had never materialised. Likewise, the Sudanese government accused Chad of repeatedly rejecting the multiple attempts to normalise relations between both countries. In early May, both countries agreed to normalise their relations under the mediation of Qatar and Libya. However, the Chadian armed opposition group UFR launched an offensive in the east of the country against the government of Idriss Déby, with the ultimate goal of seizing the capital, according to statements by rebel sources. In early June, the former leaders of the Convention Nationale du Tchad (CNT) armed group vied for the leadership of the group after the statements issued by its leader, Alijnei Hassan, who had been named army Chief of Staff and had dissolved the group's executive committee, accusing his former colleagues of trying to take up their weapons again to combat the government of Idriss Déby. The Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi, issued a call for Chad and Sudan to resolve their differences at the opening session of the summit of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) held in Sabratha (near Tripoli, Libya), which gathered together the heads of state and political representatives of the 28 member states. In late July, the Chadian government and a cluster of three armed groups signed a peace agreement in Sirt (Libya) after mediation by the Libyan leader, who was also serving as the president of the AU. The agreement called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the exchange and release of prisoners as part of a general amnesty, and for the armed groups to engage in political activity and their members to be included into the armed forces within three months. The government, armed groups, Libya and the ACNUR were to set up a committee to work on returning and reintegrating the refugee population. The coalition of groups, called the National Movement, was made up of three armed groups, the UFDD-Renewal led by Issa Moussa Tamboulet, the MNR led by Mahamat Ahmat Hamid and the FSR led by Ahmat Hasaballah Soubiane, who was also the leader of the three-group coalition that had been formed in June. The coalition of groups led by Timane Erdimi, the UFR, which encompasses eight armed groups, rejected this agreement stating that it had been reached separately, and issued a call to set up an inclusive negotiating table.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN Security Council approved Resolution 1861 in which it authorised the replacement and expansion of the EU mission (EUFOR RCA/TCHAD, made up of 3,200 soldiers) on the 15th of March with the MINURCAT peacekeeping mission, which included 5,200 soldiers and 300 police officers. • The Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi, issued a call for Chad and Sudan to resolve their differences. • The Chadian government and a cluster of three armed groups signed a peace agreement in Sirt (Libya) after mediation from the Libyan leader, who was also serving as the president of the AU.
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Agents in the process



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 dictator D. Dacko, who 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 became owner of many of the companies that mined the country's natural resources. The country suffered from several military mutinies in the 1990s because it failed to pay the soldiers' salaries, and a coup d'état in 2003, when 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 a deterioration in its economic situation for twenty years, and half of its population is illiterate. 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 pitting the government against several armed groups has been closely linked to the situation in Darfur (Sudan), which shares a border with CAR, as the armed groups from both countries take shelter in refugee camps on both sides of the border, generating serious tensions between the two countries. The majority of the conflict, then, is centred in the northern region of Vakaga, whose capital, Birao, has been controlled by the rebel groups on several occasions. In 2005 the armed opposition groups **Popular Army for the Reconstruction of the Republic and Democracy (APRD)**, and the **Union des Forces du Renouveau (UFR)**, headed by F. Njadder-Bedaya, were created. There is another armed group, the **UFDR (Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement)**, led by Michel Djtodia, which 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.

Population: 4 million inhabitants
Area: 623,000 km²
HID: 179 (of 182))
GDP: 1,600 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$370
IDP: 280,000
Armed actors: FDPC, APRD, UFDR, UFR
Facilitators: I. Zokoe, Libya, Gabon, UN (BONUCA, MINURCAT), Centre for a Humanitarian Dialogue

Development of 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 February 2000 there has been a United Nations Peace-building Office in the Central African Republic (**BONUCA**) with the mission of helping the government consolidate peace and national reconciliation. In February 2004, the government approved the Ex Combatants and Community Support Project that started operating in December 2004. The government also created the National Council for Permanent Peaceful Mediation, led by Abel Goumba, former Prime Minister. With the support of the Switzerland-based Foundation Hirondelle, and the UNDP, Radio Ndeke Lula has been operating for some years now, a station devoted to peace and development in the country. In 2005 troops from ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) were deployed in the conflictive region in the northeast of the country. In August 2006, president Bozizé announced the possibility of starting up talks with the armed opposition groups. Some leaders, such as the UFDR chief, announced their willingness to talk and asked France and ECOWAS to act as the facilitators. It is also worth pointing out that many of the

peace initiatives were financed by China, which has a great interest in the oil resources in the region.

In early February, 2007 the government and the rebel leader of the FDPC, Abdoulaye Miskine, reached a peace agreement in Sirte (Libya) under the mediation of Libyan president, Muammar al-Gaddafi. The peace agreement called for an immediate ceasefire, an end to hostilities, the release of his brothers at arms who had been arrested and cantonment of the FDPC and UFDR troops on Central African soil in order for them to be integrated into the country's security forces or civilian life. In March, the Central African president and his Libyan counterpart asked Abdoulaye Miskine to convince the two rebel leaders of the UFDR, M. Djotodia and Abakar Sabone, who were under arrest in Cotonou (Benin) to sign the peace agreement as well. The former Minister A. The former minister A. Ringui Le Gaillard, who leads another rebel movement against president François Bozizé, the **APRD**, which is active in the northwest of the country, also **joined the peace agreement**, although his group later engaged in clashes with the governmental armed forces. For his part, **deposed President A. F. Patassé, exiled in Togo, requested peace talks** with the current President, and with the ex-President, A.Koulingba.

In mid-April, the government of the CAR and the armed opposition group UFDR reached a **peace agreement**, which included a joint appeal for an immediate end to hostilities and an offer of amnesty for members of the armed group. Damane Zakaria, acting leader of the UFDR, apologised to the people of Birao and Vakaga for the suffering caused by the clashes. The ten-point agreement also allowed the members of the armed group to join the armed forces. The amnesty also covered the leader of the UFDR, M. Djotodia and his spokesperson, Abakar Sabone, who were imprisoned in Benin. One positive note worth pointing out is that the CAR and Sudan agreed to normalise their bilateral relations. In September, the **Security Council approved Resolution 1778**, giving the green light to create a peacekeeping mission to be led by the EU (**EUFOR TCHAD/RCA**) which would be made up of between 3,000 and 4,000 soldiers, most of them French, and a UN political mission (**MINURCAT**) consisting of between 300 and 400 police officers and around 50 military liaison officers, as well as an indeterminate number of civilian staff. Weeks later, the president François Bozizé announced that **he had invited the main rebels in the northwest of the country, the APRD, to join in the political dialogue** that was taking shape, and he apologised to the people of the Central African Republic for all the violence committed in this region by the state security and armed forces. In late November, however, **the APRD rejected President Bozizé's proposal to hold the political dialogue in Bangui and demanded that it be held in Libreville, the capital of Gabon, under the auspices of the Gabonese president, Omar Bongo**. However, at the close of the year it agreed to participate in the process and pledged to name its representatives in early January.

In 2008, the president and spokesman of the armed group UFDR, Michel Djotodia and Abakar Sabone, were released after having been arrested by Benin as a result of the international arrest warrant issued by Bangui two years earlier. The spokesman and leader of the armed opposition group APRD, Laurent Djim-Woei, announced that he was sending his delegates to the national peace conference provided that the political exiles could return in order to participate in the national dialogue, especially former president Ange Félix Patassé. **The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the country, François Lonseny Fall, met for the first time in two years in Paoua, in the northwest of the country, with the spokesman and leader of the APRD, Laurent Djim-Woei**. In May, the armed opposition group **APRD and the government reached an agreement in Libreville with mediation by Gabonese President, Omar Bongo**. The agreement was signed by one of the APRD leaders, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, and the Central African Minister of Communication, Cyriaque Gonda. The document called for an immediate ceasefire, a general amnesty, the release of the individuals who had been arrested and the rehabilitation of the zones affected by the armed conflict. With regard to the armed opposition group, UFDR, there were discrepancies within the group which affected the dialogue in which it was engaged with the government. However, in June, **the government announced that it was postponing the start of the**

IPD because the global peace agreement and general amnesty between the government and the armed groups had not yet been signed, the precondition that had been expressed by the groups in order for them to participate. Nevertheless, some members of the government expressed their refusal to sign a general amnesty, while the leader of the APRD, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, in exile in France, expressed his group's willingness to participate in the process and stressed that ever since the ceasefire agreement had been signed in Libreville, there had been no violations of it. In parallel, from the standpoint of the other major armed group in the country, the UFDR, Colonel Charles Massi was appointed political representative of the group to participate in the IPD. According to the group's spokesman, the UFDR's participation in the national dialogue was strictly conditioned upon the prior signing of a global peace agreement, as called for by the preparatory committee for the IPD.

In late June, the government and the armed opposition groups APRD and UFDR signed a Global Peace Agreement in Libreville under the auspices of CEMAC. The leaders of the APRD, the rebel group in the northwest of the country, presided over by the former Defence Minister, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, and of the UFDR, located in the northeast and presided over by Damane Zakaria, took part in the meeting. This agreement was intended to facilitate the IPD, a precondition established for participating in this process, which was to get underway on 23 rd July. The third rebel group, Abdoulaye Miskine's FDPC, did not sign the agreement; its leader, who was in Tripoli according to Gabonese sources, was not able to travel to Libreville for logistical reasons. Nonetheless, the main armed groups (UFDR, APRD, FDPC) and the coalition of democratic opposition parties, Union des Forces Vives de la Nation (UFVN), expressed their disagreement with the three draft laws on amnesty submitted by the government and decided to suspend their participation in the Inclusive Political Dialogue process. In mid-September, the government and the armed movements in the country reached a new agreement to re-launch the Inclusive Political Dialogue. The government pledged to revise the controversial amnesty law that required the APRD to withdraw from the peace agreements.

In late December, the IPD concluded with the formation of an inclusive government, free elections, the launch of a committee to monitor the agreements and a truth and reconciliation committee. The dialogue was co-facilitated by Romain Grandjean from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Participants in the dialogue included former presidents of the country such as André Koulingba; Ange-Félix Patassé, deposed by François Bozizé's coup d'état; the APRD leader, Jean-Jacques Demafouth; the UFDR leader, Damane Zakaria; the UFR leader, Florent N'Djadder; and Abakar Sabone, who leads a separate faction within the UFDR, the MLCJ. However, the leader of the FDPC, Abdoulaye Miskine, did not take part in the IPD due to the ambush his group suffered in November. However, he returned to Libya to join the agreement. N'Djadder's UFR signed the act joining the ceasefire agreement reached in Libreville (Gabon) on 21st June by the Central African Republic government and the armed groups, a prerequisite for taking part in the IPD.

The peace process in 2009

President François Bozizé dissolved the government formed in January 2008 by the Prime Minister Faustin-Archange Touadéra and the next day once again reappointed him as prime minister. Touadéra appointed his cabinet, which changed little from the previous cabinet despite the provisions set by the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) that had ended in December. This was criticised by the opposition coalition UFN. In February, the first meeting was held of the supervisory committee agreed to after the fourth meeting of the committee to monitor the agreement reached in the capital of Gabon, Libreville, in June 2008. The committee, presided over by the United Nations, has 15 members. Of them, the delegate from the armed group APRD, on behalf of the country's insurgency, and a government delegate were appointed first and second vice presidents, respectively. However, in late February the armed opposition group FDPC, led by Abdoulaye Miskine, attacked the town of Batongogo, 500 km north of Bangui. The leader of the FDPC claimed that 400 former combatants waiting to benefit from the DDR programme had

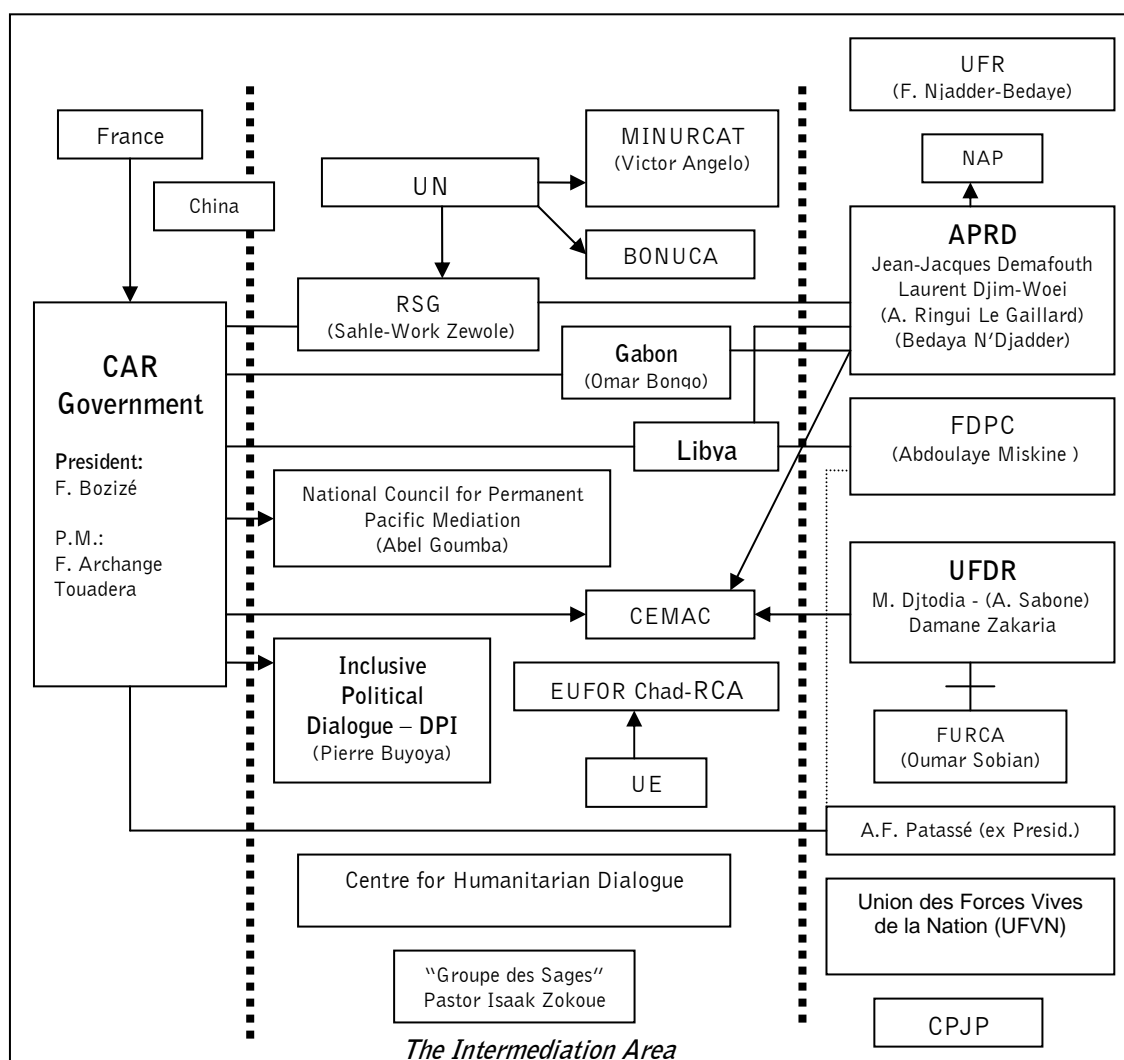
taken up their weapons once again. The Ministry of Defence acknowledged the attack, but not the fact that these combatants had taken up their arms. The attack took place weeks after the one perpetrated by the group **Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP)** against positions held by the Central African armed forces in mid-February in the town of Bossembélé (160 northeast of Bangui), calling for a strict enforcement of the agreements and recommendations reached by all the parties to the Inclusive Political Dialogue. In turn, **the leader of the DFPC and the leader of the MLCJ (Abakar Sabone)**, signed a joint communiqué on the 16th of February threatening to resume the war. Both movements also criticised the appointment of Jean-Jacques Demafouth as vice president of the DDR Supervisory Committee, a nomination that was stipulated in the Libreville agreements without their approval. Despite these setbacks, in March the United Nations deemed that the December 2008 peace talks were a window of opportunity to consolidate peace in the country. Several committees were therefore established in the areas of: **governability and politics; security and armed groups; and socioeconomic questions.** Likewise, several agreements were reached, including the establishment of an integration government and the scheduling of elections in 2009 or 2010. **The president of Libya, Muammar al-Gaddafi, welcomed his Central African counterpart, François Bozizé, to discuss the evolution of the peace process in the Central African Republic.** The goal of the visit was to secure the aid of the Libyan leader after the upheaval caused by the implementation of the agreements by some of the armed groups like the MLCJ and the CPJP. Finally, a contingent of 200 soldiers from Togo joined the UN peacekeeping mission in R. Central Africa and Chad (MINURCAT) operational since mid-March. Russia also joined the MINURCAT contingent by sending a military hospital and an engineering unit, which were added to the aviation unit it had already pledged.

In early April, the leader of the armed opposition group APRD, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, offered to mediate between the government and the armed groups still existing. The APRD had signed a peace agreement with the executive in late 2008. In early June, the leader of the armed group MLCJ, formerly the cofounder of the UFDR, Abakar Sabone, returned to Bangui. Sabone, who had been in exile for the past four years, joined the peace process in December 2008. **Sabone announced that he had reached an agreement with the government** and stated that he was ready to disarm his combatants. However, in mid-June there were clashes between the army and the armed group Convention des Patriots pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP). **In early July, the armed group FDPC led by Abdoulaye Miskine signed a peace agreement with the government at the AU summit held in Sirt (Libya).** The rebel leader, who was in exile in Libya, had not yet signed the global peace agreement reached in June 2008 under the auspices of Gabon. His spokesperson, Christophe Gazam Betty, expressed his desire to work towards peace after returning in the official airplane of the president of the Central African Republic at the head of a delegation of 20 military officers who would participate in the first phase in the integration of the armed group into the peace process. In late August, the leader of the armed group APRD, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, and the Minister of Communications, Cyriaque Gonda, visited the cantonment zones of the members of this group in the north, reiterating their commitment to peace and reconciliation. The government announced the start of a disarmament programme for the APRD, which would take place over three years and affect 6,000 combatants in 14 districts in the country.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader of the armed opposition group APRD, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, offered to mediate between the government and the armed groups still existing. • The armed group FDPC, led by Abdoulaye Miskine, signed a peace agreement with the government at the AU summit held in Sirt (Libya).

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- ICG (www.crisisgroup.org)
- Le Confident (www.leconfident.net)
- MINURCAT (www.un.org/Depts/DPKO)
- United Nations (www.un.org)
- PNUD (www.cf.undp.org/p_ala_une.htm)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- RFI Actualité (www.rfi.fr)
- Sangonet (www.sangonet.com)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (East)

Context of the conflict

During the twentieth century, the DR Congo was immersed in a situation of despotism, absence and disintegration of the state. In addition, its 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 the enrichment of the Mobutu elite by plundering the natural resources for their own benefit. In 1996, the

Population: 62 million inhabitants
Area: DRC (2,345,000 km²), Kivus (124,600 km²), Orientale (503,200 km²), Katanga (497,000 km²), Ituri district (65,600 km²)
GDP: 8,600 million dollars
Per capita income: \$140
HDI: 176 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 3.5 million people
IDP: 1,400,000 people in 2007
Refugee population : 462,000 people
Armed actors: Factions of the armed groups included in the Transitional National Government, Mai-Mai militias, MRC, FNI, FRPI, CNDP, the Rwandan armed opposition group FDLR (former Rwandan armed forces and Interahamwe militia)
Facilitators: Ketumile Masire (Botswana), Libya, South Africa, SADC, United Nations, AU, the Saint Egidio Community, Rwanda, MONUC

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 with the excuse that they were guaranteeing the security of their borders. These countries supported different armed groups (Rwanda supported the RCD and Uganda supported 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. In this chapter we shall exclusively analyse the process underway in the most conflictive provinces in the country: Orientale (especially the Ituri area) with the presence of the MRC, FNI and FRPI; North Kivu, with the presence of the ADF (now dismantled), CNDP and Mai-Mai militias; South Kivu, where the Rwandan group FDLR is active; and Katanga, another region where the Mai-Mai militias are currently active.

Background to the peace process

The first stage in the 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** (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.

However, the conflict continued in the east of the country. Laurent Desiré Kabila was assassinated in 2001 and his son, Joseph Kabila, took over. 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 agreement at the end of these negotiations, called the **Global and Inclusive Agreement**, signed in Pretoria in December 2002. The Sun City Final Agreement was reached in April 2003, bringing together and summarising the previous agreements. The Mai-Mai militias participated in the Inter-Congolese Dialogues, but they later divided into several groups, some of which are still active. The Ituri and Mai-Mai militias in the north of Katanga did not sign the Pretoria agreement. In parallel, between 2000 and 2002, other peace agreements were reached on the withdrawal of several foreign troops from Congolese territory. However, subsequently, some countries, in particular Rwanda, have been accused of continuing military intervention within the DR Congo. 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 RCD/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. Despite this, confrontations have persisted in the provinces of North and South Kivu, Katanga and the Ituri district (Orientale province, in the northeast of the country). These clashes are between local armed groups and they protest the presence of the MONUC. The recruitment of underage soldiers, sexual violence as a weapon of war and the illegal exploitation of resources has continued.

With regard to the conflict affecting the **regions of Ituri and Kivu**, 2005 started with the demobilisation of 6,000 combatants from one of the six armed groups operating in the region, the **FAPC**. Finally, in March 2005 the Rwandan **FDLR** armed opposition group announced that it was abandoning the armed struggle against Rwanda, condemning the 1994 genocide. This group, which has at least 14,000 fighters, has been based in the DR Congo for the last ten years and has launched regular attacks on Rwanda. The process aimed at reaching an initial agreement on the disarmament of the FDLR involved facilitation from the Community of Saint Egidio. This agreement led to internal divisions in the FDLR, and a number of groups continued to attack the civilian population. The EU's Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Aldo Ajello, stated that the Union could give military support to fight against the FDLR forces that had not disarmed. Given the lack of progress, the Congolese, Rwandan and Ugandan Ministers for Regional Cooperation met in Kigali with facilitation from the USA and gave the FDLR until the end of September to disarm its forces completely, a demand that was not met.

The UN Secretary-General's report dated 13th June pointed out the stalemate in the process of reintegrating the demobilised combatants and the people's constant harassment by the armed forces. Although 15,000 members of the militias in the Ituri region in the Orientale province joined DDR programmes, another 2,000 refused to disarm and founded a new armed coalition, the **Congolese Revolutionary Movement (MRC)**, which has been active since mid-2005 and seemed to have received support from Uganda at first. Shortly thereafter, however, the Ugandan government arrested several leaders of this militia. The MRC is made up of the **FRPI** and the **FNI** (Front for National Integration). 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 gradually join the country's armed forces in exchange for amnesty for all its members. The agreement was reached through **mediation by the UN peace team** in the region. The demobilised people included one of the leaders of the FNI militia, Peter Karim, who joined this process after having released five members of the MONUC. 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. All three groups agreed to voluntarily hand over their weapons, verify their storage in cantonment points in the presence of the Congolese armed forces and the MONUC, and the presence of UNICEF to take charge of minors serving as soldiers. In November, Joseph Kabila's was declared president of the country with 2006% of the votes. Days later, the **Rwandan armed opposition group FDLR issued an appeal to president Kabila to become involved in achieving peace in the Great Lakes region.** However, by the end of 2006 Rwanda had offered to mediate between the government of DR Congo and the forces of general Nkunda, and the first meeting was held in Rwanda.

In the first few days of January, **several groups of combatants joined the DDR process** in eastern DR Congo, the majority in the Ituri district and the province of South Kivu. Of them, 110 belonged to the Patriotic Force of Resistance in Ituri (FRPI), a group in which a few dissidents remained without having demobilised, and 687 from the Mai-Mai militias. At least 62 were soldiers under the command of dissident general Laurent Nkunda. **The chief of staff of the Congolese armed forces, J. Numbi, and the dissident general, Laurent Nkunda, who repeatedly stated that he needed guarantees of safety for the Tutsi community living in the eastern region of the DR Congo, reached a peace agreement in Kigali, facilitated by the Rwandan government,** former ally of the dissident general. This agreement also came after having held talks with the Congolese government in Kigali. Nkunda confirmed that his militia would join the Congolese armed forces in mixed units. Nevertheless, the agreement stated that the group had to leave the province of North Kivu. In September, **the Congolese government refused to negotiate with dissident general Laurent Nkunda,** leader of the CNDP rebel movement and it expressed its dissatisfaction with the UN Security Council's recommendations for dialogue between both parties. Finally, in December **the government of DR Congo issued an appeal to hold a peace conference in Goma in early 2008, in which all the armed, political, economic, ethnic and social actors in the Kivus regions could participate** in order to put an end to the violence. Laurent Nkunda issued his own appeal to embark on talks with the government, although he did not desist from military activities until the end of the year, when he declared a ceasefire in order to facilitate the peace conference. This conference was organised by a preparatory committee led by abbot Apollinaire Malu Malu.

The Conference on Peace, Security and Development of the provinces of North and South Kivu was held in Goma **from 6th to 17th January** with the goal of putting an end to the violence that was tearing the country apart. This agreement was signed by 2008 groups. The conference brought together representatives from the government, the armed groups (with the presence of Laurent Nkunda's CNDP especially worth noting), civil society and the different ethnic groups from both provinces. There were also representatives from the United Nations, the AU, the USA and the EU. However, neither the President, Joseph Kabila, nor the CNDP leader, Tutsi General Laurent Nkunda, were presented, which cast doubts on the effectiveness of the initiative. Despite this, the CNDP movement and pro-government Mai-Mai militias signed an agreement to create a technical committee that would supervise the ceasefire and the disarmament of both groups. The government granted them amnesty for acts of war, but it did not cover human rights violations. One day before this resolution, **the FDLR made an appeal for holding peace talks with the Tutsi government of Rwanda** under the auspices of the international community in order to explore pathways and methods for resolving the dispute with the Rwandan government.

Even though they represent a minority group, a faction of the FDLR called RUD-Urunana, with just 300 members, turned over their weapons to MONUC and showed their willingness to be repatriated in Rwanda. Similarly, in May more than 300 Mai-Mai combatants and their families, as well as a few isolated members of the CNDP, appeared before MONUC to join the DDR process. In early June, **hundreds of combatants belonging to the FNI and the FRPI also handed over their weapons** to MONUC in the Ituri province in the northeast of the country. To this end, during the month of September, **the CNDP made an appeal to Germany and some other country to act as mediators** between them and the government. One of Nkunda's chief political advisors,

Jean-Desiré Muiti, stressed that he had accused the MONUC, EU and US mediators of taking sides with the government. During the third quarter, small factions of the FDLR were demobilised.

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. Nevertheless, neither the Congolese president nor the rebel leader were at the head of their respective delegations. The Congolese government also invited the 20 or so armed groups present in the east of DR Congo who were part of the Goma peace agreement reached in January 2008 and the Amani process, triggering a rejection by the CNDP, which claimed that it would not sit down in talks with them. However, when the talks began none of these groups actually appeared, so the two delegations began talks behind closed doors. However, after three days, Obasanjo stressed that the talks were at a deadlock as a result of two difficulties: firstly, because of the armed group's desire to discuss the overall situation of DR Congo instead of simply the conflict in North Kivu, and secondly, because of the absence of decision-making power in the talks in the rebel delegation.

The peace process in 2009

Early January 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. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Makenga Sultani, along with a group of senior leaders and commanders of the armed group expressed their loyalty to Nkunda and accused Ntaganda of high treason, stressing that he had no authority to depose Nkunda. This revealed that the group had become divided into two blocs: Mushaki's sector in Masisi territory west of the northern region of the province, Ntaganda's fiefdom where he had met with several CNDP military leaders who approved of his decision, and Rutshuru's sector, north of Goma, the fiefdom of the CNDP leadership in favour of Nkunda. Ntaganda, alias "Terminator", is sought by the ICC for war crimes (abduction of minors in Ituri, as he had been a member of the UPC, whose leader, Thomas Lubanga, was currently in The Hague). In any event, at the start of the year direct talks resumed between the armed group CNDP led by Laurent Nkunda and the Congolese government, under the mediation of Benjamin Mkapa, former president of Tanzania, and AU representative for the conflict, along with the UN representative, Olusegun Obasanjo. Nevertheless, just a few days later, Laurent Nkunda was arrested 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. The declaration was signed in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, before the Congolese Minister of the Interior and the Rwandan Chief of Staff, James Kabarebe. 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. Between 3,500 and 4,000 soldiers from the Rwandan armed forces penetrated into Congolese soil as part of a joint operation agreed to between the DR Congo and Rwanda to combat the FDLR, some of whose members were responsible for the 1994 genocide. Nevertheless, in early February the president of Congo, Joseph Kabila, announced that the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces had to leave DR Congo by the end of the month. The new leader of the CNDP, Desiré Kamanzi, stated that he would not recognise the results of the peace talks held in Nairobi.

After the government and the Congolese armed opposition group CNDP signed a peace agreement on the 23rd of March, which included stipulations such as the reconversion of the CNDP into a political party, in early April the mediator in the conflict and former president of Nigeria, Olesegun Obasanjo, and the former president of Tanzania and AU special envoy, Benjamin Mpaka, asked the country's leaders to guarantee full implementation of the peace agreements

reached in the region. Both Obasanjo and Mkapa stated that after years of conflict and humanitarian crises, the Kivu region might finally be embarking upon the pathway towards peace. They also expressed their satisfaction with the start of the return of many internally displaced persons to their homes. In turn, the UN Secretary-General's special representative for the country and head of MONUC, Alan Doss, warned about the persistence of violence despite the signing of the peace agreement, and he criticised the delay in sending the 3,000 troops promised to reinforce MONUC. Likewise, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, underscored the fact that the region was still volatile. In late May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the surge in human rights violations (extortion, rape and murder) against the civilian population of this country. The UNHCHR fingered the FDLR as the main perpetrator, although he also condemned the role played by the Congolese armed forces in this state of affairs.

During the third quarter, no headway was made with the FDLR. In fact, the activities of the FDLR and the Congolese armed forces led to the displacement of 400,000 people in the first half of the year alone. MONUC also announced the formation of a coalition between the Congolese Mai Mai militias and the Rwandan FDLR to combat the Congolese armed forces. These Mai Mai militias include the Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Démocratique (APCLS) and the Patriotes Résistants Congolais (PARECO), which are active in the region of Lubero (North Kivu) where the clashes with the armed forces took place. As a demonstration of the huge impact played by natural resources in perpetuating the conflict, in late July local sources stated that the profits from the charcoal (makala) mining in the zone helped to keep the conflict alive due to the fact that the militias, armed groups and army members controlled the production and commercialisation of this product. On a positive note, in mid-August **the presidents of Rwanda and DR Congo met in Goma (CAR) to restore their diplomatic ties**, in what Joseph Kabila defined as a huge step forward. This was the first official meeting between the leaders of Rwanda and DR Congo in the past decade. The leaders agreed to plan joint economic activities and to **reactivate the CAR-Rwanda Permanent Joint Commission**, which had been inoperative for the past 21 years. In Paul Kagame's opinion, this meeting symbolised friendship, stability and good relations between DR Congo and Rwanda. However, one of the points of contention between the two leaders was Rwanda's refusal to extradite the leader of the Tutsi militia CNDP, Laurent Nkunda, under the assumption that he might receive a death sentence in DR Congo.

The most important events of the year

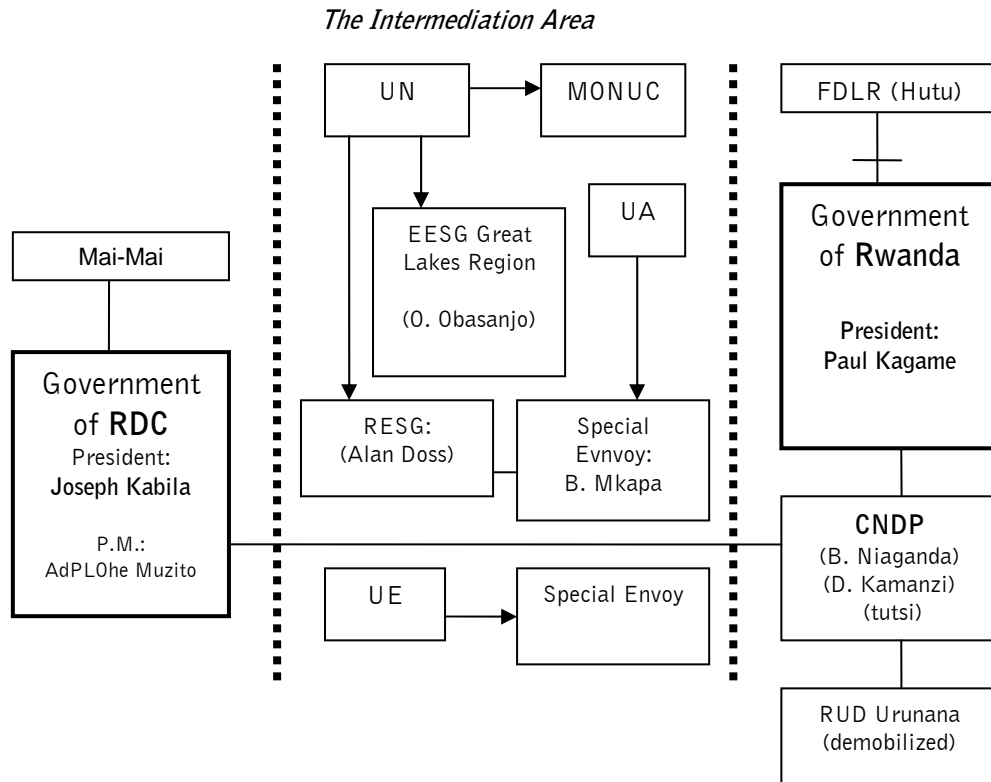
- Laurent Nkunda was arrested in a joint military operation between the Rwandan and Congolese armed forces.
- The government and the faction of the Tutsi armed opposition group CNDP signed a peace agreement on the 23rd of March.
- The presidents of Rwanda and DR Congo met in Goma (CAR) to restore their diplomatic ties.

Websites of interest

- All Africa (allafrica.com)
- CNDP (www.cndp-congo.org)
- Congo Daily (www.congodaily.com)
- Congo DR News (www.drcnews.com)
- Global Policy (www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/kongidx.htm)
- ICG (www.crisisgroup.org)
- IGAD (www.igad.org/Sudanpeace/index.htm)
- MONUC (www.monuc.org)
- OCHA (www.rdc-humanitaire.net)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)

- SADC (www.sadc.int)

Agents in the process



UGANDA (LRA)

Context of the conflict

Since 1986, there has been a conflict in the north of Uganda involving the armed opposition group the Lord's Resistance Army (**LRA**), led by Joseph Kony, who claims to have supernatural powers. It aims to overthrow the government of Yoweri Museveni and establish a regime based on the Bible's Ten Commandments. Uganda has experienced antagonism between the north and south for many centuries. The north is mainly populated by Acholis. It is a marginalised area that is neglected by the central government, whose members, including the president, are from the south. The conflict has caused thousands of deaths and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Many of these people have been forced to live in "protected villages" where insecurity nonetheless predominates. Much of the population have been forced to move due to the LRA attacks on the civilian population, the forced recruitment of minors as soldiers (30,000), the fighting between the LRA and the armed forces and the pro-government militia.

Population: 31 million inhabitants
Area: 241,000 km²
GDP: 11,300 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$370
HID: 157 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 40,000
Displaced population: 1.2 million people
Armed actors: LRA, ADF
Facilitators: Betty Bigombe (former minister), ARLPI, vice president of Sudan, Norway, R. Rugunda, United Nations, IOM (with ADF)

In addition, this conflict has a significant regional dimension. Between 1993 and 2002, the LRA had its bases in the south of Sudan and received support from this country. Simultaneously, the Ugandan government was giving military support to the SPLA, a Sudanese armed opposition group. However, since 2002, the Sudanese government has allowed the Ugandan armed forces to enter its territory to attack the LRA bases. This has led to the LRA combatants returning to Uganda and a rise in human rights violations and international humanitarian law violations against the civilian population.

Since 1996 the armed opposition group Allied Democratic Forces (**ADF**), has also been operating, which has its headquarters in the RDC and is made up of Muslims.

Background to the peace process

In 1994, the then-minister for peace in the north of Uganda, Betty Bigombe, held talks with LRA leaders which were, however, unproductive. Since then, parallel active diplomacy efforts have been made by religious groups and Acholi civilians such as Kacoke Madit. External actors have also been involved, such as the Community of Saint Egidio and the Carter Center. Kacoke Madit was created in 1996 by Ugandans in the Diaspora to obtain peace by peaceful means. At the end of 1997, the Ugandan government agreed to meet an LRA delegation, although this effort, too, was unproductive. The following year, the **Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)** began the important task of raising awareness of peace by acting as a mediator and maintaining regular contact with the LRA. In 2004, the LRA requested the mediation of the Ugandan ambassador to the AU. The government declared a temporary truce to facilitate the talks, and the United Nations gave its support to the future reintegration of LRA combatants.

The talks between the government and the LRA during spring 2005 and the intervention of the International Criminal Court regarding the LRA's systematic violations of international humanitarian law, pointed to an improvement in the conditions in the northern Uganda peace process. However, fighting between the LRA and the armed forces still continued. The government's peace commissioner, Betty Bigombe, met with leaders of the LRA on a number of occasions to formalise a potential peace process. In February, the government declared a new unilateral truce that was several days long, to facilitate contact with the group. The LRA's

spokesperson and official representative surrendered to the armed forces (defying the orders of LRA's leader, Joseph Kony). At the request of the commissioner, Norway lent a hand in the peace process, and the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the UN supported several initiatives. In the first few months of 2006, the conflict between the government of Uganda and the armed opposition group LRA stood out because of the contradictory messages as to whether or not the government would grant amnesty to the LRA leader should they lay down their weapons. While in late March the Ugandan president denied this possibility, a decision that was voted on in April by the Ugandan parliament, in May he issued a new amnesty and safety offer if disarmament were to take place prior to July. This offer was issued shortly after the LRA leader held a **secret meeting with the vice president of South Sudan, Riek Machar, in which Joseph Kony agreed to stop the attacks against the civilian population and hold talks with the Ugandan president.** This offer was initially accepted by president Yoweri Museveni as long as the LRA ended its military activities before July. Finally, after holding several meetings in Juba (Sudan) mediated by the vice-president of South Sudan, Riek Machar, on which doubts were cast due to the LRA delegation's lack of credibility and political influence, **the government and the armed opposition group LRA reached a limited agreement to end hostilities on 26th August, which entered into force three days later and was to last for three weeks.** During this period, negotiations continued with the goal of achieving a definitive peace agreement. The truce was to be revised twice a week. The agreement was signed by the representatives of both parties, namely the Ugandan Minister of the Interior, Ruhakana Rugunda, and the head of the LRA delegation, Martin Ojul, and overseen by the vice-president of the government of South Sudan, Riek Machar.

Conciliation Resources

This is an independent not-for-profit organisation with its headquarters in London, dedicated to the prevention of violent conflicts, promoting justice and building peace in societies castigated by violence. It has carried out support activities in civilian society in the Philippines, Uganda, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Fiji, Colombia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and other countries, together with governments and local and international organisations. "Accord" magazine published an article about civilian peace initiatives.

www.c-r.org

At the beginning of the year, the LRA delivered a report to the government delegation **in which the heads of the LRA blamed the ICC as the main obstacle for reaching a peace agreement** with the Ugandan government, despite the fact that its president, Y. Museveni, upheld that the government had offered amnesty to the LRA leaders provided they lay down their weapons and pledged to pursue the peace process. He also recommended that they could use the Acholi peoples' traditional reconciliation system, called "Mato Oput", to resolve the conflict, as the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, was a member of this community. After several meetings, Rugunda stated that **the government and the LRA had agreed to resume peace talks with Sudanese mediation backed by representatives from South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and DR Congo.** He also stated that the venue of the talks would remain the Sudanese city of Juba, where the peace talks had been held until then. Furthermore, several women's groups expressed their desire to take part in the peace talks. **In mid-April the representatives of the Ugandan government and the LRA agreed to resume the peace talks in Juba and extend the end to hostilities agreement for another three months, until June.** The involvement of the UN Special Envoy, **former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, who met in the Congolese jungle with the leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony,** and the extension of mediation to other African countries, meant that the situation was finally getting beyond the stalemate. However, the rebel leaders demanded that the international search and arrest warrants handed down by the ICC be withdrawn as a precondition to signing any final agreement.

In early November, an LRA delegation headed by the chief negotiator, Martin Ojul, managed to get the government to allow the rebel group to make a courtesy call to Kampala for the first time

in history, where they met with political representatives and finally with president Yoweri Museveni as well. During the meeting, both parties agreed to extend the end to hostilities that was going to expire at the end of November for three more months. During the tour, they apologised for the atrocities committed against the residents of the north of the country during the 20 years of armed insurrection. They also asked the UN Security Council to withdraw the ICC's search and capture warrant, calling it the most important obstacle to peace. At the end of the year, several rumours about the trial of some LRA leaders (especially the number two, Vincent Otti), the leadership disputes and the desertion of a significant number of combatants revealed the crisis within the LRA and the possibility that the armed group was disintegrating.

The negotiations between the government and the LRA were hindered by the dissidence in this group after the murder of the vice commander and negotiator, Vincent Otti, by members of his own group. The LRA leader, Joseph Kony, replaced his entire negotiating team when the talks resumed with the facilitation of the Vice President of Sudan, Riek Machar. The head of the new negotiating team of the LRA was Nyekorach Matsanga, accompanied by Alfred Obita. Likewise, the government and the LRA reached an agreement to judge the war crimes in Uganda itself instead of having them be judged by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. In May, as a reflection of the chaotic situation within the group, Joseph Kony announced that he would not sign the peace agreement with the government of Uganda, casting doubt on the continuity of the peace process. Despite this, there were further clashes, so in early September, the army of DR Congo and the United Nations began a military operation to try to contain the actions of LRA leader Joseph Kony. According to several analysts, ever since Kony refused to sign the agreement reached by his representatives in April, he was becoming a rising regional threat with his sacking of towns and kidnapping of civilians and minors in both the Central African Republic and in Sudan and Congo as well. Central Africa, as well as Sudan and Congo. In November, the armed opposition group ADF agreed to embark on formal peace talks with the government, as reported by the IOM, the organisation that was mediating in the negotiations. The rebels agreed to repatriate 300 women, minors and former combatants who had been injured from the east of DR Congo to Uganda. After three months of dialogue among the government, the ADF and IOM, the ADF pledged to begin a formal peace process. The peace process with the armed group LRA, which was in a deadlock, made it easier for the government to initiate contacts with this group. The ADF was trained and armed by Sudan with the support of Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, according to Ugandan authorities.

The peace process in 2009

The attempt to launch a peace process in Uganda with the LRA was once again thwarted in the first quarter, after the group conducted a major offensive, committing massacres among the civilian population and looting and destroying homes in town in the Haut Uélé region (northeast of DR Congo, on the border with southern Sudan), causing the death of between 400 and 500 people during the last week in 2008. In mid-January, a communiqué which was purportedly issued by the leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony, declared the dissolution of the current negotiating team in the Juba talks headed by David Nyekorach Matsanga, a change that took place several times over the course of last year. In the midst of the usual confusion, Matsanga stated that this declaration did not come from Kony as he had recently issued a communiqué and confirmed that he was satisfied with his work. As proof of the gradual disintegration of the group, in late January there was apparent confirmation of the surrender of the deputy commander of the LRA, Okot Odhiambo, who got in touch with the IOM to announce his desertion from the ranks of this group. The Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, promised to grant amnesty to the deputy commander of the LRA, Okot Odhiambo, and to any other group members who turned themselves in, after the announcement by him and the third leader of the LRA, Dominic Ongwen, of their renunciation of the armed struggle and their contacts with the IOM. During the second half of April, the Ugandan Foreign Minister, Henry Okello Oryem, claimed that his government was unwilling to resume the peace negotiations with the leader of the armed opposition group LRA,

Joseph Kony. Okello Oryem stated his opinion that Kony should sign the agreement that both parties reached several months earlier. These statements were issued in view of the surge in rumours that the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for the peace process in northern Uganda, Joaquim Chissano, was trying to revive the peace talks. While several organisations had asked for the formal resumption of talks, two former LRA delegates, Obonyo Olweny and Otim Okullo, stated that the reason why the last talks failed had to do with the lack of political will in both Kony and the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni. In turn, the President of the Amnesty Commission for northern Uganda, Justice Peter Onega, claimed that the victims of the LRA had to be compensated by the government before peace could be consolidated in the regions affected by the conflict. Onega believed that the peace negotiations and the amnesty for the rebels were just some of the solutions needed to ensure the end to the conflict. Onega issued these statements during the ceremony delivering resettlement packages to around 4,000 former LRA and ADF members. Since the Amnesty Commission was founded, more than 25,000 combatants are estimated to have benefited from these measures. Finally, in late May the Ugandan government stated that two former senior LRA leaders, Odong Kao and Santo Otto, might be trying to lead a regrouping of the LRA after the existence of reports confirming meetings between them and former combatants in the zone near the town of Gulu. The government urged these two former LRA officers, both of whom had been granted amnesty, to come to the government quarters before the government was forced to order their capture. In mid-June, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni stated that the leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony, was once again sending messages showing his desire to reach a peace agreement and asking for a ceasefire. In parallel, a US lobby announced that it would gather around 2,000 people together in the capital, Washington, to ask the US President, Barack Obama, to put an end to the conflict being waged by the LRA against the civilian population in the zone between DR Congo, southern Sudan and northeast Uganda and to provide urgent aid to the communities stricken by the violence.

In early July, the armed forces confirmed the arrest of 17 people linked to a **possible new armed group** – made up of members of the Acholi Diaspora with the help of the local population with the aim of replacing the armed group LRA – and accused the president of the Gulu district, Norbet Mao, of aiding and abetting this armed group formed in 2007, originally called the Uganda People's Front (UPF), which aimed to promote an internal grassroots movement against Museveni's dictatorship with the support of the Ugandan Diaspora. According to army sources, the founding members were former LRA members who disagreed with Joseph Kony's participation in the Juba peace process and with the later murder of deputy commander Vincent Otti. In late July, several religious leaders, politicians and community members from north Uganda, including the archbishop of the Gulu diocese, John Baptist Odama, questioned the recommendations from the former UN Secretary-General's Special envoy for the conflict in northern Uganda, Joaquim Chissano, which included the need to use military methods parallel to the peace initiatives in order to force the LRA to accept peace negotiations. In mid-August, the LRA representative in the peace negotiation with the government in southern Sudan, David Matsanga, announced that he was leaving his post with the intention of running as a candidate in the 2011 presidential elections. Doubt had been cast on Matsanga's credibility after he announced repeatedly that the leader of the armed group, Joseph Kony, was willing to sign the agreements. Days later, the new spokesperson for the **LRA's peace negotiations**, Justine Labeja, asked that some of the points in the proposed agreement to be signed in Kampala in April 2008 be revised with regard to the provisions on the future of its leader, Joseph Kony, regarding the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court, as well as the safety and welfare of the LRA members who gave up their armed struggle. Labeja claimed that amending these sections of the agreement would make it more likely for Kony to sign it.

The most important events of the year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ugandan Foreign Minister, Henry Okello Oryem, claimed that his government was unwilling to resume the peace negotiations with the leader of the armed opposition group

LRA, Joseph Kony.

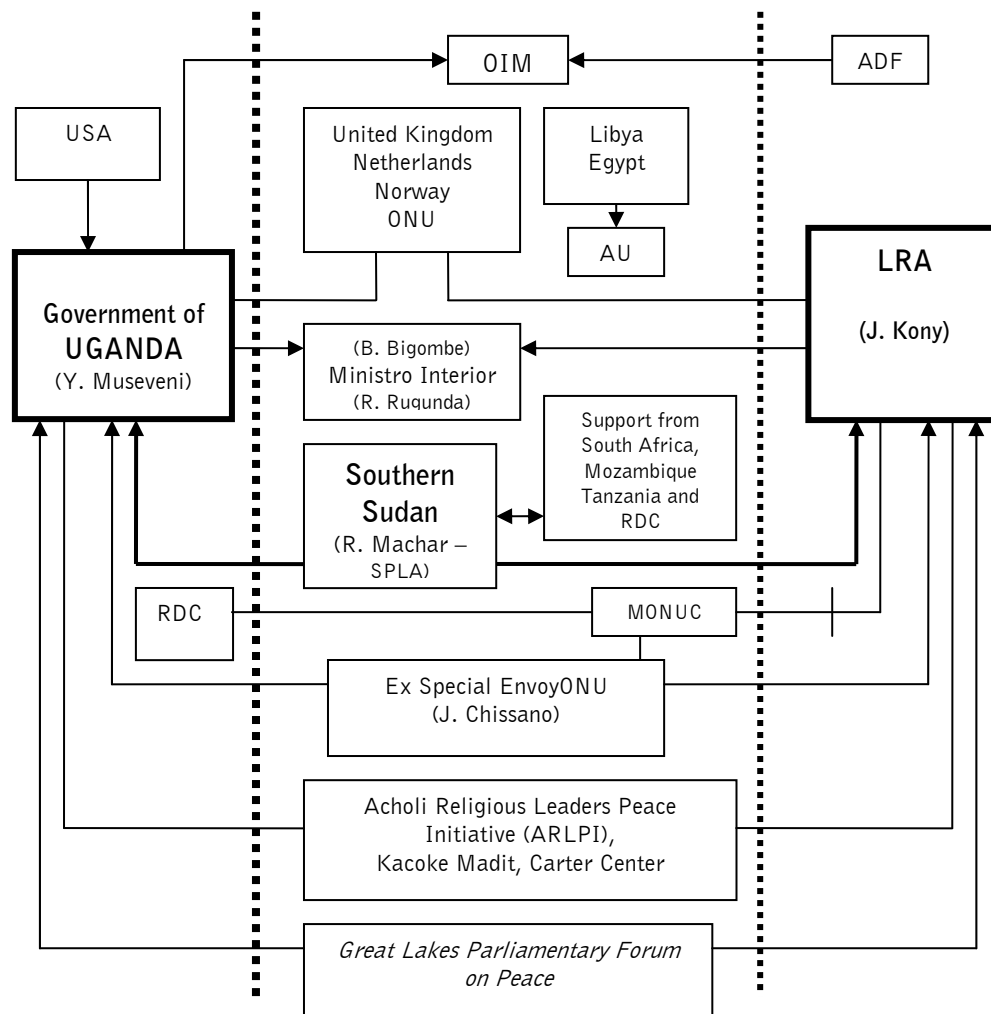
- The new spokesperson for the LRA's peace negotiations, Justine Labeja, asked that some of the points in the proposed agreement to be signed in Kampala in April 2008 be revised with regard to the provisions on the future of its leader, Joseph Kony.

Websites of interest

- Acholibreaks (www.acholipeace.org)
- Conciliation Resources (www.c-r.org)
- ICG (www.crisisgroup.org)
- LTTE (www.ltteps.org) (www.lttepeacesecretariat.com)
- Kacoke Madit (www.c-r.org/km/about/main.htm)(www.km-net.org)
- New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)

Agents in the conflict

The Intermediation Area



d) Maghreb

WESTERN SAHARA

Context of the conflict

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony until 1975, when a self-determination referendum 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 the negotiations begun by the United Nations back in 1988 took 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.

Population: 250,000 inhabitants
Area: 184,000 km ²
HDI (Morocco): 130 (of 182)
Deaths due to the conflict: 10,000
Refugee population: 86,000-150,000
Armed actors: (POLISARIO Front)
Facilitators: United Nations

Development of the peace process

Since the **ceasefire** between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front was reached in 1991, the United Nations has been working to reach a satisfactory agreement between both parties. However, the desired results were not obtained in any stages of the process until 2007. The **1991 Settlement Plan**, which called for a referendum to be held in the short term, was blocked shortly thereafter due to the allegations submitted 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 new deadlock caused by Morocco detracted from the Houston agreement. In view of this, the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, James Baker, presented a new proposal, or **Framework Agreement**, in 2001. This agreement yielded to Morocco's main demands, as it proposed that a new autonomous regime under Moroccan sovereignty should be established in the Western Sahara. This proposal was roundly rejected by the POLISARIO Front. In 2003, James Baker presented a new, more balanced proposal which was accepted by the POLISARIO Front as a starting point for negotiations. However, this time the proposal was rejected by Morocco. In 2004, James Baker was replaced by Álvaro de Soto. The Moroccan government announced that it would present a new plan for the autonomy of the Western Sahara to the Security Council in April 2006, which by the end of 2006 had not yet been made public.

In April the UN Secretary-General, K. Annan, released a statement in favour of **direct negotiations between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front** with participation by Algeria and Mauritania in order to seek a political solution to the conflict in Western Sahara. By doing so, the United Nations permanently tabled the Baker Plan, which had been unanimously approved by the Security Council in 2003, to take up the ideas of the new Secretary-General's Representative for Western Sahara, the Dutchman Peter van Walsum. According to diplomatic sources, in an approach that differed radically from that of his predecessor, Peter van Walsum believed that the Baker Plan had been erroneous, that the option of independence would have been discarded and that Algeria should sit down to negotiation, a fact that this country has always refused as it regards that Morocco does not represent the Saharan people. According to K. Annan, the new plan drafted by the UN would be doomed to failure because Morocco would reject it unless it did not include the option for a referendum on independence. The POLISARIO Front then rejected the UN's proposal to start direct negotiations with Morocco about Western Sahara. Likewise, the king created the created **Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS)**, made up of the

chiefs of several Saharan tribes, local elected officials and NGOs. This body expressed its approval of broad autonomy within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty.

In December, Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS) unanimously adopted the plan for autonomy for Western Sahara and submitted it to the monarch for his approval. According to the president of CORCAS, K. Ould Errachid, the document proposed an autonomous government, parliament and judicial power for Western Sahara, which would necessitate a constitutional reform. According to K. Ould Errachid, the proposal was inspired by the types of autonomies currently in practice in Europe, mainly the system in Spain. Indeed, Spanish would be the second official language of this autonomous community after Arabic. K. Ould Errachid, a pro-Morocco Western Saharan, reiterated that it was impossible for Western Sahara to be granted independence as there was no agreement in the voter census. What is more, he pointed out that the proposal totally safeguarded the national sovereignty of the Saharan provinces. The spokesperson for the Moroccan government N. Benabdala suggested that the independence project would not go to referendum.

In 2007, the Secretary-General of the UN named British diplomat J. Harston as the new Special Representative for the Western Sahara and as Head of the UN Mission for the organisation of a referendum (MINURSO). In March, the Algerian president, Bouteflika, declared that the Western Sahara issue would not be a *causus belli* between Algeria and Morocco, and that it was more inclined to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict via a referendum on self-determination. Despite this, two attacks committed on 11th March in Casablanca and on 11th April in Algiers, claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb, might have been the detonators of a change in Algeria's and Morocco's positions on Western Sahara, as they had to strengthen their relations in order to counter terrorism. 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 have autonomy in terms of administration, economics, taxation, infrastructure, culture and environmental issues. The state of Morocco, in turn, would reserve exclusive jurisdiction on matters of sovereignty (the flag or national currency), 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. The POLISARIO Front also submitted its own proposal to the Secretary-General, which called for setting up economic and trade relations with Morocco as part of a possible independence achieved via the right to self-determination. In mid-April, the Secretary-General of the UN submitted to the Security Council his report on the situation in the Western Sahara, which he urged Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to enter into talks to seek a solution to the conflict. Both sides expressed their willingness to meet, which paved the way for a **first two-day meeting in a United Nations building near New York in June.**

In August, in Manhasset, a town near New York, the second two-day round of negotiations was held via separate consultations with Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to find a solution to Western Sahara. This round ended with an agreement to meet once again at the end of the year, probably in Geneva. Both parties listened to several different talks by experts on specific issues, such as natural resources and local administration. The negotiations, which were held under the auspices of the UN based on the Security Council's Resolution 1754, were described as useful by Mahfoud Ali Beiba, the chief of the POLISARIO Front delegation. At the same time, he called on Morocco to stop what he regarded as delay tactics and to make a good faith pledge to uphold Resolution 1754. According to some analysts, the new round of negotiations did not yield positive results, and the process remained deadlocked in the midst of mutual accusations of inflexibility. For his part, the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Peter Van Walsum, communicated after the meeting that **both parties acknowledged that the current status quo was unacceptable** and that they had pledged to continue with the negotiations in good faith, as well as to develop confidence-building measures (facilitate family visits, joint de-mining actions, respect for human rights, etc.). The opening and closing sessions were attended by Algeria and Mauritania.

The third round of negotiations held in Manhasset, near New York City, between the government of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front ended in early January. Even though the UN communiqué stated that both parties had agreed to resume the talks from 11th to 13th March, the UN Special Envoy for Western Sahara, Peter Van Walsum, declared that **the parties were still expressing serious divergences on the fundamental issues at stake**, as effectively proven after the fourth round was held. Likewise, the parties had expressed their agreement on the need to force the process into a more intensive phase of negotiations on the more substantial issues. The report by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, stated that despite the fact that Morocco and the POLISARIO Front had interacted dynamically in their last encounter, the exchanges could hardly be considered a negotiation. Ban Ki-moon stated that despite both sides' commitment to negotiation, their positions were still quite divergent. However, it is worth pointing out that in March, Morocco issued an appeal to open of the frontier with Algeria, which had been closed for over a decade, as well as a normalisation of bilateral relations. The dispute showed no major progress during the second quarter of the year, although it was significant that in early April Algeria rejected Morocco's appeal to normalise relations and open the frontiers between both countries, which had been closed since 1994. Also noteworthy is the fact that **the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Western Sahara, van Walsum, declared that due to the lack of pressure on Morocco to give up its bid for sovereignty over Western Sahara, the latter country's independence is not a realistic proposal**. Van Walsun's statements were communicated via a letter addressed to the 15 members of the Security Council just a few days before meeting to discuss a variety of matters, including the renewal of the MINURSO mandate. Van Walsum's analysis triggered confusion in the Security Council, leading the then-rotating president of this institution, South African ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, to claim that Van Walsum's comments seemed to contradict the UN Secretary-General's report. In response, Ban Ki-moon stated that it was unacceptable for the current negotiation process on Western Sahara to be used to consolidate the status quo, and that it was necessary to find a way out of the current political impasse through realism and the spirit of compromise on both sides. What is more, days later **the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1813**, in which it appealed to both sides to enter into a more intensive, substantial phase of negotiations, while it also asked them to continue with the talks **without any preconditions** and in good faith with the goal of reaching a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

During the third quarter of the year, the conflict continued to worsen due to the **tensions between the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy and the POLISARIO Front**. The negotiator for the POLISARIO Front in the talks held in Morocco and Manhasset (New York), Mohamed Haddad, claimed that it was impossible for a fifth round of negotiations to be held under the current circumstances. Haddad stated that the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Western Sahara, Peter van Walsum, dealt the coup de grâce to the process, referring to his words in which, according to several interpretations, he asked the UN Security Council to choose the realistic option, rejecting independence for Western Sahara. A spokesman from the US State Department stated that an independent Saharan state was not a realistic option. In late July, the POLISARIO Front challenged the UN Special Envoy and formally requested a new negotiator for the new round of negotiations. During the second half of August, in a letter published in the Spanish newspaper *El País*, the hitherto UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Peter Van Walsum, confirmed that he had not been re-elected for the post after the POLISARIO Front asked for his removal in a communiqué written to the Secretary-General of the organisation, Ban Ki-moon. Van Walsum stated that with political will the conflict could be resolved, but that the deadlock in which it was enmeshed arose from Morocco's April 2004 decision not to accept a referendum that would consider the possible independence of Western Sahara, and from the Security Council's stance of requiring a consensual solution. In mid-October, the Fourth Commission of the UN General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution backing the negotiation process started the previous year between the POLISARIO Front and Morocco, and it asked both parties to cooperate with the ICRC and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law.

In November, as part of celebrations of the 33rd anniversary of the Green March, the spokesman for the Moroccan government stated that Rabat was seeking to embark on serious negotiations under UN auspices in order to resolve the conflict with the POLISARIO Front. However, it also declared that the negotiations must be based on autonomy, not on the UN's 1991 plan that called for a referendum on independence. In a speech by King Mohammed VI on the same occasion, the monarch announced a reform to transfer power to Western Sahara and other regions. The King also announced that he was setting up a consultative committee to propose an "overall concept of regionalisation", and he charged the government with drawing up a draft decentralisation project that would include the creation of new provinces. In parallel, the Moroccan government decided to double its military spending for 2009 to 3,206 million Euros (4.6% of the GDP).

The peace process in 2009

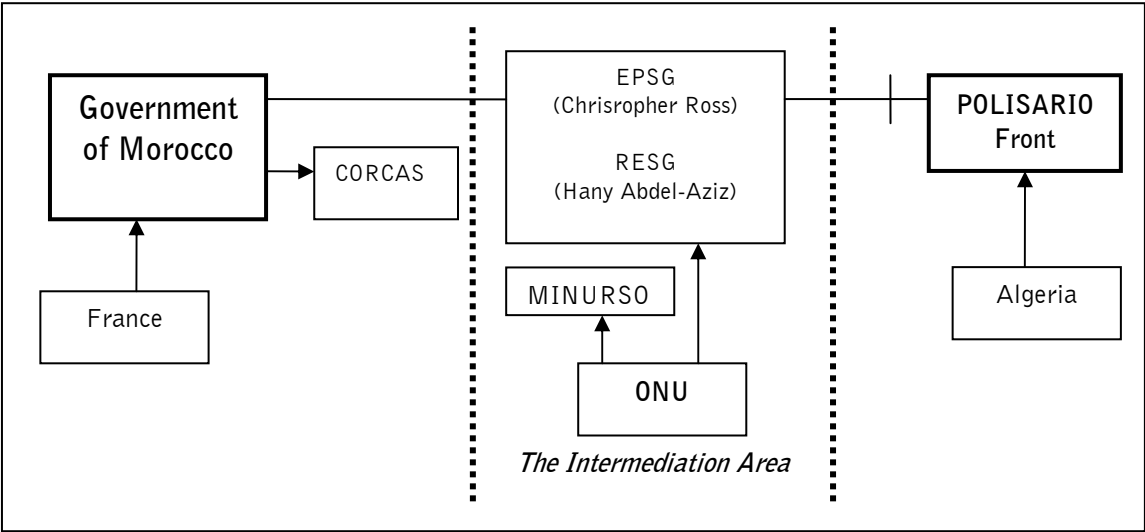
In early January, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, named diplomat Christopher Ross as his Special Envoy for the Western Sahara. Ross is the former US ambassador to Syria and Algeria, and in February he visited the region for the first time and declared his support of finding a solution to the conflict that takes into account the Saharan people's right to self-determination. In mid-March, a report from the European Parliament delegation that visited Western Sahara claimed that MINURSO's mandate must also include the supervision of human right in this land, but in late April France opposed including the monitoring of human rights in the MINURSO mandate after several NGOs, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, along with other organisations like the Maghreb Delegation of the European Parliament, requested this change. The UN Security Council unanimously approved a one-year extension of MINURSO's mandate, while it also asked Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to negotiate without preconditions and in good faith. Furthermore, given the fact that the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahara deemed that the conditions were not in place to resume the negotiation, the holding of previous "informal talks" between the parties was approved. The negotiations had been on hold since March 2008. During the Security Council talks, the French representative, Foreign Minister Jean-Maurice Ripert, expressed his support for the autonomy plan offered by Morocco, while his US counterpart, Susan Rice, simply stressed that the conflict had been going on for too long. With regard to the POLISARIO Front's reactions to the Security Council's vote, the head of the group, Ahmed Bujari, criticised France's stance and claimed that the UN body was using a double standard.

In late July, the King of Morocco, Mohamed VI, announced that he was launching an autonomy policy in Western Sahara. In his speech from the throne, which dovetailed with the tenth anniversary of his coronation, the monarch announced that a consultative commission would be created within a few months that would present a plan to implement advanced regionalisation in the country, which until then had been characterised by a highly centralised organisation. He further stated that the process would begin with the so-called southern provinces (Western Sahara), which were to become a model for the rest of Morocco. In mid-August, after two days of informal meetings in a hotel in Dürnstein (Austria), Morocco and the POLISARIO Front agreed to resume negotiations on Western Sahara, thus unblocking contacts that had been paralysed for the past 18 months. The UN Special Envoy for the Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, had promoted the encounter, and he claimed that these preliminary talks had taken place in an atmosphere of serious commitment, trust and mutual respect. The dates and venues for these negotiations are yet to be determined, but they will be the fifth round after the ones held in Manhasset (New York). Representatives from Mauritania and Algeria attended the opening and closing of these talks. As reported in press releases, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front maintained their postures: Rabat insisted on its proposal for autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty, while the POLIARIO Front demanded a referendum on self-determination that included the option of independence. However, they did make headway on a principled agreement for Saharan families living in the Western Sahara or in refugee camps in Tindouf to be able to travel by land to visit each other under UN supervision. Until then, in order to see each other only

for a few days, the families had to sign up on a list to fly in a UN airplane, starting a waiting period that could last as long as several years. Nonetheless, this progress was jeopardised in mid-September when the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres**, halved the number of Saharan refugees in the camps in Tindouf, in southwest Algeria compared to the figure provided by the POLISARIO Front. This movement, which upholds independence for Western Sahara, claimed that there were 165,000 refugees on Algerian soil. In October, Egyptian Hany Abdel-Aziz was appointed the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, declared his support of finding a solution to the conflict that takes into account the Saharan people's right to self-determination. • The King of Morocco, Mohamed VI, announced that he was launching an autonomy policy in Western Sahara and creating a consultative commission within a few months that would present a plan to implement advanced regionalisation in the country. • After two days of informal meetings in an Austrian hotel, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front agreed to resume negotiations on Western Sahara, thus unblocking contacts that had been paralysed for the past 18 months. • The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, halved the number of Saharan refugees in the camps in Tindouf, in southwest Algeria.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARSO (www.arso.org) • CORCAS (20six.fr/corcas) • Government of Morocco (www.mincom.gov.ma/french/reg_vil/regions/Sáhara) • ICG (www.crisisgroup.org) • MINURSO (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minurso) • United Nations (www.un.org/spanish/documents) • SADR- Sahara Press Service (www.spsrasd.info)



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 different 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 15,000 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.

Population: 44 million inhabitants
Area: 1,139,000 km ²
GDP: 180,400 million US dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$4,100
HDI: 77 (of 192)
Displaced population: between 2 and 4 million people
Refugee population: 450,000
Armed actors: FARC, ELN, AUC, new paramilitary groups
Facilitators: Catholic church, OAS, Cuba, Spain, France, Norway, Switzerland, Venezuela, Piedad Córdoba

Background to the peace process

Since the 1980s, many efforts have been made to build peace by actors involved in the conflict and by Colombian society. 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. Members of this group include the FARC, the ELN and the EPL. However, the 1992 talks were suspended when the FARC assassinated a minister they had kidnapped. In 1995, the Colombian Episcopal Conference created the National Reconciliation Commission (CCN). In 1997, president Samper proposed forming a National Peace Council to include institutions and civil society. 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.

International support for the peace process 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. At the end of 1998, president Pastrana authorised the demilitarisation of a large swath of the country so that negotiations with the **FARC** could be held. A twelve-point agenda was agreed to during these talks. Subsequently, a national committee for talks and negotiation and a thematic committee were formed. In March 2001, the Group of Friends of the Peace Process with the FARC was created. The following countries were involved in this group: Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and

Venezuela. 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 guerrilla group after six years of efforts, acknowledging the impossibility of continuing this mission and maintaining direct contact with the guerrilla leaders. The Nobel Peace Prize winner and Archbishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu, invited the guerrilla leaders to visit South Africa to inspect the transition and reconciliation processes in the country. The proposal was rejected by the FARC. However, the FARC did request that a new group of Friendly Countries be formed to facilitate the quest for a solution to the armed conflict. The US Government rejected a new call for talks by the spokesperson of the FARC, Raúl Reyes, insisting that they would not negotiate with terrorists. With respect to the agreements on humanitarian aspects the government launched a series of proposals which were rejected by the FARC. The FARC insisted on holding the meeting in two municipalities that the security forces would leave during the talks to guarantee their safety, a condition which the government did not accept. The FARC also rejected a proposal by the Catholic Church to begin pre-talks in neutral territory with no conditions attached. In mid-December 2005, however, the government accepted a proposal made by the Exploratory Technical Committee, comprising representatives from the governments of France, Switzerland and Spain, which established a security system that would allow representatives from both the government and the FARC to meet in a 180 km² area near the town of Pradera (Valle). In the end, this proposal was not accepted by the FARC.

In May 2006, president Álvaro Uribe stated that upon being re-elected (with 62.6% of the votes) he and his team would look into how to embark on a pathway to peace with this group. To this end, he met with former minister Álvaro Leyva, who had mediated with the FARC in the past. Colombian businessmen also expressed their willingness to support negotiations with this armed group. Previously, the government had rejected possible regional dialogues with the FARC unless the group declared an end to hostilities. However, the most significant event was the **indicators of rapprochement with the FARC armed group** towards the end of the third quarter after four years without negotiations. In July 2006, the FARC spokesman, Raul Reyes, asked the EU to withdraw his group from the terrorist lists, and he also asked this European body to cooperate in exploring pathways towards peace in Colombia. In early September, the High Commissioner for Peace promoted the creation of a single front which would make possible a single channel of communication with the FARC. The latter group took advantage of the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries being held in Havana to ask for its cooperation in resolving the armed conflict, and it expressed its willingness to send emissaries to any country interested or to welcome international delegations in its encampments. Days later, the Colombian government expressed its willingness to authorise an "encounter zone" in the Valle department to **begin talks with the FARC that would lead to a humanitarian agreement and the start of political negotiations** with this group. In early October, with unusual speed, **the FARC soldiers and the government exchanged communiqués containing proposals** that paved the way for not only a possible humanitarian agreement but also subsequent peace negotiations. For the first time, the government expressed its support of a military withdrawal limited over time in two towns in the Valle department, and it even deemed feasible the possibility of calling a Constituent Assembly as the end of the peace process. The FARC chief of staff, in a letter addressed to the three branches of political power in Colombia, reiterated his proposal to discuss the exchange of kidnapped persons for imprisoned guerrillas in the towns of Pradera and Florida, and it suggested that the contact continue in order to begin discussing a definitive peace. With this purpose in mind, it demanded that military forces be withdrawn from the two departments in the south of the country, that arrest warrants for its leaders be lifted, that the international community cease to label them as terrorists, and that the

presidency acknowledge the existence of a social armed conflict. The main new feature was its willingness to discuss a bilateral end to armed conflicts, as well as the publication of a specific agenda with the points they wanted to discuss.

Thematic FARC proposal presented on 2nd October 2006	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To demilitarise the departments of Caquetá and Putumayo in order to begin peace talks. 2. To suspend the arrest warrants for the members of the Central Staff. 3. To ask the international community to stop classifying FARC as a terrorist organisation. 4. To acknowledge the existence of a social and armed conflict. 5. To suspend military operatives on a nationwide scale. 6. To grant full travel guarantees for central staff members in the aforementioned departments. 7. For government-FARC meetings to be public. 8. To explore pathways leading to a bilateral ceasefire and to analyse the political resolution to the social and armed struggle by bringing the following matters to the table for discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Agenda of Caguán and Platform for a New National Reconciliation and Reconstruction Government • State paramilitarism • Clean-up of the armed force troops linked to paramilitarism • Immediate release of the civilian population joined with guerrilla groups • Economic reparations from the state to everyone affected by the internal conflict • The FTA with the United States • Immediate agricultural reform which includes restoring ownership of estates and plots to the peasantry affected by the conflict • Return of displaced persons to their homes • Urban reform • Illegal drug policy • Extradition treaty • Constituent Assembly • Energy policy

Nevertheless, just a few days later, despite the interest aroused by this proposal, in a public speech president A. Uribe suspended all types of rapprochement with the FARC armed groups and asked the international community for military and intelligence aid "in order to make headway in the military operations of rescuing the kidnapped individuals". This announcement was prompted by a car bomb that exploded in the car park of the Higher War School that left 25 people injured. Nonetheless, at the end of the year the president did not discard the possibility of opening up new communication channels if the FARC would make some sort of meaningful gesture.

At the beginning of 2007, I President Álvaro Uribe authorised new contacts with the FARC on behalf of friendly countries (Spain, France and Switzerland) to take up the subject of a humanitarian agreement once again. According to the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, the government was prepared to go forward if there had been a feasible proposal made in good will and without any terrorist actions such as car bombs. Several congress democrats from the US also offered their services as mediators between the government and the FARC in a future humanitarian exchange in a proposal that was well received by the government. It also became apparent that the guerrilla group had held their 9th National Conference 14 years after the previous one. At the end of May President Álvaro Uribe announced the release of more than a hundred prisoners from the guerrilla group to conciliate the liberation of the hostages in the hands of the group. At the request of French president, Nicholas Sarkozy, the Uribe president also decided to release the leader, Rodrigo Granda, who later received permission to travel to Cuba. The FARC described the release of the prisoners as a trap, but they maintained that Rodrigo Granda could act as witness in the case of a possible humanitarian exchange. At the end of June, however the FARC murdered eleven of the twelve representatives of the Valle Department, who they had been holding captive for five years in circumstances which have not been fully clarified, meaning a deadlock for the possibilities of short-term progress towards

humanitarian and political negotiations with the guerrilla group. In the face of this situation, **the president of Venezuela offered his services to achieve a humanitarian exchange, a gesture which initially required the acceptance of the Colombian president and the backing of the US government.** . The Colombian president authorised Senator Piedad Córdoba to enter into discussions with the FARC. Several Latin Americans also offered their services to achieve the abovementioned humanitarian agreement. In the beginning the initiative received widespread international support. 112 government representatives from the non-aligned countries group NOAL issued a message of support to President Hugo Chavez for his role in facilitating peace in Colombia. A few months later, however, there was a misunderstanding between the Venezuelan delegation and the Colombian government, for several reasons. In November, President Chavez in the company of Senator Piedad Cordoba and the guerrilla leader of the FARC Ivan Marquez, gave a media presentation from the presidential headquarters of the content of a meeting held a few days earlier. Shortly afterwards, **the Colombian president declared that the mediation of the Venezuelan president for a humanitarian agreement had come to an end,** making relations between the two countries significantly tenser. In December, however, President Alvaro Uribe **authorised the Colombian Catholic Church to carry out a facilitation exercise,** authorising a meeting area with the FARC of 150 km² for one month in a rural, sparsely populated area of the country. At the end of the year, despite everything the FARC announced the release of two hostages and the son of one of them who had been born in captivity, through the Venezuelan government. This release took place in the first days of January 2008.

In early January the FARC released the kidnapping victims Clara Rojas and Consuelo González with the mediation of the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, after six years of captivity and multiple arrangements to secure their release. After this, the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, asked the government of Colombia and other governments around the world to remove the FARC and ELN from their terrorist lists and to recognise their status as belligerent forces, because in his judgment they were true insurgent forces with a political and Bolivarian plan. This triggered serious upheaval in the Colombian government, which in early February ordered the armed forces to locate the FARC encampments where people were kidnapped and to enclose them so they could later conduct actions leading to their release. Shortly thereafter, however, the FARC announced the unilateral release of three kidnapped politicians who would be turned over to Chávez and Senator Piedad Córdoba on Colombian soil, or to the people that they designate. This news came from the leadership of this organisation two days before a **world protest day against kidnapping** was held in the main cities of Colombia and numerous cities around the world with a huge turnout. Weeks later, another day of multitudinous demonstrations was organised by the Movement of Victims of State Crimes, which was criticised by the government as it viewed it as manipulation by the FARC. The marchers demanded that the state pay reparations to the victims, that the truth about the crimes committed be revealed, and that the victimisers be punished. In parallel, Brazil and France were working on **setting up a new international group for a humanitarian agreement,** which would also include Venezuela, Argentina, Cuba, Spain and Switzerland. In order to launch this initiative, they needed the approval of President Uribe and the President Chávez. Likewise, the Secretariat of the FARC claimed that the government of Spain and the Catholic Church had excluded themselves from any facilitation efforts on behalf of the humanitarian agreement as they sided with President Uribe. Despite offers from several countries, the crisis in the relations between Colombia and Venezuela were further aggravated by accusations by the Venezuelan leader that certain sectors of the Colombian government supported the presence of paramilitaries on Venezuelan soil, which it labelled as a serious threat to his country's security. In late February, the Colombian armed forces conducted a night-time air and land attack on a FARC encampment located in Ecuador, killing Raúl Reyes, the third in the line of command of this guerrilla group, along with 22 other guerrillas. Ecuador's President Correa declared that President Uribe had lied to him, because the attack was in no way an action "in the heat of the moment", rather a planned operation in which he had deliberately violated Ecuador's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The crisis was addressed at the Rio Summit, a body over which the government of the United States, which unconditionally backed the government of Colombia, has no direct interference. The summit of the Rio Group reached a consensus on the

Santo Domingo Declaration, in which it stated its rejection of the violation of Ecuador's territorial integrity and reaffirmed the principle that the territory of one state was inviolable and could not be the object of either military occupation or other forceful measures taken by another state, either directly or indirectly, regardless of the motive, even temporarily. The Colombian government, in turn, revealed that the three computers seized from Raúl Reyes contained highly compromising information that demonstrated the existence of close ties between the governments of Ecuador and Venezuela and the FARC guerrillas. A few days later, however, Presidents Chávez, Correa, Ortega and Uribe declared that the crisis had been overcome and pledged to re-establish their respective diplomatic legations. In the meantime, the Secretariat of the FARC announced that Joaquín Gómez was now a full member of the high command of this organisation. In March, FARC was dealt another blow in its command structure with the **murder of Iván Ríos by a member of that guerrilla**. Ríos was a member of the Secretariat, the highest governing body. President Uribe also sent a message to the FARC saying that this was the best time to sit down at the negotiating table to reach peace. During the second quarter of the year, **the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, issued an appeal to the FARC to release all the kidnapping victims in their power without asking for anything in exchange** as a peaceful gesture that would help to pave the way for peace negotiations, with the cooperation of a group of countries, including several in Latin America, Europe, and the USA. Another noteworthy event was the **death of the top FARC leader, Manuel Marulanda, alias "Tirofijo"**, on the 26th of March. He died of a heart attack according to the FARC, which in turn announced that **Alfonso Cano had been unanimously appointed as chief commander of the guerrilla group** and would continue to lead the FARC until its strategic goals had been reached. The FARC also reiterated its willingness to reach a humanitarian agreement with the government and search for a political solution to the internal conflict. President Uribe offered to release the FARC guerrillas on probation and send them to another country, perhaps France, if they deserted the group and released Ingrid Betancourt and other kidnapping victims. It also offered hefty sums of money as a reward.

During the third quarter, the conflict was largely dominated by the sense that it was impossible to embark on peace negotiations with the guerrillas due to the scandals triggered by the so-called "parapolitics", the onset of a process called "farcpolitics" and tensions with the neighbouring countries. **In late June, 15 kidnapping victims were released by the FARC** in an extremely controversial operation, among other reasons because FARC illegally used the Red Cross emblem and because there were doubts as to whether the services of the guerrillas chiefs who were guarding the kidnapping victims had been purchased. The released captives included former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, three US intelligence agents and 11 more soldiers. The Colombian Defence Minister, Juan Manuel Santos, asked the FARC to release the remaining captives and put an end to the conflict by means of a negotiated exit. In her first declarations after being freed, Ingrid Betancourt said that she thought that peace was possible in Colombia and invited the FARC and the government to negotiate the definitive cessation of the armed conflict. President Hugo Chávez expressed his pleasure at the release of the captives; he further stated that the time of revolutionary armed struggle is in the past and asked that Colombian guerrillas to negotiate peace with the government and join the wave of democratic changes that are taking place in Latin America. **The Peace Commissioner, Luis Carlos Restrepo, declared that the government would seek direct dialogue with the FARC in the near future without the aid of mediators**, after having stigmatised everyone who had tried to build bridges between the guerrillas and the Colombian government in recent years. The press revealed an excerpt from a communiqué from the FARC signed by Alfonso Cano which had been issued one month before operation "Jaque", in which 15 kidnapping victims were released. In it, **the FARC expressed its willingness to hold direct meetings with the government to negotiate a humanitarian agreement**, although not to open up a political dialogue. The communiqué also mentioned the appointment of Iván Márquez as the new head of the International Front, a job that Raúl Reyes used to fill, and of Pablo Catatumbo as the new head of the Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia, a clandestine political organisation that Cano led until the death of Manuel Marulanda Vélez. In September, in the midst of an escalation in the military clashes between the armed forces and the FARC guerrillas, Senator Piedad Córdoba sent a letter to the guerrilla group signed by a long list

of people linked to academia, art and journalism and other social leaders, in which they proposed public dialogue through an exchange of letters which would help to identify the elements for an agenda that would help to shed light on the possible pathways towards understanding in favour of the humanitarian agreement and peace with social justice. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Ecuadorian Minister of Security proposed setting up a commission of five friendly countries, chosen by consensus between Ecuador and Colombia, to verify the security conditions on the border between both countries.

In late October and early November, the **FARC accepted the exchange of letters proposed by a long list of Colombian personalities**, with the participation of Latin American countries willing to accompany the process, although there were still doubts as to how to this exercise would actually be carried out. Likewise, the politicians who had been released by the FARC, Orlando Beltrán and Consuelo González de Perdomo, announced in October that they had presented to the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, several initiatives to reactivate the humanitarian agreement that would make the release of the other individuals kidnapped by the FARC possible. They said that even though the government refused any kind of international mediation, this was an indispensable condition for the parties to once again take an interest in pursuing this pathway. In November, the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, warned that if the FARC continued to attack the Ecuadorian armed forces, the state would be obliged to respond in turn. At the end of December an interview was finally held with Alfonse Cano with a Spanish magazine in which the leader of the FARC presented a new 11-point plan, as a summary of the hopes of the FARC for achieving peace in the future, as reflected in the following table, thus specifying the political platform announced three years earlier more realistically. This could be interpreted as a new focus from the time of the replacement of the group's leader.

Objectives identified by the FARC in December 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public strength based on the Bolivarian principles of never using arms against the people. • Democratic participation at national, regional and municipal levels in the strategic decisions affecting each level. • Single chamber parliament • Independence in the election of bodies of institutional control, and their integration in the high courts. • Strategic production sectors should be owned by the State. Economic emphasis on production and self-sufficiency in food production. • The rich should pay the highest taxes. 50% of the national budget should be destined to social projects and 10% to scientific research. • Productive lands should be available to rural population with large incentives and support. • Strategies for maintaining ecological balance. • International relations should be on the basis of non-intervention by foreign forces. • Legalisation of the production and commercialisation of drugs using crop substitution strategies. • Respect for the right of ethnic and minority groups.

The first negotiations between the government and the **ELN took place in 1991 (in Caracas and Tlaxcala)**. In 1998, both parties signed a peace agreement in Madrid, in which they agreed to hold a National Convention. In the same year, ELN negotiators met with members of civil society in Mainz (Germany). They 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 2002, the High Commissioner for Peace

undertook new rounds of exploratory negotiations with the ELN in Cuba, and in mid-2004, new exploratory talks began with Mexico acting as facilitator.

At the beginning of 2005, facilitation by the Mexican ambassador Andrés Valencia continued in an attempt to achieve rapprochement with the ELN guerrilla group. After a temporary crisis related to the facilitation process, at the end of March this group and the Colombian government exchanged proposals aimed at holding direct negotiations outside the country (in either Mexico or Cuba). This stage of rapprochement was successful, and a peace process began which received strong international support. Despite these positive developments, the ELN suddenly dispensed with the facilitation services, claiming that Mexico had disqualified itself by voting against Cuba on the UN Human Rights Commission. However, the guerrillas stressed that the group of Friendly Countries (Spain, France, Switzerland, Norway and Cuba) could act as alternative facilitators. In the third quarter of 2005, exploratory talks continued between the ELN and the government on the government's proposal to set up an external rapprochement process (for a short and fixed period) and its suggestion of international involvement. In September, president Álvaro Uribe authorised the ELN's spokesman, Francisco Galán, to be released from prison for three months in an attempt to advance discussions with all sectors of Colombian society, and in response to a citizens' initiative (the "Group of Guarantors") that was also approved by the ELN. This armed group had outlined what it considered to be the five obstacles blocking the beginning of a real peace process. These were: the government's denial of the existence of an armed conflict; the humanitarian crisis; the social, political and economic causes of the conflict; the dearth of spaces for civil society to participate; and the mock negotiations with the paramilitary groups. Days before the end of the three-month period, the government extended the ELN spokesman's release for a further three months. The government reached an agreement with this spokesman 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".

After an initial meeting in Havana (Cuba) in December 2005, a second meeting was held in the same city in February 2006. After this meeting, the president of the Colombian government, Álvaro Uribe, officially recognised Antonio García, Ramiro Vargas and Francisco Galán as the interlocutors representing the ELN, which enabled them to travel around inside Colombia and abroad, as their arrest warrants had been lifted. Both parties also agreed to create an alternate committee where the ambassadors of the three facilitating countries (Spain, Norway and Switzerland) would participate, in order to discuss "interim affairs". The ELN declared a unilateral end to offensive actions during the period when parliamentary elections were being held. In late March, the ELN representative, A. García, travelled from Cuba to Colombia to hold meetings with representatives of civil society and diplomats. In April, the third exploratory round was held in Havana. According to the military head of the armed group, A. García, countries such as Holland, Sweden, Canada and Japan would also be willing to support the talks. Likewise, the Colombian Catholic Church announced that it would ask the Vatican to join the international facilitators in the negotiation process. The ELN expressed its willingness to participate in a new round of negotiations in Cuba in early October, and it announced the beginning of a Political Campaign for Peace. In September, the ELN announced that it had held its 4th Congress, its most important internal event. The commandants and delegates from all its guerrilla structures had taken part in this gathering. The conclusions stressed the **quest for a political solution to the conflict** in order to obtain peace, which was understood as eradicating the profound inequalities, overcoming the humanitarian crisis, and building a "new government of nation, peace and equity". They also reiterated that **the political struggle was the main form of the struggle, including the electoral vying, to achieve new local and regional governabilities**. The event ratified the proposal of the National Convention as the inclusive democratic scenario for building a national consensus to overcome the country's serious problems. To this end, they invited all the revolutionary, patriotic and democratic political and social forces to join together to address the challenges entailed in building a new country in peace and with social justice, and they recognised the Alternative Democratic Pole as the only opposition alternate to the right wing in Colombia. They also invited the guerrillas from the FARC to work towards unity amongst the insurgent

movement based on affinities, yet with respect for the uniqueness of each organisation. The ELN negotiator, Antonio García, announced that he would propose to the government that all political prisoners be granted amnesty, that a National Convention be held and that an agenda including economic and social issues be studied in order to tackle the country's crisis and put an end to the war.

In October 2006, the government and the ELN held the fourth exploratory round in Cuba. Upon its conclusion, they highlighted the headway made in the design of the process by setting the two structural axes towards a Basic Agreement: Climate for Peace and Participation in Society. In mid-December, **the ELN Central Command (COCE) issued a communiqué in which it repeated its willingness to agree to a ceasefire and an end to bilateral hostilities with the government.** It also called for the creation of a new coalition government, the formation of a Special Truth Commission to which the paramilitary troops could report about the deeds and secrets that the country should know about in order to begin the clean-up of institutions, an in-depth solution to drug trafficking without resorting to fumigation and a refusal to allow Colombians to be extradited. The following morning, the Guarantee Committee of the process with the ELN held a press conference to present its "roadmap" for 2007. This was criticised by the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, for not having been discussed previously between the sides (Government and ELN) since it involved matters for negotiation that should be addressed in the next round of talks, forecast for the beginning of 2007 in Havana.

Francisco Galán, spokesperson for the guerrilla group for the last 16 years, received conditional release from prison in the first part of 2007 and the Government awarded the a member of the Central Command of the guerrilla group, Pablo Beltrán, the position of Representative Member, giving him freedom of movement in order to join the ELN negotiating team which was extended to four members. At the beginning of March the fifth round of talks between the government and the ELN was concluded in Havana, and counted on the support of the Nobel Prize-winner for Literature, Gabriel García Márquez, without the parties making the content of their discussions public. The guerrilla representation was led by Pablo Beltrán, substituting military chief, Antonio García. In mid-April, the government and the ELN began a new round of talks in Havana for an initial duration of six weeks. Unlike the five previous rounds, the sides promised to reach a significant agreement (the so-called "base agreement") to advance the peace process, beginning with reaching some kind of ceasefire agreement and cessation of hostilities. So **the ELN proposed a bilateral, temporary, experimental ceasefire and an end to hostilities without localizing the guerrilla forces,** and demanded that the government place a freeze on processes for the agreement of the Free Trade Treaty (TLC) among other social and economic measures. 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 the way of concentrating and verifying the guerrilla.** The Government insisted on the demand that they locate in one or several , including one abroad which should be previously coordinated and with the names of all those concentrated in them, and which would have an international verifier, something which was rejected by the ELN which was not prepared to reveal the identity of its members or concentrate in conditions which they perceived of giving them a military disadvantage. In this round, and **for the first time, members of the National Peace Council (CNP) took part,** an organisation that had been created years ago and had not been put into operation until that time. The CNP presented a proposal for verifying the corridors of mobility in 10 areas of the country and the presence of the international observers in each region. Observers would have the communications mechanisms necessary to maintain permanent contact with military commanders and the chiefs of the insurgents. In September, delegations from the Government and the ELN met in Caracas, on accepting the **goodwill offered by the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez,** to help to unblock the process. Delegates of the ELN began consultations with the Central Command of the organisation to decide its position in the future round of negotiations. The National Peace Council, for its part, created a commission responsible for articulating the efforts made by the Government and the public sector for peace and development programmes in public policy. It therefore decided to create a permanent committee for the monitoring of peace

talks with the ELN. The Government and the ELN decided to meet again at the end of December, but the tension with the Venezuelan government meant that the round was put back to the beginning of 2008, and at the end of the year it was not known whether a further meeting would be held in Havana.

With regard to the ELN guerrillas, in January they expressed their pleasure at the government of Venezuela's recognition of the political nature of the FARC and the ELN, and at the international community's request for these organisations to be recognised as belligerent forces and withdrawn from the lists of terrorist organisations. They claimed that their recognition as a belligerent force would stress the **need to reach a war regulation agreement with the government** as a point of departure for embarking on a peace process. Still, by the end of the quarter no new rounds of negotiations had been started. The last one had been in August 2007. In early April, the political spokesman for the ELN, Francisco Galán, met with President Álvaro Uribe in the Casa de Nariño with the purpose of discussing the paralysis in the peace talks that this guerrilla group had been engaged in with the government. Galán declared that he attended the meeting on his own behalf and that he was renouncing the war, although not his convictions, and that he had been authorised by the government to remain in permanent contact with the Central Command of this organisation with the purpose of working towards a return to the negotiating table. He also stated that he was going to spearhead an effort to build a national political consensus for peace with all the violent actors in the country. In turn, the **ELN Central Command withdrew Galán's appointment as spokesman and his membership in the ELN delegation engaged in the talks with the government because his deeds and opinions did not represent the ELN's policies**, and they left him free to develop his political options as he saw fit. In late April, the ELN Central Command suggested to the country a national agreement among all the democratic and social forces in order to open up a peace process that would be founded on the reconstruction of democracy, social justice and the welfare of the majority. It said that this effort must begin by removing the obstacles to a humanitarian agreement. It also suggested to that a plan be promoted to address the serious humanitarian crisis of the displaced persons, and that a National Constituent Assembly be called with no exclusions, as well as a referendum to approve the new constitutional charter. In June, **the ELN stated that it saw continuing with its rapprochement with the Colombian government as futile**, and so did not expect to hold a new round.

In August, the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, and the Cuban leader Fidel Castro declared that the armed struggle in Latin America had lost its relevancy, which sparked a debate on the combination of the forms of struggle; the ELN labelled this as a false dilemma. To its mind, peace, social justice, democracy and national sovereignty were the common cause behind the Colombian Left, and to achieve them the structural problems had to be grappled with, such as: independence and self-rule as a sovereign nation; the model of society, economy and state at the service of the national majorities; the culture of the licit; the elimination of the mafia and overcoming drug trafficking; and the legitimacy of the state, para-state and guerrilla armed structures. On other matters, the government announced the **demobilisation of the Guevarist Revolutionary Army, ERG** – a small guerrilla organisation that had split off from the ELN in 1992 and operated in the Department of Chocó. The 45 guerrillas that made it up turned over their weapons at a ceremony presided over by the Higher Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, and military authorities.

With respect to the Colombian United Self-Defence (**AUC**), in August 2002 there was a reunification of most of the paramilitary groups to face negotiations with the government with the mediation of the Church. In December of the same year, the AUC declared a cessation of hostilities and the Government named a committee of six people to explore possibilities of talks. **Finally**, in July 2003 the government and the AUC signed the Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement, in which the self-defence forces promised to begin total demobilisation between the end of 2003 and the end of 2005, disassociate themselves from drug trafficking and move to areas controlled by the state. At the beginning of 2005, 1,600 combatants were demobilised. However, the process came to a standstill due to disagreements over the legal framework that would apply to former

combatants. During the first half of the year, public debates were held to draw up a Law on Justice and Peace that would regulate the process, which also led to disagreements within government ranks. An EU commission visited 15 municipalities in Montes de María to study the possibility of setting up a third peace laboratory in the region. Meanwhile, the demobilisation process continued. President Álvaro Uribe approved the controversial Justice and Peace Law a month after it had been approved by Congress. Under this law, the government established a Victim Reparations Commission for those who had been victims of the actions of illegal groups. The end of the year saw a further crisis in this process with the resulting halt in demobilisations. Finally, the president agreed to extend the period set to complete the demobilisation. For its part, the OAS increased its budget and the team of people in charge of monitoring the demobilisation process. By the end of December 2005, 15,600 members of the AUC had been demobilised.

In late March, 2006 in response to the OAS' accusations that 4,000 demobilised troops had taken up arms once again and that many of them had engaged in criminal actions, the former AUC commanders stated that from then on they would cease to be accountable for the actions of their demobilised troops when they committed criminal acts. They also claimed that one of the reasons why many of the demobilised combatants were taking up their arms again was the lack of jobs or educational opportunities for these people. In response to this problem, president Álvaro Uribe pointed out that between 15,000 and 20,000 reinserted troops could become civilian police officers who would take care of the motorways and stadiums, without carrying weapons. On other affairs, the National Reparations and Reconciliation Commission (abbreviated CNRR) publicised its roadmap with the intention of beginning a national deliberation that would lead to the collective construction of what might come to be a Colombian model of reparation and reconciliation for the victims of the armed conflict. Shortly before the presidential elections, the Peace Commissioner, Luis Carlos Restrepo, announced the practical demobilisation of all the paramilitary groups within the umbrella organisation United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC). More than 30,000 former combatants had returned to civilian life, 1,175 were in prison and 604 had to submit to the courts (as shall be seen below, this figure rose considerably). Seventeen thousand weapons were handed over. The government decided to create a Presidential Reinsertion Council in view of the high number of demobilised individuals in recent years. In April, the US Congress approved a 15.4 million dollar appropriation for this demobilisation process, conditioned upon Colombia's cooperation in extraditing some of the paramilitary leaders. The Secretary-General of the OAS announced that the size of the Mapp-OAS mission would be doubled in order to monitor the demobilisation. However, the controversial factor was the decision adopted in May by the Constitutional Court. This ruling deemed the Law on Justice and Peace regulating the demobilisation of the paramilitary groups legal, yet it cut back several of the benefits for people covered by this law. The court denied the political nature of the self-defence groups, stressed the rights of the true victims, withdrew all the penitentiary benefits for whomever did not confess to their crimes, required all the members of the paramilitary groups to be jointly accountable for all the crimes committed by the organisation, offered the Public Prosecution Service more time to bring the defendants to court and stipulated that the seclusion sites would work under the rules of the normal prison system. This decision by the Constitutional Court unleashed a serious crisis amongst the AUC leaders, who met to debate their future.

In the third quarter of 2006, the government announced that around 12,000 paramilitary troops who were not part of the armed structures would cease to receive subsidies, which triggered protests by the AUC leaders. Likewise, the first monitoring report of the 35,000 demobilised paramilitary troops indicated that there were 541 prisoners, 236 deaths and no information on another 141. A government report also claimed that hundreds of demobilised troops from the AUC paramilitary groups had gathered together into ten new armed gangs in the past six months, and that they were linked to drug trafficking, smuggling and extortion. In turn, the Public Defender, V. Pérez, claimed that these criminal structures were in their embryonic state and that they were just beginning to operate in a coordinated fashion. Thus, he insisted that the authorities take measures aimed at preventing them from consolidating. In August, leaders of the paramilitary groups met with the current president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize winner,

Oscar Arias, to ask him to accompany them in the demobilisation process being conducted by the government of Álvaro Uribe. They also requested support to train members of the demobilised paramilitary groups in peace-related issues, as well as his assistance to try to revive the Contadora Group to accompany the peace process in Colombia. Oscar Arias pledged to discuss these issues with president Álvaro Uribe during his trip to Colombia to participate in the president's swearing in ceremony for his new mandate. In September, the government publicised the names of the 2,695 demobilised AUC paramilitary troops who could be expected to be brought to trial under the parameters defined by the Law on Justice and Peace. They included the fifteen leaders sought for extradition by the USA on drug trafficking charges. According to the vice president, Francisco Santos, the judges would be in charge of determining who would be eligible. Since August, the AUC leaders had been secluded by presidential order in the town of La Ceja (Antioquia), although there were still several who had not yet turned themselves in to the authorities. In October the government suspended safe conduct for demobilised chiefs and ordered the capture of those who had not been rounded up, having warned that they could lose their advantages under the Law of Justice and Peace. From there the heads of the AUC announced that they would reveal all the political and military support that they had received since their creation.

The District Attorney ruled at the beginning of 2007 that there were signs showing the presumed attachment of 80 soldiers with the AUC, as well as several politicians and congress members, and one of the top leaders of those groups, Salvatore Mancuso confirmed that the paramilitaries that had demobilised were reorganising and that they already had more than 5,000 soldiers among their ranks. In February, the Minister of Foreign Affairs resigned from his post when his brother was imprisoned, accused of links with paramilitary organisations. Taking his place was Fernando Araujo, who just two months before had managed to escape after six years in the captivity of the FARC guerrilla. During the second half of the year, in a letter sent to president Álvaro Uribe, 11 former paramilitary chiefs imprisoned in the Itagüí jail, expressed their desire to do politics in the regions where they exercised power through weapons. The government responded by agreeing to let the applicants serve as political spokesmen, yet it limited their action exclusively to strengthening the demobilisation process. In May, one of the top leaders of the AUC, Salvatore Mancuso, condemned the involvement of prominent politicians, military officers and business leaders in the formation of the paramilitary groups. In four months, more than 700 corpses buried in pits were discovered, the victims of paramilitary violence. The National Reparation and Reconciliation Commission revealed in August that in the two years that the Law on Justice and Peace had been in force, only 200 people had confessed to their crimes of the 2,816 that the government had required to testify before the prosecutors. All of the cases had to be examined by just 23 prosecutors. This cast doubts as to the efficacy of the mechanism set up due to a lack of human resources. On the other hand, the Supreme Court of Justice issued a ruling that denied the criminal nature of AUC members, whose leaders were divided in terms of their positions on the justice system. Also worth pointing out during the second half of the year is the continued appearance of new paramilitary structures linked to drug trafficking with around 5,000 combatants. In October, the monitoring and follow-up report on the demobilisation process of the paramilitary troops issued by the Colombian police claimed that between 2003 and that date, 737 former paramilitary troops had died in a variety of circumstances, mainly from violent acts. It was also revealed that between December 2002 and April 2007, 250 women had been murdered or had disappeared at the hands of paramilitary groups. Likewise, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) noted that the paramilitary demobilisation process was full of stumbling blocks, gaps and systematic errors. The IACHR claimed that many demobilised troops had not been members of the paramilitary structures and that they joined the demobilisation in order to benefit from the economic incentives offered by the state. Around the same time, the demobilised paramilitary troops announced in Medellín that they had set up a political party to run in the popular elections. The so-called National Movement of Demobilised Self-Defence Forces named a former head of the Bloque Cacique Nutibara faction of the AUC as its spokesman, and former congresswoman Rocío Arias as its civilian spokeswoman. In view of the vast number of people that were posing as victims (more than 82,000), the Colombian government, in turn, decided to make several adjustments in the application of the Law on Justice

and Peace. These included giving the paramilitaries a deadline to appear before the prosecutors, under penalty of losing the benefits stipulated by the law and have their trials transferred to the regular Public Prosecution Service. Plus, collective trials started to be held according to the groups into which they had been organised and acted or the crimes that they had collectively committed. At the end of the year, the government revealed that the demobilisation process of the paramilitary groups had already cost the country 227,000 million pesos, equivalent to 108 million dollars, which also included the economic aid for personal sustenance that had been given to each of their members for 18 months.

A report from the Ministry of Defence stated that in **2008 2007** members of illegal groups were individually demobilised, including 3,192 minors and 354 FARC members. The same report stated that in the past five years **14,470** individuals had been demobilised, 8,391 of whom were from FARC and 1,961 from the ELN. The remaining 3,682 came from paramilitary groups, and another 436 from other dissident groups. The report also said that 1,780 FARC guerrillas, 243 ELN guerrillas, nine from the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) and three from the EPL died as a result of clashes with the armed forces, according to military sources. Late in the year, however, doubt was cast on many of these figures when the Ministry of Defence discovered that the armed forces had tricked or retained many poor youngsters to get them to enlist in the army, and that they were later murdered by the same recruiters, passing them off as guerrillas who died in combat (the so-called "false positives") with the purpose of inflating the figures on losses in the insurgency. This episode led to the dismissal of numerous officers in the armed forces and the resignation of General Montoya, head of the Colombian army.

During the second quarter of 2008, President Uribe announced that the 170,000 private guards in Colombia would be linked to an intelligence network that the state has to deal with the guerrillas, drug trafficking and crime as part of the democratic security policy that the government was spearheading. This decision was questioned by experts in international humanitarian law and human rights because it would get private sector organisations involved in functions that are the exclusive competence of the public sector. In parallel, the crisis of what was called "parapolitics", in which numerous MPs and senators were accused of having ties with the paramilitaries, was heightened thus triggering a major institutional crisis that dovetailed with rising pressure on certain swaths of society. This intensified to such an extent that a group of independent experts from the UN asked that urgent measures be taken in order to protect the human rights defenders in Colombia after a recent wave of violence that included the murder, harassment and intimidation of activists in civil society, trade union leaders, and lawyers representing victims and indigenous peoples. The indigenous peoples organised massive demonstrations in October and November to reclaim their lands and condemn the murders of their leaders committed by the paramilitary forces. In November, the Human Rights Unit of the Public Prosecutor's Office claimed that it was investigating 780 people, the vast majority of them linked to the paramilitaries, for having recruited youngsters who were later murdered and cited by the army as guerrillas fallen in combat. In turn, the Attorney General of the Nation, Edgardo Enrique Maya, revealed that 2,300 civil servants were being investigated for illegal executions. The National Reparation and Reconciliation Commission calculated that at least 10,000 bodies of victims were buried all around the country. The government, in turn, in an unprecedented measure, dismissed 27 high ranking officers and the commander of the army, General Mario Montoya.

During the first quarter of 2008 complaints continued about the presence of the **new structures of those groups** in different parts of the country, highly linked to drugs trafficking. In view of this news, the embassies of eight countries (Sweden, Spain, Canada, Norway, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Argentina) and group of 27 institutions that work to defend human rights, such as Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, Latin America Working Group, Center for Justice and International Law and Amnesty International, expressed to the Colombian Public Defender and government their concern for and protest over the murder of ten trade unionists within the first three months of the year and the threats against people opposed to the government. In May,

there was yet another scandal when **President Uribe ordered the extradition to the USA of 15 paramilitary chiefs who were being held in Colombian prisons** and protected by the Law on Justice and Peace. The President declared that the decision was motivated by four reasons: they had not revealed the entire truth; they had not turned in their assets to be used for victim reparations; they had continued to commit crimes from prison; and they had lied and committed defamation. These extraditions caused serious consternation among the victims insofar as they could have meant an end to the already-slow process of revealing the crimes committed by the AUC. In the third quarter, the latest OAS report on the demobilisation of these groups pointed out that according to police information, **819 demobilised paramilitaries had been murdered** and that the murders were related to the conflicts over territorial control, disputes among combatants and their refusal to rejoin other paramilitary groups. The report highlighted the fact that its greatest concern lay in the fact that the state had not defined the legal status of the demobilised guerrillas, which generated legal uncertainty and became a stimulus for many of them to take up arms once again. The head of the OAS Peace Process Support Mission, Sergio Caramagna, who had accompanied the demobilisation process of the paramilitaries, claimed that his office had recorded that **140,000 people had been recognised as victims of the crimes of the paramilitaries**, which demonstrated both the dimension of the conflict and the importance of the demobilisation process, as these people had to be compensated and have their rights recognised as set forth in the Law on Justice and Peace and the national constitution.

The peace process in 2009

Early in the year, the **High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo**, submitted his **irrevocable resignation** after President Uribe did not heed his decision to hinder media access to the places where the hostages were to be transported after being turned over to the humanitarian commission. Nevertheless, Luis Carlos Restrepo stated that he would remain involved in politics to join the partisan groups behind President Uribe. Restrepo was replaced by Frank Pearl, who served as the High Councillor for Reintegration and took on both jobs. In mid-February, the US ambassador in Bogota, William Brownfield, made a surprise statement that his country's government would be willing to listen to any proposal that contributes to the quest for a solution to the conflict in Colombia and to study the legal status of the FARC prisoners imprisoned in his country. Likewise, Senator Piedad Córdoba and personalities belonging to the Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz (CCP) met to define the terms of the third letter to the FARC and the first to the ELN. In this regard, one of its members stated that they would insist that the FARC discontinue kidnapping as a practice and foster behaviours that respect the civilian population as long as the military confrontation lasts, and that they would insist that the ELN resume negotiations with the government in order to draw up a "baseline agreement". These negotiations had been interrupted in October 2007. At the start of the National Assembly of Bishops, the President of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia, Monsignor Rubén Salazar, said that if there were shared interests among the parties, government and guerrillas, the Church could contribute to creating an atmosphere that would facilitate dialogue and agreement, and he claimed that "the solution to the conflict is negotiated, not military".

In late February, sources from the **Democratic party in the US Congress** revealed that the **financing for the 2009 Colombia Plan would remain at 545 million dollars**, but that its internal distribution would change, **prioritising aid for social programmes and reintegration programmes for former combatants**. Furthermore, the new text of the Colombia Plan boosted the conditionality of the aid and asked the State Department to regularly report to Congress on the human rights situation in Colombia and to track the demobilisation of the paramilitary networks, claiming that the government was cutting off its ties to them. In March, the final report from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued after the Annual Voluntary Exam to which the Colombian government is subjected, **deemed the results of the enforcement of the Law on Justice and Peace to be deficient, mainly in the issue of reparation for victims**. It also stated that the measures taken by the government to combat illegal executions had not significantly curtailed this practice. The report further pointed out the indigenous communities' and Afro-Colombian

groups' defencelessness before the violent actions of the actors in the armed conflict, who murdered their members and expelled them from their lands. In March, in an open letter to the FARC guerrillas, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, CRIC, suggested an epistolary dialogue with this insurgent organisation in which it questioned its aggressive, violent conduct against the indigenous communities in southern Nariño. They vehemently stated that their communities are not participating in the armed conflict and that they do not support any armed actor. They also demanded that their lands not be used as the stage of war and asked the FARC to take responsibility for the murder of the eight indigenous people from the Awá ethnic group, whose authorship FARC had acknowledged. The Attorney General of the nation, Mario Iguarán, revealed in April that the **Attorney General's office was investigating 22,000 cases of forced disappearances in Colombia** that have taken place in the past four decades. This senior official labelled this practice genocide and claimed that only 1,040 disappeared persons have been found to date. The OAS, in turn, appointed the Argentine lawyer Marcelo Álvarez as the new head of the Colombian Peace Support Mission with the paramilitary to replace Sergio Caramagna. The País Libre Foundation asked the government for transparency when handling the figures on kidnappings in Colombia, as in this NGO's records only 326 people appear as still kidnapped by the FARC and another 240 in the ELN's hands, while the government was citing figures of 2,801 people kidnapped since 2006. The report from the Human Rights Unit of the Attorney General's Office revealed that 426 soldiers had been arrested for illegal executions as part of the scandal surrounding the armed forces over the so-called "false positives". There is a total of 1,009 trials opened involving 1,666 soldiers. In mid-June, the Colombia office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed its profound concern about the interception of communications from judges, lawyers, political leaders and trade unionists and journalists by Colombian intelligence organisations. Philip Alston, the UN's Special Rapporteur on summary and illegal executions, ended a trip to Colombia with a call for the army to acknowledge the gravity of the "false positives" situation. The rapporteur stated that the murders of civilians were driven by the government's policy of rewarding soldiers for more effectively fighting the insurgent groups, and he asked for an immediate suspension of this kind of incentive.

In early September, President Álvaro Uribe received support from the majority in Parliament for his plans to hold a referendum on his possible re-election for a third mandate. At the UNASUR summit in Bariloche (Chile), the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, proposed that a regional group be created to manage the peace initiative for Colombia. This proposal was seconded by the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa. On another note, the most recent report by the Justice and Peace Unit in the Attorney General's Office claimed that the paramilitaries had confessed to having murdered 21,000 people in the past 22 years. The latest report from the Attorney General's Office, published in October, stated that the practice of "false positives", the name used for soldiers' practice of murdering civilians and then presenting them as guerrillas who died in combat, had reached the alarming figure of 2,077 murdered Colombians to date, including 59 minors and 122 women. Based on these facts, the Attorney General opened up investigations into 2,965 army members. Finally, with regard to the events affecting the country as a whole, there were rising tensions between Colombia and Venezuela in the second half of the year. During the second half of November, the diplomatic conflict between the two countries was aggravated by the signing of an agreement to set up US military bases on Colombian soil, and this took place in the midst of strong disqualifying language between both governments and appeals to multilateral organisations and calls for the international community to recognise the arguments wielded by both parties to the conflict.

With regard to the FARC, in early February Alfonso Cano, the top leader of this guerrilla organisation, stated that his movement wished to engage in talks with the current government, as long as the guarantees needed for its spokespeople were granted, and he reiterated the Bolivarian platform for a new government, contained in 11 points or demands. The government, in turn, announced that it would strengthen the dissuasive power of its armed forces on the border with Colombia in view of the incursions into its soil by the FARC guerrillas and even members of the Colombian military. In parallel, and in the midst of major controversy and difficulties, **six of the**

FARC hostages were released with the logistical support of Brazil, the aid of Senator Piedad Córdoba and a group from the Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz, as well as under the responsibility of the International Committee for the Red Cross. **In early April**, President Álvaro Uribe suggested that the FARC cease its armed activities for a three- or four-month period as a precondition for starting peace talks. The government had previously announced its new strategy of annihilating the guerrillas which was described as a qualitative leap in the fight against the armed groups. Uribe had earlier discarded all possibilities of dialogue or negotiation for the humanitarian exchange of prisoners. In a letter addressed to Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz (CCP), the Secretariat of the FARC rejected President Uribe's position while it also stressed that any step taken towards peace required bilaterality. In the same letter, the FARC pledged to unilaterally release the Police Sergeant Pablo Emilio Moncayo in acknowledgement of the efforts of the CCP and Professor Moncayo, as well as in response to the request and interest shown by Presidents Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa. The Secretariat of the FARC expressed its regret for the death of eight members of the Awá indigenous group by its combatants in a communiqué addressed to the Awá, Unipa, Canawari and Acipap indigenous communities. The FARC also expressed its willingness to talk, and to do so it appointed three commandants with the mission of "speaking with you (the Awá) until we find a scenario of mutual respect and understanding that closes the doors to any expression of violence in our relationship". Gabriel Bisbicuz, the leader of Unity of Indigenous Awá People (UNIPA), stated that he was willing to talk and declared that he was waiting for the government's authorisation to begin these talks, as he regarded them as an indispensable step that should be postponed no longer. In late May, a member of the Secretariat of the FARC, Timoleón Jiménez, in an article entitled "Las FARC no callan" (The FARC Will Not Remain Silent), claimed that the FARC was fully committed to the quest for a political solution to the social and armed conflict, because the organisation had decided on this stance and because **they were convinced that the solution to the conflict in Colombia should not come from military confrontation**. He also said that a favourable atmosphere was needed for peace through negotiations to thrive, while he asked the media and government not to criminalise the peace efforts underway by major sectors of society like the CCP and other citizen initiatives. In early July, President Álvaro Uribe modified his decision to not allow Senator Piedad Córdoba to act in the release of Police Sergeant Pablo Emilio Moncayo and the soldier Josué Daniel Calvo. Instead, he authorised her to accompany the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Catholic Church, and to make arrangements for the simultaneous release of all the prisoners with the backing of the armed forces. At first, this declaration aroused major questions because it left Moncayo's and Calvo's release in limbo and failed to say whether the government would release FARC prisoners. However, these declarations were later fleshed out by the Minister of the Interior, who was acting on behalf of the President in his absence, by stating that the releases could take place in several sessions, albeit within a defined timeframe. In mid-September, the government reiterated its position in very similar terms. Days earlier, in an open letter to UNASUR and the ALBA countries, the FARC stressed the complex nature of the Colombian conflict, which was not just military but also political, economic and social, and they argued that they were a belligerent force and asked these two integration organisations to be recognised as such. They also expressed their willingness for the armed conflict to be resolved through dialogue and negotiations, for which they proposed returning to the agenda that was being discussed in Caguán. They deemed that the exchange of prisoners was the pathway to be taken in order to arrive at peace talks, while they also **asked UNASUR and ALBA to include a political solution to the Colombian conflict on their agendas**, as an ongoing concern of the Latin American countries. The FARC reiterated that the solution to the issue of drug trafficking entailed the nations' discussing and agreeing to legalise drug consumption in a large assembly, just as happened in the past with alcohol and tobacco. Finally, they also expressed their willingness to appoint a delegation of its members, if UNASUR and ALBA deemed it appropriate, to directly set forth its points of view and proposals for overcoming the Colombian conflict.

With regard to the stalemated process with the ELN guerrillas, in early May, in a letter of response addressed to Colombianos y Colombianas por la Paz (CCP), the Central Command of this group stated that there would be no vetoed issues within a possible dialogue and negotiation

process, and it stressed its willingness for the issues of kidnapping, forced disappearances and political prisoners to be dealt with at the table. The letter stressed that all sectors of society should play a key role when devising the contents of the political solution. Finally, it warned that they would accept no preconditions, in a direct allusion to the ones imposed by the former Higher Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, who demanded that the ELN combatants and militants be concentrated and identified for there to be a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. In late May, the first commandant of the ELN, Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista, expressed his willingness to put an immediate end to the serious armed clashes between both organisations in some regions of the country in a letter addressed to his FARC counterpart, Alfonso Cano. In early September, in a letter sent to Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa, who held the presidency of UNASUR, the Central Command of the ELN asked this regional integration organisation to lend a hand in a process to solve the internal conflict in Colombia. The letter declared the ELN's desire for peace and political and diplomatic handling of the conflicts, and it further stated that the political solution to the conflict in Colombia entailed a solution to the conflicts underway in Venezuela and Ecuador as well.

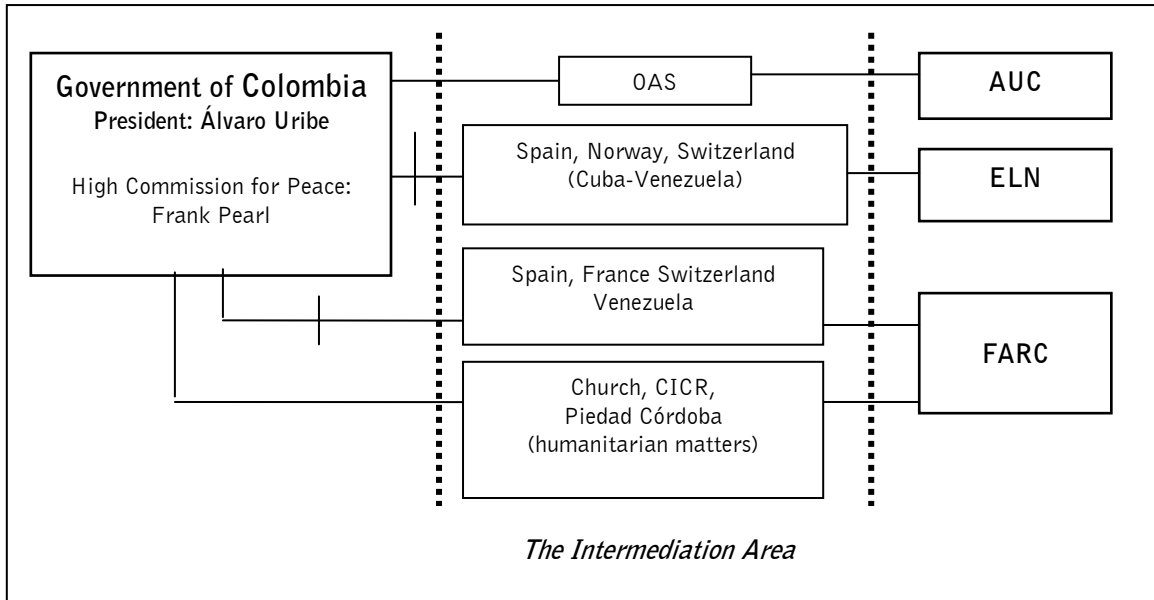
The most important events of the year

- The High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, submitted his irrevocable resignation and was replaced by Frank Pearl, who served as the High Councillor for Reintegration and took on both jobs.
- The final report from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued after the Annual Voluntary Exam to which the Colombian government is subjected, deemed the results of the enforcement of the Law on Justice and Peace to be deficient, mainly in the issue of reparation for victims.
- There were rising tensions between Colombia and Venezuela in the second half of the year based on an agreement between the United States and Colombia for the use of seven military bases.
- Alfonso Cano, the top leader of the guerrilla organisation FARC, stated that his movement wished to engage in talks with the current government, as long as the guarantees needed for its spokespeople were granted, and he reiterated the Bolivarian platform for a new government, which contained in 11 points or demands. President Álvaro Uribe suggested that the FARC cease its armed activities for a three- or four-month period as a precondition for starting peace talks.
- FARC asked UNASUR and ALBA to include a political solution to the Colombian conflict on their agendas.
- The ELN guerrilla group noted its willingness for the issues of kidnapping, forced disappearances and political prisoners to be dealt with at the table, and in a letter sent to Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa, who held the presidency of UNASUR, they asked this regional integration organisation to lend a hand in a process to solve the internal conflict in Colombia.

Websites of interest

- High Commissioner for Peace (www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co)
- House of Peace (www.casadepaz.org)
- Colombia Libre (AUC) (www.colombialibre.org)
- El Colombiano (www.elcolombiano.terra.com.co/pd.asp)
- El Espectador (www.elespectador.com)
- El Nuevo Siglo (www.elnuevosiglo.com.co)
- El Tiempo (eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/noticias/index.htm)
- ELN (www.eln-voces.com)
- FARC (www.anncol.nu)

- Fundación Ideas para la Paz (www.ideaspaz.org)
- Indepaz (www.indepaz.org.co)
- UNDP (www.undp.org.co)
- Semana magazine (www.semana.com)



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 it became a republic. A few years later, a Communist government came to power that had to engage in fighting with an Islamic guerrilla group, leading to intervention by 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 through 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 ended up wresting control of the country, which they kept 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 held the presidency of the country. Between 1992 and 1996, the different 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 still remains as refugees in other countries.

Population: (26,400,000 people in 2007)
Area: 652,000 km²
HID: 181 (of 182))
GDP: 8,100 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: (\$300)
Deaths due to the conflict: 100,000 civilians since 1990
Displaced persons: + 1,000,000
Refugees: + 6 million
Armed actors: Taliban, al-Qaeda, occupied forces (50.000)
Facilitators: UNAMA, National Reconciliation Committee, Jirgagai, ISAF, ANBP, EUPOL, Saudi Arabia, Turkey

Background to the peace process

In May 1988, the United Nations created the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP), whose mandate came to an end in March 1990. Its mission included supervising the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. As a result of the Bonn Agreement signed in December 2001, the Interim Authority was created. The process started in Bonn in 2001 culminated in September with elections for the National Assembly (Wolesi Jirga) and the provincial councils. Nevertheless, as Amnesty International pointed out at the time, many of the candidates running in the elections – which were tarnished by a climate of intimidation prior to the voting – were factional chiefs, many of whom had been accused of committing human rights abuses, which led to widespread consternation among the citizens. Women were guaranteed at least one-fourth of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga, yet they nonetheless came upon social and administrative barriers. The low voter turnout, especially in Kabul, cast doubts on the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Since then, NATO has kept a military mission called the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, made up of 41,000 troops from 38 countries, 15,000 of whom are American, with a United Nations mandate. In March 2002, as the result of a Security Council resolution, the UN 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. It has 1,000 civil servants, most of them Afghans, and since February 2006 it has been led by Tom Koenigs, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. In April 2003, the UNDP created a programme to disarm and demobilise the combatants, called the

ANBP, which came to an end in 2006 with the demobilisation of 63,000 militia members and 53,000 weapons gathered. This programme now focuses on dismantling the remaining illegal armed groups and destroying mines. In early 2006, the Afghan government approved an Action Plan for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation.

In early February, the Wolesi Jirga, as Afghanistan's lower chamber is called, approved a **draft amnesty law** for all the combatants who had participated in the 25 years of conflict, including Mullah Omar, the highest Taliban authority. This amnesty also extended to people accused of war crimes, such as the former Mujahideens (Afghan resistance) who fought against the Soviets in the 1980s, some of whom now held government posts. The measure was harshly criticised by human rights groups in the country, as they believed that it contravened the constitution and left the victims of the conflict with no recourse. **In September**, the Taliban claimed that they were willing to begin negotiations with the Afghan government after president Hamid Karzai made a proposal to negotiate. Nevertheless, a Taliban spokesman stated that before formal negotiations could get underway, the government had to agree to withdraw the international troops present on Afghan soil, adding that the imposition of Islamic law is a requirement. The head of the UNAMA, Tom Koenigs, indicated that the UN was in favour of promoting dialogue with the tribes that wished to reach an agreement with the Afghan government. In early October, president Hamid Karzai stated that his government was ready to negotiate with the Taliban and its leaders such as Mullah Omar, but he stated that the foreign troops would not be withdrawn from the country until the post-war rehabilitation process had come to an end. Karzai noted that **contacts with the Taliban had got underway through the National Reconciliation Commission**, the security forces and the tribal and religious authorities, but that the process was not yet formal for the time being. Nevertheless, a committee from the joint commission for peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan met in early November to put the finishing touches on the negotiation agenda with the Taliban. The committee is made up of 50 people, 25 from each country, and it met separately with the Taliban from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The committee, also known as the **Jirgagai** (or little Jirga), will be charged with spurring on the negotiations with the Taliban.

In March, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his latest report on the situation in the country, claimed that two years after the approval of the Pact for Afghanistan, the country's political transition was still facing serious problems. It pointed out that the **Taliban and related groups, along with the drug economy, posed fundamental threats to the political, economic and social institutions of the country, which were still fragile**. In addition, several humanitarian agencies stated that the peace in the country was being jeopardised by the international community's failure to provide the assistance it had pledged. The government depends 90% on international aid, which is mainly earmarked for the military to the detriment of humanitarian aid and development. **In early October**, President Hamid Karzai revealed that he had asked Saudi Arabia to facilitate peace negotiations with the Taliban leaders, and he revealed that his envoys had travelled to that country and to Pakistan to initiate those talks. **Representatives of Afghanistan and Pakistan met in late October in a mini-jirga** (traditional assembly) and agreed to hold talks with the insurgencies from their respective countries if they agreed to abide by the constitutions of each country. Additionally, the initial condition was set that the Taliban would renounce violence. Several analysts pointed to the importance of this declaration, which could give rise to peace talks. However, the Taliban discredited this jirga, which they claimed had been held under the auspices of the USA. Late in the year, Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban insurgency, stated that increased US troops in the country would lead to further deaths and injuries in the foreign ranks. The Taliban leader also rejected any possibility of dialogue with President Hamid Karzai for as long as the US troops remained in the country, and he issued an appeal to boycott the elections scheduled for the following year. In December, Turkey hosted the second trilateral summit to facilitate the dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan and to promote peace in the region. The Presidents of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, and Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, met in Istanbul.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, the head of Saudi Arabia's intelligence services, Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, met with representatives of the Afghan government in what might be an attempt at mediation between the Taliban insurgents and the Afghan authorities. The Saudi representative met with the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, and members of his cabinet, as well as with leaders of the political opposition. However, President Hamid Karzai claimed that negotiations with the Taliban could only take place via the government, after the appearance of reports claiming that Danish soldiers had held talks with local leaders, with Taliban representatives also present. Weeks later, the United States President's Special Envoy, Richard Holbrooke, claimed that winning the war in Afghanistan would be much harder than winning the war in Iraq, and he announced a **change in the US's policy towards Afghanistan**. Holbrooke met with President Hamid Karzai in Germany. The US hoped that the total number of US troops stationed in the country would be 66,000 after President Barack Obama approved the deployment of an addition 17,000 soldiers. Holbrooke claimed that only 5% of the Taliban militants in Afghanistan belonged to the most hard-line faction of the movement, and that the rest might be persuaded to put down their weapons. Holbrooke also stated that approximately 25% were frustrated with the government's policy, and that 70% had joined the militias solely in exchange for money and weapons. Despite this, **the US envoy stated that negotiations with the hardcore of the Taliban were out of the question**, and he also expressed his opposition to the agreements recently reached with the Pakistani Taliban insurgency. In March, the Taliban spokesperson, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, denied reports stating that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, had given the green light to the start of peace talks. Ahmadi claimed that the talks would not take place as long as foreign troops remained in the country. In turn, the President of the US, **Barack Obama, stated that reconciliation with the Taliban could be an important initiative in an armed conflict in which a US military victory was unlikely**. The coordinator of the gender and justice unit of UNIFEM, Najia Zewari, called for the participation of Afghan women in the negotiations with the Taliban. Zewari expressed her concern with the fact that for now it was uncertain whether women could participate in these negotiations and whether gender issues would be on the agenda. In April, a spokesperson for the Afghan government stated that **progress was being made in the talks with the Taliban** to put an end to the conflict, while it had also made a pledge to its international allies to remove the names of some combatants from the list of people being sought for arrest warrants. In late August, General Stanley McChrystal, at the head of the international and US forces stationed in the country, stressed the need for a new military strategy in the country in view of the failure of the current strategy. McChrystal described the situation in Afghanistan as grave and stated that the priority should be to protect the people, not to fight against the Taliban insurgents.

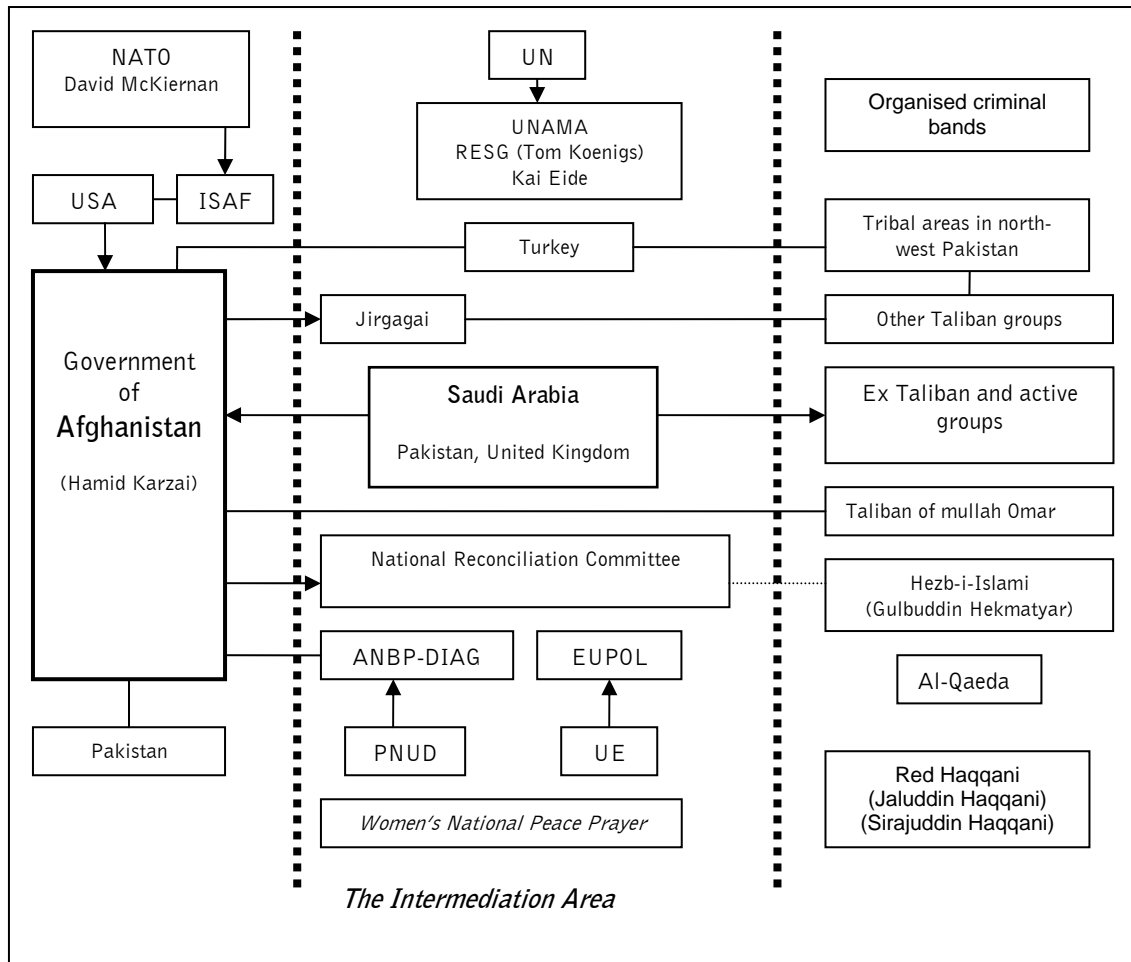
In mid-October, the United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, claimed that the government was examining the possibility of approaching the Taliban as part of a new strategy for the country. Shortly thereafter, Hamid Karzai was proclaimed the winner of the presidential elections by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) after his rival Abdullah Abdullah withdrew from the second round of voting. Abdullah alleged that the IEC, which he blamed for fraud in the first round, remained intact, thus cancelling out any guarantees for the second round to be held without fraud. In the second half of November, the US special representative for Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, confirmed that Saudi Arabia had started a dialogue process with the Taliban and stated that the US would support any Saudi initiative. According to the Saudi press, the US ambassador to Afghanistan, **General Karl Eikenberry, had held talks with the former Taliban Foreign Minister, Mulla Mutawakil, in Kabul**. Eikenberry had offered to recognise the Taliban government in several provinces – Helmand, Kandahar, Arakzan, Kunar and Nuristan – in exchange for a cessation of the Taliban's attacks on the US armed forces in the country. Mutawakil promised to forward this proposal to Mullah Omar. Pakistan and the United Kingdom were to take part in the negotiations with the Taliban as well, although for the time being they were being held with mid-level Taliban leaders, not with the senior leaders.

The most important events of the year

- The head of Saudi Arabia's intelligence services, Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, met with representatives of the Afghan government in what might be an attempt at mediation between the Taliban insurgents and the Afghan authorities. Later, the US special representative for Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, confirmed that Saudi Arabia had started a dialogue process with the Taliban and stated that the US would support any Saudi initiative.
- The President of the US, Barack Obama, stated that reconciliation with the Taliban could be an important initiative in an armed conflict in which a US military victory was unlikely.
- General Karl Eikenberry had held talks with the former Taliban Foreign Minister, Mulla Mutawakil, in Kabul. Eikenberry had offered to recognise the Taliban government in several provinces – Helmand, Kandahar, Arakzan, Kunar and Nuristan – in exchange for a cessation of the Taliban's attacks on the US armed forces in the country.

Websites of interest

- Afghanistan New Beginning Programme (www.undpanbp.org)
- BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/spanish/especiales/afganistan_despues_taliban)
- ISAF (nids.hq.nato.int/isaf/index.html)
- Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre (www.peacebuilding.no)
- UNDP (www.undp.org/afghanistan)
- Presidency of the Republic (www.president.gov.af)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- UNAMA (www.unama-afg.org)
- UNGOMAP (www.un.org/spanish/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/ungomap/index.html)
- Women Watch (www.un.org/womenwatch/afghanistan)



INDIA

With 1,100 million inhabitants, an area measuring 3.2 million square kilometres and a GDP of 805,000 million dollars, India is a true mosaic in terms of its cultures and political traditions. This is captured in the numerous regions inhabited by peoples with aspirations of reunification and self-government, which is the motive for armed conflicts in several of them. In this section, we shall discuss the processes that have emerged in the regions of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura, leaving the dispute with Pakistan over the Kashmir region for later.

a) Assam

Context of the conflict

Assam is a region in northeast India. Many immigrants from Bangladesh have arrived in this region. This immigration has brought about the formation of several nationalist groups that want 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. For talks with the Government, the ULFA requested negotiations abroad in the presence of UN observers. Carried out attacks against petroleum interests and has training bases in Bangladesh.

Population: 32 million inhabitants
Area: 78,400 K km²
HDI (India): 134 (of 182)
GDP (India): 1,071,000 million dollars
Per capita income (India): \$950
Armed actors: ULFA, NDFB, India
Mujahideen
Facilitators:
ULFA: R. Goswani, People's Consultative Group, PCPIA
NDFB: *All Bodo Peace Forum*

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

The peace process during 2007

In 1993, attempts were made to find a solution to the demands of the Bodo people. An agreement was signed with moderate Bodo groups to create a Bodoland Autonomous Council. However, this agreement was not supported by the NDFB, which did not begin further exploratory talks with the government until 2002. In any event, in **2003**, an agreement was signed that brought an end to eleven years of confrontations between the BLTF-BLT group (Bodo Liberation Tigers) and the government. In addition, in **2003**, the government signed a ceasefire agreement with the group **DHD**, which had been founded in 1995 to fight for the independence of the Dimas people. The government and the DHD formed a Joint Monitoring Group to ensure that the agreement was upheld.

The **ULFA** opposed the 2003 agreement between the BLT and the government. However, in mid-2004, they established relations with the government, to open up the way for future negotiations. In 2005, several attempts were made to establish formal talks with the ULFA, though fighting between the group and government armed forces continued. In February the facilitator for this process, the writer R. Goswami, went to the Government to ask them to withdraw the pre-

conditions established in the ULFA to renounce violence before beginning talks. Days later, the government made a new offer of talks. This time the ULFA accepted, on the condition that the issue of sovereignty be discussed. The government refused. In September, **the ULFA announced the appointment of a delegation of eleven trusted citizens, called the People's Consultative Group (PCG)** to maintain contacts with the Indian government. The writer R. Goswami and former footballer R. Phukan were to act as facilitators. This Consultative Group promised to consult civil society and submit its conclusions to the government. Through the PCG, the ULFA presented the government with six demands for negotiations. Most of them were accepted, with the exception of the request for independence for Assam.

The first round of negotiations through the PCG was held on 25th October 2005. It was marred by a military offensive by the armed forces which led to the death of five ULFA leaders. On the demand of the group, the Indian Prime Minister, M. Singh promised to suspend armed operations against the ULFA and the Prime Minister of Assam, T. Gogoi, indicated at the end of the year that he was committed to guarantee the safety of the ULFA delegation participating in negotiations, and that these could take place anywhere. On 7th February 2006, the second round of negotiations with the ULFA was held through the People's Consultative Group (PCG). Three issues were discussed: the suspension of military operations, the release of the arrested leaders and information on the ULFA troops captured in 2003. Both parties agreed to hold a **new round before beginning direct talks between the government and the ULFA leaders**. The ULFA, however, expressed its willingness to negotiate under the auspices of the United Nations, while the PCG conditioned its presence in the forthcoming rounds of negotiations to the suspension of military activities in the region. In August, the Indian government claimed that it would not release the five members of the ULFA central committee right away as it had to follow the due legal procedures, and the decision could only be taken by a tribunal. Nevertheless, the executive branch of the government did express its satisfaction with the appeal to containment that the ULFA issued to its militants and the end of violence in response to the suspension of Indian military operations in the region, in the hopes that this new situation would foster a lasting solution to the conflict. It is also worth pointing out that the existent truce was the first one that encompassed the entire armed opposition group ULFA in its 27 years of existence. Despite the intensification of military operations against the ULFA, in the second half of the year the writer and facilitator of the group, M. Raisom Goswami, once again expressed her desire for the peace process to restart through a new forum headed by her, which would be called Nagarik Shanti Manch – NSMA (Citizens' Peace Forum, Assam). In June, **the government agreed to restart the peace talks with the ULFA** under several conditions. The government would not release the five leaders of the armed group who were imprisoned, but it would facilitate encounters with them if it were necessary for the negotiations, guaranteeing a safe corridor. In early October, **the ULFA stated that it would sit down to talk with the government within 48 hours after it expressed its willingness to discuss the issue of Assam's sovereignty**. A high command from the armed forces stated that they were not against a peace process with the ULFA, and that they agreed that negotiations be held with the leaders of the armed group without preconditions. The armed forces also stated that they would suspend operations against the ULFA if it sat down at the negotiating table with the government without imposing any conditions. In November, the executive stated that negotiations would only be possible if the ULFA leader, Paresh Baruah, participated in the talks. Nevertheless, the government also announced that the military operations against the armed group would continue until the ULFA gave up violence. Likewise, the government also announced that it would pay additional compensation to the family members of ULFA victims.

In early January, the executive stated that it would not accept any precondition for starting negotiations with the armed opposition group **ULFA**. Despite this, the government indicated that the doors were open to a new peace process, but that it would have to be the ULFA themselves who approached the government, thus setting aside the formula of negotiations through a third party (in the past, the Popular Consultative Group, made up of representatives of civil society appointed by the ULFA, had served this purpose). In October, **the government stated that it had received no formal proposal for direct negotiations from ULFA** and claimed that since the end of three rounds

of negotiations with the representatives named by the armed group in 2006, it had received no new proposals from ULFA.

With regard to the other process the government is involved in with the armed opposition group DHD, **the government extended the** ceasefire agreement for another six months, even though it also accused the DHD of violating it. The agreement was announced after a tripartite encounter between the central Indian government, the government of the state of Assam and the armed group, and it included the suspension of military operations. During the third quarter, the government and the **DHD (N)** agreed to extend the ceasefire agreement for another six months, as well as to hold a subsequent meeting in July in order to address political issues. Likewise, the armed opposition group DHD (J) or Black Widow (a splinter from the DHD) unilaterally declared a ceasefire and forwarded the government a list of requests, expressing its willingness to hold peace negotiations. However, the government refused to dialogue with this group as long as it continued to rearm, as in November it had resumed its armed activities, which were only interrupted by the unilateral ceasefire declaration. Therefore, this group is expected to be outlawed soon.

On another front, during the second half of the year the Indian government issued an ultimatum to the armed opposition group **NDFB** asking that it draft a document stating its demands in order to begin formal peace negotiations, a year and a half after signing the ceasefire agreement. However, no headway had been made by the end of the year with the exception of a six-month extension of the ceasefire. This agreement, which ended 18 years of violence, was valid for a period of one year and established the creation of a joint supervision group for the ceasefire. The NDFB announced in September 2005 that it would carry out a consultation with the civilian population before finalising its list of demands to the Indian Government for formal peace negotiations, without withdrawing their demand for the liberation of Bodoland territory. In 2006 representatives of the group indicated that they had not submitted any document of proposals because **they were waiting to receive a formal invitation from the Government to start negotiations**. During the third quarter of the year, the NDFB denied that it was going to form a political party and indicated that it was centring all its efforts on the peace process with the Government. The NDFB demonstrated that the meetings that it had held with different political parties addressed only the intention to establish contacts to find a political solution to the Bodo conflict and obtain support for the peace process. In December demonstrations organised by the All Bodo Peace Forum took place to demand the resumption of peace talks. This group had already been involved in achieving the 2005 ceasefire. In the second quarter of 2007 the Indian Government issued an ultimatum to the **NDFB** to draw up a document with its demands to begin formal peace negotiations a year and a half after signing the ceasefire agreement, without any progress being made at the end of the year, with the exception of prolonging the ceasefire for a further six months. **With regard to the NDFB, in October this group sent the government a document listing its demands**, which could enable negotiations to be resumed in an effort to resolve the violations of the ceasefire that had been reached two years earlier. However, in late November, the government stated that it might review the ceasefire agreement because the NDFB was purportedly involved in several attacks.

Another armed group operating in Assam, the **KLNF**, claimed in December that **it was willing to hold peace negotiations with the government if it stopped military operations against them**. These declarations took place after several of its main encampments in the Karbi Anglong district had been destroyed. Finally, at the end of the year, the University of Guwahati held a gathering with the participation of organisations from civil society and representatives of armed organisations that had ceasefire agreements, including the leaders of battalion 28 of the ULFA, and representatives of the DHD. The participants in the gathering stressed the need to create a body able to facilitate the peace process in the entire northeast region of India.

The peace process in 2009

In early January, the Alpha and Charlie companies of the 28th battalion of the ULFA, which had announced a unilateral ceasefire in June, created a **new organisation that they called ULFA Pro-Talks** headed by Mrinal Hazarika. They also announced that they were giving up their demands for sovereignty and independence and would work instead to achieve greater autonomy for the state of Assam. Nonetheless, this faction stated that the government's demand that it turn in its weapons as an indispensable condition for holding peace negotiations was unacceptable, and it threatened to resume its armed activities if talks did not start. Despite this, the government initially announced that it would reinforce its operations against this armed group and discarded any rapprochement for the time being. Just a few days later, however, the **government announced harsher conditions for the armed groups with which it had ceasefire agreements**, which had to set up encampments where their members could be cantoned. The government also stated that the ULFA faction in favour of negotiations had resubmitted its request to hold talks with the government and was in favour of accepting an agreement within the framework of the constitution. In February, a leader of the ULFA Pro-Talks faction, Mrinal Hazarika, claimed that this armed group had close ties with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi intelligence services. Likewise, a manifesto suggested that a dual citizenship mechanism be established for everyone living inside Assam prior to the British "indigenous" colonisation and for those who had emigrated to different regions of India and held the status of "ethnic" citizens. The term "Assamese" would be used to classify both collectives. The group stressed the need to create an upper chamber in the state parliament where all the permanently settled groups could be represented, including the Bengalis, Biharis, Marwaris, Punjabis and Nepalese.

In the second half of November, **ULFA gave the green light to peace negotiations**, as reported by Mukul Mahanta, member of the People's Consultative Group (PCG) appointed by ULFA to facilitate talks with the government. Arvind Rajkhowa, the president of ULFA, sent an email stating his desire to start peace talks. The announcement took place parallel to the declarations of the People's Committee for Peace Initiatives in Assam (PCPIA), which includes almost 30 organisations from Assam, which had recently stated that the government should promote peace talks with ULFA, taking advantage of the circumstance that several members of the armed group's central committee were imprisoned or under police care. The coordinator of the PCPIA, Lachit Bordoloi, who is also a member of the PCG, met with representatives of the government in Delhi. Likewise, the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that if the ULFA leaders wanted to hold peace talks without any preconditions, they had to guarantee the safety of Arvind Rajkhowa. Nevertheless, the Minister of the Interior for the central government, Palaniappan Chidambaram, stated that the negotiations with ULFA would lead nowhere, since the main leaders of the armed group – Paresh Barua, Arvind Rajkhowa and Raju Barua – were outside the country. ULFA, in turn, criticised the government's lack of desire to negotiate on the issue of sovereignty.

With regard to the negotiations with the **NDFB**, in early January the government announced an **extension of the ceasefire agreement** for another six months. This announcement came after the armed group removed its leader, Ranjan Daimary, and expelled him from the organisation in view of his refusal to accept his removal. This took place before the accusations that Daimary was involved in the wave of attacks that took place in Assam in October. The NDFB stated that the entire group should not be blamed for the actions of a few. However, the government stated that the agreement would be suspended immediately if the ceasefire was violated. In May, the NDFB asked the Supreme Court of Guwahati to withdraw the illegalisation that weighed heavily on the organisation, given that it had accepted the Indian constitution. The group's Secretary-General, Gobinda Basumary, submitted this request to the high court and stressed that the armed group had been upholding a ceasefire agreement since May 2005, and that its members were living in the encampments designated for cantonment. In late May, however, six members of the NDFB died in a clash with the armed forces in the district of Karbi Anglong during a military operation. Later, five civilians – one member of the Congress Party and four family members – were shot to death by NDFB insurgents in the same district.

Likewise, the ceasefire agreement with the armed opposition group DHD(N) was also extended for another year after the negotiations held by representatives of the central and state government and the insurgent group. The DHD(N) expressed its satisfaction with the results of this meeting. In mid-September, the armed opposition group DHD-J, also known as Black Widow, started a process of surrender and turned in its weapons in the wake of the latest ultimatum issued by the government, which stated that it must turn in its weapons by the 15th of September under the threat of a large-scale military operation. The 350 members of the armed group were to be transferred to cantonment areas. In the first nine months of the year, around 100 people died as a result of violence waged by this armed group, which had split off from the DHD in 2003. The negotiations got underway in August after the government rejected a ceasefire proposal from the armed group and demanded that it turn over its weapons. In late October, the Minister of the Interior, P. Chidambaram, stated that talks would be held with the armed opposition group DHD-J as a result of its having turned in its weapons. The central government appointed the former Director of the Intelligence Bureau, P. C. Haldar, as the interlocutor for the talks with the DHD-J, as well as with the armed groups UPDS and the pro-talks faction of the NDFB. During the second half of November, the government set a one-year deadline to reach agreements with the armed groups with which it had agreed to ceasefires, namely the DHD(J), UPDS and NDFB (pro-talks faction). The interlocutor appointed by the government, P.C. Haldar, would hold negotiations with all three groups. The government stated that it did not want to see a repetition of previous situations in which the negotiations extended over several years. All three organisations submitted their documents with their respective demands.

Most significant events in the year in Assam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government announced harsher conditions for the armed groups with which it had ceasefire agreements, which had to set up encampments where their members could be cantoned. • The armed opposition group DHD-J, also known as Black Widow, started a process of surrender and turned in its weapons. • ULFA gave the green light to peace negotiations. • The government set a one-year deadline to reach agreements with the armed groups with which it had agreed to ceasefires, namely the DHD(J), UPDS and NDFB (pro-talks faction).

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 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
HDI (India): 134 (of 182)
GDP (India): 1,071,000 million dollars
Per capita income (India): \$950
Deaths due to the conflict: 20,000
Armed actors: NSCN (IM)
Facilitators: Kredha (Netherlands), Prime Minister of Mizoram, Thailand

Background to the peace process

El NSCN (IM) declared a **ceasefire** in 1997, which is still in effect today. In 2003, negotiations were held between the government and this group in Thailand and the capital of India. In 2004, talks were held in Thailand with the prime minister of the state of Mizoram acting as facilitator. A meeting was also held in Amsterdam to decide on the terms for extending the ceasefire. In August 2004, after two further meetings in Thailand, the NSCN (IM) made the gesture of publicly congratulating the Indian people on Independence Day for the first time.

In 2005, talks with the NSCN (IM) armed opposition group continued throughout the year. The NSCN (IM) leaders travelled from the Netherlands to New Delhi to negotiate with the government. The last of the three rounds of negotiations with the government was held in December 2005 in Bangkok, where a number of consultative rounds of talks had already been held with different NGOs. The NSCN (IM) proposed establishing “federal relations” with India, the creation of joint armed forces, the integration of areas with a Naga population and the use of the region’s own flag. Were the negotiations to fail, the leaders of this group announced that they would call a referendum of the Naga people, as they had not given up on the idea of creating a territorial entity that groups together the regions inhabited by the Naga. Taking part in these negotiations was the Dutch organisation **Kreddha**, made up of conflict resolution analysts and led by Michael C. Van Walt Praag, former Secretary-General of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO).

The government and the NSCN (IM) **met in Bangkok (Thailand) in February 2006**, agreeing to a six-month extension of the ceasefire that had been in place for eight years. The government and the NSCN (IM) also agreed to modify the bases of the current ceasefire agreement in order to make it more effective. The NSCN (IM) had previously claimed that it would step up pressure on the issue of unifying all the Naga territories. During the second half of the year, **they met in Amsterdam for three days, where they agreed to meet more often**. In August, both parties agreed in Bangkok to **extend the ceasefire agreement for another year**. In October, representatives from the government and the NSCN (IM) met in Amsterdam, agreeing to hold yet another meeting in early 2007. Prior to that meeting, **the government stated that it would consider formulas for an asymmetrical federalism** to resolve the conflict, as in the last round both parties argued over the limits to the constitution’s flexibility, as well as over **how a sub-national constitution could fit in with the federal one**.

Early in the year, the leaders of the NSCN (IM), president I. Shisi Swu and the Secretary-General, T. Muivah went to the area from Thailand with the intention of continuing peace talks with the Government. In mid-February, **the leaders of the NSCN-IM held consultations with the civilian population and religious leaders about the possible creation of a “Greater Nagaland”** (to include land in other states, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, where there are also Naga people living) prior to holding negotiations with the government. In July, both the Indian government and the NSCN (IM) agreed to **extend the ceasefire for another year** ten years after it was originally signed. Nevertheless, with regard to the headway in the peace negotiations, the government reiterated to the armed group that the issue of sovereignty was totally outside the scope of the talks, and that any solution to the conflict must be framed within the constitution of the country. The armed group might have agreed to **remain part of Indian via a federal link to the union with special status**, although this discussion has not been closed yet.

In mid-May, the Indian government stated categorically that there was no possibility of negotiating the issue of sovereignty with the leaders of the armed opposition group NSCN-IM, which it asked to study the constitution in order to reach a solution within the confines of that document. Local sources stated that the armed group could be in touch with constitutional experts. The government asked the NSCN (IM) to point to the elements in the constitution that might be reformed in order to find a solution to the conflict. The government has held more than

60 rounds of negotiations with this group without reaching any definitive agreement. After the serious violations of the ceasefire agreement in recent weeks, in June the Ministry of the Interior stated that a separate meeting would be held with each of the different factions of the NSCN. In turn, the student organisation NSF stated that it would embark on a process to try to unify all the insurgent Naga organisations to the benefit of the Naga people. The NSF pointed out that it would meet with representatives of the NSCN -K armed groups and with members of the other factions. In October, representatives of the Indian government and the NSCN (IM) met in The Hague to address the issue of the sovereignty of Nagalim (Nagaland). As a confidence-building measure, the different factions of the NSCN agreed to a ceasefire in order to play a "Naga reconciliation" football match. The teams were made of a mix of combatants from the armed groups and members of Naga civil society organisations. The match, the second of its kind, aimed to foster reconciliation among the different Naga organisations. The Nagaland media stated that the peace talks between the Indian government and the armed opposition group NSCN (IM) had no preconditions, which means that the government will not impose its agenda. The government and the NSCN (IM) are studying how to accommodate the armed group's demands within the Indian constitution. **The armed group had expressed its desire to establish a federal relationship with the central government.** In December, a new round of negotiations was held between the Indian government and the NSCN (IM) in Amsterdam.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, the NSCN (IM) released five members of the security forces who had been held by the group for several hours. This release took place thanks to the intervention of several organisations from civil society. The armed group warned the government that it would not tolerate the presence of security forces in the environs the encampments where its members were cantoned. Days later, the Chief Minister of State Neiphiu Rio expressed his satisfaction with the gradual decline in inter-factional conflicts. In turn, **the leader of the NSCN-IM, Isaac Chisi Swu, expressed the group's commitment to resolving the conflict by peaceful means.** In late February, however, a curfew was imposed in Imphal, in the state of Manipur, as a result of the disturbances triggered by the murder of three government civil servants in the Ukhrul district. The murder had been committed by members of the NSCN-IM. The armed group claimed that it would punish the murderers, stating they could not regard it as an act by the armed group rather as an individual action. The NSCN-IM asked that these events not be used to jeopardise the peace process. In early June, **the armed opposition group NSCN-K stated that it was prepared to start formal peace negotiations with the government of India,** eight years after a ceasefire agreement had been reached with Delhi. The NSCN-K expressed its willingness to place no preconditions on the dialogue and stated that issues like sovereignty could be discussed at the negotiating table without their posing an obstacle to the start of negotiations. In mid-June, **the Forum for Naga Reconciliation announced the signing of an agreement, the "Reconciliation Pact", among the different factions of the Naga insurgency.** The document was signed by the leaders of the main armed Naga opposition groups: the NSCN-IM, the Federal Government of Nagaland (created in 1956 by the first insurgent Naga organisation, the NCC) and the GPRN/NSCN (set up by the NSCN-K). In mid-August, the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, appealed to all the groups in the state to see beyond their differences in order to reach permanent peace. Rio stated that his government was committed to playing an active role as a facilitator for the peace process between the central executive and the armed groups. The central government asked the group NSCN-IM to carefully study the Indian constitution and suggest possible amendments that could contribute to resolving the Naga conflict, according to sources at The Statesman. The group accepted this proposal. Days later, the Ceasefire Supervision Group and the Ceasefire Supervisory Board of the armed opposition group **NSCN (K)** jointly reviewed the implementation of the ceasefire agreement reached between the government and the armed group. The government stated that violence had dropped in recent months as a result of a lower number of clashes between factions, but it expressed its concern over the rise in cases of extortion. Furthermore, it asked the armed groups to move to the cantonment areas designated for them. The NSCN-IM stated that it did not agree that the Indian constitution should serve as the foundation for the

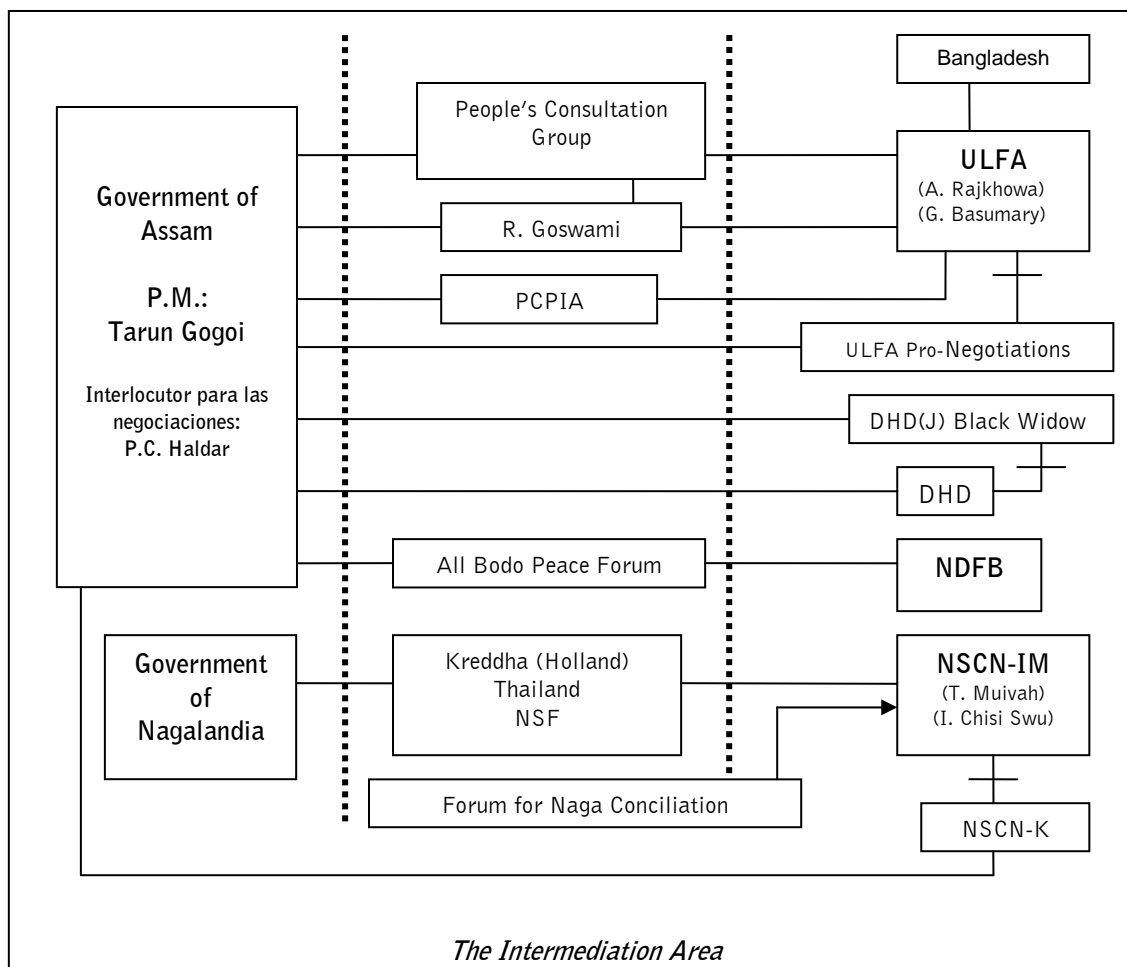
solution to the Naga problem, as the government declared, stating that an understanding on autonomy had been agreed to as part of the Magna Carta. The armed group denied that there had been any bilateral talks on a formula for autonomy, as the government had claimed. In mid-September, the NSCN-IM stated that the peace package that the Indian government had offered to the different insurgent Naga organisations contradicted the bilateral agreements reached, as the NSCN-IM was the only insurgent organisation with a mandate to negotiate with the government. This measure contradicted what had been agreed to in Paris in 1995 by the Indian government and the armed group, and in its opinion it only strove to create divisions among the Naga people. In 1995, it was agreed that the bilateral peace negotiations would be at the level of prime minister, held at locations outside Indian soil and without any preconditions by either side.

Most significant events in the year in Nagaland

- The leader of the NSCN-IM, Isaac Chisi Swu, expressed the group's commitment to resolving the conflict by peaceful means.
- The armed opposition group NSCN-K stated that it was prepared to start formal peace negotiations with the government of India, eight years after a ceasefire agreement had been reached with Delhi.
- The Forum for Naga Reconciliation announced the signing of an agreement, the "Reconciliation Pact", among the different factions of the Naga insurgency.

Websites on the peace processes in India

- AlertNet (www.alertnet.org)
- Asian Center for Human Rights (www.achrweb.org)
- Assam Tribune (www.assamtribune.com)
- Frontline (www.flonnet.com)
- Hindustan Times (www.hindustantimes.com)
- IDSA (www.idsa.in)
- Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (www.ipcs.org)
- Kuknalim (www.kuknalim.com)
- Nagalandia International Support Centre (www.nagalim.nl)
- Nagalandia Post (www.Nagalandiapost.com)
- North East News Agency (www.nenanews.com)
- NSCN (www.nscnonline.org)
- ONGC (www.ongcindia.com)
- Ploughshares (www.ploughshares.ca/librarie/ACRText/ACR-IndiaAP.html)
- SATP (www.satp.org)
- South Asia Analysis Group (www.saag.org)
- www.andhanews.net
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- www.northeastvigil.com/news
- www.rediff.com/news



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 joining India was a source of conflict between the two countries, and the clashes began the same year. India laid claim on the territories controlled by the other countries, arguing that they had been lands administrated 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.

Population: 13 million (Kashmir) Area: 222,200 km ² (Kashmir) HDI: India 134; Pakistan 141 (out of 177) GDP: India, 1,071,000 million dollars; Pakistan, 126,700 million dollars Income per inhabitant: India, \$950; Pakistan, \$860. Deaths due to the conflict: 47,000-70,000 people since 1989. Actors: APHC, Hizbul Mujahideen Facilitators: ----

Therefore, the conflict has two dimensions. The first is interstate, involving a border dispute between India and Pakistan for the Kashmir region. This conflict is evident in the continuous infiltrations of Pakistani groups across the border. The other dimension is intrastate, involving the fight of 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 vying for 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 type of international mediation; it prefers direct bilateral dialogue, it is not in favour of changing the territorial demarcations and it has the backing of China. In contrast, Pakistan is in favour of internationalising any peace process. Furthermore, based on the right of self-determination, it has called for a referendum to be held under the auspices of the UN, although lately it has declared that it would be willing to withdraw this demand. Likewise, the USA has performed some mediation for the sake of resolving the dispute so that the armed forces of its ally in the region – Pakistan – can focus on fighting against Al-Qaeda. The most noteworthy aspect of this conflict is the dynamic of **creating confidence-building measures** by both sides and the model of process which is known as a *composite dialogue*, which consists of addressing all the disputes in a single process so that headway can be made on several different fronts at the same time. Even though reaching agreements is a slow process, there is usually no going back.

In early 2005, the Indian government announced the creation of a committee to explore the possibility of granting greater autonomy to the region. During the year, bilateral talks continued, which built up trust between the parties. There were reciprocal visits by foreign ministers, a bus service between the two halves of Kashmir was resumed (it had been suspended 60 years previously), the release of more prisoners was agreed and trade exchanges increased, as did collaboration on drug-trafficking, maritime routes and other financial, political and humanitarian issues. As a symbolic gesture, in March the Indian government invited the Pakistani president to a cricket match in India between the two countries. Indian and Pakistani pacifist groups organised a joint march from Delhi (India) to Lahore (Pakistan), following a 13th century Sufi route. Representatives of the **APHC** (the coalition of the main pro-independence parties in Kashmir) met with the Pakistani President P. Musharraf and the Indian Prime Minister M. Singh, during the visit of the premier to Delhi with satisfactory results on both sides. In addition, for the first time, the Indian government allowed the main leaders of this coalition to visit Pakistan to hold talks with the Pakistani government. The moderate faction of the APHC stated that it wanted to begin talks with the Indian government

During the second half of 2005, relations between the countries continued to improve with significant advances. Also notable was the announcement by the Pakistani president to the effect that the dispute over control of Kashmir could be resolved by granting greater autonomy to the region. This coincided with statements by the Indian prime minister indicating that a **Kashmir without defined borders** along with greater autonomy for the Indian-administered parts of the region were measures that might help to resolve the conflict, **thus reducing the importance of the border demarcation issue**. In December, the main armed opposition group operating in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (India), **Hizbul Mujahideen**, asked the EU to review its decision to include it on the list of terrorist organisations. The APHC leader announced that the Pakistani president had offered his support for the creation of a United States of Kashmir, in which members of the legislative assembly for each of the Kashmirs would elect representatives for a third assembly. This third assembly would in turn take the necessary decisions to bring a final end to the conflict. Finally, it is worth noting that trade between India and Pakistan doubled in 2005.

During the second quarter of 2006, the Indian Prime Minister, M. Singh and the APHC agreed to set up a system that would allow possible solutions to the dispute over the region to be discussed. This was the second encounter held by both parties since M. Singh was named prime minister. Shortly thereafter, the APHC announced that it would set up a group of negotiators to hold talks with the government of India. India and Pakistan also agreed to partly open up the Line of Control (the de facto border between the two countries) in an effort to step up trade through a lorry transport service. They also agreed to expand the bus service between the two Kashmirs. Pakistan announced that it was releasing 71 Indian fishermen who had been arrested, and both countries held a tenth round of negotiations to achieve the withdrawal of troops from the Siachen glacier, where 7,000 Indian soldiers and 4,000 Pakistani soldiers were still stationed. They also agreed to allow Indian programmes to be broadcast on Pakistani television. During the third quarter, developments continued in confidence measures, despite the attack in June which caused the death of 200 people in the city of Mumbai. India temporarily suspended the process and asked Pakistan to take measures to end terrorism. Also worth pointing out is that in late August 2006 **the armed opposition group Hizbul Mujahideen claimed that it pledged to take all the measures needed to reach a solution to the dispute in Kashmir** that was in line with the desires of the Kashmiri people. What is more, the group responded to the criticism launched by other armed groups saying that the real intentions of the Hizbul Mujahideen was to call for a ceasefire, claiming that they would not lay down their weapons until the conflict was resolved. Hizbul Mujahideen also announced that any process, including a plebiscite and the demilitarisation of Kashmir, should be undertaken under international supervision. This group, led by M. Back in 2000, this group, led by M. Yusuf Shaw, alias "Syed Salahuddin", had announced a proposal for a ceasefire when it met with Indian civil servants in Kashmir. Finally, in September the leaders of both countries agreed to resume peace negotiations after having met for the fourth time in two years, within the framework of the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries in Havana. The Pakistani

foreign minister also stated that both countries were close to reaching an agreement on the dispute over the Siachen glacier.

In December 2006, the Pakistani President P. Musharraf, confirmed that Pakistan could abandon its demands on Kashmir if India would agree to its peace proposals: a gradual withdrawal of troops in the zone, self-government for Kashmiris and a joint supervision mechanism which would involve Indians, Pakistanis and Kashmiris. India's response to this proposal was that maps cannot be redrawn; however, it claimed that it was possible to **make the borders irrelevant**. At the beginning of 2007 both countries confirmed the recommencement of the peace process, following a visit to Pakistan by Indian Foreign Minister, P. Mukherjee, during which several meetings with Government members were held, including President, P. Musharraf, and in March held the fourth round of talks in the so-called Composite Dialogue. The coalition of independent parties of Jammu and Kashmir, APHC, asked that the armed struggle be abandoned in order to pave the way for peace negotiations that would lead to a sustainable peace agreement. To this end, the APHC asked the armed groups to declare a temporary ceasefire that could help to resolve the conflict. In mid-February, **the Indian government stated that it was ready to resume the dialogue process with Pakistan**, holding a fourth round in April on the level of Foreign Ministers, and it celebrated the fact that elections were being held in this country, as they would enable the Pakistani people to voice their vote. The dialogue process had been interrupted after the state of emergency was imposed by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. Both countries agreed to double the number of weekly flights linking both states, as well as to increase the number of destinations served and the number of airlines authorised to make these flights.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, stated in June that the Kashmiri leaders on both sides of the border would be consulted before holding the next round of negotiations with India. The declarations were made upon his return from the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Uganda, which was also attended by Kashmiri leaders. This meeting included an exchange of opinions with members of the APHC (a coalition that includes the main pro-independence parties in Jammu and Kashmir). Qureshi stated that the **contact group on Kashmir in the OIC** expressed its support for the dialogue process between India and Pakistan and that this subject was included in the Kampala Declaration, issued during the meeting, for the first time. Both countries also agreed to extend the direct contacts between the people living on either side of the Control Line (the de facto border between both countries). **Pakistan** invited India to a meeting with the goal of initiating trade relations across the Control Line. The goal of the meeting was to deepen the agreement reached in June by agreeing to modalities and signing trade contracts. **The Pakistani government announced that it was creating a parliamentary committee to examine the issue of Kashmir** with the goal of achieving a consensus on this issue and on the peace process with India. The committee would have representatives from all the political parties. In mid-October, the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, made an official state visit and said that his government was willing to hold negotiations with all sectors of society, including the coalition of pro-independence parties APHC. Singh reiterated that the borders could not be eliminated, but that they could become irrelevant. **Trade exchanges across the Control Line** (the de facto boundary between both countries) *were also started* for the first time in 60 years one month after both governments reached an agreement to that effect. In late November, a serious attack in the Indian city of Mumbai, which caused 200 deaths, jeopardised relations between the two countries. The attack was claimed by an unknown group called Deccan Mujahideen . Both countries decided to jointly investigate the event, but this did not prevent them from indefinitely suspending the Composite Dialogue process, the framework in which the peace negotiations had been held. Diplomatic sources stated that the atmosphere at the time, marked by Indian's conviction that the attacks in Mumbai had been perpetrated by groups or individuals based in Pakistan, made it impossible for negotiations to be resumed immediately. However, the Indian government did not directly accuse the Pakistani government. Pakistan stated that continuing with the dialogue process was in both parties' interests, and representatives from the Indian government stated that war between both countries was not an option and that the issue was not linked solely to the dispute over Kashmir, rather that it had to be framed within a context

of global terrorism. As a positive feature, late in the year the Pakistani President, Asif Ali Zardari, proposed a pact in southern Asia to avoid the use of nuclear weapons. Zardari stated that Pakistan would not use nuclear weapons against India.

The peace process in 2009

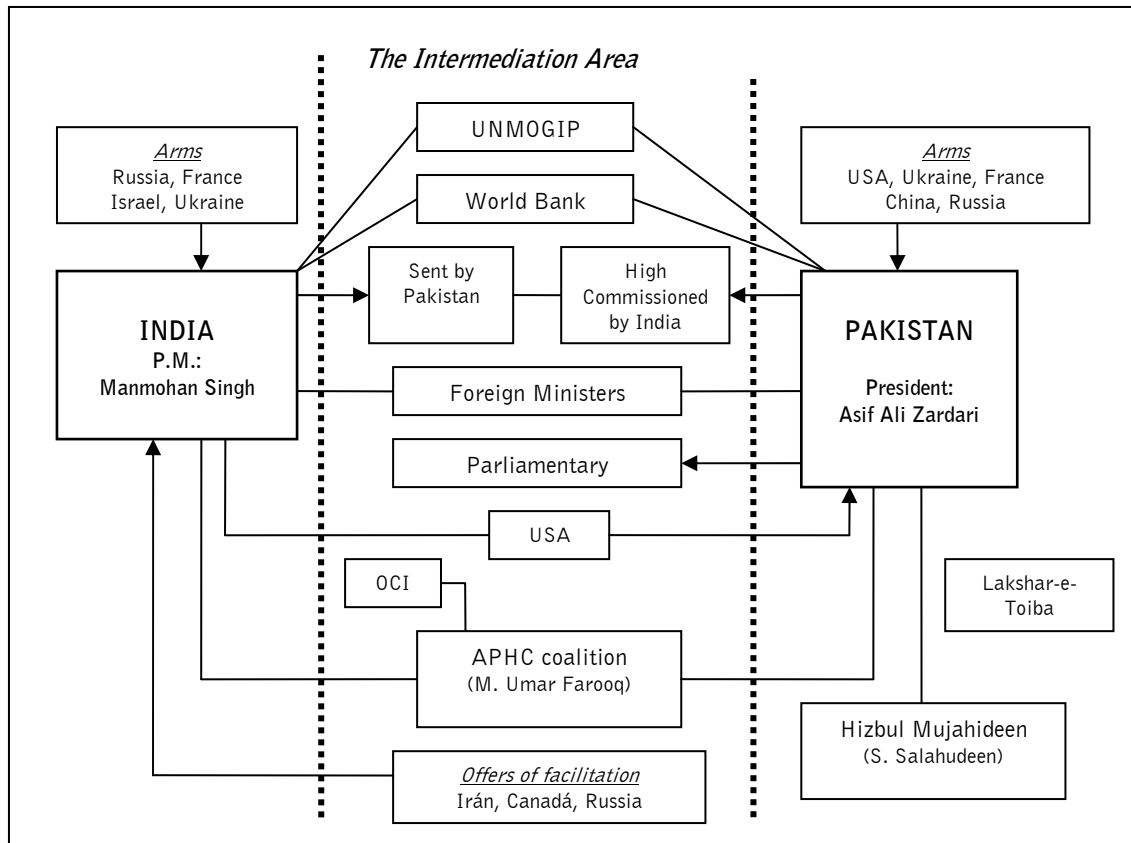
In mid-February, the Pakistani police arrested the leader of the armed opposition group **Hizbul Mujahideen**, **Muzaffar Ahmad Dar**, the chief commander of the armed group's operations. The advisor to the government of Pakistan on the Interior, Rehman Malik, declared that the attacks that took place in Mumbai in November 2008 might have been partly organised by Pakistan, and he condemned the arrest of several people linked to these events who might have been members of the armed organisation L-e-T. These declarations were hailed by the Indian government, as the discrepancies between both governments had triggered a diplomatic crisis and an escalation in tensions. The Indian government added that it hoped that the Pakistani executive would dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the country. In turn, the spokesperson for the L-e-T once again denied the group's involvement in these attacks and condemned the Pakistani president's attitude. In early April, one of the most prominent separatist leaders, Sajjad Gani Lone, President of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference, announced that he would run in the elections slated to be held in India. Lone stated that he wanted to shift the armed struggle to the Indian Parliament, where he will try to make Kashmir's claims for independence heard. Other pro-independence sectors called for a boycott of the elections in disapproval of Lone's decision. The Indian government reiterated that the possibility of peace negotiations with Pakistan resuming depended on the latter country's desire to punish the masterminds of the Mumbai attacks. In early June, the Pakistani Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani, claimed that neither country could afford an armed conflict and that the resumption of the composite dialogue was in the interest of both sides. In parallel, the government of the USA was trying to pressure the Indian government to agree to resume the dialogue process. In mid-June, the **pro-independence organisation JKLF** hailed a meeting among the Indian and Pakistani leaders and stressed that dialogue was the only way to resolve the current situation. The leader of this organisation, Mohammad Yaseen Malik, had been under house arrest for the past three months. Likewise, both countries decided to resume bilateral trade, which had also been suspended since the attacks. In early August, however, Pakistani government sources announced that the **Indian government's plan to launch a nuclear-propelled submarine "Arihant" within the next few months**, valued at 416 million Euros, could threaten the peace and stability of the region, as well as any headway made in the peace process between the two countries. This came two weeks after both countries had agreed to resume peace talks. India plans to build two more submarines capable of launching nuclear missiles, in addition to the convention submarines it has already purchased from several countries, meaning that its military spending skyrocketed to 28.4 billion dollars.

In early October, India rejected the appointment of a special envoy for Kashmir by the **Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)**, stating that it should not interfere in India's internal affairs. The OIC had appointed Saudi Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman as its special envoy on Pakistan's request. This was the first time the OIC had gotten involved in the Kashmir issue in this way. The president of the coalition of pro-independence Kashmiri parties, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), welcomed the appointment, which was a major step forward, and it deplored India's reaction. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, leader of the APHC, stated that a peace delegation would travel to Delhi and Islamabad in an effort to reduce the tensions between both countries and re-launch the dialogue. In early November, the central government announced that it was preparing a series of political measures for the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir which were to be implemented within the next two years. These measures were the result of the working groups set up in 2006, and they encompassed relations between the state and the central government, trust-building measures, the strengthening of relations across the Control Line (the boundary between India and Pakistan), economic development and the governability of the state. In the second half of November, the moderate leaders of the coalition of pro-independence parties, APHC, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Abdul Gani Bhat and Bilal Lone, secretly

met with the Minister of the Interior, Palaniappan Chidambaram, for the second time. Chidambaran issued no statement on the meeting, but earlier he had stated that a "silent diplomacy" process would get underway. However, other sectors of the APHC, especially the one headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, expressed their opposition to negotiations with Delhi, stressing the need for these talks to be tripartite, with the participation of Pakistan.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pro-independence organisation JKLF hailed a meeting among the Indian and Pakistani leaders and stressed that dialogue was the only way to resolve the current situation. • Pakistani government sources announced that the Indian government's plan to launch a nuclear-propelled submarine "Arihant" within the next few months, valued at 416 million Euros, could threaten the peace and stability of the region, as well as any headway made in the peace process between the two countries. • This came two weeks after both countries had agreed to resume peace talks. • India rejected the appointment of a special envoy for Kashmir by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).The central government of India announced that it was preparing a series of political measures for the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir which were to be implemented within the next two years. • The moderate leaders of the coalition of pro-independence parties, APHC, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Abdul Gani Bhat and Bilal Lone, secretly met with the Minister of the Interior, Palaniappan Chidambaram, for the second time.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Centre for Human Rights (www.achrweb.org) • ICG (www.crisisweb.org) • LTTE (www.ltteps.org) (www.lttepeacesecretariat.com) • 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) • www.jammu-kashmir.com



NEPAL (Madhesh-Terai)

Background to the conflict

The Nepalese region of Madhesh (which means “in the middle”), also known as Terai or Tarai, is a strip of land located in the south of the country bordering on India. Its culture also quite closely resembles Indian culture, and despite the fact that it only accounts for 23% of the land area, it is home to almost half of the population of Nepal, around 11 million inhabitants. It is a very fertile area which is rich in crops, yet the resources have not benefited its inhabitants, who are mainly Hindu and have felt marginalised by the central authorities. This has led to a feeling of identity which in turn has triggered the demand for greater autonomy and a higher presence in the national parliament. Some sectors of society have also called for independence. Around 40% of Madheshis do not even have Nepalese citizenship, and they are barely represented in the parliament. After signing a peace agreement with the Maoists from the CPN, the demands of the Madheshi people rose, as did the divisions and clashes among the Maoist groups in the region.

Population: 28 million inhabitants (Nepal); 11 million (Terai)
Area: 147,000 km² (Nepal), 34,100 km² (Terai)
HDI: 144 (of 182)
GDP: 9,900 million dollars (Nepal)
Income per inhabitant: \$350
Deaths due to the conflict: hundreds
Displaced persons: 25,000
Armed actors: MJF/MPRF, JTMM-G, JTMM-J, MRM/MNLF, MMT and others
Facilitators: UN

IN 2001, J. K. Goit created the **MNLF** (Maoist Madheshi National Liberation Front), but in 2003 the leadership shifted to Matrika Yadav, a member of the politburo who accused Goit of being an ally of the monarchy and the Indian nationalists. In February 2004, the authorities detained M. Yadav, at that time leader of the then Autonomous Government of the Madheshi People. The previous leader, J.K. Goit, then created a dissident group called the **JTMM-G** (Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha), which in turned underwent a schism in August 2006, leading to the **JTMM-J** led by Jwala Singh. Both vied for the leadership of the current **TJLF** (Terai Janatantrik Liberation Front). Right now, there are at least 12 armed groups in the region.

The peace process during 2007

At the start of the year, the Community Party of Nepal (CPN) named its 73 members who would be part of the new Interim Parliament. Of them, 20 were Madheshis, Matrika Yadav being one of them. However, to demonstrate that the CPN was not the only representative group in the Nepalese opposition, during the second half of January there was a major popular revolt led by the Madheshi people that lasted several weeks. This conflict pitted the CPN against other dissident Maoist Madheshi groups. In early February, the eight main Nepalese political parties – the seven-party alliance and the CPN – reached an agreement to resolve the political crisis that was spreading around the south of the country. The agreement involved an increase in voter registration and the adoption of a proportional representation system, which was one of the demands of the Madheshi groups in the south. Additionally, the government named a team to hold negotiations with the groups involved in the protests. **Nepalese prime minister, G.P. Koirala, named the Madheshi Minister of Agriculture, Mahanta Yhakur, as head of the government negotiating team.** The agreement reached by the governing political forces meant an increase in the number of seats occupied by representatives from the south of the country. Some Madheshi leaders called this agreement positive yet not enough. The parties pointed out that they had agreed to **create a federal state (as demanded by the representatives of the Madheshi community)**, although the specific form of this state would have to be decided in the representative chamber. The United Nations envoy to the country, Ian Martin, praised the plans to hold **talks between the government and representatives of the population living in the region of Terai**, the site of serious tensions and violence. A government team plus representatives of the Madheshi and Janajati peoples were to take part in the talks. Despite, this, in early March an undefined general strike

got underway in the Terai region, called by the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), which clashed with the former Maoist opposition. The purpose of the strike was to ask for a federal system to be established in the country. In April, the **MJF-MPRF**, led by Upendra Yadav, who was at odds with **Matrika Yadav**, leader of the MRM-MNLF, took up its weapons once again after claiming that their condition for participating in the talks (the resignation of the Minister of the Interior, K. P. Sitaula) had not been fulfilled. Sitaula had not been satisfied. The government once again issued a call to negotiate with the split-off Maoist faction, **Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha** (JTMM), pointing out that all the arrest warrants against members of this faction would be suspended during the course of these talks, and that the safety of its leaders would be guaranteed. In March, the Nepalese parliament finally changed the constitution, choosing federalism as the state model in response to the demands from the Madhesi people in the south of the country, who felt marginalised in the state institutions.

In April, the government announced that it would conduct an investigation into the episodes of violence that had taken place. The investigation commission would be headed by a Madhesi judge. In early June, the government and the minority Madhesi group MJF-MPRF, began negotiations in Janakpur with the purpose of finding a dialogued solution to the group's aspirations for independence in the province of Terai. The group of negotiators from the MJF, led by its president, Upendra Yadav, presented its demands in a 26-point document. These demands were well-received by the government group, led by the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Ram Chandra Poudel. The points agreed upon included compensation for families of the people killed in the clashes against the Nepalese army, and the return of properties that had been seized by the Maoists. Poudel also pledged to continue negotiations on the inclusion of a technical team from the United Nations in the talks and access by the Madhesi, Dalit, women and other disadvantaged groups to the state bodies. The MJF leader, Yadav, reported that more political issues such as self-determination, the federal system and proportional representation would be discussed in the next round of talks.

One of the main opposition groups in the region of Terai, the JTMM, claimed in July that it was ready to hold peace negotiations with the government under the supervision of the United Nations or any other credible organisation. **The JTMM sent a letter to the United Nations asking it to mediate.** The UNMIN stated that it regarded the request very favourably, but that both parties had to agree to its mediation. In October, the armed opposition group **Madhesi Mukti Tiger** (MMT) and JTMM-J, led by Jwala Singh, declared a ceasefire during the Hindu and Muslim religious festivals of Dashain and Eid. Furthermore, the JTMM-J denounced the fact that the rise in extortion in recent weeks was nothing other than a defamation campaign against the group. Consequently, he asked that high leaders accept not donations and that people not give money to anyone asking for it in their name. In November, the government announced that it had decided to immediately implement the agreements reached with the ethnic and regional groups through the different ministries. It also decided to **create a committee on which the secretariat of the Ministry of Peace and of the Interior, and members of the Madhesi organisation MJF-MPRF would participate in order to implement these agreements.**

Early in the , the government stated that it would not negotiate with the **Goit and Jawala Singh** factions of the armed opposition group **JTMM** because of their criminal tendencies. Despite this, the government and the coordinator of Madhesi organisations **United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF)** reached an agreement that would allow the Madhesi people to participate more in Nepalese institutions. The eight-point agreement includes issues such as compensation for victims of the clashes that took place last year, and the creation of autonomous territorial entities for the Madhesi people. Likewise, the government also reached a five-point agreement with the **Federal Republican National Front (FRNF)**, which also includes several Madhesi organisations, in similar terms to the agreement with the UDMF. In March, the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Ram Chandra Poudel, who is part of the negotiating panel with the groups in the region of Terai, claimed that **peace talks would be held with the armed groups in the region of Janakpur, in the district of Dhanusha.** At a meeting, the government negotiating panel decided to hold a talk with

the leaders of the four armed groups in the region of Terai: Madhes Mukti Tigers (MMT), Terai Cobra (TC), Janatantrik Terai Mukit Morcha (JTMM) led by Rajan Mukti and the Joint Democratic Liberation Front (JDLF). Previously, all four armed groups had announced that they were assembling a negotiating team for the talks, including a coordinator. During the second quarter, the Madhesi party MPRF stated that it would not be part of the new government and that the Maoists had to have the initiative to form it. The MPRF stated that Prachanda should give up his post as supreme commander of the PLA before the new government was formed. In mid-May, several armed opposition groups met in the city of Patna, India, to explore the possibilities of unified action, according to the local media. The leaders of the groups ATMM, MMT, MVK, TC, TA, SJTMM and a faction of the JTMM participated in the meeting.

In early July, the seven-party coalition agreed to pass a law allowing the constitution to be reformed in order to accommodate the demands of the Madhesi organisations in Terai. This law would replace the proposal that these parties had formulated which had been signed by the Madhesi organisations, and stated that Madhesi demands would be addressed by the future High Level Commission on State Restructuring. This situation contravened what had been agreed with the government before the elections of the Constituent Assembly had been held, according to the Madhesi parties that had won parliamentary representation. Additionally, there were several **clashes among members of the TKS and the Madhesi party MPRF**. In early October, the government appealed to the armed groups to hold negotiations, and it named three government negotiators. Days later, a joint declaration issued by 14 armed groups operating in this part of the country announced a ceasefire during the religious festival of Dashain and expressed their desire to hold peace negotiations with the government. This declaration took place in response to the appeal issued by the government to resolve the offensives on the Madhesi people via dialogue. The armed groups, which held a meeting, decided to join together under a single umbrella group. One of the demands of the Madhesi organisations is for the criminal lawsuits against their members to be withdrawn, as well as for their arrested members to be released. Likewise, the Minister of Peace and Reconstruction, Janardhan Sharma, who headed the government's negotiating team, stated that he hoped to hold peace negotiations with the Madhesi organisations in the near future. In November, Sharma stated that 15 of the 40 armed organisations operating in Terai had agreed to embark on a peace process. The leaders of these groups had expressed their willingness to declare Nepal a federal democratic republic. However, some organisations, like the Terai Cobra, were against the composition of the government's negotiating team. Likewise, the Madhesi party TMDP announced that it was creating a self-defence group made up of young adults, the TMSSA, to protect the Madhesi people.

In late November, the Foreign Minister and leader of the Madhesi party MPRF, Upendra Yadav, expressed his regret that no solution had been offered to the offensives suffered by the Madhesi community, and he asked that the agreements reached in the past that guaranteed more rights to this people be implemented. Likewise, the armed opposition group TSJP formed a three-person team headed by its spokesman to hold negotiations with the government. The Minister for Peace and Reconstruction stated that the first formal gathering had been held with the organisation called MVK, and that this encounter would be followed by meetings with other organisations. As a result of these talks, the government and the armed group had reached a four-point agreement in which the former withdrew its charges against the insurgents and agreed to treat the organisation as a political party. In exchange, the MVK would cease its armed activities. At the end of the year, however, the leading armed Madhesi organisations, JTMM and TA, had not formally agreed to hold peace negotiations.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, the leading political parties agreed to divvy up posts to preside over the different committees charged with drawing up the constitution. The CPN-M and CPN-UML parties agreed to a division of labour in which the former would lead seven committees and the latter five committees, just like the NC. The Madhesi parties from the region of Terai would each lead one

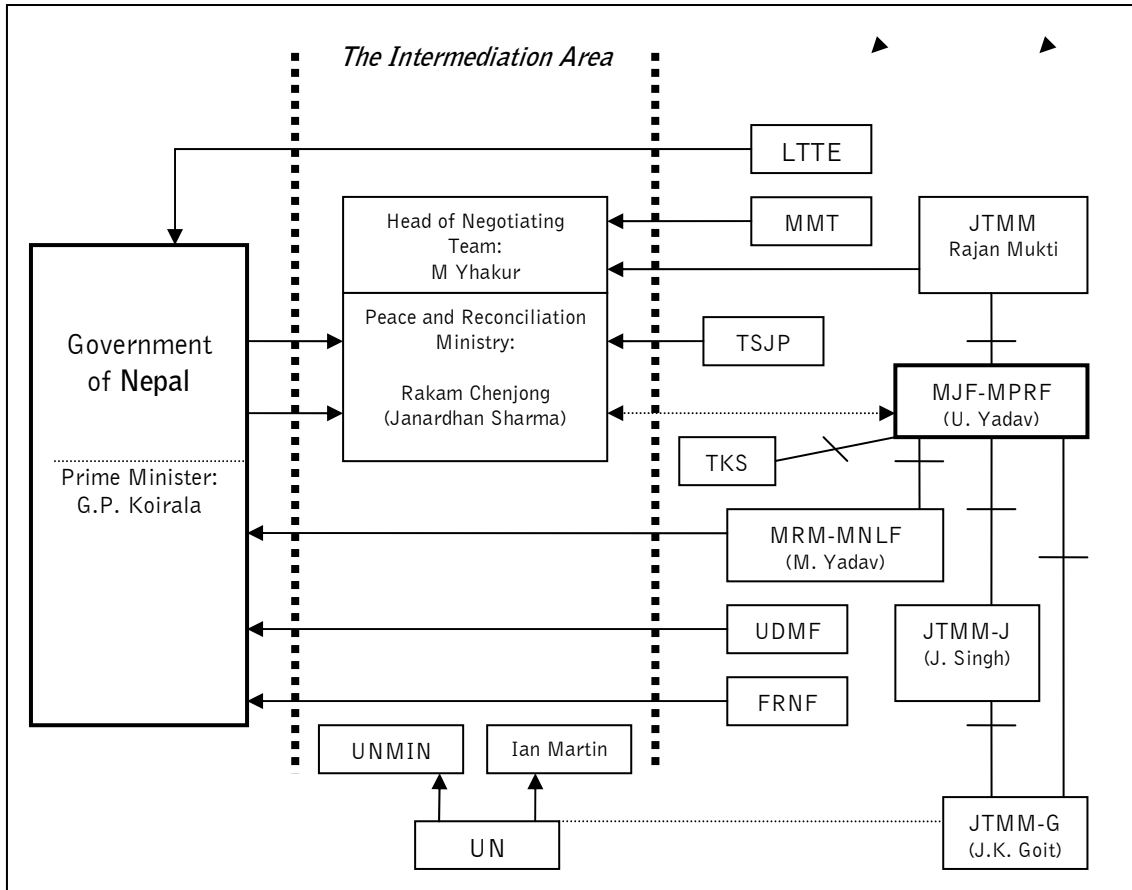
committee. Likewise, the Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, announced that the security measures in the region of Terai would be reinforced in view of the deterioration in this zone. The police sent reinforcements to different cities, as more than 20 armed groups are active in this region. In early February, several episodes of violence took place during the course of the general strike that was called in the southern part of the country by the organisation Tharu Welfare Council, which represents the ethnic Tharu community. The strike was called to protest the government's decision to set aside quotas for government jobs for the Madhesi community. The Tharu Welfare Council expressed its disagreement with the government's decision to lump the entire population inhabiting the southern part of the country under this category, ignoring the ethnic diversity. Likewise, **an armed Tharu opposition group was formed, the Tharuhat Autonomous State Council**, which called for the Tharu people to have control over the natural resources and for the defence of the rights of this indigenous people. The group stated that it had 375 members. To further complicate the situation, in late February the Madhesi faction that had split off from the Maoist government party CPN-M warned that it would take up weapons if its claims were not heeded. These claims include the granting of lands to peasants with no lands in the region and economic compensations for the families of people who died during the popular uprising in 2006 which put an end to King Gyanendra's regime, among other measures. **As a positive development**, the government reached a five-point agreement with the armed opposition group Liberation Tigers of Terai Eelam (LTTE) after negotiations held in Birgunj. This agreement stated that the government would guarantee the security of the group's members for the duration of the negotiations, and the armed group pledged to conduct no armed activities during the period of the talks. In March, there were clashes between the police and demonstrators in the Chitwan zone as protests were being staged by the Tharu community. However, after having reached an agreement with the government, the general strike was called off. The agreement stated that the Tharu people would not be classified in the same category as the Madhesi people, which had deprived them of specific quotas for landing government jobs. This was the group's main claim. Furthermore, they accused the Maoist government of having broken its promise to guarantee greater autonomy. Some of the organisations leading the protests included the groups JTSC, FIP and JMNSC . In early May, the Tharu organisation TJSC called off the two-week strike after having embarked on a dialogue process with the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation. The Tharu organisations' main demands included recognition of this ethnic group and greater representation in the institutions. In early June, the Madhesi Peoples Rights Forum party was poised to split off because of a lack of agreement on support of the government recently created by the Prime Minister, Madhav Kumar Nepal. The president of the party, Upendra Yadav, claimed that they would not support the new executive and expelled seven members who did not accept this decision. The splinter group was headed by several of the expelled individuals who might possibly be part of this new government.

In early July, the recently-appointed Minister for Peace and Reconciliation, Rakam Chemjong, denied that he was planning to hold peace talks with all the armed Madhesi organisations, stating that the majority were not political groups and were involved in criminal activities. Chemjong stated that any organisation that had committed extortion, kidnappings and murder was not political. Later in the same month, dovetailing with the government's decision to launch a new security strategy in the country, four armed groups operating in the region of Terai announced that they were creating a coalition of forces. The leader of the Madhesi Mukti Tigers, Madhesi Virus Killers, Terai Samyukta Janakranti Party Nepal and the Rajan Mukti faction of the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha held a joint press conference at which they expressed their willingness to work in coordination with each other. The Government had already carried out a first round of talks with those groups. The government had already held a first round of talks with these groups, which accused the government of failing to implement the agreements reached in the first round of negotiations and of not treating the peace talks seriously. They demanded that a second round be called with the Terai groups. The government's new security strategy called for military deployments in several regions in the country, especially in Terai, which had witnessed a rise in criminal acts, thefts, executions and kidnappings in recent months. The plan would cost an

additional 3.75 billion rupees (32.5 million Euros), and it also planned to create 10,000 new police and intelligence service jobs in order to put a halt to criminality.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tharu Welfare Council expressed its disagreement with the government's decision to lump the entire population inhabiting the southern part of the country under this category, ignoring the ethnic diversity. Likewise, an armed Tharu opposition group was formed, the Tharuhat Autonomous State Council. • The government reached a five-point agreement with the armed opposition group Liberation Tigers of Terai Eelam (LTTE). • Four armed groups operating in the region of Terai announced that they were creating a coalition of forces.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy Forum (www.advocacyforum.org) • AlertNet (www.alertnet.org) • Asian Center for Human Rights (www.achrweb.org) • Asian Study Center for Peace & Conflict Studies (www.aspectasia.org) • BBC Nepali Service (www.bbc.co.uk/nepali) • Butwal Today (butwaltoday.com/index.asp) • Terai Conference (www.himalassociation.org/baha/nepal-tarai-programme.htm) • Conflict Study Center (www.conflictstudycenter.org) • Government of Nepal (www.nepal.gov.gov.np) • (madhesi.wordpress.com) • Institute for Conflict Management (satp.org/satporgtp/icm/index.html) • International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) • Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com) • Nepal Times (www.nepaltimes.com) • Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int) • Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org) • United States Institute of Peace (www.usip.org)



Pakistan (Balochistan and the Northwest Border)

Context of the conflict

As part of its anti-terrorist strategy initiated after 9/11, the United States strengthened its alliance with Pakistan with the goal of countering the groups linked to Al-Qaeda which had taken refuge in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This gave rise to constant skirmishes that not only affected the lives of thousands of citizens but also demonstrated the extreme difficulty of defeating a series of tribal groups used to taking shelter in and crossing mountainous

borders. This conflict has been complicated by prior tensions in several different regions within Pakistan, giving rise to a sweeping mosaic of situations, interests, agreements and incompatibilities. In any event, starting in 2006 there were several attempts to negotiate with some of these groups, many of which were at odds with each other. Several agreements were actually reached, more for convenience than for peace per se. These agreements have affected some of the Pakistani regions bordering on Afghanistan, such as Bajaur, Balochistan and Waziristan. Nevertheless, these agreements did not manage to stanch the infiltrations by Taliban combatants or Al-Qaeda members. Due to the implications that it might have in the near future, it is worth noting that in late 2007 the former prime minister and leader of the opposition party, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated along with 20 other people in an attack which unleashed several disturbances all over the country and increased its already high level of instability. I must also be pointed out that at the end of August 2008 the President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, felt pressure to resign after nine years in the post in order to avoid having to face the dismissal process that his Government had initiated against him and that he had every chance of prospering in a parliamentary vote. At the beginning of September, Asif Ali Zardari, widower of Benazir Bhutto was elected as the new president following votes in two chambers of the Parliament and the four provincial assemblies and in which he obtained the support of two-thirds of the electorate. The Afghan Prime Minister, however, announced his attendance at the ceremony for handing over Zardari, which could represent an attempt to improve relations between the two countries, which had been damaged by accusations against Pakistan of supporting the Taliban insurgents.

<p>Population: Pakistan: 162 million; Balochistan: 6.5 million; Waziristan: 0.8 million</p> <p>Area: Pakistan: 796,000 km²; Balochistan: 347,200 km²; Waziristan: 11,500 km²</p> <p>HDI Pakistan: 141 (of 182)</p> <p>GDP: 140,200 million dollars (Pakistan)</p> <p>Per capita income Pakistan \$860</p> <p>Deaths due to the conflict: around 4,000</p> <p>Armed actors: TNSM, IMU, JUI-F, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, BLA, BRF, BRA, JWP</p> <p>Facilitators: Loya Jirga</p>

a) Balochistan

Summary of the conflict

Balochistan is a large region that falls within three different states (Pakistan, India and Iran, with a major Diaspora in Oman) populated by around 15 million people divided into numerous tribes. The Pakistani province is the largest, measuring 347,200 km²; however its population is a mere 6.5 million people due to the mountainous terrain and the scarcity of water. Its capital is Quetta. It has a lengthy border with Afghanistan and is close to the Afghan city of Kandahar, leading the Afghan conflict to directly affect the events in this region, one of the poorest in Pakistan although it is quite rich in gas and oil, as well as in minerals (gold and copper). Despite this natural wealth, the inhabitants of the region have not benefited from the revenues derived from them. Pakistani Balochistan has also been the region where underground nuclear testing has been carried out by the Pakistani government, specifically in the Chagai region, which serves to demonstrate its marginality. Even though it has always been regarded as an unstable region, since 2005 there have been serious skirmishes between tribal groups and the Pakistani armed forces, with attacks on the gas facilities. At the same time, the government has made major

investments in the region, especially in the coastal region, where with the aid of China a large port is being built. The Pakistani government uses this argument to show that many of the disturbances reflect the interests created by some of the tribal leaders who might be receiving support from the Afghan Balochistan authorities. Thus, frequent parallels are drawn between this conflict and the one over Kashmir, which has Pakistan pitted against India.

The Baloch people have inhabited the region for over two millennia. Upon Pakistan's independence in 1947, it became the westernmost province of the new country, but in 1970 it was declared a separate province, a status that was nullified shortly thereafter due to the repressive, centralist measures instituted by president Ali Bhutto. This led to a popular uprising which was harshly repressed and which led to the emergence of a guerrilla movement. In 1977, with the toppling of A. Bhutto, the situation was temporarily normalised; however, in 1990 the new government dissolved all the provincial assemblies, spurring the emergence of Islamist groups with the support of the Taliban. In April 2006, a government of Balochistan was created in exile, led by Mir Azaad Khan Baloch, who was highly critical of the former prime minister of Pakistan between 2002 and 2004, and Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, of Baloch extraction, a member of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and very close to president Musharraf. The Baloch people have traditional means of resolving conflicts, called the *markka* or *maihr* method, in which the most prominent people in the community go to the house of the victims and jointly agree on the type of pardon that should be set for the perpetrators.

Background to the peace process

In 2005, the Prime minister S. Aziz expressed determination to resolve the conflict by peaceful means, promising major investment in the region. One of the most important tribal leaders, N. Akbar Bugti, leader of the Jamhoori Watab Party (JWP), who was later assassinated in August 2006, expressed his scepticism at the possibility that the government would grant the region true autonomy and let its inhabitants control and profit more from the major gas resources in the region. The secretary-general of the JWP, Shahid Bugti, also demanded that the mega-project to build a large port in Gawadar directly benefit the Baloch people. In April 2006, the head of the Jamali tribe and former prime minister of Balochistan, Mir Taj Muhammad Jamali, offered to hold a meeting of the Loya Jirga (assembly) with the president of the country with the purpose of achieving peace in the region. In October 2006, several political leaders, intellectuals and journalists issued an appeal to the Pakistani government to change its stance on the issue of Balochistan and hold negotiations with the real leaders in the province as part of a gathering organised by the Liberal Forum of Pakistan. They also insisted on the need for the different territories in the Pakistan federation to have greater control over their natural resources. The prime minister, S. Aziz, stated that he was willing to talk with anyone who supported the development of the country, but he warned that the majority of violent acts were committed by armed foreign militants, especially Afghans. However, at the end of the year a commission from the Pakistani senate visited the country and pointed out the importance of reaching a negotiated solution to the conflict, which in 2006 alone caused 200 deaths. The president of the country, P. Musharraf, announced in turn an amnesty for everyone who surrendered their weapons, further stating that the government was willing to hold peace talks.

At the beginning of 2007, the chief of the Jamali tribe (the name of the Balochi in the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh), S. Y. Mohammad Jamali, offered to mediate between the Government and the Balochistan tribes, stating that military operations in the region should cease. In March, the prime minister of Pakistan, S. Aziz, insisted on the need for a gradual return of the Afghan refugees (2.4 million), whom he offered 100 dollars each to go back to their homelands. In the second half of the year, **president Pervez Musharraf offered amnesty for the combatants who surrendered their weapons**, but he stated that very strict actions would be taken against any who did not. The governor of Kandahar (Afghanistan), in turn, offered to mediate between the government of Pakistan and Balochistan. In November, the leader of the armed opposition group

from Balochistan, the **BLA**, Mir Ballach Marri, was shot to death in Afghanistan, as spokesmen for the group announced. In mid-December, however, **the interim prime minister of the province started to hold a series of meetings with leaders of the Baloch and Pashtun nationalist parties** with the intention of promoting reconciliation in the province.

In mid-January, the Prime Minister of the interim government of the province, Sardar Mohammad Saleh Bhootani, stated that he was willing to hold talks with the tribal and political leaders in order to resolve all the pending issues. In late February, **a few days before being appointed, the recently-appointed government of the province of Balochistan, Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Magsi, stated that the problems in the region could only be resolved through negotiations**, and that therefore the military operation underway in the province must be stopped. Furthermore, the governmental party PPP set up a committee to organise a conference in which all the political parties would participate with the goal of addressing the offences suffered by the people of the province. The goal set by the organisers was to reach a national consensus that would enable such issues as the autonomy of the province, the disappearances and arrests of political activists, poverty, the militarization of the zone and the launch of development projects to be addressed. A committee on Balochistan within the PPP party will send a delegation to Quetta to start a dialogue process with local leaders, intellectuals and politicians before the multiparty conference is held. The committee's mandate was to work on a constitutional formula that would put an end to the insurgency and bring all the clashing parties in the conflict to the negotiating table.

In early September, **the main Baloch armed opposition groups, the BLA, BRA and BLF, announced that they would suspend their armed activities for an indefinite period**, although they denied that this announcement was linked to any agreement. The spokesmen of the armed groups stressed the unity among their organisations and stated that if the military operation was not stopped and cantonment areas were not built in the zone they would once again take up their weapons. The organisations took advantage of this period to review the situation in the province. After the announcement of the ceasefire, not a single act of violence was perpetrated by the armed organisations. In late September, the President of the Internal Committee of the Senate, Talha Mahmood, asked the government to end the military operation in this province and embark on peace talks with the armed opposition groups. In mid-October, the President Asif Ali Zardari stated that the government would restore peace in the province and guarantee that surveying could be conducted for possible oil and gas drilling in the province. Zardari stated that energy security was as vital to the country as food security. **The government also announced a roadmap for resolving the conflict in the province**, and it called an assembly consisting of intellectuals, media professionals and elders with the goal of formulating constitutional reforms that could guarantee the redistribution of the resources from the province. Later, another assembly was called in which the different political parties took part.

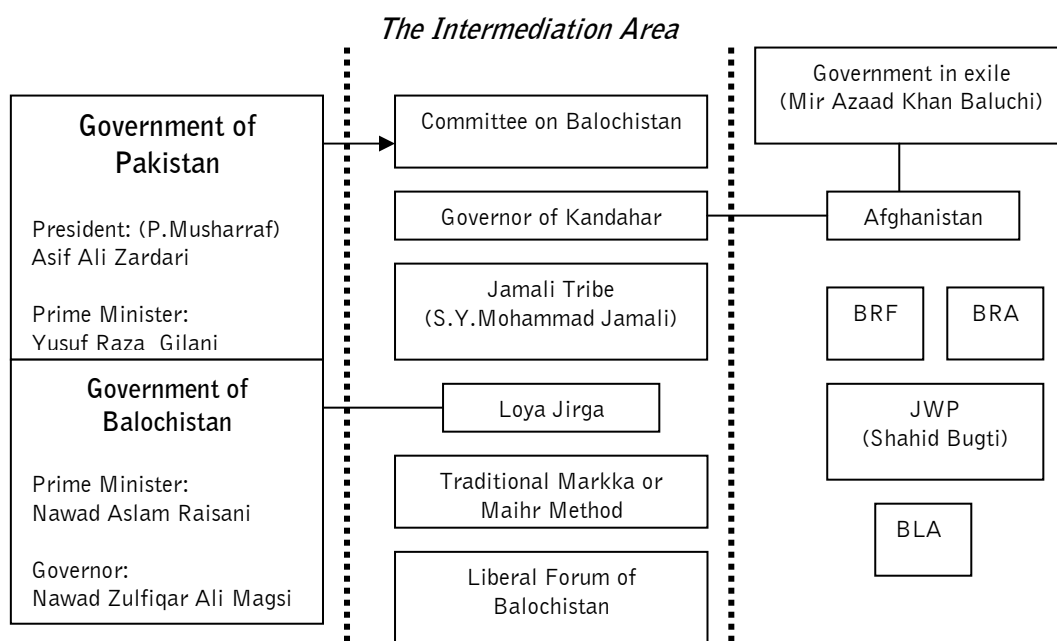
The peace process in 2009

In early January, the armed opposition groups BLA, BRA and BLF announced the end of the ceasefire declared unilaterally four months earlier. A BLA spokesperson stated that the ceasefire was declared with the goal of getting a response from the government, but that the continuation of the military operation had led them to resume their armed activities. In mid-March, **the US government was considering the possibility of expanding its military operations in Pakistan and waging attacks against Taliban bases in Balochistan**, the zone where the top leaders of the Taliban movement live. The intention was to attack a zone Near Quetta that is regarded as a Taliban sanctuary. In mid-September, the government announced that it would withdraw the charges against the Baloch political leaders and approve a general amnesty for the political prisoners after the President, Asif Ali Zardari, and 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. President Zardari stated that an environment had to be created that would enable the displaced and exiled people to return home, and that measures would be launched to deal with the injustices that had been committed against the population for

decades. In the second half of November, the government presented a plan for Balochistan to the Senate and National Assembly which included constitutional reforms to step up the province's autonomy. The plan also included a lengthy list of measures aimed at promoting political dialogue with all the actors in the province. These measures include the release of all political prisoners who have not committed serious crimes, facilitating the return of exiles, the withdrawal of the Sui armed forces, the creation of an investigative commission on the whereabouts of the disappeared persons, investigations into the death of the Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti Shaheed, and greater local control over the profits earned from the resources in the province. The Baloch parliamentarians and Pashtuns from all political parties, including the governing parties, rejected the proposal, alleging that it was clearly not enough, and that without a significant rise in the province's autonomy it made no sense.

The most important events of the year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The armed opposition groups BLA, BRA and BLF announced the end of the ceasefire declared unilaterally four months earlier.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government presented a plan for Balochistan to the Senate and National Assembly which included constitutional reforms to step up the province's autonomy. The plan also included a lengthy list of measures aimed at promoting political dialogue with all the actors in the province.

Agents in the process



b) North-West (Waziristan and the FATA)

Background to the conflict

Located to the north of Balochistan, Waziristan is a small zone measuring just 11,500 km² that is divided into two regions, called agencies (North Waziristan and South Waziristan), both bordering on Afghanistan. They are populated by Pashtuns who are governed by the tribal system of Loya Jirga, an assembly of prominent elders in the sub-clans. Both Waziristans are part of the

Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and were independent until they were annexed to Pakistan in 1947, when the country won its independence. The total population is a little over 800,000 inhabitants, joined by the same language (Waziri) and a warrior tradition. Its geographical and cultural proximity to Afghanistan explains why this mountainous region has served as a refuge for the Taliban and members of Al-Qaeda. For this reason, too, it has been affected by the counter-terrorism fight waged by the United States since 2001 with the formal support of the government of Pakistan. This gave rise to a particularly intense armed conflict between 2004 and 2006, in which between 1,000 and 3,000 people died and thousands more were arrested. In 2003, the president of Pakistan was attacked twice when visiting the region. He responded in turn with an increase in the military presence in the region, where there are now around 80,000 soldiers.

Background to the peace process

After two partial agreements reached in April 2004 and February 2005 in the south of Waziristan, which were largely unfulfilled, a peace agreement was signed in September 2006 between the Pakistani government and the pro-Taliban tribes from North Waziristan (tribal representatives from North Waziristan, the local Mujahideen NWFP and students from the Utmanzai tribes). This agreement included the pledge to expel foreign combatants from the zone, while it also called for a reduction in the presence of Pakistani troops, the reconstruction of infrastructures damaged from the conflict and compensation for the tribal leaders. Some analysts interpret this agreement as a triumph for the Taliban, as they managed to create a sort of "Islamic emirate" where they could even bring their light weapons, despite the vast economic and military support that the United States offered the government of Pakistan (4,000 million dollars between 2002 and 2006) and the fact that the agreement banned setting up a parallel administration. The presence of radical foreign Islamists in South Waziristan has been the source of serious tensions within the community itself. Despite all its shortcomings, some analysts have pointed out that the aforementioned peace agreement could serve as a model for NATO to achieve something similar in Afghanistan. In late 2006, in view of the constant Taliban infiltrations from Afghanistan, the Pakistani government announced a plan for laying mines and building a 2,400 km long wall on the border zone with Afghanistan. This unleashed harsh criticism by the UN and many humanitarian organisations.

In February 2007, the US Secretary of State, C. In February, the US Secretary of State, C. Rice, stated that the peace agreement reached the year before in the area of **North Waziristan** was not working and that it had not served to lower violence along the border with Pakistan. The US had initially offered its support for the signing of this agreement; however, the US armed forces reported that the **Taliban militias had tripled their armed actions since the agreement had been signed**. The governor of the Northwest Frontier Province stated that he was trying to get the elders to support the agreement. According to the text published, foreigners had to submit to the agreement or leave the zone. Finally, **the peace agreement signed between the Pakistan Government and the tribal militia in the South Waziristan region in 2004 was left in doubt after air attacks carried out by the Pakistani armed forces**. These attacks by the armed forces took place hours after the visit to Kabul by the US Defence Secretary, R. Gates. In March there were clashes between the local tribes supporting the Taliban and the armed militias made up of Uzbeks, who might be part of the armed group **IMU**, after the murder of a local Al-Qaeda leader who headed the local peace committee. During the month of April, there were clashes between armed militias made up of Uzbeks and tribal volunteers from South Waziristan, leading to the death of 54 people, 44 of them Uzbeks. Days later, tribal and religious leaders in the region reached an agreement with the **Pakistani government in which they pledged not to give refuge to the armed Uzbek opposition**. Other commanders from pro-Taliban militias also participated in the agreement. In late May, however, 11 of the 15 members of the tribal peace committee of Waziristan resigned. This body had been set up as part of the peace agreement signed in September 2006 between the government and the militants from Waziristan. The resignations were to protest a recent military operation in the town of Zargerkhel. Nonetheless, in late July,

100 members of the armed militias from the Marri tribe, led by Daula Khan Marri and Kamal Khan Marri, surrendered their weapons to the local authorities. The inter-tribal *jirga* of Waziristan called to revive the peace agreement reached with the government and the Taliban militias operating in the region and broken after the eviction from the Lal-Asjid mosque in Islamabad, ended in its efforts after both parties refused to change their stances. The government asked for guarantees that the agreement would be fully implemented, while the militias stated that talks would not resume without a complete dismantlement of the military control posts. In August, a joint *jirga* with Afghanistan and Pakistan attended by around 700 tribal leaders, members of parliament, clerics and other figures from both countries agreed to combat terrorism and the trafficking of opium in their tribal regions, as well as promote reconciliation with what they call the opposition, referring to the Taliban that accept the rule of law. However, in October there were serious clashes between the Pakistan security forces and the pro-Taliban militias in both North and South Waziristan causing the death of at least 250 people (50 of them soldiers), in addition to 200 injuries after several days of combat. Despite this, in mid-December the Taliban militias operating in Waziristan announced a ceasefire to last until 1st January in North Waziristan, during which government facilities would not be attacked.

In the zones of **Waziristan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)**, January began with serious clashes between the armed forces and the Taliban. The different Taliban militias operating in the FATA grouped together in a single organisation called Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), with the commander of South Waziristan, Baitullah Mehsud, at the helm. Until then, he had been at the head of an army that claims to have 30,000 men. Later, **the clashing factions in the Kurram Agency (part of the FATA) signed an agreement to put an end to the hostilities that they had spearheaded in recent weeks** which caused the death of 300 people and injuries to another 500. The agreement was signed by 100 elders in the city of Parachinar. Furthermore, in late January the **Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud unilaterally declared an indefinite ceasefire** after the security forces started to withdraw from several key positions, and he stated that he was prepared to engage in negotiations with the new government. On the previous days the government had released seven people who had been arrested in a gesture of goodwill with the goal of reaching a peace agreement in North Waziristan. Also on the days prior to this, the Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud had agreed to mediation by a tribal *jirga* in order to reach a peace agreement with the government, but he stressed the need for an end to the military operations in South Waziristan and Swat. In mid-February, **the local authorities and tribal leaders of North Waziristan reached an agreement that strove to revive the peace agreement signed between the Taliban militias and the Pakistani government in September 2006.** The same tribal leaders (280 took part in the signing) will supervise implementation of the agreement, and it will be applicable to the entire region of North Waziristan.

In early April, the recently-appointed Prime Minister, Yusuf Raza Gilani, received a unanimous vote of confidence from the entire chamber (including the opposition loyal to President Pervez Musharraf), and he presented his programme for the first 100 days of government. The measures listed included the announcement that the government was willing to hold a dialogue process with all the groups that give up their weapons. Furthermore, Gilani announced the repeal of several laws that banned trade union activities or laws covering the tribal areas in the country, among other issues, as well as the approval of a freedom of information law. The government of the North-West Frontier province appointed a ministerial committee charged with starting a dialogue process with the different armed opposition groups. **The decision was adopted at the first meeting held by the provincial government, at which it decided to reactivate the *jirga* system – traditional assemblies – to resolve the issue of the armed violence.** The Pakistani government also asked the USA to refrain from conducting direct military actions in the tribal areas. In terms of the negotiations between the Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan and the local authorities, in April there were hopes that they might lead to the signing of a 15-point agreement. This agreement would call for an end to armed activities and would stipulate an exchange of prisoners, the withdrawal of the armed forces and resolution of the disputes using the local customs and the laws known as the Frontier Crimes Regulation. However, in May the Taliban commandant

Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the armed opposition group TTP, called off his participation in the peace negotiations with the government after it refused to withdraw its troops (around 100,000 soldiers) from the tribal areas, as the Taliban had requested. In order to overcome these obstacles, the government studied a peace plan for the province of the North-West Frontier with a budget of four billion dollars. The goal of the plan would be to cut back the armed insurgency by 30% within the next three years, and it also calls for setting up a traditional assembly in which provincial ministers and legislators would take part. It further calls for a 14,000-member increase in the police force. The plan includes police reforms, strengthening the magistracy, support for the regional coordination efforts and the establishment of ten regional peace conferences with religious leaders. The governments of the USA, Saudi Arabia, the EU, China and the Scandinavian countries have expressed their interest in this peace plan.

In mid-May, the government of the North-West Frontier province announced that it had reached an agreement with the Taliban insurgency led by Maulana Fazlullah in Swat which would enable peace to be restored in the zone. The Taliban militias had to agree to give up their armed actions and stop attacking governmental or military facilities. The 15-point agreement also included the withdrawal of the government troops deployed in the region. For its part, the government agreed to impose Sharia law in the zone, as well as to withdraw its charges against the Taliban, including the leader Maulana Fazlullah, who also secured permission to continue to run a radio station that he uses to promote the Taliban ideology. Also worth noting was the announcement of the **complete cessation of hostilities issued by the Taliban militia of Darra Adamkhel**, led by Commandant Tariq. The armed forces would stop their military operations, and in exchange the Taliban would stop their insurgent activities, ensuring passage along the so-called Indus Highway. **Along the same lines, the Taliban of Mardan** (a province in the North-West Frontier) also announced a ceasefire for this district. In June, these group dialogues experienced a moment of tension after an air attack by the US armed forces in the FATA caused the death of Pakistani soldiers. Despite this, the peace efforts continued. The government introduced two clauses in the draft agreement for **South Waziristan**, which it signed with the **Mehsud tribe**, that included a commitment from the Taliban militias to not violate Pakistani and Islamic law inside the country or abroad. The second clause stated that five million rupees had to be raised to pay the government for the losses generated by the armed insurgency. The draft agreement also stated that foreign soldiers must be expelled from Pakistani lands after the peace agreement was signed in a process that was to last two months. Likewise, the **Adam Khel Taliban militia** in the city of Darra (Orazkai Agency in the FATA) submitted 12 demands to the government to restore peace in the zone in the course of the first round of negotiations. A second round was expected after the government representatives who attended the talks informed the provincial government and military authorities about these demands. They included the withdrawal of the security forces from the city, the payment of compensation for the damage caused to the houses of the Taliban militants, the release of the arrested persons, educational and healthcare services, exemptions from certain taxes and the establishment of a quota system so that members of the Darra tribe could gain admittance to the faculties of engineering and medicine, among other issues.

During the third quarter, there were clashes and tensions derived from the US air attacks in the region, which led the government of Pakistan to issue a protest. A spokesman for **the Taliban of Mardan** (district in the North-West Frontier province) announced a ceasefire after several attacks and clashes with the security forces, and they accepted the provincial government's offer of negotiations. In late June, however, the security forces launched a military operation in the Khyber Agency (FATA) against the insurgent group Lashkar-i-Islam led by Mangal Bagh, who stated that negotiations would only be held with the government if they came hand-in-hand with a withdrawal of the security forces from the Bara Tehsil zone (FATA), as well as the release of all their arrested members and the reopening of the motorways. In July, a **spokesman from the Taliban armed opposition group Tehrik-i-Taliban in Swat** announced the suspension of the peace negotiations with the government until the 21st May agreement was fully implemented. Likewise, the clashes between rival factions of the Turi and Bangash tribes in the Kurram Agency (FATA) led to the death of seven people, while another 200 were injured. In just a few weeks, these

clashes had claimed more than 400 lives. In the Bajaur Agency (FATA) the clashes between the armed forces and the Taliban in the zone also increased, as did clashes against the Mamond tribe, which was still the Taliban insurgency's main ally. In contrast, in the month of September the **Taliban leaders from Swat (North-West Frontier province) agreed to withdraw from the Koza Bandai zone and allow the security forces to regain control in exchange for their withdrawal** as soon as they had de-mined tunnels, deactivated explosives and restored the electricity and telephone services. This is a zone that had been encircled by the armed forces for several days and was under the control of the Taliban militias loyal to Maulana Fazlullah. Another newsworthy event was the meeting of the Friends of Pakistan group in New York. This group includes the G-8, China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; the goal of the meeting was to draw up a proposal to reconstruct the tribal areas in the country. In October, the government of Pakistan stated that under no circumstances would it allow foreign armed forces to operate inside its borders. During September, **there had been repetition of the US attacks against the Taliban militias on Pakistani soil without the government of Pakistan having authorised the USA's presence and military actions.** The President, Asif Ali Zardari, issued an appeal to the US to acknowledge the state of war, and it stated the need to design a new government plan to handle this situation. Zardari further stated that **Pakistan would host an international conference on terrorism** which would debate proposals to counter this phenomenon with the participation of countries like Afghanistan, the USA, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the NATO countries.

In October, a traditional assembly of leaders (jirga) representing the clashing factions in the Kurram Agency (FATA) agreed to heed a ceasefire until 31st December and stated that they would cooperate with the government to achieve peace in the zone. The twelve clashing Sunni and Shiite tribes were represented at the jirga, and the local authorities also participated. The agreement stated that should any incident take place that would be considered a breach of the ceasefire, whoever was behind the incident would be turned over to the authorities. In November, the government of the North-West Frontier renewed its offer of dialogue with the Taliban if they agreed to lay down their weapons. The offer took place during a meeting held between a representative of the government who had already facilitated agreements with Taliban groups in other zones of the country and a jirga. The government also conveyed the message to a representative of the Pakistani armed Taliban organisation, Tehreek-i-Taliban, that negotiations with the faction led by Maulana Fazlullah could be resumed if they laid down their weapons. Late in the year, after meeting with several tribal leaders, the President, Asif Ali Zardari, stated that the air attacks against certain targets in the tribal zones of the country would continue. However, Zardari also expressed his desire to continue the fortnightly meetings with the tribal leaders to listen to their suggestions.

The peace process in 2009

The start of the year witnessed a surge in both the clashes and the rapprochements between the security forces and the insurgent Taliban groups in the zone of Swat. The United Nations stated that it forecasted 600,000 displaced persons due to these clashes in this year alone. In view of the situation, the Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani claimed that the government would change its counterinsurgency strategy in Swat in order to prevent collateral damage. Gilani stated that given the failure of dialogue, the government had no choice but to go the military route. Despite this, as a continuation of the strategy used the previous year to draw closer to certain Taliban groups, in mid-February the **government signed an agreement with the Taliban organisation Thereek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi** – headed by and a member of the Taliban coalition Therik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – in which **the government agreed to impose Sharia in the region of Malakand, which includes the Swat valley.** The Taliban announced a unilateral ten-day ceasefire with the goal of facilitating implementation of the agreement, and they noted that the possibility of permanently extending the ceasefire would depend on the government's fulfilment of the current agreement. The US government expressed its concern with the agreement reached in Swat, stating that it was tantamount to a surrender to the Taliban insurgency. **The government, in**

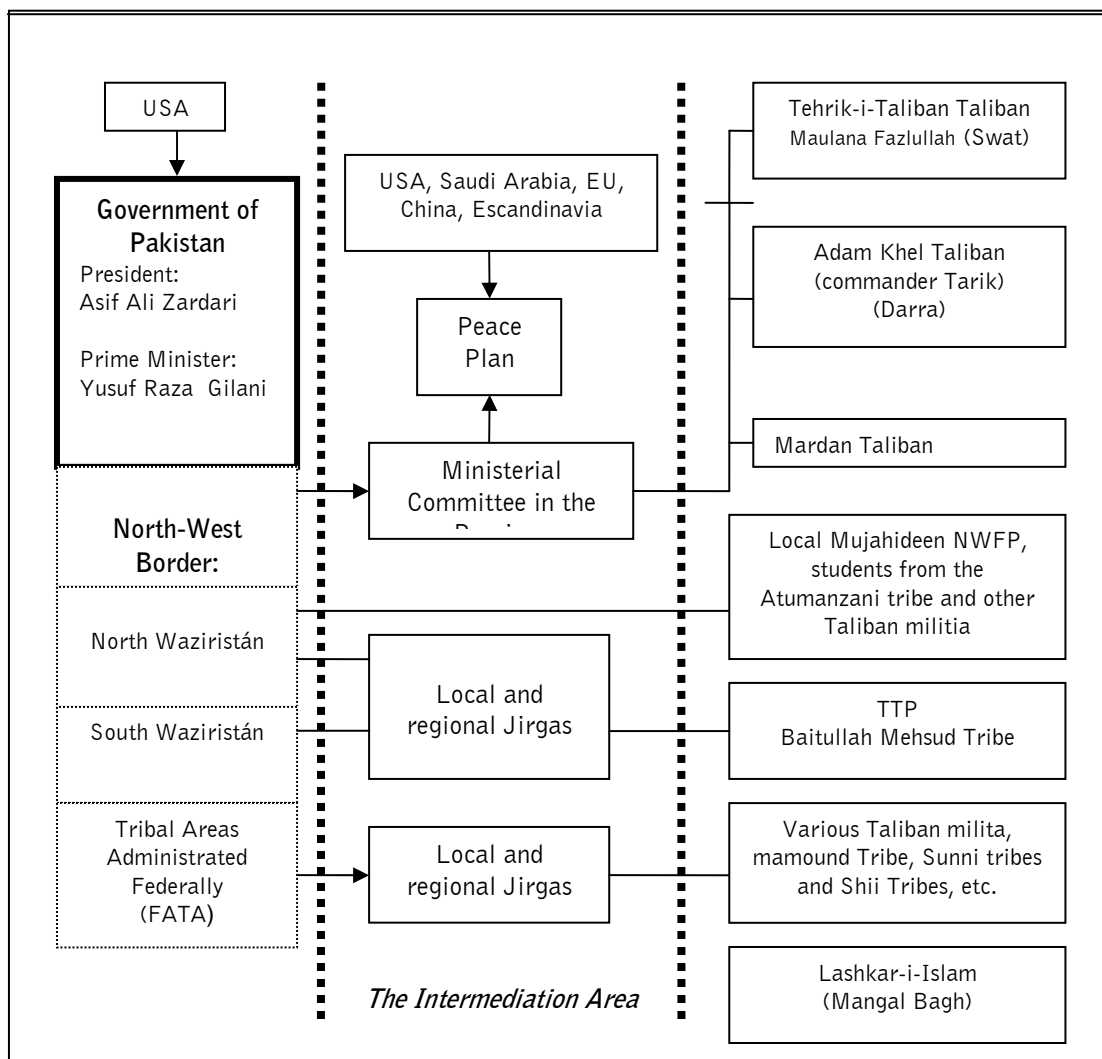
turn, denied that it had reached a peace agreement with the Taliban insurgency in Bajaur, in the Federally Administrative Tribal Areas. Official sources said that the military operation was proceeding as planned, despite the unilateral ceasefire declaration issued by the Taliban as a result of the negotiations held between the Mamond tribe and the government, and the announcement that for four days the security forces were not going to conduct any actions against the insurgency. A military operation had been underway in Bajaur since August, which had led to the death of 2,000 people and forced another 200,000 to be displaced.

In mid-April, the President, Asif Ali Zardari, approved implementation of *Sharia* in the division of Malakand, in what was described by many sectors as a capitulation to the Taliban militias. Malakand covers one-third of the province and includes Chitral, Dir, Swat, Buner and Shangla. The armed Taliban groups TNSM and T-i-T Swat expressed their satisfaction with this approval. Likewise, the Taliban claimed that they would not turn over their weapons in Swat as part of the agreement reached with the government to implement *Sharia* in the zone, as this would run counter to Islam. The Taliban announced that they would extend their struggle to other parts of the country until they achieved their objectives. However, in early May, the Pakistani security forces stepped up their military operation against the Taliban insurgency in the zone, especially in the districts of Swat, Malakand and Dir. According to armed forces sources, more than 750 insurgent had died in the course of this operation, in addition to 29 members of the security forces. Between 12,000 and 15,000 members of the armed forces were participating in this operation. The government stated that it calculated the number of Taliban active in Swat at 4,000, although it warned that there had been a rise in the recruitment of young natives to the zone who had been given weapons. **The intensification of the military operation took place after the Prime Minister addressed the armed forces on the 7th of May**, stating that the government's desire to sign a peace agreement with the Taliban insurgency and accepting the implementation of *Sharia* in certain zones had been misinterpreted. The government announced that it would earmark one million rupees to caring for the displaced population, and that it would give one job to every family that had lost a breadwinning member. According to ACNUR, the total figure of displaced persons since the operation began was 2.3 million, and every day another 126,000 people were added to this figure, turning it into one of the worst displacement crises in the world. The authorities from the Bajaur Agency, in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas, gave the people from the Mamond tribe six days to evacuate the zone before a military operation began to expel the Taliban insurgency. After attempts to get the elders to convince the members of the insurgent group Therik-i-Taliban Pakistan, the government stated that it was forced to start a military operation. In mid-June, there were major clashes between the security forces and the Taliban insurgents. The armed forces launched an offensive in South Waziristan against the zones controlled by the Taliban insurgency loyal to Commandant Baitullah Mehsud. Therefore, **the partial agreements reached in the past year were all broken**. In early July, the Minister of Information stated that the military operations in Swat and Bunner were completed, and that the security conditions in both districts were now such that the displaced people could return to their homes. In mid-August, the chief spokesperson for the armed group TTP, Maul Umar, who had been captured by the security forces, confirmed the death of the TTP's leader, Baitullah Mehsud, by an attack with US missiles early in the month. In the second half of November, the Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah, whom the armed forces claimed to have killed in June, reappeared after several months and escaped to Afghanistan. Fazlullah stated that large-scale attacks against the security forces in Swat would be waged in the near future.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partial agreements reached in the past year were all broken.

Websites of interest

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SRI LANKA

Context of the conflict

The conflict between the armed opposition group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government of Sri Lanka for the independence of the Tamil majority regions in the north of the country dates back to 1983. The underlying causes of this armed conflict lie in the social, political and cultural exclusion of the Tamil people since Sri Lankan independence in 1948. During the English colonisation of the island, the Tamils enjoyed certain social and economic privileges. However, since independence, the Sinhalese community, which is mainly Buddhist, has been in power and has carried out a policy of Sinhalisation. This has led to the exclusion of the Tamil minority, who are predominantly Hindu. India has always tried to prevent the island's division, as it fears that it will also receive demands for division. The LTTE was founded in 1972 as a response to acts of repression by the army, creating a parallel government in the Jaffna peninsula. It now has some 19,000 fighters, 20% of whom are women, although in the last year it has suffered numerous casualties and was defeated in military terms in 2009. It also has a considerable Diaspora in France, the United Kingdom, Canada and Norway.

Population: 20 million inhabitants
Area: 66,000 km ²
HDI: 102 (of 182)
GDP: 30,800 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$1,540
Deaths due to the conflict: 75,000 people
Armed actors: LTTE, TMVP
Facilitators: Norway, CHD (Switzerland)

Background to the peace process

In 1993, the first informal negotiations were held in Europe, with little success. The following year, then Prime Minister, Ch. Kumaratunga, accepted an ICRC initiative to arrange a meeting between leaders of the LTTE and a government delegation. This began a period in which the peace process was boosted. However, both parties resumed military offensives, causing many deaths and a great deal of destruction. This led the LTTE to lose much of the Tamil population's support. After successive declarations and violations of the ceasefire by the LTTE, in December 2001, a new unilateral declaration culminated in a ceasefire agreement signed between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in February 2002.

This agreement led to the beginning of a process of formal peace negotiations, under the auspices and facilitation of the Norwegian government. **Six rounds of negotiations were held before April 2003 in Thailand, Norway, Germany and Japan.** However, the LTTE abandoned the formal process when the USA banned the group from a preparatory meeting to plan a donor conference in Washington. This reduced the prospects of reaching a solution rapidly. The most positive progress in the process since 2002 is considered to be the ceasefire, which is still in effect, and the establishment of a **monitoring mission (SLMM)** made up of Nordic countries. There have been no serious armed confrontations in these four years. However, in 2005 violations of the agreement by the LTTE were reported.

The peace process has continuously been affected by political instability due to the successive changes in government and the numerous elections held. The lack of continuity in government policy on the peace process has also greatly hindered progress. At the beginning of the year, the LTTE informed the government that it was willing to cooperate in creating a joint mechanism for the distribution of aid to the people affected by the catastrophe (December 2004). This mechanism was called P-TOMS. Weeks later, paramilitary groups murdered five LTTE leaders. After new outbreaks of violence, the president of Sri Lanka approved the creation of an investigative commission, which was an unprecedented measure. According to the regional press, the UN Secretary-General was weighing the possibility of sending a Special Envoy to the country.

The LTTE stated it would be pleased with this measure, as it considered that a greater UN presence could help the process. An LTTE delegation visited Europe in March 2005.

During the second half of 2005, the process continued but there were difficulties as a result of a lack of confidence between the sides, because of the temporary suspension of the joint management of humanitarian aid by the Supreme Court in the month of July; because of a climate of suspicion resulting from the assassination of the Foreign Minister in August, as well as questions about the Norwegian mediation. Despite this situation, the ceasefire between both parties was respected even though the government rejected the LTTE's proposal to hold new negotiations in Oslo, after almost two and a half years without direct negotiations. The government insisted that the negotiations be held within the country. The President of Sri Lanka made a petition to the UN Special Advisor of the Secretary-General, L. Brahimi, in order to reactivate the process and increase the commitment to the United Nations, without replacing the facilitating role of Norway. In September 2005, the situation became tense when the EU banned any LTTE member from travelling to Europe. The EU announced that it was considering declaring the LTTE a terrorist group unless it gave clear signs of its involvement in the peace process. In October, the Prime Minister and presidential candidate, M. Rajapakse, again questioned Norway's role as facilitator. He also announced that he would not accept the LTTE's demands for autonomy and self-governance, but would consider a federalist model for the state. In the elections, and partly due to a boycott by the LTTE, the winner was M. Rajapakse, who requested that the peace process be renewed. Days previously, the head of the negotiations, J. Dhanapala, who wanted to stand for Secretary-General of the UN. The new President showed his willingness to enter into direct peace talks with the LTTE, proposing a **territorial formula framed on a unitarian State**, a named as Prime Minister R. Wickremanayake, considered to be a defender of the hard line against the LTTE.

In December 2005, several parties allied to the new government pressed for Norway to be replaced by India as facilitator in the process, given the stalemate since April 2003. For his part, the Japanese peace envoy, Y. Akashi, offered his country as a base for discussions between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. This proposal was initially accepted by the LTTE, which has always asked for talks to be held outside the country, although a few days later it rejected the idea, preferring to maintain the initial format for the talks, facilitated by Norway in Oslo. In spite of these issues and the insistence in some political circles that India play a greater role in the process, in mid-December the new president invited Norway to continue in its position as facilitator in the negotiations. Likewise, the donor community's strategy based on making financial aid conditional on substantial advances in the peace process did not produce the expected results.

The most noteworthy event of 2006 was the **resumption of direct negotiations** between the government and the LTTE, which had been suspended in 2003. These negotiations were held in February in a meeting at the **Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**, headquartered in Geneva, and with mediation by Norway. The only issue on the agenda was the revision of the ceasefire agreement. Both parties also pledged to curtail violence and to hold a new meeting in Geneva in the second half of April to continue discussing the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, which was rejected by the Sinhalese nationalist parties JHU and JVP. At the end of march, Norway nominated J. Hanssen-Bauer as new Special Envoy for the peace process, substituting E. Solheim. Nevertheless, the peace process was seriously damaged in the following months, despite the efforts by Norwegian diplomacy and the warnings from the international community. This deterioration was due to a major escalation in violence between the LTTE and the armed forces (giving rise new a low-intensity war), as well as by the struggles between the LTTE and the dissident faction led by colonel Karuna, and the break-off of negotiations due to a lack of security for the LTTE negotiators. In June, the Norwegian government offered its country for the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka to hold a meeting that would allow them to discuss the role to be played by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), whose members had been subject to serious risks in the previous months. However, ultimately the LTTE withdrew from

the meeting, alleging that the government delegation was too low level. In view of this climate of violence, **the EU and Canada included the LTTE on their lists of terrorist groups.** At the end of May, the country's president, M. Rajapakse, asked the Sinhalese political parties to draft a new plan that would involve ceding power to the Tamil minority in exchange for the establishment of peace and an end to violence.

In the third quarter, the process remained in a critical situation, with clashes between the armed forces and the LTTE despite the fact that in July, president Rajapakse invited the LTTE to hold talks to discuss what the LTTE wanted. The president remarked that he had appointed a group of experts from different sectors of society to draft a preliminary peace plan. Nevertheless, the LTTE claimed that the members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission from Denmark, Finland and Sweden had to leave the country by 1st September, as they could no longer be regarded as neutral after the EU included the LTTE on its list of terrorist organisations. In August, the government's deputy secretary of state for peace, K. Loganathan, was assassinated after being shot several times in an attack that was not claimed by any group. The president, M. Rajapakse, and the leader of the main opposition party, the UNP, R. Wickremesinhe, met after the latter announced that he would offer his support to the government to reach a resolution to the armed conflict that was plaguing the country. After the meeting, they announced that they had agreed to create a committee made up of five members from each party to formulate an action plan with the goal of reaching a consensus on the possible solution to the armed conflict. Despite the fact that the clashes between the LTTE and the armed forces continued intensely, both parties met in Geneva during the second half of October, although no agreement was reached. What is more, the LTTE asked for the motorway leading to Jaffna to be reopened as a condition for holding a new encounter with the government. In early October, the government claimed that it wanted to discuss substantial issues that would lead to a long-term solution, and the head of the Secretariat of Governmental Peace stated that the executive was considering **the possibility of a federal solution within the framework of a united, indivisible Sri Lanka.** During the second half of November, in his annual speech, the leader of the armed opposition group LTTE, V. Prabhakaran, declared that the group was left with no other option than to **pressure for the creation of an independent state**, in view of the repeated deceptions that LTTE had suffered on the part of the government. Following the victory of M. Rajapakse in the 2005 presidential elections, the LTTE said that it would grant the government a one-year period to find a political solution to the armed conflict or else it would be resumed. Following the abovementioned declarations, **the president, M. Rajapakse, indicated that he was prepared to hold direct talks with the leader of the LTTE.** The Norwegian envoy to Sri Lanka travelled to the country to meet with both parties when the government of Sri Lanka got in touch with him to ask him about the validity of the ceasefire agreement, after Prabhakaran's declarations. In December, however, the clashes and military operations against the LTTE continued, and the Norwegian Special Envoy, J. Hanssen-Bauer, had to cancel a meeting in Kilinochchi (general LTTE military headquarters) at the request of the government, which also stated that it might illegalise the LTTE.

At the beginning of the year, the peace process continued to deteriorate due to the escalation in violence in the preceding months. Germany even announced that it would provide no further aid to the government of Sri Lanka until headway was made in the process. The armed forces announced that they had taken control of some of the principal territories of the armed LTTE opposition group in the country, the city of Vakarai, at the time that the Defence Secretary and brother of the president, G. Rajapakse, indicated that he was willing to destroy all military installations of the LTTE, including those in areas they controlled under the terms of the ceasefire agreement in 2002. In view of the situation, Norway once again offered to provide its support to try to revive the peace process, which was now in serious jeopardy, and the Norwegian envoy for the peace process, H. Brattskar, met in Kilinochchi with representatives of the LTTE. In April, Pope Benedict XVI demanded that the Government of Sri Lanka should resume negotiations, but weeks later the leader of the political wing of the LTTE, S.P. Thamilselvan stated that the armed group would not return to peace negotiations until the armed forces had put an end to the military campaign against them. In August, **the dissident faction of the LTTE led by Karuna, officially**

known as the Tamileela Makkal Viduthalao Pulikal, declared its willingness to disarm for the first time provided its security was guaranteed beforehand. On previous occasions, the group had refused to surrender its weapons until the LTTE did likewise. At the beginning of November, the political wing of the LTTE, S.P. Thamilselvan died as the result of a bomb attack by the armed forces. Thamilselvan had been at the head of the delegations of the armed group that had participated in the peace negotiations with the government back in 2002, and he had served as the main political interlocutor of the armed group since then. He was the highest-ranking LTTE member who had died as a result of actions perpetrated by the armed forces. After this bombardment, the government expressed its readiness to continue bombing LTTE positions as a way of achieving peace in the country. The government also stated that it might once again illegalise the LTTE if the armed clashes and large-scale attacks continued. Should it be illegalised, this would be a major setback in the peace process as it would prevent negotiations from being held. In any event, as a demonstration of the deterioration in the situation, in the early days of 2008 the rupture of the ceasefire was made official in view of the magnitude of the clashes.

In early January, the government formally abandoned the ceasefire agreement that it had signed in 2008 under the auspices of Norway, which had been breached de facto in 2002. The ceasefire supervision mission, SLMM, also started its withdrawal from the country after six years of work, although the government stated that Norway's role in the country would have to be redefined. In other matters, Colonel Karuna, leader of the main dissident faction of the LTTE, was sentenced to nine months in prison in the United Kingdom after having been arrested in London for holding a diplomatic passport under a false identity. After many months of fighting against the LTTE, in March this group informed members of the TNA party that it was preparing to resume negotiations with the government as long as the government pledged to put an end to the military operations against it. Also in March the LTTE faction known as TMVP, already established as a political party, won the local elections held in the district of Batticaloa by a majority. This district had been under rebel control during the past decade, and the government had regained control of it thanks to the help of this splinter faction. Currently the TMVP remains armed and has an indeterminate number of child soldiers among its ranks. During the second quarter of the year, the government rejected Norway's requests to visit the areas under Tamil control, stating that any resumption of the negotiations would depend on this group abandoning weapons and following a calendar. In late July, the Tamils declared a ten-day truce, coinciding with the SAARC summit being held in Colombo. However, it refused to hold peace negotiations with the government, which in turn responded by stepping up its military counteroffensive in the northern part of the country. According to government sources, 6,000 members of the LTTE had died between January and August. In mid-October, the Prime Minister of India asked the government of Sri Lanka to put an end to the internal armed conflict. This request came after a group of Indian MPs, whose support was crucial to sustaining the governmental coalition, threatened to tender their resignations if the Indian government did not demand that Sri Lanka declare a ceasefire in the conflict that pitted it against the armed opposition group LTTE. These MPs, originally from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, claimed that the armed forces were expelling the Tamil people from their homelands and stated that they were defending not the LTTE but the Tamil people. However, in November, the government rejected the latest truce offer from the LTTE and stated that it would hold no negotiations with the armed organisation until it laid down its weapons. In early November, the armed opposition group TMVP (led by Colonel Karuna and created from a splinter group of the LTTE) agreed to disarm in the forthcoming months and join the armed forces. This is the first time that a process of this kind has taken place in Sri Lanka. The total number of soldiers in the TMVP is unknown, although it is estimated at around 6,000.

The rupture of the peace process in 2009

In Sri Lanka, despite the LTTE's being on the verge of military defeat early in the year, making it lose much of its scope of influence, India asked the government of Sri Lanka to begin a process that would lead to a political solution to the conflict. After the visit to the island by India's

Foreign Secretary, Shivshankar Menon, the Indian executive stated that the Sri Lankan president, Mahinda Rajapakse, had expressed his willingness to make headway towards a political process. Rajapakse had stated that the problems with ethnic relations would be solved via the political route, but that terrorism would be countered with military force. Menon met with representatives from all the political parties, including the main opposition party, UNP, and the Tamil party with close ties to the LTTE, the TNA. In February, **the armed forces denied that there was any possibility of a negotiated surrender of the LTTE**, and they stated that this surrender must be unconditional. It furthermore rejected the possibility of granting any kind of amnesty to the senior echelons of the LTTE, although it would be possible for lower-ranked soldiers in exchange for reintegration into civilian life. The Secretary of Defence stated that no ceasefire agreement would be signed either, as these agreements had been used by the LTTE in the past to rearm. The government of Sri Lanka also reported that it would open up five "social aid settlements" which would house Tamils fleeing from the jungle where the army had immobilised the rebels. These settlements were surrounded by wire and control posts, and neither young men or single people were allowed to leave them, which sparked criticisms from numerous human rights groups. In mid-March, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, **stated that** the government and the LTTE might be committing war crimes and asked both sides to put an immediate to the hostilities. In early April, the government reported that it had captured all the territory under LTTE control and stated that the end of the conflict was near. **The government of Sri Lanka asked Norway to fully abandon its role as a peace facilitator** after the Sri Lankan embassy in Norway suffered an attack which the Sri Lankan executive attributed to the LTTE. By the second half of April, 6,500 civilians had died and another 13,946 had been injured in the north of the country since early January, according to an internal United Nations document. The government's restrictions on access to the zone by independent observers, including journalists and human rights observers limited information on the scope of the human impact. In parallel, **the government vehemently rejected the LTTE's ceasefire declaration on the 26th of April**, asking the group to surrender or accept its destruction. **In late May**, the President, Mahinda Rajapakse, declared the end to the armed conflict one day after the death of the LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was announced after 26 years of clashes. In a televised message to the country, Rajapakse stated that the ethnic and national divisions must come to an end. However, the Secretary of Defence later rejected the LTTE's offer to launch a democratic process after its military defeat. The armed group, which acknowledged the death of its leader for the first time, expressed its willingness to start a democratic process to defend the human rights of the Tamil people. However, the President, Mahinda Rajapakse, stated that this was not an option. Spokespeople for the army reported that in the 34 months that the latest phase in the armed conflict had lasted, 22,000 members of the LTTE and 6,200 soldiers had died. In mid-June, **the LTTE announced the formation of a provisional transition government to achieve self-determination** for the Tamil people, and that a committee led by exiled Tamil lawyer Rudrakumar Viswanathan would spearhead the process.

In mid-August, the new leader of the LTTE, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, was arrested in Bangkok and sent to Sri Lanka, according to military sources. Members of the LTTE named Pathmanathan their new leader in July, after Velupillai Prabhakaran was killed in May during the military offensive that put an end to the armed group. The government of Sri Lanka pledged to not allow the armed Tamil movement to resurge. In mid-September, however, exiled political activists from the LTTE announced that they would form a government in exile, soon after the leader of the group, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, was arrested. The new government would have headquarters in several of the countries where the Tamil Diaspora is living in exile. The LTTE announced that it would hold elections next April.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government of Sri Lanka asked Norway to fully abandon its role as a peace facilitator. • In late May, the President, Mahinda Rajapakse, declared the end to the armed conflict

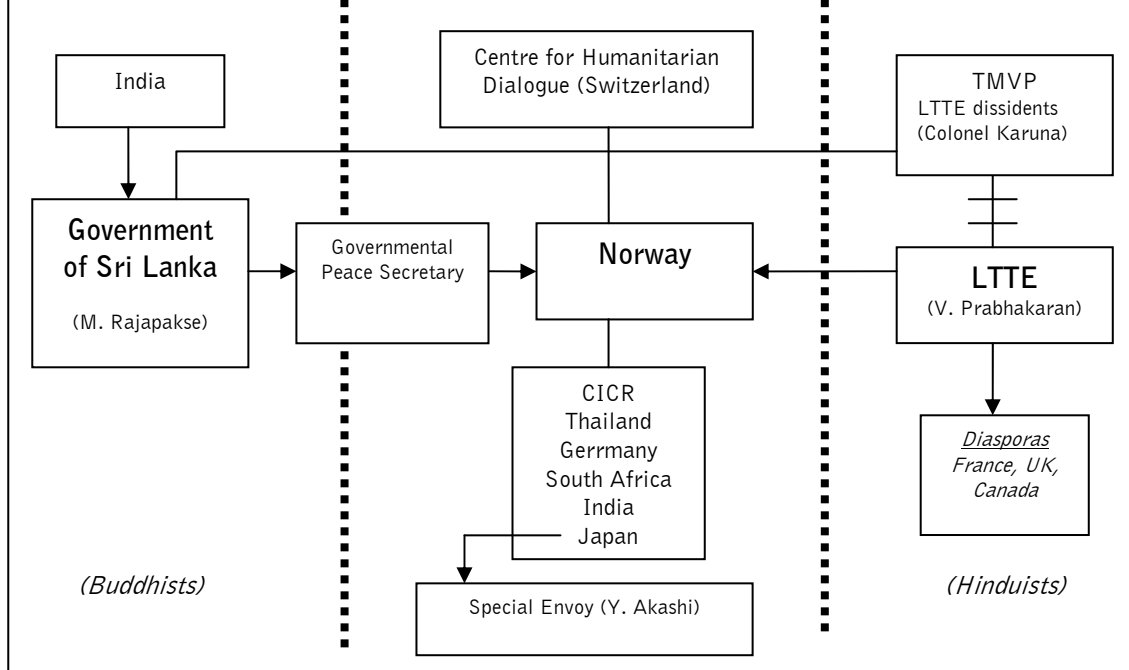
one day after the death of the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was announced after 26 years of clashes.

- The LTTE announced the formation of a provisional transition government to achieve self-determination for the Tamil people.

Websites of interest

- Berghof Center (www.berghof-center.org)
- Conciliation Resources (www.c-r.org)
- Foundation for Co-Existence (www.fco.ex.com)
- Government (www.priu.gov.lk)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- LTTE (www.ltteps.org) (www.lttepeacesecretariat.com)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- SATP (www.satps.org)
- South Asia Monitor (www.csis.org)
- Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (www.slmn.lk)
- Sri Lanka News Update (www.formin.gov.lk/news)
- Tamil Nation (www.tamilnation.org)
- Tamil Net (www.tamilnet.com)
- www.nitharsanam.com
- www.peaceinsrilanka.org

The Intermediation Area in 2008



b) East Asia

CHINA (People's Republic of China)

In this section we shall briefly comment on the recent progress in relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan and Tibet, setting aside the tensions that the People's Republic of China may have within some of its regions.

Taiwan (Republic of China)

Context of the conflict

In the 17th century, the island of Taiwan (formerly Formosa) shifted to the hands of the Ming Dynasty, which organised a first wave of Chinese colonists to the island. In 1895, after the First Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan came to depend on Japan. This situation changed at the end of World War II, when the island once again fell under the fold of the People's Republic of China. Despite this, since 1945 the island of Taiwan has been under the regime of the Republic of China, led by the Kuomintang (nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Chek), who lost the civil war (1945-1949) against the Communist Party of China. Even though in practice Taiwan has been an independent state since 1949, the People's Republic of China does not recognise it and has waged a political and diplomatic dispute to get the island back as part of the People's Republic of China. After a long dictatorship, in the 1990s the island underwent a democratising process with economic support from the United States and Japan. In the 2008 presidential elections, Ma Ying Jeou of the Kuomintang was chosen President, and a rapprochement between the island and mainland China got underway. The island measures 36,192 km² and has around 23 million inhabitants, and its average income is far higher than that of mainland China. For years, Taiwan has had no seat on the UN General Assembly, as the People's Republic of China holds one, and is also on the Security Council.

The candidate for the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), Ma Ying Jeou, won 58.4% of the votes in the presidential elections early in 2008 against the candidate from the party which until then had been official, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), who won 41.5% of the votes. After eight years of tense relations between China and Taiwan, **the virtual new President was more conciliatory with the Chinese government than his predecessor in the role**, Chen Shui-bian, had been. At times Chen had insinuated his intention to seek independence for the island. Ma Ying Jeou expressed his support for creating a common market, setting up direct flights, encouraging mutual investments and studying the possibility that Chinese tourists could visit Taiwan. Ma Ying Jeou also proposed that the **region be demilitarised**. According to numerous analysts, these measures arose from the need to reactivate the Taiwanese economy, which had suffered signs of a slow-down in 2008. However, the new president refused to start negotiations to reunify both countries. Late in the year, for the first time in almost 60 years, both governments agreed to set up direct air and sea routes. Until then, boats and planes had to travel through third countries. The agreement, which also called for increasing the number of passenger flights to more than 100 per week, would enable the costs of trade exchanges between the two countries to be cut. Precisely several followers of the former president issued statements to protest this agreement, as they believed that it would lead Taiwan to be excessively economically dependent on China.

The peace process in 2009

In early March, the Prime Minister of China expressed the government's willingness to engage in talks with Taiwan over political and military issues with the goal of achieving peace between both

<p>Population China: 1,318 million inhabitants; Taiwan: 23 million; Tibet: 2.7 million</p> <p>China surface area: 9,635,000 km²; Taiwan: 34,700 km²; Tibet: 1,228,000 km²</p> <p>HDI China: 92 (of 182); Tibet: (132)</p> <p>GDP China: 3,126,000 million dollars; Taiwan: 34,700 million dollars</p> <p>Income per inhabitant China: \$2,370 ; Taiwan: \$15,000</p>
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parties. In turn, the Taiwanese government expressed its desire to address economic relations and then political issues later. According to some sources, many Taiwanese people's continuing sense of rejection of continental China means that it is unlikely for political affairs to be addressed in the near future. In the second half of April, China and Taiwan reached an agreement to allow investment across the Taiwan Straits in a new effort to improve the relations between both countries. The agreement was signed by the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits. In a joint communiqué, both representatives promised a normalisation in economic relations across the Strait. This was the third agreement between the clashing parties since the new government of Taiwan came to power. The communiqué also stated that both parties had a unique, historic chance and that they were promoting economic investment from China in Taiwan. The Taiwanese economy entered into a recession last year. In the second half of October, it was announced that **China and Taiwan would have permanent representatives in the other country**, a measure that was part of the distension process launched after the Taiwanese President, Ma Ying-jeou, was sworn in the previous year. According to Taipei government sources cited by the press, the decision to open these permanent representations was triggered by the significant rise in the flow of tourists in both directions.

Tibet

Context of the conflict

China has directly governed Tibet since 1920. In 1950, one year after having won the Chinese civil war, the Communist government of Mao Tse Tung invaded Tibet, and throughout the following decade it stepped up its military, cultural and demographic pressure on the region, putting down several attempted uprising, with thousands of people dying in the process. In view of the brutality of the occupation, the Dalai Lama and tens of thousands of people fled Tibet and went into exile in other countries, especially Nepal and northern India, where the Tibetan government has its headquarters in exile. In recent decades, both the Dalai Lama and numerous human rights organisations have condemned the repression, demographic colonisation and attempts at acculturation against the Tibetan population, part of whose territory has the status of autonomous region.

Background to the peace process

With regard to the tensions and clashes that took place during the second quarter in Tibet between the Tibetan monks and the Chinese government, in mid-April a group of human rights experts from the UN expressed their concern about the mass arrests in the autonomous region of Tibet and surrounding areas, and it asked the authorities to allow international observers to have access to the area. A representative of the Dalai Lama declared that he had sent a letter to the President of China, Hu Jintao, offering to send his delegates to Tibet to attempt to dampen and redirect the social and political tensions that had been besetting the region for the past several weeks. In early May, envoys from the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama, in this case represented by Lodi Gyari, met in Beijing to address management of the crisis. The Dalai Lama declared that he had noticed a degree of openness in the Chinese government and that he was optimistic about the future after hearing the invitation to dialogue issued by the Chinese President, Hu Jintao. On a visit to the United Kingdom, the Dalai Lama declared that **the government in exile was not demanding Tibet's independence, rather a type of autonomy** in which the central Chinese government could keep certain competences such as foreign affairs and defence, while the Tibetan people could take charge of issues like education, religious policy and the environment. The top Tibetan authority admitted that some sectors of Tibetan society were openly advocating independence. The Dalai Lama even expressed his willingness to attend the Beijing Olympics if a long-term solution to the Tibet issue were reached beforehand.

In late June, the Chinese government confirmed a new round of talks in Beijing with two of the Dalai Lama's special envoys (Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen). The Chinese government placed a series of conditions in order for a dialogue to be held with the Dalai Lama's special envoys this year. The conditions were that both the Dalai Lama and his followers would explicitly pledge to not boycott the Olympics, that they would adopt measures to put an end to the violent activities of the Tibetan Youth Congress and that they would oppose any argument or activity in favour of Tibet's independence. For its part, the Tibetan government in exile bemoaned China's lack of impetus to embark on a substantive dialogue process. In September, the Chinese government criticised a resolution adopted by the two main parties in the US Senate in which they asked Beijing and the Tibetan government in exile to initiate a dialogue process without preconditions that would address the offences to the Tibetan people and lead to greater autonomy for Tibet. Beijing accused the USA of encouraging Tibet in its claims for independence. The Dalai Lama, in turn, called an international meeting with Tibetan leaders in exile and representatives of some NGOs to analyse and revitalise the talks with the Chinese government. In early October, the Chinese government published a report in which it accused the Dalai Lama of wanting to reinstate a theocratic, feudal system in all the regions inhabited by the Tibetan people, what is called "Greater Tibet". The Dalai Lama denied the accusations and once again stated that his aspirations were for Tibet to have greater autonomy. For its part, the chief envoy of the Tibetan government in exile, Kelsang Gyaltsen, declared that the situation of political and cultural repression in Tibet was similar to what happened in China during the Cultural Revolution and that it had deteriorated since the end of the Olympics. Kelsang Gyaltsen also stated that to date no advances had been made in the three rounds of negotiations that had been held since July. In October, a new round of negotiations got underway between the Chinese government and two of the Dalai Lama's envoys, who were also the Tibetan representatives to the governments of the USA and Switzerland. This was the eighth round of negotiations since 2002 and the first after the Olympics. In parallel, for the first time the British government recognised the Chinese government's sovereignty over Tibet, although it clearly supported the Dalai Lama's calls for autonomy and the current negotiations between both parties.

In November a meeting of the Tibetan exiles was held in the northern Indian city of Dharamsala, where the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, lives. This meeting, which brought together around 500 Tibetan leaders in exile, aimed to review all the aspects of the current situation in Tibet with respect to China. Some of the delegates attended the meeting stating that negotiations should continue in order to achieve autonomy for the region, while others believed that this avenue had been exhausted and that they should now strive for independence. The Prime Minister in exile, Samdhong Rinpoche, stressed that if the groups meeting in Dharamsala decided that independence was the only option, the Tibetan people could pressure China for independence. In response, the Chinese government declared that it would never consent to independence for Tibet, although it would be willing to consider allowing the Dalai Lama to return. Beijing kept accusing the Dalai Lama of having a hidden secessionist agenda and of instigating the violence in Tibet. Furthermore, it believed that the so-called "middle way" propounded by the top Tibetan leader (which consists of recognising China's sovereignty over Tibet but advocating greater autonomy in politics, religion and culture) was ultimately a strategy to win independence in the long term. At the end of that month, the Chinese government called off the 11th EU-China summit as a sign of protest over the intention of the French president and rotating President of the EU, Nicolas Sarkozy, to meet with the Dalai Lama in Poland. In view of all of this, the Dalai Lama declared that the negotiating process was frozen until Beijing showed signs of political will.

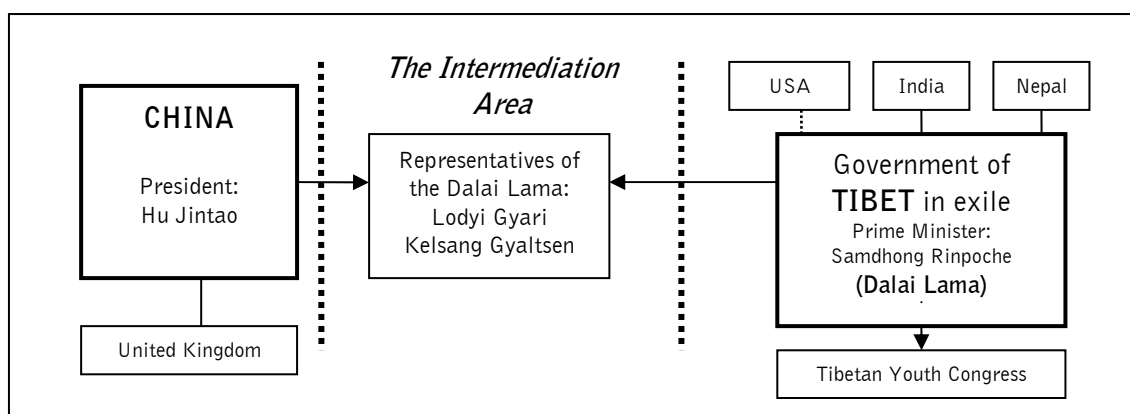
The peace process in 2009

With regard to the conflict over Tibet, in late February, dovetailing with the 50th anniversary of the occupation of the region, the Chinese government published a report declaring its refusal to grant Tibet independence or high levels of autonomy, and accusing the Dalai Lama of sowing instability in the region. In late May, a representative of the Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyaltsen, declared that the Tibetan government in exile was prepared to resume talks with the Chinese

government; these talks had been blocked since the previous October. Kelsang Gyaltzen once again recalled that the main demand, autonomy not secession, was in full agreement with the Chinese constitution. He also declared that encounters between groups of Chinese and Tibetan people were being held in order to improve communication and understanding between both sides. In mid-August, the Dalai Lama stated that he would await signals from Beijing. Between 2002 and 2008, nine rounds of negotiations had been held between Chinese civil servants and representatives of the Dalai Lama. In mid-September, a delegation from the US government met in Dharamsala (India) with the Dalai Lama and with the Tibetan government in exile to exchange impressions on the present and future status of Tibet. According to several sources, the Dalai Lama had made clear his intention to gain greater autonomy (but not independence) for Tibet and had expressed his desire to meet with the President of the United States, Barack Obama, on his trip to the USA in October. Also in the realm of international diplomacy, the British Foreign Minister announced a forthcoming visit to Tibet in order to learn about the situation in the region firsthand. In turn, the Chinese government expressed its annoyance with the Czech government for having sponsored an event in which the Dalai Lama participated along with the exiled Uighur leader, Rebiya Kadeer. However, the Dalai Lama praised the non-violent struggle for greater autonomy for Xinjiang being spearheaded by Rebiya Kadeer.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prime Minister of China expressed the government's willingness to engage in talks with Taiwan over political and military issues with the goal of achieving peace between both parties. • The Chinese government published a report declaring its refusal to grant independence or high levels of autonomy to Tibet, although a representative of the Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyaltzen, declared that the Tibetan government in exile was prepared to resume talks with the Chinese government.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China Today (www.chinatoday.com/gov/a.htm) • Government of the People's Republic of China (english.gov.cn) (spanish.china.org.cn) • Government of Taiwan (www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website) • Tibet Office in New York (www.tibetoffice.org/sp)



c) Southeast Asia

THE 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, impunity against the serious violation of human rights, 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 socioeconomic discrimination against the southern population, and particularly against the people who live in the island of Mindanao and on the Sulu archipelago. This discrimination has led to regional nationalism, as two-thirds of the country's Muslims live in this region. Two thirds of the country's Muslim population also lives in this region. In the 1990s, a new radical terrorist group, **Abu Sayaf**, emerged which primarily operates on the Sulu archipelago. This group aims 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.

Population: 88 million inhabitants
Area: 300,000 km ²
HID: 105 (of 182))
GDP: 142,100 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$1,620
Deaths due to the conflict: 120,000
Displaced persons: 750,000
Armed actors: NPA, MILF, MNLF, Abu Sayyaf
Facilitators: Norway, Malaysia, Libya, Iglesia, OCI, FCD, UNPO, CDH, Arabia, Qatar, Arabia

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 for several organisations 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 NDF is led by José María Sison "Joma", in exile in Holland. 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)**. The MNLF was 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. On the other hand, it is important to mention that in the month of October 2005 the Government announced the signing of a **cessation of hostilities agreement with the armed opposition group RPM-M**, a faction that had broken away from the NPA a few years back and which had been holding talks with the Government over the last two years.

Background to the peace process

Two years after rejecting the 1996 Manila Agreements, the MILF secured Libya's support to begin negotiations with the Philippine government. However, this attempt was not successful. In 2001, the president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, offered to hold negotiations outside the country. She also suspended military operations and began talks in Malaysia under the auspices of Libya. These talks led to a ceasefire. Despite several major clashes with the armed forces, talks were resumed in Malaysia in 2003. Throughout 2004, the government of the Philippines and the MILF held exploratory meetings in Malaysia, in which a three-point initial agenda was set. This

involved: security, rehabilitation of the conflictive areas and protection of the ancestral lands on Mindanao Island. In August, the MILF began an information campaign, informing its members of its desire to reach an agreement with the government. At the beginning of 2005, talks between the government and the MILF armed opposition group continued to show progress, though factions of the armed group were accused of maintaining links with Jemaah Islamiya. Talks continued during the second quarter of the year with mediation from Malaysia, and important advances were made on social, economic and political issues, particularly as regards key issues such as the management of natural resources and land. Experiences in other countries were analysed in the talks (Timor-Leste, Sudan, Bosnia). It seemed that the MILF had given up its claims for independence, while at the same time it demanded self-governance formulas that would provide a greater degree of autonomy in the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In May 2005, the MILF announced its intention to help the government in tasks such as maintaining safety and public order in the Muslim communities in the south of the country, where organised crime groups had proliferated.

The government placed a high value on the MILF's almost two years of ceasefire. It demonstrated its trust by reaching a peace agreement with the group before the end of 2005. In May, the MILF held a large assembly in the south of the country which was attended by more than half a million people. The assembly acted as a forum for its members and sympathisers to discuss the principle challenges facing the Bangsamoro people and the strategies to be adopted in the quest for solutions. New Malaysian observers joined the international monitoring team for the 2003 ceasefire. This team also included military observers from Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Libya. In September 2005, the government and the MILF began a new informal round of talks in Malaysia, dealing with issues such as governance and the ancestral lands of the Bangsamoro people. Other questions, such as the extent and type of autonomy to be granted to Mindanao and the role of the police and armed forces, were postponed. In December, the Swiss organisation Geneva Call organised a course for several dozen MILF leaders on International Humanitarian Law, anti-mine legislation and protecting children in armed conflicts.

In February 2006, a new round of talks was held in Malaysia between the government and the MILF to debate economic matters, including the distribution of profits from the exploitation of natural resources in Sulu and Mindanao. The Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process initiated a series of regional encounters in the main cities on Mindanao to tell the civilian population about the peace negotiations. In March, after a delay due to the state of emergency declared by the president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, due to an apparent coup attempt just hours before the massive demonstrations called to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the popular uprising that ended the Marcos dictatorship, a new round was held in which the ownership of the ancestral lands of the Bangsamoro people was discussed. However, no definitive agreement was reached. At that time, there were speculations as to possible dissidence within the MILF, in a struggle to displace Murat Ebrahim from the leadership position within the group. During the second quarter, the negotiation rounds continued in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), addressing the issue of ownership of the ancestral lands of the Bangsamoro people (concept, territory, resources, areas of influence and governance of the MILF), which became the main stumbling block in the negotiations. In late April, the USA pledged 30 million dollars to reconstruct Mindanao if a peace agreement was reached, which president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo estimated might take place before the end of the year. Japan is another country that has invested a great deal in reconstruction on the island.

During the third quarter of 2006, the negotiations suffered from delays in reaching an agreement on ownership of the ancestral lands, and several clashes took place on the island of Mindanao. Thus, expectations that an agreement would be reached by the end of the year were quashed. MILF sources stated that they would nonetheless not tolerate violations of the ceasefire by any lower officers in the group. In August, the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, claimed that they were willing to withdraw their demand for independence, but that they wanted the Muslim population to decide how it wished to be governed. He also said that the Autonomous Region of

Muslim Mindanao was a structure created unilaterally by the government. The leader of the armed group claimed that they hoped that in the next round of negotiations scheduled to be held in Malaysia, the government would make a new offer, and that the MILF would ask that the Christian colonists return the lands expropriated from the Bangsamoro people. In October, the archbishop of Manila deemed it critical for there to be previous recognition of the right to self-determination in order to open up realistic possibilities; among these he suggested reaching a temporary agreement setting up a five-year "experimental" period of Moro self-governance to later rectify the problems that arise, reach a definitive agreement and hold a referendum only in those areas where there are disputes. In November, the advisor on the peace process, Jesús Dureza, announced that the government had sent the MILF a new proposal to return to the negotiating table through the government of Malaysia, after negotiations had been stalled for over a year. The government's latest proposal was received warmly by the armed group, as, according to its lead negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, it cites "the right to self-determination". The Joint Coordination Committee for the End to Hostilities (which encompasses the respective government committees and the MILF), the International Monitoring Team (IMT) spearheaded by Malaysia, and the NGO Bantay Ceasefire Group reactivated the Joint Monitoring and Assistance Team (JMAT), whose purpose is to ensure that security and stability are upheld in Maguindanao (southern Mindanao), as well as to ensure that the 50,000 displaced persons in the region could return to their homes. In mid-December, the MILF claimed that it was willing to embark on new talks with the government in January after both parties held consultations in Malaysia. The MILF was demanding thousands of plots of land that it regards as its ancestral, while the government was only willing to grant them 600 plots. Another area of friction between both parties is the mechanism for validating the new political entity, as the MILF rejects the possibility of holding a referendum, as required by the government and obligated by the constitution. Despite these problems, top-ranking leaders of the MILF declared that talks might be resumed, and they heralded US president George W. Bush's announcement that the country was stepping up its disbursement of economic aid to serve as an impetus for the peace and development of Mindanao, once a political agreement is signed between the armed group and the Philippine government.

During the first few days of January 2007 there were simultaneous explosions of three bombs in different cities in Mindanao, causing seven deaths and around thirty injured. The MILF denied any involvement in the attacks and the police suspect that it is a case of individual interested in interrupting the peace process of this group with the Government, which have come to a deadlock over the question of the ancestral territories of the Bangsamoro people. At this point, the MILF declared that it had already presented the proposal of the Moro people as a response to that which was passed by the Government in December. The MILF assured that they had drawn up a proposal based on historical, moral and pragmatic criteria; in other words based on the fact that Mindanao is currently inhabited by a majority of Christians. According to internal protocols within the negotiating process, both sides had to submit their proposals to the Malaysian government, which acted as facilitator. The Peace Commissioner, Jesus Dureza, announced the launch of a committee responsible for resolving ground conflicts between the members of the MILF and the civilian population. In March, the MILF positively viewed the latest Government proposal, since Manila would have offered the right to self-rule for the first time to the Bangsamoro people, although it ruled out beforehand any possibility of independence. . The Government would be prepared to grant them a self-government formula, except in the areas of defence, foreign affairs, currency and postage. The Government also declared that the peace negotiations with the group could be resumed following the legislative and local elections on 14 May. For its part, the MILF declared that despite the situation of *impasse* into which the negotiating process had entered since the end of 2006 as a result of the disagreement over the ancestral territories of the Bangsamoro people, informal contacts between both sides had been maintained in recent months. Another of the aspects that distanced the sides was the holding of a referendum to include the said community in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (RAMM), an option rejected by the MILF.

In June 2007, some 20 members of the MILF and other military groups met to exchange opinions on the conflict and to promote confidence between the two sides, an event that was observed by the governments of the USA, Canada, Japan, Malaysia and by the EU, and which preceded the reopening of peace talks between Manila and the MILF. For its part, the International Women's Peace and Solidarity Mission to Basilan and Mindanao, made up of women from Pacific Asia, called on the Philippine Government and the MILF to resume peace talks immediately. The Australian Government expressed interest in September in playing a more direct role in the peace process, including participation in the IMT, which Japan and Canada have recently joined.

At the beginning of October, Malaysia made a call to the government and the MILF to make progress with peace discussions, and threatened to withdraw their IMT observers if no progress was made. Weeks later the Government and the MILF agreed to renew formal peace talks in mid-November after they were blocked for 13 months over the question of the ancestral lands of the Moro people. **The other two points, one security and rehabilitation and development, had already been agreed and even partially implemented.** Without going into details about the formula that would have enabled an *impasse* in the negotiations to be overcome, the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, indicated that some of the areas of the Muslim majority bordering the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (made up of six of the 27 provinces of Mindanao and another two cities) would become immediately incorporated into the so-called Bangsamoro Legal Entity, while the non-adjointing ones would be incorporated following a period of transition. **In mid-December the meeting in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) between the government and the MILF ended, with no definitive agreement.** In this latest round of negotiations the sides needed to finalise the principles of agreement for the four aspects of the ancestral domains: concept, resources, governability and territory. However, the MILF considered that the government panel had introduced in its proposal some new elements that had not been discussed. The MILF also reported the existence of political sectors attempting to boycott the negotiating process. For its part, the government considered that the future creation of the Bangsamoro Legal Entity (basically an expansion of the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao) would require a plebiscite as established under the constitution. According to certain sources, neither delegation managed to coincide, despite the fact that they were staying in the same hotel in Kuala Lumpur. At the end of the year, dozens of leaders from the indigenous populations of Mindanao, known as the Lumad, declared that they would not oppose the current peace process between the government and the MILF, but at the same time they claimed from the government the territories that were not included in the future Bangsamoro Legal Entity called for by the MILF. Despite the fact that both of the peace panels have Lumad representatives, the leaders demanded from the Executive of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo **parallel negotiations to discuss the ancestral domains of the Moro people and the delimitation of territories.** Given that situation the Government and the MILF indicated that the indigenous Lumad populations would have the option of deciding freely whether to become integrated in the Bangsamoro Legal Entity or not, days after the indigenous leaders expressed some fears in that respect and called for greater participation in the peace process.

In 2008, the then presidential advisor for the peace process, Jesus Dureza, declared at the beginning of January that the Government was going to propose reforms to the Constitution that would be necessary to impel the creation of the federal State in which the Moro population could exercise a high level of self-government. In terms of the government's proposal that an eventual peace agreement should be approved by the congress, **the MILF stated that it would not accept a peace agreement whose contents the Parliament had the authority to amend,** as happened with the 1996 agreement between the government and the MNLF. In the next few months several participants in the conflict showed optimism for the future of the peace process. The International Monitoring Team declared that the conditions on the ground were good enough for the peace talks to be resumed, and even for a peace agreement between both parties to be signed. In mid-February, the US ambassador, Kristie Kenney, met the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, just as other members of the embassy had been doing since 2005.

In March, tens of thousands of MILF members met in a camp in the province of South Lanao to debate the current status of the peace process and the strategy to pursue in the forthcoming months. The leaders denied that there had been in-fighting within the upper reaches of the organisation. **The leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, denied that there had been arguments among the leadership of the organisation and declared that negotiation was the most realistic pathway for putting an end to the conflict, and he stated that an agreement could still be reached before the end of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's mandate.** The Government had previously warned about the risk that the most intransigent factions of the MILF could distance themselves from the official line of the group and start a unilateral campaign of violence if the peace process did not advance or if the independent status of Mindanao was not recognised. However, in early May the MILF expressed its satisfaction with the imminent arrival in Mindanao of several negotiators who participated in the conflict-resolution in Northern Ireland, who according to some media sources had offered to help restart the negotiations between the MILF and the government. Furthermore, a delegation of 11 EU ambassadors (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Holland, Spain, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom, France and the EU) met with the top leaders and negotiating team of the MILF to address the current juncture of the negotiation process and learn firsthand about the group's proposals on ownership of the ancestral domain of the Moro people and the so-called Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.

In late July, the government and the MILF declared that they would sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Ancestral Domain on 2008th August in Malaysia. This had been the most controversial aspect of the negotiations in recent years, but in the end the MOA was not signed. Both parties also pledged to reach a global peace agreement within the next 15 months that would include the three main points on the negotiation agenda: security; rehabilitation and development; and ancient domains. Finally, the MILF and the government also agreed that one year after the MOA were signed (August 2009) a referendum would be held in 735 communities with Muslim majorities adjacent to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and by six cities in the province of North Lanao, to decide which ones would join the future Bangsamoro Juridical Entity. The same referendum would be held in another 1,459 communities, albeit at least 25 years after the signing of the definitive peace agreement. However, in early August **the Supreme Court temporarily suspended the Memorandum of Understanding on Ancestral Domain just hours before the Philippine government and the MILF were ready to sign the agreement in Malaysia.** In the previous months, several local politicians had encouraged civil protests against the said agreement and had called for its suspension.

Given the breakout of violence resulting from this decision by the Supreme Court, **at the beginning of September the Government dissolved its negotiating panel, put an end to negotiations with the MILF (after 11 years of peace process) and declared that the new Government strategy would be one of direct dialogue with the local communities.** In spite of this negative atmosphere, at the end of September both parties publically declared that they had not abandoned the peace process either formally or finally. The Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, Hermogenes Esperon, met in Malaysia with the facilitator of the peace negotiations, Othman Abdul Razak, whom he gave a document with four main points. The first point was that the peace process should continue. The second was that the MILF must show greater control over some of its commandants, like Umbra Kato and Bravo. The third was that the Memorandum of Understanding would be one of the main reference points once the talks had been resumed. And finally, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process has to be a priority on the government's agenda. In mid-October, **the Supreme Court declared the Memorandum of Understanding on Ancestral Territories to be unconstitutional by eight votes to seven,** although it did state that an agreement may be renegotiated. Subsequently, the MILF stated that it did not consider the Supreme Court's ruling to be binding, and that the Memorandum of Understanding on Ancestral Domain was the key document for resolving the conflict in Mindanao. In parallel, various civilian organisations called on the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, to intervene to force peace talks to resume. The MILF also asked for Ki-moon's participation and declared that

it was willing to resume the peace talks as long as there was an international organisation to facilitate them and supervise the commitments made.

At the end of that month, the government of Malaysia withdrew its troops from the International Monitoring Team (IMT), the international team that had been supervising the ceasefire agreement between the government and the MILF since 2004 and whose mandate ended on 30th November. Since the month of April the Malaysian government had announced its intention to withdraw if there were no significant advances in the negotiation process between the government and the MILF. Despite the fact that towards the end of the year there were still crossed accusations, in December the government nominated a new negotiating panel and declared that informal peace talks could resume. A short period beforehand, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had returned from a trip to Qatar where she had requested the **participation of the Qatari Government as international guarantor of the peace process**. For its part, at the end of the year the MILF declared that it was prepared to renew negotiations on four conditions: 1) the military operations against the MILF in Mindanao were stopped; 2) Malaysia continued as the facilitating country; 3) investigation by the IMT of all violations of the ceasefire since 1 July; and 4) there were international guarantees to resolve the problem of the ancestral domain.

With regard the NPA, it has been negotiating with the government since 1986, the year in which its negotiators moved to the Netherlands. It began a ceasefire in 1987; at that time it had 25,000 combatants. In 1992, new talks with the Philippine government were held in the Netherlands, and a four-point agenda was set (human rights and international humanitarian law, social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and disarmament). However, the illegalisation of the Communist Party of the Philippines led to divisions within the NPA. In 1993, talks took place in Hanoi, and in 1994, talks were held in the Netherlands. In 1995, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) was reached, which granted immunity to about a hundred people linked to the negotiation process. **In 1997, an agenda of topics for negotiation was established. This enabled an agreement between the negotiating teams to be reached in 1998 on a Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).** However, this agreement was not validated by the country's president. In 2004, the government held a meeting in Oslo with NPA delegates. Both parties agreed to establish a joint committee to monitor the implementation of the human rights agreements. Since 2002, the main obstacle to the negotiations has been the fact that the NPA and the leader of the NDF are on both the US and the EU terrorist lists.

A crisis arose during the exploratory process in July 2005 when the leader of the NDF (in exile in the Netherlands) announced that the group felt there was no point in continuing negotiations with a government that was in crisis and lacking in legitimacy. The NDF called for a transition government, which would not include members of the NDF, the NPA or the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). This government was to resolve five main issues: the removal of the NPA from terrorist lists, the release of political prisoners, reparations for the 10,000 victims of human rights violations committed under the regime of Ferdinand Marcos, the adoption of measures to end the assassinations of political and social leaders and the negotiation of social and economic reforms. At the beginning of August, the Philippine government announced that it would suspend the immunity that had been agreed for the NDF's negotiators (on the basis of a prior agreement on security guarantees) within 30 days unless negotiations were resumed immediately. The NDF responded by postponing formal talks with the government, though it added that this did not mean ending the peace negotiations, as the negotiating panels and their advisers and teams would continue their work. The NDF also indicated that the government had not fulfilled the obligations established in the 1992 Joint Declaration on the release of political prisoners, reparations for victims and the removal of groups from the lists of terrorists. Finally, the NDF announced that the government's attempts to get the party to sign the Final Peace Agreement violated the principles established by the Hague Declaration in 1992. Therefore, they recommended opening formal negotiations to resolve the armed conflict, as the Final Peace Agreement represented capitulation. In September, following an informal meeting in Oslo mediated by the Norwegian

government, the Philippines government back-pedalled on their suspension of immunity for the negotiating team and called on the NPA to declare a truce once formal negotiations had started.

In mid-October 2005, the government decided once again to suspend the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) for the NPA's negotiators. The NPA once more made its ceasefire conditional on being removed from the lists of terrorist organisations, and it stepped up its attacks on the armed forces. In addition, in October, the EU included the CPP on its list of terrorists. This increased the tension between the Philippine government and the NPA/NDF. At this time, there was a notable increase in the number of clashes between the NPA and the armed forces. In addition, social activists and human rights groups' activists were murdered. In December, the government announced a four-day ceasefire to roughly coincide with Christmas, following the tradition started in 1986. For the first time, the NPA rejected this measure due to the government's dishonesty in the negotiations and its ongoing human rights abuses.

During 2006, combat between the armed forces and the NPA continued, and the president accused the group of being behind the thwarted coup attempt. During the third quarter, however, the government and the CPP travelled separately to Oslo to meet with the Norwegian executive, which is serving as a mediator and is striving to unblock the negotiations which were interrupted in 2004. After the meeting, the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, Jesús Dureza, announced that there were possibilities of resuming talks if the NPA fulfilled certain conditions, without getting into the specific conditions. However, Jesús Dureza also warned that Manila would continue its legal and military offensive against the NPA. Recently, high-level authorities within the government also condemned the NPA's tactics in the peace talks. In the last few months of the year, the clashes intensified and the Philippine president ordered the country's armed forces to defeat the communist guerrillas within a two-year period. As for the armed group NPA, which had broken off negotiations with the government in mid-2005, in April the Archbishop of Davao and other representatives of the Catholic Church issued an appeal to the government and the armed opposition group NPA to declare a ceasefire and resume the peace talks that had been stalled since August 2004. **The Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process declared that the peace talks were not unconditionally blocked and that they could be resumed if certain requirements were met.** However, at the same time he also accused the NPA of not wanting to sign a ceasefire. The NPA, in turn, accused Manila of not having made the diplomatic efforts needed for the NPA and the leader of the CPP, José María Sison, to be removed from the lists of terrorist organisations of the USA and the EU. **In late August, the leader of the NDF and founder of the CPP, Jose María Sison, was arrested in the Netherlands**, which hindered the chances of reopening negotiations with the NPA in the short term. Sison was released two weeks later. This arrest took place shortly after the head of the armed forces, Hermogenes Esperon, asked the government to resume the peace talks with this armed group and pledged to suspend military operations for three years if a bilateral ceasefire was agreed to previously. According to Esperon, the resumption of the peace talks would lead to a significant reduction in the wave of murders and disappearances being perpetrated against sectors critical of the government. From exile in Holland, José María Sison declared that negotiations would only resume if the government took the steps needed so that both he personally and the CPP and the NPA would be removed from the list of terrorist organisations of the USA and the EU, if the government demonstrated its will to stop the murders of political and social leaders on the left, and if the ten points that the NPA put forth to resume the talks were heeded. In mid-September, the president of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, offered an amnesty for the NPA combatants who wished to surrender their weapons and rejoin political life. In October, the NDF proposed moving the talks from the Netherlands to China, while keeping the Norwegian facilitation efforts.

In mid-October 2007, in Holland the president of the Peace, Unification and Reconciliation Committee of the Philippine Senate, María Ana "Jamby" Madrigal, signed a joint declaration with the negotiating panel of the NDF, presided over by Luis G. Jalandoni, in which both sides were committed to working to reopen the negotiations that had broken down in 2004. The goal of this meeting was to find out the NDF's position firsthand and to explore new avenues of dialogue.

The parties agreed to create a Technical Working Group to delve further into the substantial issues on a negotiation agenda. In November, the **United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions**, Philip Alston, published the report on the visit he had paid to the country. In this report, he stated that **as part of the counterinsurgency strategy against the armed opposition group NPA, the military was largely responsible for the extrajudicial executions committed in the past six years**. Alston also stated that in some regions of the country, several leaders of progressive organisations were the deliberate, systematic targets of the armed forces. He thus asked the president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, to spearhead measures that would put an end to these actions. Philip Alston's report also categorically denied the government's version that the numerous extrajudicial executions committed in recent years were due to internal purges by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA. Likewise, Alston also criticised the NPA for murdering civilians, intimidating politicians and fostering the establishment of so-called revolutionary justice and people's tribunals.

During the first three months of 2008, the government declared again its refusal to resume peace talks, interrupted in 2004, if the NPA did not previously declare an end to hostilities, a formula which according to the government had worked before with the MNLF and which they are testing with the MILF. For its part, the NPA and the NDF rejected the proposal and regretted the fact that Manila had turned a deaf ear to the communication of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP), which had called for the Government to immediately restart peace talks with no previous conditions and in full compliance with the agreements already reached. In the month of May **the Norwegian Government sponsored and enabled a meeting in Oslo between the Philippine Government and the NDF**. The meeting was information and was the first in the last three years. It was valued very positively by both sides. The Government and the NDF agreed to return to talks and reactivate, **after four years of inactivity, a joint supervisory committee for human rights and international humanitarian law**. However, the head of the negotiating team for the NDF, Louis Jalandoni, accused the Government of a lack of political will and presented a list of 13 points for negotiations to resume, among which are the release of political prisoners, an end to US military deployment in certain areas of the country, an end to the wave of killings and disappearances of activists, the non-demand for a cease to the hostilities as a previous condition for negotiation, indemnity of victims of the Marcos dictatorship and the withdrawal of lists of terrorist individuals and organisations from the NAP and the Communist Party of the Philippines. The government warned the NDF not to adopt an extreme position and declared that it would study its request for being withdrawn from the USA's and EU's terrorist lists.

In the following months, the **presidential advisor for the peace process offered to take up talks again and the President ordered communication channels to remain open with the NDF**. However, **the Government demanded a previous ceasefire, continued to proclaim its intention to bring down the NPA in a military defeat in 2010 and insisted that the NAP fighters join the programme of reinsertion and exchange of arms for money established by the government**. The Minister of Defence declared that the police and the armed forces would train the civilian population (the so-called Auxiliary Civilian Groups) in order to bolster the security of the numerous mining companies operating in the country. For its part, the NDF did not rule out resuming informal talks **to discuss economic and political reforms**, but categorically rejected signing a previous indefinite ceasefire agreement and declared that the resuming of formal peace talks should take place on the basis of agreements that had already been reached, indicating that given the intense counterinsurgency campaigns, Government offers of dialogue were not credible. However, the NAP offered a cessation of hostilities while the talks were going on.

Although official talks with the Government were suspended, the NDF held exploratory talks with different political and social agents. Likewise, the Senator and President of the Senate Peace, Unification and Reconciliation Committee, Jamby Madrigal, met in Utrecht with two of the Communist leaders in exile, Luis Jalandoni, the head of the NDF's negotiating panel, and Jose María Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines. In a joint declaration, Madrigal, Jalandoni and Sison displayed their support for an immediate reopening of the peace talks and

urged the naming of a new presidential advisor to substitute Esperon. In September, the PEPP delegation, which includes the Archbishop Antonio Ledesma and two bishops held talks in Utrecht (Netherlands) with the negotiating panel of the NDF with a view to extend a bridge to the Philippine government. In the context of parallel diplomacy, the Norway Ecumenical Peace Platform invited a Philippine delegation to discuss a future resuming of peace talks with the NPA and MILF opposition armed groups. For its part, Jalandoni invited the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the organisation Initiatives for International Dialogue (with headquarters in Davao) as third parties in the negotiating process.

In late November the negotiating panels of the government and the NDF, led respectively by Nieves Confesor and Luis Jalandoni, met informally in Oslo under the facilitation of the Norwegian government. According to the NDF, the talks failed because the government's attempt to resume the official negotiations, which had been called off in 2004, had to be preceded by a prolonged ceasefire declaration. The NDF also accused the Government of sabotaging the meeting, the third informal one since peace negotiations had been suspended, by including some points on the agenda such as the exploration of new ceasefire modes, the assumed recruitment of minors or the charging of the so-called "revolutionary tax" by the NPA, as well as the end of attacks by the armed group on mining companies and its presumed use of landmines. Given that situation the NDF considered it highly improbable that peace talks would recommence during Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's mandate. At the end of the year, both the government and the NPA announced a suspension of military operations (SOMO) on 24th and 25th of December and 31st of December and 1st of January.

Fighters from the divided faction in the **MNLF** group, which rejected the 1996 peace agreement rejoined the armed forces in 2005. The government accused the leader of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, (currently in prison), of behind the confrontations that took places in the islands of Jolo and Mindanao. In February 2005, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo sent some of the emissaries to negotiate with this breakaway faction, which had 800 members and later the head of the armed forces met middle ranking members of the group to explore the conditions for the future declaration of a ceasefire. The leader of this group demonstrated their wish to negotiate directly with the Government and not with the armed forces, and called for the release of their leader, Nur Misuari. In May 2006 a team of 16 people from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OCI) arrived in the Autonomous Region of Minandao to verify and assess the implementation of the peace agreement. This mission asked the President to free or transfer to Minandao the leader and founder of the MNLF and the former governor of the RAMM, Nur Misauri, with the aim of allowing him to attend a meeting that was to take place in Saudi Arabia to address the most controversial aspects of the 1996 agreement.

At the beginning of February 2007, **the government insisted again on the group disarming** in order to avoid confrontations with the armed forces in the south of the country, through the amendment to the 1996 peace agreement, since in that agreement there was no talk of disarmament. Both sides planned to meet in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) in the month of July, with the support of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OCI) , to discuss the question, with the possible participation of Nur Misauri, leader of the group of which he is currently a prisoner. Despite the fact that confrontations continued with the armed forces, following several months of negotiations with the mediation of the OCI, the government and the MNLF **there was an agreement to meet in Saudi Arabia (initially in July) to revise the implementation of some aspects of the peace agreement** which both parties had signed in 1996, as well as the status of the historical MLNF leader, Nur Misuari. The meeting could not take place until November. The OCI was putting pressure on the Philippine Government to free the historical leader of the group, Nur Misauri, so that he could attend the next round of negotiations, to complete the agreements that were reached in 1996. Despite numerous delays with respect to the date of the negotiating round, both parties maintained contact from Thailand with the aim of achieving a tripartite agreement between the Philippine government the MLNF and the OCI. In November, the courts authorised the participation of Nur Misuari in the meeting to be held by the Philippine Government, the

MNLF and the OCI in the city of Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), but finally he was not authorised to attend the meeting which ended in a commitment to the full implementation of the peace agreement signed in 1996. According to all the parties, the meeting was historic in that significant agreements were reached in terms of the applications of all the provisions of the 1996 agreement. That is how the five working groups were made up (*sharia* and the legal system; security forces; natural resources and economic development; political system and representation; and, finally, education) made up of three members of both parties who presented the conclusions of their work and their recommendations in a single meeting which took place on 14 January 2008. The meetings of these groups would be facilitated by members of the OIC's Peace Committee in the Southern Philippines, made up of Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia and Turkey. In mid-December, representatives of the MILF and the MNLF reached an agreement, with mediation by Libya, to resolve their differences and clashes by September 2008. At the end of the year, the government announced the appointment of Thambeyapha Jayari Manjoorsa, founder of the MNLF and a close collaborator for several years with its leader, Nur Misuari, as Vice-Councillor for National Security.

In mid-May, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo appointed Hermogenes Esperon, until then head of the armed forces, as the new Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, to replace Jesús Dureza, who would now occupy the role of executive spokesman. Both the different armed opposition groups that operate in the country and the opposition sectors and numerous personalities and organisations from civil society expressed their concern at the appointment of Esperon. They accused him of having perpetrated or protected numerous human rights violations in both military operations in Mindanao and in the participation by certain members of the military in the disappearance of hundreds of political activists.

In 2008, after having postponed the tripartite meeting with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference which should have been held in January, the negotiating teams of the Government and the MNLF met in February in Istanbul (Turkey), where they declared their intention to reform the law that should have included the main aspects of the peace agreement signed by both sides in 1996. However, advances in the negotiations were blocked by the breakout of an internal crisis among the leaders of the MNLF, which began after the then Mayor of Cotabato, Muslimin Sema, declared that he had been unanimously elected as the new president of the MNLF by more than two thirds of the group's central committee. Sectors close to Nur Misuari, the founder and longstanding leader of the MNLF, were unaware of this election and declared that Sema had only been elected by his followers. The special envoy of the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference Organisation, Sayyed Kassem El-Masry, travelled to Mindanao to attempt to mediate the crisis. In mid-May, Jesus Dureza, who until then had been the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process, met in Tripoli (Libya) with the leaders of several MNLF factions, invited by Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of the Libyan president. The agreement reached by the end of the meeting included a pledge by the MNLF to democratically resolve the crisis that had recently broken out among the leaders of the group and to create a single committee charged with conducting the negotiations with the government. This committee was also to be in charge of dialoguing with the MILF in an attempt to bring their positions closer into line, unify their demands and promote unity among the Moro people.

For its part, after three months of refused requests to travel abroad, Nur Misuari finally travelled to Uganda to take part for the first time in six years in the meetings of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OCI), of which the MNLF has been an observer since 1997. After the meeting ended, Misuari went to Saudi Arabia to meet with members of the Saudi government involved in the peace process. At the end of July, Nur Misuari and thousands of members of the MNLF took part in the first peace summit among Moro and Lumad peoples (indigenous), held in the Patadon community. During his talk, Misuari declared that the exploitation of the gas reserves in Liguasan Marsh could turn the region into one of the most prosperous in the entire world. Previously, Nur Misuari had declared his agreement with the proposal for a federal state

formulated by parliamentarian Prospero Nograles, but was of the opinion that the Philippines should be divided into 4 rather than 11 states: Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and Metro Manila. In December, authorities in the Bukidnon province declared that the leader and founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, was carrying out recruitment activities and reorganising the group in several towns in the province.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, the former police chief and until then Deputy Director General of the National Security Council, **Avelino Razon**, was appointed new Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, replacing Hermogenes Esperon, who had been named chief of the Presidential Management Staff. Razon continued in the post until the end of the year, when he was replaced by **Annabelle T. Abaya**. With regards to the negotiation process with the **MILF**, early in the year the new head of the government's negotiating panel with this group, Rafael Seguis, announced that his team was travelling to Kuala Lumpur in the near future to discuss the resumption of the negotiating process with the Malaysian government, the facilitator of the talks in recent years. The MILF hailed this trip by the government negotiating panel to Malaysia, yet also stressed its refusal to reinstate the talks until the government halted its military offensive against the group in several zones of Mindanao. The President of Timor Leste, Jose Ramos-Horta, expressed his willingness to cooperate in resolving the conflict in Mindanao if the Philippine government and the MILF decided to take this course. According to the organisation Initiative for International Dialogue, which proposed getting involved in the negotiating process, Ramos-Horta could perform the facilitation tasks conducted by Malaysia. In late January, the President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, declared that she had ordered the government negotiating team to resume the peace talks with the MILF. Arroyo also asked the international community to get involved, specifically citing Malaysia, Brunei, Japan, Libya, the USA, the EU and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. However, the MILF stated that it would only return to the negotiating table if the suspension of the failed agreement on the ancestral domains of the Moro people was resolved, if the armed forces halted their military offensive and if the International Monitoring Team investigated the human rights violations committed in North Cotabato, North Lanao and Sarangani. In February, Razon stated that the government would work on several trust-building measures, and he expressed its willingness to review the nature and structure of the facilitation process in order to improve it. The government held consultations with a variety of international experts, including a British delegation that had participated in the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, a team from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue met with various leaders of the MILF with the goal of unblocking the process and conveying to the armed group the desire of prominent personalities like former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to find a solution that would put an end to decades of violence. On other matters, several parliamentarians supported the creation of a parliamentary commission (with members from both the Senate and the House of Representatives) on the negotiations with the MILF. The purpose of this commission would be to ensure greater transparency in the negotiating process and avoid tensions like the ones on the days leading up to the signing of the agreement on the ancestral territories of the Moro people. In the second half of April, the negotiations with the MILF hit a stumbling block when the group asked other Moro groups to join in the struggle to win self-determination. To do this, the MILF had suggested that other groups form a joint alliance, stating that unity was urgently needed. The army seized 18 satellite MILF encampments in Mindanao after several skirmishes. The government declared that troops from Egypt and Syria might join the International Monitoring Group that supervises the ceasefire agreement signed in 2003, which had been violated several times. Currently, after Malaysia's withdrawal, the IMG is being led by Brunei. Days earlier, the President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, had declared that Syria might play an important role in the peace process in Mindanao. The President issued these statements in Damascus, where the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was holding a conference. Since 2003, the Philippine government had been requesting observer status in this organisation, which currently only recognised the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Muslim people in the Philippines. The MILF was opposed to the

Philippines' recognition as an OIC observer before the conflict in Mindanao was resolved. The MILF declared that it would not be possible to merge positions with the government during the mandate of current President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whom they accused of having failed in her attempt to resolve the conflict in Mindanao and whose prime legacy they claimed was a continuation of the war. Likewise, a member of the former government negotiating panel, Rudy Rodil, declared that it would be impossible to sign a peace agreement before the May 2010 elections. According to Rodil, the main impediment to resuming the peace talks was the MILF's insistence on the Memorandum of Understanding on the ancestral territories of the Moro people. Furthermore, he viewed an amendment of the constitution inevitable in order to include an eventual agreement with the MILF.

Almost 500 people had died since the beginning of the armed forces' offensive against the MILF in August 2008. According to army sources, the number of combatants under the command of Umeril Umbra Kato had dropped from 3,000 to approximately 1,000. Nevertheless, the government declared that it was only awaiting the response of the Malaysian government, the facilitator of the peace process, to resume talks with the MILF. In June, the government declared its intention to sign a peace agreement with the MILF before the mandate of the President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, finished at the end of 2010 and offered to resume the peace talks if a cessation of hostilities agreement was first signed, supervised by the International Monitoring Team. **The government also declared that despite the surge in violence, it had held informal contacts with the MILF in recent months. Furthermore, it also asked the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to take part in resolving the conflict,** as it believed that it would be very difficult to reach a definitive agreement through bilateral negotiations. The government of Japan, for its part, announced that it would earmark 340 million dollars to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The Prime Minister of Japan, Taro Arso, asked both parties to not to increase military hostilities and to resume peace negotiations. In June, an MILF delegation finally visited Northern Ireland, invited by the British government, to learn firsthand about this country's experience in peace processes. In early July, the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Avelino Razon, declared that the government panel was ready to resume peace talks and declared his desire for them to be resumed in the near future. Razon also declared that the leadership of the MILF had a constructive attitude towards resuming the negotiations, which had been formally interrupted after the initial attempt to sign an agreement on the ancestral territories of the Moro people in August 2008. Shortly thereafter, the President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ordered the suspension of the military offensive against the MILF in Mindanao in yet another attempt to reopen the peace negotiations. The group responded to Arroyo's order reciprocally by putting a halt to its attacks against military positions in the south. Thus, the Philippine government declared a Suspension of Offensive Military Operations (SOMO) on the 23rd of July, and three days later the MILF announced a Suspension of Offensive Military Activities (SOMA). The MILF negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, asked that the dialogue include international organisations that would ensure compliance with the agreements. The United Nations also announced that the group had pledged to join the action plan to eradicate the recruitment of minors in its ranks.

In mid-September **the government and the MILF signed a framework agreement on forming an international group to support the negotiation process in Kuala Lumpur.** The group would be made up of governments, mainly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the EU, as well as international NGOs and eminent personalities. The main purpose of this group will be to observe the negotiations, hold visits, exchange impressions and advise the parties, seek people and organisations knowledgeable about specific aspects of the negotiating process and help the parties address substantial aspects of the negotiating agenda. The government and the MILF expressed their support for the government of Malaysia to continue to serve as the facilitator, just a few days after several politicians, as well as the leader and founder of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, questioned the appropriateness of Malaysia as the facilitator of the peace process due to the conflict that for decades had pitted this country against the Philippines over the Sabah region (currently under Malaysian sovereignty). However, both parties favourably viewed Malaysia's role in recent years and declared that the conflict over Sabah bore no relationship with the armed

conflict in Mindanao. Both parties issued a call to scrupulously respect the cessation of hostilities agreement. The leadership of the MILF met in one of the main encampments in the province of Sultan Kudarat with a delegation from the government of Australia to address several issues, such as the status and future of the peace process, the status of internally displaced persons, the establishment of the international contact group that would aid in the peace talks, and police and military operations against several MILF commandants over their purported participation in attacks against the civilian population. In fact, a prominent MILF leader, Smawtin Basilan, had been arrested in Mindanao for these very reasons. In late October, **the Philippine government and the MILF signed an agreement to protect the civilian population**, which had been reached under the auspices of the Malaysian government and signed in Kuala Lumpur. The pact commits both parties to take all the measures needed to avoid the death of civilians and the impact on them and on civilian infrastructures or assets, as well as to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the government and the MILF agreed to extend the mandate of the International Monitoring Team, which from now on would include supervising, verifying and reporting on both parties' compliance with civilian protection. Likewise, the MILF asked the USA to contribute to reaching a peace agreement. This was reported on by the leaders of the group after having met with US diplomats in Darapanana, the group's main training camp in Mindanao. In the second half of November, the government and MILF negotiating panels, as well as representative of the NGOs and governments that were members of the International Contact Group, met in Malaysia under the facilitation of Datuk Othman Bin Abdul Razak. With regard to the governments, Japan, the United Kingdom and Turkey accepted the government's and MILF's invitation, while Saudi Arabia had not yet given an official response. Furthermore, both Iran and Turkey expressed their interest in participating in the peace talks, although they had not yet decided in what way. With regard to the NGOs, The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Mohammadia and Conciliation Resources had accepted the invitation.

With regard to negotiations with the **MNLF**, in early February **the government approved an Executive Order to amend the Organic Law that created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)**. According to the government, the intention of the Executive Order was to view the advances that are being made in the negotiations with the MNLF in order to fully implement the 1996 peace agreement, in addition to guaranteeing the full autonomy of the Moro people and fulfil their aspirations to self-determination. In March, **the MNLF declared that it had started talks with the MILF to bring their positions into closer alignment and offer a shared solution to the conflict in Mindanao**. However, in early May around 10,000 people were required to leave their homes due to the **clashes between the MILF and the MNLF** in the provinces of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat. Some sources declared that the clashes could be attributed to the phenomenon known as "rido" and the rivalry between the leaders of both groups. Days earlier, the OIC had invited both groups to a meeting and issued a call for dialogue and unity between them. The MILF's areas of influence are in central Mindanao, whereas most of the MNLF's strongholds are in the southwest part. The Secretary-General of the OIC asked the Philippine government to fully implement the peace agreement reached with the MNLF in 1996. In recent months, **the OIC had facilitated several working meetings between government and MNLF representatives** in order to fully elaborate on the contents of this agreement. However, in late May, when meeting in Damascus (Syria), the OIC rejected the Philippine government's request to join the organisation with observer status. According to some sources, countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Yemen were opposed to the Philippine government's joining, while others like Indonesia, Bahrain and Iraq were in favour of it. In the days leading up to this decision, the leader of the MILF, Murad Ebrahim, had written a letter to several governments asking them to reject Manila's proposal. The MNLF had the status of observing member of the OIC. At this summit, the Philippine delegation included 26 members of the MNLF (including its leader and founder, Nur Misuari), 18 government members and three MILF members. In late August, between seven and ten members of the group, including the leader Abdullah Abdurajak, died in clashes with the armed forces on the island of Balabac in Palawan. According to the government, dozens of heavily armed members of the MNLF seized several towns, extorting the civilian population and forcing 400 families to flee. However, the founder of the MNLF, Nur

Misuari, accused the armed forces of having committed a massacre. Manila declared that this incident would not alter the negotiation process with the MNLF to revise and fully implement the 1996 peace agreement.

With regard to the tentative contact with the armed group **NPA** and its political arm, the NDF, in late February the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Avelino Razon, declared that the informal contacts with the NDF might resume within one or two months with the goal of resuming the formal negotiating process, which had been halted in 2004. According to Razon, the government might be considering accepting many of the 13 conditions demanded by the NDF in order to resume the peace talks, even if it did not declare a ceasefire in advance. Some of the other issues placed on the table by the NDF were the indemnification of victims of Ferdinand Marcos' regime, its withdrawal from the EU's and USA's lists of terrorist organisations, a halt to the persecution and murder of some of the top leaders of the NDF and the Communist Party of the Philippines and the implementation of agreements already signed. In turn, **the NDF expressed its willingness to resume the talks where they had left off in 2004** if the government would accept some of its demands. In April, the government stated that 800 NPA members had laid down their weapons and joined the Social Integration Programme started in July 2008. In early May, the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process declared that the demobilisation and reintegration programme for the combatants who chose to turn themselves in was successful, especially with the NPA. Razon declared that between 2001 and 2009, more than 12,000 former combatants had joined this programme. Around the same time, the police issued an arrest warrant for the leader and founder of the NPA, Jose María Sison, and the spokesperson of the NDF, Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, due to their presumed involvement in the murder of a journalist in December 2003. The police also offered generous rewards for the arrest of both leaders. The current head of the negotiating panel of the NDF, Luis Jalandoni, accused the government of instigating the accusations for political purposes, as it did not want to resume the peace talks or honour the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Despite its clashes with the Philippine armed forces, in early July the government and the NDF announced their intention to resume official negotiations during the month of August in Oslo (Norway). This announcement took place after the NDF pledged not to demand its withdrawal from the EU and USA terrorist lists as a precondition for dialogue at an informal meeting between both parties facilitated by Norway. In turn, the government had pledged not to link the peace talks with the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement and to remove the suspension of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), which offered immunity guarantees to 97 negotiators from the NDF, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA. The JASIG had been suspended in September 2005, shortly after the NDF withdrew from the negotiating table. However, the formal peace talks had been on hold since 2004. At the announcement of the resumption of talks, the government declared that its negotiating panel would be in permanent contact with Jose María Sison, the leader and founder of the communist movement, and Luis Jalandoni, head of the NDF's negotiating panel. A few days before this announcement, the army had stated that it was poised to defeat the NPA by 2010, as the group had suffered a great deal of attrition in recent months and the total number of troops had plunged to 4,800. Despite this, the government acknowledged that the NPA would continue to pose a major challenge to the security and development of the country. In mid-July, **the head of the NDF negotiating panel, Luis Jalandoni, arrived in Manila to prepare for the resumption of peace talks with the government.** The resumption of talks was agreed to after the government offered security and immunity guarantees to the NDF's negotiating team, gave up its demand to sign a long-term cessation of hostilities agreement and pledged to ask the Department of Justice to release three NDF negotiators. In late July, the NDF agreed to include the NPA's disarmament on the agenda for the peace negotiations that would be resumed in Norway. However, the talks were temporarily postponed due to disagreement between the parties over the release of 14 NPA members. Likewise, the government criticised the NPA for imposing preconditions on resuming the talks, as well as for several attacks presumably perpetrated by the NPA in some regions of the country.

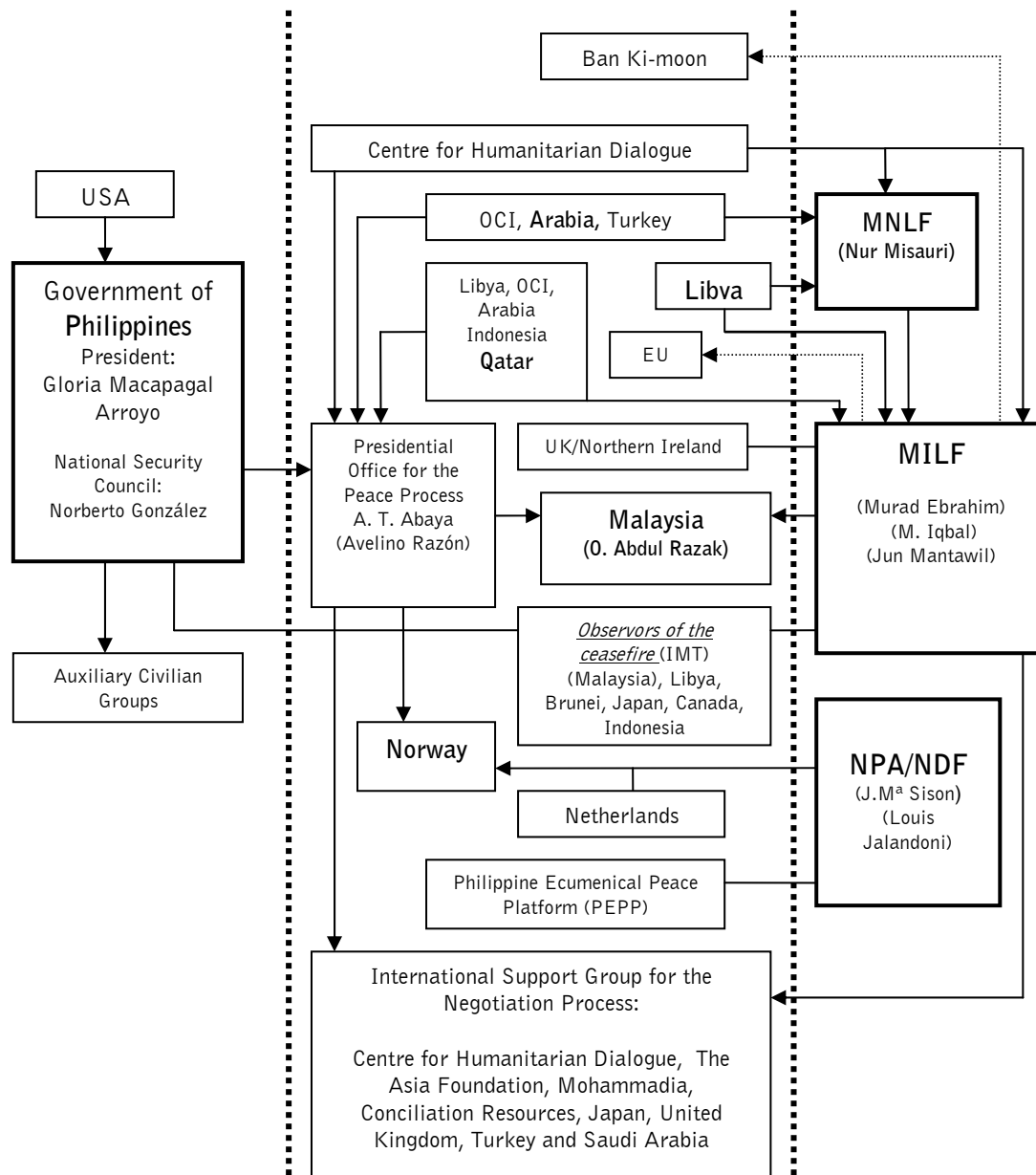
In mid-September, however, the **NDF ordered the armed opposition group NPA to step up its offensives against the US troops stationed in Mindanao.** This announcement came days after the governments of the Philippines and the USA announced their intention to strengthen cooperation on counterinsurgency matters, especially against the Abu Sayyaf armed opposition group. The government announced its willingness to continue with the exploratory peace talks with the NDF, but it also declared that it would give up its efforts to reach a peace agreement with the NPA if the NDF continued to sabotage the peace process. These declarations came in the wake of an interruption in the contacts between both parties triggered by the NDF's demand to release ten of its imprisoned leaders. The government only released two of them, accusing the NDF of wanting to get at the negotiating table what it could not get in the courts. Furthermore, **Manila accused the NDF of not wanting to deal with issues involving disarmament or the cessation of hostilities and of being a prisoner of the opinions and strategies of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, the true leaders of the communist movement according to the government,** which if true would signal an important, decisive split in the group. In turn, the NDF accused the government of failure in the negotiations and submitted three demands in order to resume the talks. First, a meeting between both parties in Oslo in mid-September in order to agree on fully compliance with the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, which would presumably also be applied to some of the NDF members currently in prison. Secondly, an agreement on the dates and the agenda of the next meeting in Oslo scheduled for November. And thirdly, a reaffirmation of the bilateral agreements reached to date and the prioritisation of the talks on economic and social reforms, as well as implementation of the Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

The most important events of the year

- In mid-January, the former police chief and until then Deputy Director General of the National Security council, Avelino Razon, was appointed new Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process. Late in the year Razon was replaced by Annabelle T. Abaya.
- The government and the MILF signed a framework agreement on forming an international group to support the negotiating process in Kuala Lumpur.
- The MNLF declared that it had started talks with the MILF to bring their positions into closer alignment and offer a shared solution to the conflict in Mindanao.
- The government and the NDF (the political arm of the NPA) announced their intention to resume official negotiations during the month of August in Oslo (Norway). Later, however, Manila accused the NDF of not wanting to deal with issues involving disarmament or cessation of hostilities and of being a prisoner of the opinions and strategies of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, the true leaders of the communist movement according to the government.

Websites of interest

- Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (www.hdcentre.org)
- MILF (www.luwaran.com)
- NDF (home.wanadoo.nk/ndf)
- NPA (www.philippinerevolution.org)
- Office of the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process (opappgov.ph)
- OIC (www.oic-oci.org)
- www.mindanao.news
- www.Moroland.ne
- www.philippinesnews.ne
- www.theworldpress.com/press/philippinespress.htm



INDONESIA (West Papua)

Background to the conflict

Irian Jaya, called Western Papua since 2001, used to be known as Western New Guinea in the times of Dutch colonisation. It is the largest province in Indonesia (422,000 km²), although it only has 2.6 million inhabitants. Despite its **mineral, oil and forest assets**, it is one of the least developed

regions in the country. Although the Netherlands tried to give it self-determination in 1961, the region was annexed to Indonesia in 1963 (in the midst of the Cold War and with a dictatorial Indonesia at the service of the US's strategy). This served to fan the flames of the separatist spirit among much of the population. In 1969 a mock referendum was held among thousand of prominent locals who endorsed the region's belonging to Indonesia. Under the regime of General Suharto, the Papua people experienced severe repression. In 1977, the army bombarded them using napalm, and any expression of their culture or ancestral rights was banned. The island is made up mainly of one million Papuas and 700,000 Javanese colonists, although the government is planning to increase the percentage of colonisation by moving several millions of new colonists there ("javanisation" or "transmigration"; in 1960, the non-local population accounted for 2.5% of the total inhabitants while by 2005 this percentage had risen to 41%), which would aggravate the problems of racism by the Indonesians against the Papuans, as well as the religious problems (the majority of the local population is Christian or animist, while the immigrants are Muslims). Another problem is the exploitation of the Papuas' wealth by foreign companies or enterprises linked to the Suharto family, which have wrought enormous ecological destruction. **The US company Freeport exploits one of the largest copper and gold mines in the world**, which has led to the militarization of the area where the company operates (it has been revealed that this company has made pay-offs to Indonesian military officers). Between 2002 and 2006 it obtained more than 2,500 million dollars in profits from this exploitation which includes rights over an area measuring 8,800 km². British Petroleum exploits the gas in the region, and Río Tinto also has interests in the region. It is calculated that around 70% of the profits generated in the region land with the central government. The number of victims of the conflict since 1963 range from between 3,000 to several tens of thousands, depending on the sources. The independence of Timor-Leste and the far-reaching autonomy granted to the Aceh region are elements that have influenced Western Papua's demands in recent years. "Regional affairs" fall within the authority of the government's Department of Foreign Affairs.

Population: 2.6 million inhabitants
Area: 422,000 km ²
HDI Indonesia: 111 (of 182)
GDP Indonesia: 372,600 million dollars
Per capita income Indonesia: \$1,650
Deaths due to the conflict: tens of thousands of people since 1963.
Armed actors: TPN (OPM)
Facilitators: ---

In 1965, the **OPM** (Organisation of Free Papua) was set up with the goal of creating a Republic of Papuasias-New Guinea. This organisation has an armed branch called the **TPN**. The 1970s and 80s was dominated by a series of combats, such as attacks on Indonesian migrant camps and petroleum wells and mines, kidnapping of foreigners etc., with the consequent repression in Indonesia and thousands of victims among the civilian population. The OPM has never had an emblematic leader and has accused much of the population of passivity; it has also suffered from internal divisions. It has never secured major support from abroad, except for Papua New Guinea in the early years, until this country signed a cooperation treaty with Indonesia in 1986. Extremely weakened militarily in the 1990s, in the middle of the past decade it became a type of "eco-guerrilla" focusing its media strategy on showing the ecological destruction wrought by the companies exploiting its natural resources. After Suharto's fall in 1998, the armed struggle gave way to a political struggle. Sem Kuroba is the coordinator of the OPM in Europe. The military wing of the OPM is not unified and has no clear leader. The OPM is fractured between the Papua Presidium led by Tom Benal since the murder of Theys Eluay and headquartered in Jayapura; the Presidium in exile, headquartered in Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, the most radical political branch, made up of local leaders who are political refugees; and the TPN, the armed

wing of the OPM with Bernard Mawen as its chief general. All three organisations have been at odds with each other for many years now.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri promised a new charter of autonomy for the region, but the murder of prominent members of the Papua Presidium put an end to any possibilities of negotiation. The proposal for autonomy offered in 2001 was rejected by the OPM, which has called for a referendum on independence as was held in Timor-Leste. In February 2002, the president presented a new law to break the province into three parts, following a "divide and conquer" strategy. Since 2004, the presidency of the country has been held by former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who was trained in American military academies.

Background to the peace process

In September 1998, following the fall of President Suharto, the Indonesian government presided by B.J. Habibie negotiated with the OPM, signing a **ceasefire agreement**. The next year, elections were held and won by Abdurrahman Wahid, and one hundred personalities from the **Forum for the Reconciliation of the Irian Jaya Community (FORERI)** met with the new president of Indonesia to ask for independence. Later, the OPM met with president Wahid, who showed signs of a desire for reconciliation and who renamed Irian Jaya Western Papua. However, he only offered the region a regime of autonomy. The Papuas held what was called a "great consultations", forming the **Papuan Presidium Council (PDP)**, which self-declared the region's independence. In June 2000, in view of Indonesia's refusal to grant the region independence, the number of demonstrations rose sharply, although just a few weeks later a **political dialogue with the Indonesian authorities** got underway, and the **OPM** joined FORERI. Nevertheless, the government banned the exhibition of all Irian Jayan flags shortly after 30 people died in clashes with the armed forces. In December 2000, the second Papuan congress declared the 1969 referendum null and void and demanded a return to the independence negotiations begun in 1961. The UN did not ratify this initiative. In early 2001, five members of the Papuan Presidium Council were arrested, putting an end to the peaceful route of achieving independence. In mid-2001, Megawati Sukarnoputri became president of Indonesia, taking the reins of the conflict and hardening the government's position. Still, in October of the same year **the Indonesian parliament proposed independence for Irian Jaya**, which would allow for self-governance and control of the majority of the resources. The following month, however, the political leader for the independence of Irian Jaya and president of the Papuan Presidium Council, Theys Eluay, was kidnapped and murdered after rejecting the proposal for autonomy offered by the president of Indonesia. A Forum for Examining the Special Autonomy Laws for Western Papua was also formed.

In July 2002, the European Commission sent an independent mission to Indonesia to support preventative initiatives, but in August of the same year the police conducted an operation to arrest Melkianus Awom, leader of the OPM, who had declared his willingness to use dialogue and peaceful methods for resolving the problem of Irian Jaya. He also expressed his support for the proposal to create a zone of peace launched by the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM), an entity created in 1993 that had held meetings between civilian Papuan and non-Papuan organisations aimed at turning Papua into a zone of peace. In April 2003, the Papuan Presidium Council asked the armed opposition group OPM to halt its armed actions against the Indonesian armed forces in order to facilitate a continuation of the dialogue on Irian Jaya's political status. In July 2003, the government declared its intention to divide the region of Papua into three provinces (Papua, Western Irian Jaya and Eastern Irian Jaya) in accordance with a 1999 law that called for such a division. The government declared that the new administrative division would enable the region to be better managed. Meanwhile, several opposition groups condemned the fact that this decision was actually aimed at weakening the pro-independence movement and that it violated the special autonomy that had been granted to the region in 2001. This announcement led to a shower of protests, as the creation of the new provinces would require prior consultation with the Papuan People's Council, which had not yet been created for unexplained reasons. The Home Office Minister, H. Sabarno, declared that the Papuan People's

Council (PPC) would not have political competencies and that it would instead be a cultural institution in charge of protecting the ancestral rights of the Papua people. In this way, the PPC could not issue statements on the decisions of the governor or the local parliament of Papua, as many of the people in the region wished. The government also pointed out that this institution might have problems representing the more than 100 ethnic groups in the area. The creation of the PPC was provided for in the 2001 Law on Special Autonomy. However, in September 2003, both supporters and detractors of the governmental decree dividing the region into three new provinces held a **reconciliation ceremony in Timika to put an end to the clashes** which had caused several deaths and injuries in the previous weeks. The governor of Papua (who was against this decree) asked for the government's support for the agreement between the parties in an effort to avoid future tensions between the immigrant population and the indigenous communities.

In January 2004, the religious leaders of the Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu communities issued a joint appeal to the central government to resume the talks. However, in the following months, the government declared a curfew. The Nobel Peace Prize winner, Desmond Tutu, asked the United Nations to review the 1969 referendum through which Indonesia annexed the Dutch colony of Western Papua. In June of the same year, **the government of Vanuatu offered to host future negotiations to explore peace**, after the Indonesian government had rejected a **similar proposal offered by New Zealand** one year earlier. In August 2004, several leaders of the OPM agreed to lay down their weapons and wage their battle by exclusively peaceful means.

In mid-February, the governors of Papua and Western Papua (originally called Western Irian Jaya) signed a cooperation agreement and staged their reconciliation after several months of tensions linked to the creation of this latter province, which many claimed violated the Law on Special Autonomy granted to Papua. The agreement calls for recognition of Western Papua, human resources and supplies to be sent from Papua to Western Papua, and a commitment to jointly manage certain infrastructures and the public funds disbursed by Jakarta. In mid-July, a report issued by the International Crisis Group (ICG) pointed out that the socio-political situation in the region was much more complex than the clash between the government and the armed secessionist group OPM. Specifically, the ICG pointed out that there were other factors that deserved the attention of Jakarta and the international community, such as the clashes among tribal groups and tensions between the local Papua and foreign population, the local discontent with the activities of multinational companies and competition for political power in the districts and sub-districts. Plus, the ICG also noted that the media attention has tended to focus on the northern coast (where the capital, Jayapura, is) and the central regions, but that there are numerous regions in the southern part of Papua that also have high levels of social tension. The ICG also stressed that since the military operations were curtailed in the late 1990s, there have been no frequent serious human rights violations by the state security corps, although practices like intimidation and harassment of the civilian population were widespread. Finally, the report said that the tension with the state security corps were not due so much to political issues as to disputes over property, personal issues and the armed forces' involvement in petty illicit activities.

In late July, around 30 humanitarian and civil society organisations wrote a joint letter to the president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, asking him to review the policy on the region, as in the recent months there had been a flood of information saying that the repressive activities of the state security corps would be stepped up. These 30 organisations also roundly denounced the appointment of a person twice accused of crimes against humanity in Timor-Leste for a key military post in the region. In early August, the president of the Papuan People's Council (**MRP–Majelis Rakyat Papua**), Agus Alua, declared that the special autonomy for the region will fail if the international community does not get more actively involved, especially due to the opposition of the state security corps, which according to Alua was still systematically repressing the secessionist movement, violating the human rights of the local population and deliberately creating a situation of chaos in order to keep control over the natural resources in the region. Alua also denounced the fact that the number of troops in Papua kept growing, especially those devoted to intelligence. Alua, who visited Australia to meet with the parliament and government,

asked the neighbouring country to pressure Jakarta to fully develop Papua's autonomy. In September, the government of Vanuatu expressed its satisfaction at the possibility of offering Western Papua the status of observer in the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) with the purpose of facilitating a dialogue with the Indonesian authorities. The MSG is a Preferential Trade Agreement that encompasses four different Melanesian states: Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji. In early October, the **West Papua Coalition for National Liberation (WPCNL)**, an organisation that includes the **OPM**, asked for negotiations to be opened with the Indonesian government, with international supervision (possibly Finland), and for the self-governance of the region, the withdrawal of Indonesian troops and the development of democracy to be discussed.

In early February 2008, the **Papua People's Assembly** and the **Legislative Council of Papua** expressed their opposition to the proposal submitted to the Parliament to divided Western Papua's two provinces into four. The earlier partition of the former region of Irian Jaya into its two current provinces had generated numerous conflicts between the local authorities and Jakarta. Tension in the region increased again when the leaders of five districts announced their intention to form a working group to negotiate with the President the creation of a new province (Pegunungan Tengah) from the province of Papua. The President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, declared that in two months he was going to approve a legislative emergency measure that would recognise and legally support the creation of the new province of Western Papua, which in 2003 had been rejected by the constitutional court and in recent years had triggered political tension in the region.

On the other hand, religious leaders from Buddhist, Catholic, Hindi, Muslim and Protestant groups confirmed that the law of special autonomy approved in Djakarta six years ago was being ignored and the Government's plans for development were dividing the local population according to ethnic group and had caused the marginalisation of the Papua people. In June, a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) also warned of the danger of both the dissatisfaction generated among the indigenous community of the non-implementation of the law of special autonomy passed in 2001 as well as the fears generated by greater self-rule among the migrant population. The West Papua National Authority threatened to take military action if the demands of the Papua people were not met by the Government. In late June, the **Indonesian parliament announced its intention to approve a law so that the province of Western Papua could benefit from the special autonomy law approved in 2001**. On the other hand, during the year the Vanuatu Government continued with its work in the United Nations Decolonisation Committee to revise the political status of West Papua and in London the **International Parliamentarians for West Papua** was created, a organisation whose main objective is to achieve international support for the revision of the fraudulent referendum which in 1969 sanctioned the annexation of Papua to Indonesia.

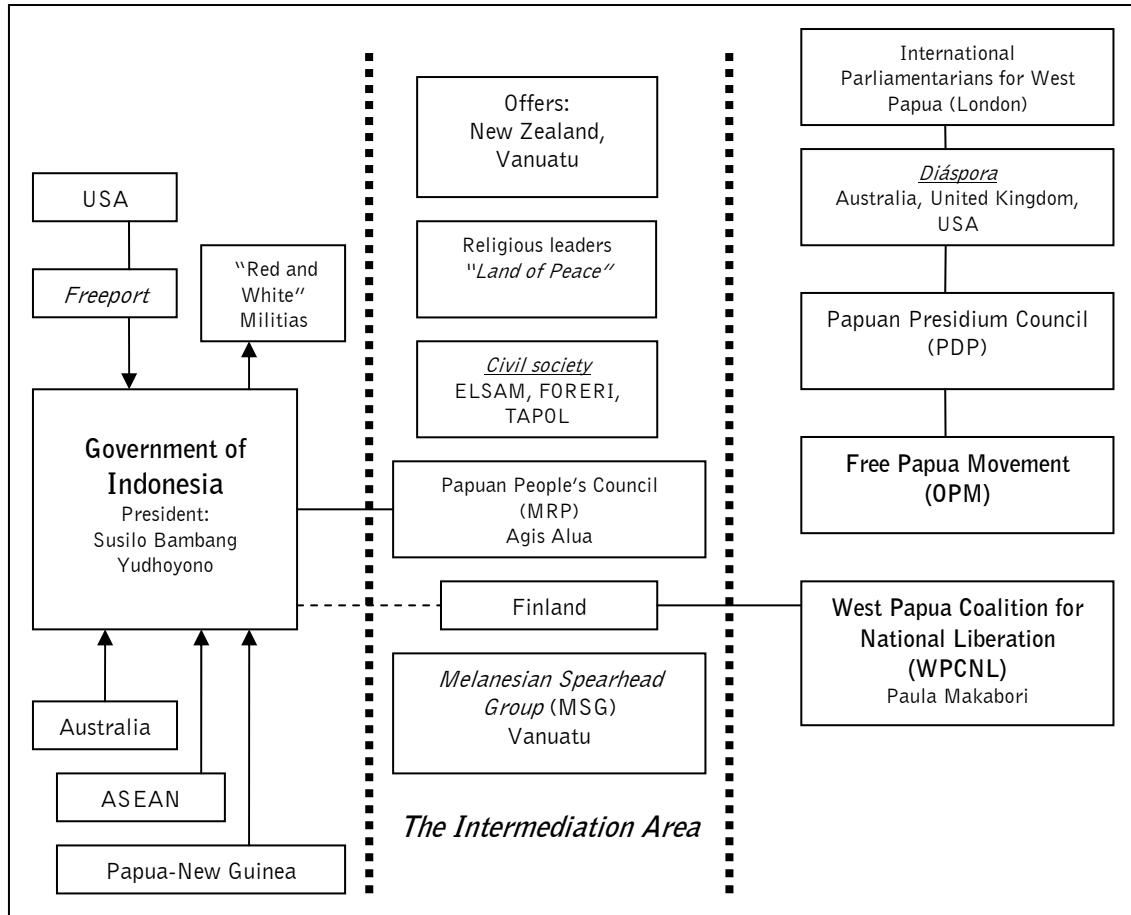
The peace process in 2009

In the second half of April, the US Secretary of State, **Hillary Clinton**, stated that the **Indonesian government has to grant greater autonomy to the province of Papua**, and that she planned to address this issue with her Indonesian counterparts. Likewise, the Indonesian government ordered that the ICRC be expelled from the Papua region after this organisation visited some members of the secessionist groups. In mid-September, a group of political and social leaders met with the acting Vice President, Yusuf Kalla, to ask the central government to talk directly with Papuan society, including the armed opposition group **OPM**, to resolve the development and violence problems that are affecting the region. In recent weeks the episodes of violence resumed in the region near the US mining company Freeport, the largest in the world in its sector. The group of Papuan personalities deemed that the provincial governments in Western Papua lacked the competence and legitimacy needed to resolve the conflict in the region, so they asked Kalla to use his experience in resolving the disputes in Aceh, Molucas and Sulawesi to help to overcome the conflict in Papua. However, these leaders also expressed their concern with the fact that Kalla's

exit from the government would entail the closure of the office that had mediated in these cases. In mid-October, the **West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNLC)**, which includes around 30 organisations, declared that it wanted to engage in negotiations directly with the central government in order to explore a solution to the conflict. According to the WPNLC, these talks could be facilitated by a third party, either a government or an international NGO, and they might take as their model the negotiations with the armed opposition group GAM, which used to operate in the province of Aceh. The leaders of this organisation declared that they received no response to the letters asking for a dialogue that they had sent to the president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in 2007 and 2008. Recently, a group of Papuan leaders led by the spokesperson of the West Papua Legislative Council asked the acting Vice President, Yusuf Kalla, to mediate in the possible talks that might be held.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated that the Indonesian government has to grant greater autonomy to the province of Papua. • The West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNLC), which includes around 30 organisations, declared that it wanted to engage in negotiations directly with the central government in order to explore a solution to the conflict.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian West Papua Association Sydney (www.zulenet.com/awpa/wptop.html) • Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centre/cpacs) • Department of Foreign Affairs (www.deplu.go.id) • Down to Earth (dte.gn.apc.org/camp.htm) • East-West Center (www.eastwestcenter.org) • ELSAM (www.elsam.or.id) • Evatt Foundation (evatt.labor.net.au/Publications/papers/131.html) • Fellowship of Reconciliation (www.for.org.uk) • Freeport (www.fcx.com) • Free West Papua (www.freewestpapua.org) • Government of Indonesia (www.indonesia.go.id/en) • HPCR (www.preventconflict.org.org/portal/main/maps_wpapua_resources.php) • International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) • Irian News (www.kabar-irian.com/news) • IRJA (www.IRJA.org) • Kabar-Irian (www.kabar-irian.com/news/index.html) • Melanesia News (www.melanesianews.org) • Peace Movement Aotearoa (www.converge.org.nz/pma/wpapua.htm) • Ploughshares Project (www.ploughshares.ca/content/ACR) • TAPOL (tapol.gn.apc.org) • UNPO (www.unpo.org) • West Papua Action (wetspapuaaction.buz.org) • West Papua News (www.inforpapua.org) • West Papua News (www.westpapua.net) • www.angelfire.com/journal/issues/irian.html • www.preventconflict.org/portal/main/maps_wpapua_resources.php



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. Independent since 1947, the country had a democratic government between 1948 and 1962, the year in which General Ne Win resulted in a military coup and it was destroyed by another military coup in 1988.

Myanmar has a population of 49 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 are politically organised under the **NDF** (the National Democratic Front) and are not involved in drug trafficking, unlike many ethnic groups. In the military field, they are operating through the **KNU** (Karen National Union/Karen Liberation Army), created in 1947, which, since January 2000, has been led by Saw Ba Thin, willing to negotiate with the Government. The group has around 7,000 combatants. In 1995, the Karen massively reformed in Thailand, being unarmed, in the majority. 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.

Population: 49 million inhabitants
Area: 677,000 km²
HID: 138 (of 182)
GDP:
Income per inhabitant:
Deaths due to the conflict: 15,000
Displaced population: 500,000
Armed actors: KNU, CNF
Non-armed actors: NLD (Aung San Suu Kyi)
Facilitators:
NLD: Malaysia, UN, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. USA.
KNU: Thailand
CNF: Reverend Chawn Kio, Peace and Tranquility Committee

The **Chin** are an ethnic group consisting of more than one million people with their own language and a culture divided between Myanmar and India; in the latter country they are called the Mizos. The Burmese part 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, so the majority of the population is Baptist. They have a far-reaching Diasporas in India, Malaysia, Canada and the United States. The military junta has persecuted the Chins, regarding them as pro-West.

Since the 1930s, the Chins have been claiming their rights to self-determination, 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 after the brutal repression by the military junta of student demonstrations calling for democracy in the country. This group, which demanded self-rule of 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 received support) and 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). In 2006, the Chin National Council was founded, which includes the CNF and other Chin organisations.

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 allowed elections, which were mainly won by Aung San Suu Kyi, led by the **NLD** (National League for Democracy) and Nobel Peace prize , who was later arrested.

Background to the peace process

The first meeting between the government and the **KNU** was held in 1996. No positive advances were made. The second meeting was held at the end of 2003, seven years after the first meeting. This meeting led to a **verbal agreement to cease hostilities**. In January 2004, a meeting was held between the prime minister of Myanmar and KNU leaders to negotiate a ceasefire. One month later, there was a second meeting which addressed the repositioning of the armed forces, the territorial boundaries of the Karen, and the future of the 200,000 displaced people. Finally, in September new talks were held in the country. The KNU stated that it agreed to end the armed conflict.

The first attempts at negotiation with the **Chin** were held in 1995. They were founded on initiatives by Baptist religious leaders which in 1996 founded the **Peace and Tranquillity Committee (PTC)** to make headway in these initiatives, although without significant results due to the conditions imposed by the military officers in the government. In 1998, the First Chin Seminar was held in Canada, attended by politicians, religious leaders and activists. In April 2006, the leaders of the CNF expressed their willingness to embark on negotiations to start a ceasefire aimed at promoting national reconciliation.

The process of democratisation and reconciliation was channelled through talks with the Nobel Prize Winner and the **NLD**. The first meetings were held at the end of 2000 and were mediated by Malaysia and the United Nations. Between 2001 and 2004, a series of gestures were made by the military junta which could be called “**diplomacy of visits**”. Several political prisoners were released either before or after the periodic visits to the country by the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the leaders of several countries. However, there were several periods in which the military junta did not permit such visits. In 2004, the government promoted a **National Convention** to democratise the country. However, the NLD made its participation conditional upon the release of its imprisoned members. Much of the diplomatic activity aimed at seeking a solution to the conflict has been undertaken through the **Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**, which is headquartered in Geneva. This organisation had had an office in the Burmese capital since 2000. However, the office was closed down by the military junta in March 2006.

The year 2005 stands out for the deterioration in the inchoate process, as the military junta began a purge of members who were in favour of talks and the democratisation of the country. Although the junta resumed the National Convention process in order to undertake democratic reforms, this took place without the participation of the democratic opposition party, the **NLD**, whose leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, was still under arrest. International pressure on the Military Junta to release the leader of the opposition continued. In March, negotiations between the military junta and the armed opposition group the **KNU** got underway. However, they did not lead to a ceasefire. In April, after the government’s decision to suspend the National Convention process, the UN Secretary-General called on the junta to clarify its position on the “roadmap” for the democratisation of the country. Some armed opposition groups threatened to break their respective ceasefires. **Two Shan groups (SSNA and SSA)** announced that they were merging, although 119 members of these groups laid down their arms. One month earlier, over 800 members of the **PSLA** (another group operating in the state of Shan) had disarmed after 14 years of ceasefire. In July 2005, 350 political prisoners were released.

However, further arrests were also made. The former Czech president, Vaclav Havel, and the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Desmond Tutu, urged the UN Security Council to undertake immediate action against Myanmar's military regime. In October, spokespeople for three armed opposition groups (NMSP, KIO and DKBA) which have been observing a ceasefire for the last ten years, indicated that they would not hand over their weapons to the military government. A new stage in the National Convention process finally began in December, aimed at preparing a new constitution in what has been referred to as a "disciplined democracy".

With respect to the conflict between the military junta governing Myanmar and the Karen people, in May 2006 the Karen organisation KNU called on the government to hold new negotiations on a possible ceasefire given the group's dire straits. The KNU claimed that the armed forces had initiated systematic military operations against its armed branch, the KNLA, despite the ceasefire agreement signed between both parties in 2004. **The KNU rejected any possibility of negotiating with the military junta**, despite the fact that the junta made an informal offer of dialogue. However, the KNU stated that for peace talks to be held, the attacks against the civilian Karen population had to stop first. The armed group pointed out that 20,000 ethnic Karen had been forcibly displaced in the past few months. In early September, the United Nations considered the possibility that the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN for Political Affairs, I. Gambari, might again travel to the country in the wake of the journey he had taken in May. This announcement was issued after the **US ambassador to the UN asked the president of the Security Council to hold a formal discussion on the deteriorated state of affairs in the country**. The military junta rejected the United Nations' decision to include the Myanmar question on the UN Security Council's agenda, as requested by the USA. The government of Myanmar expressed its confidence that China, which voted against including Myanmar on the Council's agenda, would ultimately veto this decision. Ten countries voted in favour of debating this issue. However, in addition to China, it was rejected by Russia, Qatar and DR Congo as well.

Likewise, the military junta announced the resumption of the National Convention process in October 2006, which was aimed at drafting a new constitution. During the first half of October, the EU expressed its concern over the ongoing arrest of several student leaders. It asked the Burmese military junta to free the arrested persons, members of the group 88 Generation Students, who requested that efforts be made to achieve national reconciliation in the country. This organisation was holding protests inside the country in which hundreds of people participated. The demonstrations consisted of wearing white clothing as a plea to release the political prisoners. Dovetailing with the resumption of the National Convention process (begun in 1992 by the government in order to reform the constitution), numerous pro-democracy activists were arrested, and the government stated that it would punish anyone who interfered in the Convention. Likewise, numerous international organisations supporting the Burmese democratic opposition criticised the EU's dearth of efforts to prevent companies from the member states from investing in Myanmar in sectors such as petroleum, gas and wood, which yield significant profits for the military government. The government also announced that **the informal agreement with the armed opposition group KNU was being cancelled** after the negotiations recently held by both parties. At the end of the year, the clashes between the armed forces and different armed ethnic groups in the states of Karen, Mon, Shan and Kachin gained momentum. Likewise, Human Rights Watch (HRW) condemned the fact that the **government of India had offered a military aid package to the government of Myanmar**, which would most likely be used against civilians as part of the war against ethnic insurgents. The military junta authorised the ICRC to reopen its offices in the country after the five offices that had previously existed in the country had been ordered shut. In early 2007, however, a KNU delegation met once again with the government of Myanmar, with mediation by Thailand.

Early in 2007, a delegation from the Karen armed opposition group KNLA (the armed wing of the KNU movement) travelled to Rangoon to negotiate a ceasefire agreement with the Ministry of Defence. However, the delegation moved to the capital of the country without the permission of the Central Committee of the KNU. The delegation attempted to negotiate a ceasefire agreement

for the entire Karen state. The KNU, however, indicated that it did not approve the meeting and that the Government of Myanmar was trying to create a division among the opposition movements. As an upshot, a faction headed by general H. Maung split off from the KNU and formed the KNU/KNLAPC, which signed a peace agreement with the military junta that governs Myanmar. The KNU stated that it did not recognise this group. In January, too, China and Russia vetoed the draft resolution on Myanmar presented by the United States in the UN Security Council. This resolution launched an appeal to release political prisoners, embark on a far-ranging national dialogue and put an end to military abuses of the ethnic minorities. South Africa also declared its opposition to the resolution. Additionally, the Indian government pledged to step up its military aid to Myanmar in exchange for greater cooperation for combating the Indian insurgent groups that operate along the border with Myanmar.

In March, a first two-day meeting was held in Myanmar between representatives of the CNF, led by Sui Khar (deputy Secretary-General) and the Burmese military junta, with mediation by reverend Chawn Kio, former secretary-general of the Zomi Baptist Convention. The meeting served to lay the foundations for a minimum amount of trust to attempt to address the possibility of an end to hostilities in a later meeting. The second quarter of the year witnessed several armed clashes between the Karen armed opposition group KNLA and other Karen groups in favour of the government and the military junta on several areas along with border with Thailand. Even though the clashes caused no deaths, several hundreds of people were forced to flee their homes. In early March, the armed group DKBA, a splinter group from the KNU which signed a peace agreement with the military junta in 1995, began military operations against the KNLA with the support of the armed forces. Combat between the KNU and the government were also stepped up. Furthermore, in May the negotiations for a ceasefire between representatives of the armed forces and members of the Shan armed opposition group SSA were suspended after neither party managed to achieve agreement on the venue for holding a meeting. The leader of this armed group (one of the top ones in the country) had agreed to negotiate with the armed forces with mediation by Thai military officers. The Secretary-General of the UN, for his part, appointed Ibrahim Gambari as his Special Advisor for the country in order to implement the resolutions reached by the General Assembly, as well as to cooperate with the country in its process of democratisation. Finally, the government decided to extend the arrest of the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, for another year, which triggered an outcry from the Indonesian government.

In July, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, visited several Asian countries (Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) to hold consultations with the different governments on the situation and future of the country. One of the most important meetings held was with the Chinese authorities, one of the top allies of the military regime in Myanmar. Gambari also met with representatives of the India government, which in recent months had increased its cooperation, especially in military terms, with Myanmar's executive branch, as well as with president Putin of Russia. In late September, however, after popular demonstrations and the military junta's repression of demonstrators and Buddhist monks, both the UN and other organisations pressured the Burmese regime to open up a political transition period towards democracy. In other matters, the split-off faction from the Shan armed opposition group SSNPLO claimed that it had disarmed and surrendered its weapons to the military government of Myanmar. This faction had travelled to Karen lands after the schism. In September, the government officially closed the national convention process, the goal of which was to reform the constitution, which the US State Department called a farce. In late September, several people died (including a Japanese photographer) and hundreds were injured and arrested in Rangoon and other major cities throughout the country after the military junta decided to respond to the massive citizen protests spearheaded by Buddhist monks in the main cities in the country by repressing the demonstrations. These demonstrations were later dubbed the "saffron revolution" in reference to the colour of the robes worn by the Buddhist monks. The Alliance of All Burmese Buddhist Monks published a manifesto that stated that they had three main demands: alleviate all the burdens on the everyday lives of the people, freedom for political

prisoners and national reconciliation. The UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor for Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, announced after a visit to the country and after having held meetings with the leaders of the military junta and the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, that the leader of the military junta, Than Shwe, had agreed to begin a process of dialogue with Suu Kyi. Nevertheless, the military junta stated that this dialogue could only take place if the opposition leader agreed to stop supporting international sanctions against the regime, among other conditions. Furthermore, the government also announced that it was not planning to release Suu Kyi in the near future. After Gambari's visit, **the government announced the appointment of a Vice Minister of Labour as a liaison with Aung San Suu Kyi**; this post has been called the Minister of Relations.

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is an independent organisation with its headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland), for the improvement in responses to armed conflicts. To reach this objective mediation took place between the conflicting sides and support was offered to the affected communities. The Centre is guided by humanitarian values and its ultimate purpose is to reduce the consequences of violent conflicts, improve security and contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It is led by Martin Griffiths and has acted in countries such as Sudan, the Philippines, Myanmar, R. Central Africa, Timor-Leste, Kenya, Somalia, Nepal, Burundi and Indonesia, among others.

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In mid-October, in a letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, the government accepted a visit by a UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in this country, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who had been banned from entering the country since 2003. Likewise, the government of Thailand proposed four-sided negotiations in order to reach a solution to the crisis in which the country was enmeshed, with the participation of ASEAN, China, India and the United Nations. In October, four ethnic armed opposition groups that have ceasefire agreements with the government - UWSA, MNDA, NDA and NDAA – issued a communiqué criticising the government's repression of the demonstrators in September, while it also praised the mediation role being exercised by the United Nations. The four groups formed a coalition called the Peace and Development Front and are headquartered on the border with China. In early November, **the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor for Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, on his second visit to the country since the crisis triggered by the massive popular mobilisations against the military regime, met with the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.** However, in parallel to the meetings with Gambari, the military junta refused to renew the visa of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Charles Petrie. In mid-November, after concluding his trip to the country, Ibrahim Gambari read a public declaration issued by the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, in which she claimed to be prepared to cooperate with the government in order to make headway in a dialogue process, in addition to praising the good offices that the United Nations could offer to make inroads in this process. Subsequently, **the military junta authorised a meeting between the opposition leader and four members of its party, the LDN. This is the first time in three years that a meeting of this sort has been authorised.** At the meeting, the conditions for talks between Aung San Suu Kyi and the leader of the military junta, Than Shwe, were discussed, as was the way of aiding the people who had been injured and arrested during the protests in September. The opposition leader had expressed a great deal of optimism with respect to a possible national reconciliation process under the auspices of the United Nations. In late November, **Ibrahim Gambari asked the government of Vietnam to provide its support in seeking a solution to the political crisis in Myanmar**, as Vietnam would soon become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Gambari highlighted that this situation, along with the fact that Vietnam has good relations with Myanmar, should help the country exercise a positive role in resolving the crisis. At the end of the year, the UN Secretary-General called the first meeting of the **"Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Myanmar"**, with participation by 14 countries that plan to support their diplomatic efforts in the Asian country. This group is consultative in nature and its

members include Australia, Indonesia, Russia, the United States, China, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, France, Norway, Thailand, India, Portugal and the United Kingdom. A United Nations spokesperson said that the meetings would be informal and would take place further in the future. Also worth noting is the fact that in December, Samak Sundaravej, leader of the Thai party PPP (one of the main parties in the country) and candidate in the forthcoming elections, suggested that Thailand host an international conference on Myanmar, taking as its model the six-sided negotiations on North Korea.

In mid-January, the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi held a meeting with the Minister of the Military Junta, Aung San Suu Kyi, assigned to conduct the dialogue process with her. **The Military Junta authorised a meeting between Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her party, the NLD.** After the meeting, the party stated that Aung San Suu Kyi was not satisfied with the negotiation process with the Military Junta as there was no timeline to organise these negotiations. Likewise, the Military Junta of Myanmar once again postponed the invitation for the UN Special Advisor, Ibrahim Gambari, who was slated to visit the country in November 2007 and then again in January 2008. However, it did authorise him in March to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, who remained under house arrest. The goal of Gambari's trip was to ask the Military Junta to reform its draft constitution so that it would allow Suu Kyi to participate in the next elections, a request that was denied by the Junta. There was also speculation that the government might be pressuring different ethnic armed groups to get more involved in the process of political reforms that it was spearheading. Along these lines, the government had met with leaders of the armed groups UWSA, KIO, SSA-N and KA. In mid-February, the Military Junta announced that a referendum would be held on the new constitution in May and general elections were scheduled for 2010. The referendum would be the fourth step in the roadmap towards democracy laid down by the government. The goal of the elections would be to replace the Military Junta with a representative government, as the Junta itself had stated. However, the elections would be managed by the USDA, which has close ties to the government and has held the majority of the seats in the National Convention process which had drawn up the new constitution that would be submitted to a vote. The USDA is also behind the harassment of numerous opponents through paramilitary groups. This organisation may become a political party for the 2010 elections. After the announcement, two of the main organisations opposing the military regime – the group 88 Generation Students and the Alliance of All Burmese Buddhist Monks – issued an appeal for the Burmese people to vote against the constitution. Finally, the leader of the armed Karen opposition group KNU, Mahn Sha, died after being shot at his home in Thailand by unknown perpetrators. After the murder, the KNU, which accused the Burmese armed forces of being behind the crime, proclaimed their number two, Ba Thin Sein, their new leader. Nine Nobel Prize winners, led by the Archbishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, asked both the UN Security Council and individual governments to set up a weapons embargo against the Military Junta.

During the second quarter, despite the devastation wreaked by a cyclone that left around 100,000 deaths in its wake, the Military Junta decided to hold a false referendum in the midst of the tragedy and the opposition's boycott. The Military Junta announced that the result of the referendum to approve the draft constitution was 92.4% in favour, with a 99% voter turnout rate, according to official sources. The referendum was held despite the appeals from both the political opposition and the international community, including the Secretary-General of the UN, for it to be postponed given the humanitarian crisis in which the country was enmeshed after Cyclone Nargis. Furthermore, in late May, the Military Junta extended the house arrest of the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi for the sixth year in a row, despite the fact that the law states that arrest under these conditions may last at most five years, a timeframe which was coming to an end. **In early June, the newspaper The Australian reported that Indonesia could be preparing a plan to help the Military Junta in a transition towards democracy based on its own experience.** The plan would end with the formation of a dual government in which civilians and military officers would play different roles during the transition. In the third quarter, the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi refused to meet with the UN Secretary-General

Special Envoy for the country, Ibrahim Gambari, on his six-day trip to Myanmar. Analysts and the opposition coincided in interpreting the cancellation of the meeting as a clear message of frustration with the lack of headway in the dialogue process between the UN and the Military Junta. Gambari asked for both the NLD and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be allowed to participate in the 2010 elections. In turn, the NLD stated that Gambari's six trips to the country had been futile. Shortly thereafter, the Military Junta released thousands of prisoners, seven of whom were prominent members of the NLD. However, in November a court sentenced 40 pro-democracy activists to more than 65 years in prison. The activists included members of the 88 Generation Students and Buddhist monks. Additionally, 11 members of the opposition party NLD were sentenced to seven years in prison. A total of 80 activists were sentenced, which was a harsh setback for the attempts at mediation being conducted by the United Nations.

On the other hand, the organisation KNU, the political arm of the opposition armed group KNLA, appointed a new executive and a woman as its Secretary-General for the first time in its history. Zipporah Sein, who until then had been at the helm of the Karen Women's Organization, replaced the murdered leader Mahn Sha in this post. **The new leadership of the KNU stated that it was willing to hold peace talks with the government of Myanmar as long as certain conditions obtained,** such as the withdrawal of troops from the Karen state and the release of all the political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Hundreds of people were displaced as a result of the **clashes between the armed Karen opposition groups KNLA and DKBA** near the border with Thailand. The KNLA stated that this was a strategy for capturing all their bases before 2010, the year when general elections are scheduled to be held. The DKBA, a breakaway group from the KNLA, has a ceasefire agreement with the government and may be conducting a forced recruitment strategy with the civilian government to counter the KNLA.

The peace process in 2009

In early January, the government reported that the members of the armed opposition group **DKBA** – a splinter group from the KNU – would have to provide services as border guards. The announcement was made by the government to the armed group, with which it has a ceasefire agreement, after meeting in Naypyidaw. However, the organisation did not need to disarm. Some high-ranking members of the group were considering desertion to show their disagreement with this government decision, which fell within the measures included in the new, recently approved constitution. In parallel, there were clashes between the DKBA and the **KNLA** (the armed wing of the KNU). The KNLA stated that the DKBA'S real intention was to control the region in order to set up trade relations with the Thai government, as this zone is rich in gold, zinc, tin and teak wood. Likewise, the armed opposition group UWSP, which has a ceasefire agreement with the government, suggested that a special autonomous region be created in the territory under its control. The armed group would sign its official documents with the name Government of the Wa State, a special autonomous region that joins Myanmar. Currently the Wa zone is part of the special region 2 in the Shan state. Around 20,000 members of the UWSA (armed wing of the UWSP) are deployed along the border with Thailand and China. The Mon armed opposition group **NMSP**, which has had a ceasefire agreement with the government since 1995, announced that it would not take part in the 2010 elections. The reasons given were that its demands were not heeded during the constitutional convention process. The NMSP stated that it would not disarm either if the government asked it to. **The KNU/KNLA Peace Council faction, which had split off from the KNU, reached an agreement with the military junta** stating that the members of this armed group would serve as border guards in Three Pagodas Pass on the border with Thailand. In contrast, the Shan armed opposition group **SSA** announced that it would use all the means at its disposal to try to prevent the elections from being held next year, and that at least ten more armed groups shared this decision, including the UWSA, which was allied with the government. In mid-March, the Thai authorities were preventing leaders of the armed opposition group KNLA from entering its territory. The government of Thailand had demanded that they stop their armed activities conducted from Thai soil.

In early April, the organisation Lahu National Development claimed in a report that the **political situation in the Shan state had deteriorated** since mid-2008 as a result of the **rising pressure to disarm that the government was exerting on the armed groups with ceasefire agreements**, as well as the rising economic influence of China in the region. **The armed opposition group KNU agreed to hold a meeting with government representatives to discuss the possibility of reaching a ceasefire agreement** after representatives of the armed organisation met with the Foreign Minister of Thailand. The government of Myanmar is particularly interested in reaching this objective with the goal of getting the KNU to participate in the elections scheduled for 2010, as this might enhance the legitimacy of these elections, which to date have been rejected by the opposition. Numerous analysts stressed that behind these negotiations the government had no real intention of conducting a peace process; rather it was merely political game for the elections. The military junta was negotiating a proposal with the armed opposition groups with which it has ceasefire agreements to join the border security forces and thus relinquish their ability to organise themselves. The insurgents would come under the command of the armed forces. Some of the groups with which the government was negotiating this proposal include the UWSA, KIA, MNDAA and NDAA. This proposal would be implemented after the elections scheduled for 2010. In early June, the KNU issued an appeal to international organisations to pressure Myanmar's government to hold tripartite talks on the political and ethnic conflicts affecting the country. This appeal came in the wake of the latest joint offensive waged by the armed forces and the armed group DKBA against the KNU, which forced between 4,000 and 6,000 ethnic Karen to be displaced. The Kachin armed opposition group KIO rejected the government's proposal to become a border security force under the command of the armed forces. This organisation noted that its armed wing, the KIA, would only embrace this proposal when there was a democratic change in the country. Other armed groups like the MNDAA and the Wa group UWSA, also rejected a similar proposal. In early September, several sources warned about the **risk that the high-intensity armed conflict in the country would resume in the wake of serious clashes in the north of the Shan state between the armed forces and several armed opposition groups**, mainly the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), which represents the Kokang minority, and the United Wa State Army (UWSA), which represents the Wa minority. Several sources stated that the real reason for the conflict was the refusal by the MNDAA and other armed groups to join the border guards, a corps authorised under the new constitution which would be under the orders of the armed forces. In September, the UWSA might have forged an alliance with the Shan armed opposition group SSA-S in the south of the Shan state to jointly combat the government. The government had blocked the routes that join the UWSA's bases in the north and the south of the state of Shan. Just a few days earlier, the armed group **UWSA had stated that its intention was not to engage in confrontations with the state but to conduct a negotiating process for the Wa state to become a self-governed zone within a federal Burmese republic**. In October, a faction of the armed wing of the Mon organisation NMSP, the MNLA, split off from the group out of opposition to the 2010 elections. The NMSP has had a ceasefire agreement with the government since 1995. Likewise, a minority faction of the Karen armed opposition group KNPLF stated that it would become a border guard in accordance with the provisions of the Burmese military regime. The KNPLF, which split off from the KNPP in 1978, has had a ceasefire agreement since 1994 and has operated as a militia for the armed forces since then. Nevertheless, the majority sector of the armed group did not accept this agreement. In November, the government rejected the creation of an autonomous Wa state, as the leaders of the armed group UWSA had requested. The 2008 constitution recognises the existence of a "Wa Self-Administered Division", thus limiting ethnic autonomy. Likewise, the military junta extended the deadline for the UWSA to become a security guard under government control to the last week in December. UWSA leaders did not confirm whether or not they accepted the government's demand. The armed Kachin group NDA-K did accept this demand and became one of the first to become a border guard.

With regard to the military junta's relations with the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in early February, the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, ended his trip to the country without having met with the head of the military junta, General Than Swe, although he

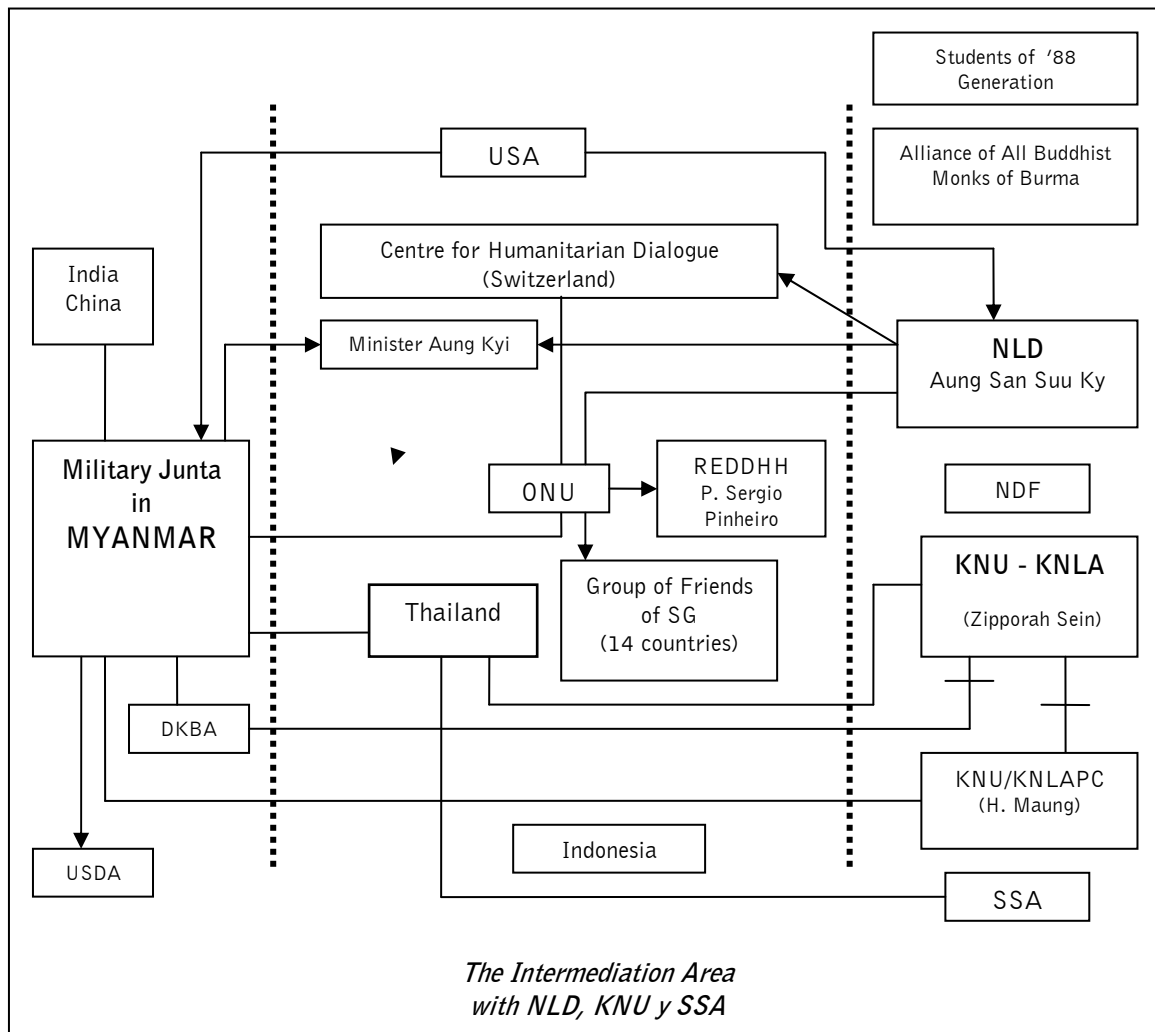
was able to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi as well as with the Prime Minister, General Thein Sein. At the same time, two European ministers visited the country despite the boycott imposed by the EU. The Danish Minister of Development Cooperation, Ulla Tornas, and the Norwegian Minister of Development and Environment, Erik Solheim, took a trip to the country and met with members of the Myanmar Red Cross. The ministers visited the zones that had been affected by cyclone Nargis. Ulla Tornas also asked the Danish Parliament for an agreement to put an end to the sanctions on this country and announced that there were plans to step up the financial aid. Likewise, **the new US administration of President Barack Obama may not be against holding direct negotiations with the military junta**, as hinted at by State Department sources. The Assistant Secretary of State mentioned the possibility of creating an analogous format to the one used in the negotiations with North Korea, through a six-sided dialogue in which ASEAN, Japan, China and India would also take part. In early May, the leader of the democratic opposition, Aung San Suu Kyi, and two workers accompanying her were arrested at the home of the former and moved to the Insein prison. The arrest and transfer took place after a US citizen, John Yettaw, entered Aung San Suu Kyi's home, which according to the Myanmar authorities was a violation of the conditions of the opposition leader's house arrest. **The United Nations Special Envoy for Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari**, travelled to the country prior to the scheduled visit of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. However, United Nations sources stated that Ban Ki-moon would not accept the Burmese government's invitation if opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was imprisoned or if her house arrest was extended as a result of the trial that was being held against her. In early July, the military junta prevented the UN Secretary-General from meeting with the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, on his trip to the country. Nevertheless, **US representations from the delegation of the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, met with representatives of the military junta** in Phuket (Thailand) during the Asian Forum. The USA asked Myanmar to release around 2,100 political prisoners, including the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and it offered Myanmar economic investments in the country in exchange for the release of the opposition leader. In early October, Aung San Suu Kyi met with several Western diplomats – from the Austrian, British and US representations – to address the issue of economic sanctions against the country. Suu Kyi had asked diplomats to clarify the goal of these sanctions, as well as their consequences. After conferring with the leader, the representatives met with several members of Suu Kyi's party, the NLD. These meetings took place after Aung San Suu Kyi herself asked the leader of the military junta, General Than Shwe, to meet with the diplomats to discuss a possible end to the sanctions against the country. In turn, the Assistant Secretary of State of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell, met with Myanmar's Minister of Science and Technology, U. Thaung, at the first official encounter after the US executive announced that it would conduct a dialogue process with the military junta. Weeks later, Kurt Campbell travelled to the country once again and met with the Prime Minister, General Thein Sein, the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the political and ethnic opposition. **The US representatives stressed their desire to improve relations with the military junta if it took specific steps towards democracy.** During the second half of November, the US government stated that it was hoping for a dialogue process to get underway between the military junta and the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, after the party she leads, the NLD, had published a letter that Suu Kyi addressed to the leader of the junta, General Than Shwe, expressing her willingness to work with the government to put an end to the sanctions affecting the country.

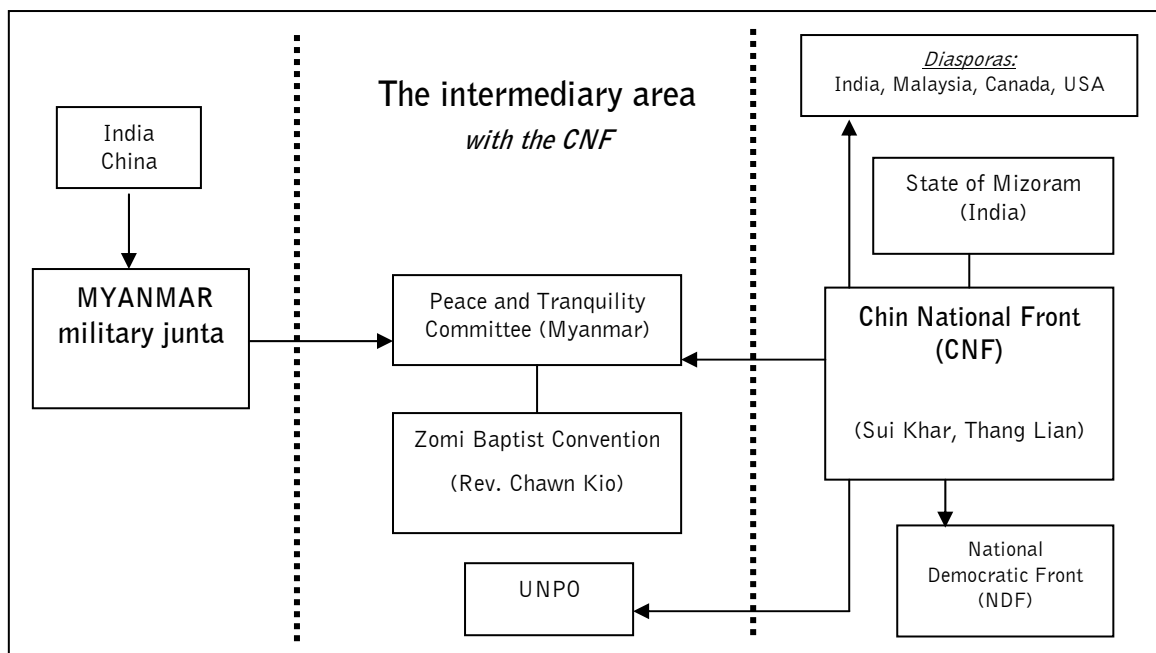
The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The armed opposition group UWSP, which has a ceasefire agreement with the government, suggested that a special autonomous region be created in the territory under its control. • The KNU/KNLA Peace Council faction, which had split off from the KNU, reached an agreement with the military junta stating that the members of this armed group would serve as border guards. A faction of the Karen group KNPLF and the Kachin group NDA-K did the same. • The armed opposition group KNU agreed to hold a meeting with government representatives to discuss the possibility of reaching a ceasefire agreement.

- The new US administration of President Barack Obama expressed its willingness to hold direct negotiations with the military junta, and several senior administration officials met with the Burmese authorities.

Websites of interest

- Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (www.altsean.org)
- Burma Issues (www.burmaissues.org)
- Burmanet News (www.burmanet.org/news)
- Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (www.dhcentre.org)
- CNF (www.chinland.org)
- Government of Myanmar (www.myanmar.com)
- Irrawaddy (www.irradaddy.org)
- Mizoran News (www.zoram.com)
- The Burma Project (www.soros.org/initiatives/bpsai)
- UNPO (www.unpo.org)
- Women's League of Burma (www.womwnforburma.org)
- Zomi Reunification Organisation (www.zogam.org)
- Zoram (zoram.org)





Thailand (South)

Context of the conflict

The insurgence 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.

Population: Thailand (64 million), South (2 million)
Area: Thailand (513,000 Km²); South (11,000 Km²)
HDI Thailand: 87 (out of 182)
GDP Thailand: 217,200 million dollars
Per capita income in Thailand: \$3,400
Deaths due to the conflict: 4,000 since 2001
Armed actors: PULO, PULA, New Pulo, BRN, BNPP, Bersatu, GMIP
Facilitators: Malaysia, Perdama Leadership Foundation, Indonesia

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. 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.

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 intermediate 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. For this reason, the Perdana World Peace Organisation (PGPO), led by Mahathir Mohamad, believed that these historic leaders' return to Thailand might help defuse the situation in the region, although he also acknowledged that the peace process had to be gradual due to the fragmentation of the armed opposition groups. In November, the government also suggested granting a more prominent role to Islamic law in the region, while it simultaneously rejected any notion of independence. Nevertheless, the PULO, which agreed to participate in the peace process, issued a communiqué criticising the government's conciliatory policy and interpreting the steps it had taken as partial, while also claiming that its hidden agenda was to "Thailandise" the Malays. The PULO thus rejected any attempt at this kind of assimilation and expressly declared the model of peace process pursued with the communists in the 1980s as inapplicable to this case.

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, 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, despite the fact that more than 2007 people had died and a much higher number had been injured since early 2000. In August, the Indonesian government declared that it had accepted the request from its Thai counterpart to cooperate in resolving the conflict affecting the southern provinces with a Malay-Muslim majority. This request had been officially submitted during a visit by the prime minister, Surayud Chulanont, to the Indonesian president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, although it had already been drafted months earlier by the King of Thailand. Indonesia, which had already initiated contacts with leaders in southern Thailand, stated that it would try to cooperate in finding a solution to the conflict that respects the territorial integrity of the country. It also stated that it might use the peace agreement reached in the province of Aceh signed in August 2005 as a model. Meanwhile, 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. In mid-October, a report issued by the International Crisis Group (ICG) stated that the increasing use of paramilitary forces in the south of the country was weakening the efforts to counter the armed insurgency in this zone.

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. However, the new Prime Minister, Samak Sundaravej, played down the intentions of his executive with regard to granting a certain degree of self-governance to the southern provinces. During the second quarter of the year, no major headway was made and clashes were heightened. In late July, three presumed leaders of the Thailand United Southern Underground (TUSU), an organisation that includes 11 armed secessionist groups, announced on several TV stations the start of a ceasefire in the south of the country, which would remain in place until 14th July. These individuals, who expressed their loyalty to the King and their desire for unity among the Muslim and Buddhist communities, also called on other armed groups to put an end to the violence. The former head of the armed forces, former Minister of Defence and current leader of one of the six parties in the government coalition, Chetta Tanajaro, declared that the ceasefire announcement was preceded by several months of informal talks with the leaders of the insurgency. These talks, in which no members of the government participated directly, would have benefited from the cooperation of Malaysia and several European governments, including Switzerland. Likewise, one of the main leaders of PULO, one of the longest standing armed opposition groups, declared that TUSU was created in an opportunistic way to divide the pro-independence movement and that the armed hostilities would continue in the southern provinces of Thailand. In late September, press agencies leaked the news that the government of Thailand had held a closed-door meeting in Indonesia with five Muslim representatives from the south of the country under the mediation of the Vice President of Indonesia, Yusuf Kalla. The meeting lasted two days and was held in the presidential palace in Bogor, and they agreed to hold a new meeting in November. The governmental delegation was led by General Khwanchart Klahan, and the Muslims by leaders of the Pattani Malay Consultative Congress (PMCC), which serves as an umbrella for several insurgent organisations. The Muslims' demands included the introduction of Islamic law and the Yawi language into the educational system and improvements in the local economy. However, the Thai government claimed that the meeting was a private initiative, despite the fact that the media claimed that it was official but that the government was not interested in making it public. Despite this, in late October the President of the Indonesian Parliament, Agung Laksono, expressed to a Thai delegation visiting Indonesia Jakarta's willingness to facilitate a second round of negotiations between representatives of the Thai government and representatives of the

insurgent organisations operating in the south of the country. Agung Laksono declared that the conflict in southern Thailand was an internal affair, but he offered Bangkok Indonesia's experience in handling identity conflict. In late November, the Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat resigned after the Constitutional Court ordered the dissolution of the three parties in the government coalition and nullified 37 political posts from the People's Power Party, including Somchai Wongsawat himself, based on fraud in the last elections held in December 2007. In December, the Parliament elected and the King ratified the leader of the Democratic Party, Abhisit Vejjajiva, as new Prime Minister of the country, with 235 votes in favour and 198 against. Abhisit Vejjajiva is the country's fifth leader in the past five years.

The peace process in 2009

Early in the year, the armed forces declared that the insurgency was well organised and divided into five groups, including the BRN-Coordinate, **an umbrella organisation that coordinates the different insurgent activities**, and the RKK, the most active group of military cells, with between 3,000 and 3,500 members. The new government announced its intention to create a new administrative structure to handle the main problems in the south of the country. Several sectors of civil society from different political sensibilities would take part in this organisation. The Vice Prime Minister, Suthep Thaugsuban, will coordinate the set-up of the organisation, which is regarded as a top priority on the agenda of the new executive. However, during the entire first quarter there were clashes in the region that led to numerous victims. Early in April, on the occasion of the ASEAN summit, the Prime Ministers of Thailand and Malaysia met to address cooperation on insurgency affairs. The new leader of Malaysia, Najib Razak, declared that he empathised with the Thai government's approach and pledged to pay greater attention to the actions by the insurgency in southern Thailand. The government created the Council of Ministers on the Development of the Five Southern Border Provinces Special Zone, an organisation whose purpose is to coordinate and implement the government's new strategy to manage the conflict in the south of the country. According to the government, this strategy would place a greater emphasis on development, human rights and respect for the unique religion and culture of the region. Also worth noting is that in early May, the ambassadors of 14 European countries, along with the Thai Foreign Minister, visited the south of the country to learn firsthand about the political situation and the government's efforts to manage the conflict. The Foreign Minister also announced that similar visits would take place shortly by ambassadors from Muslim countries, from America and from Africa. He also stated that representatives from Bahrain would soon visit the region to analyse the possibilities of investing in the food sector. In late May, 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).

EUROPE

a) Southeast Europe

CYPRUS

Background to the conflict

Colonised by many different cultures throughout its history, the island of Cyprus (9,250 km², 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 interests of the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot communities on the island. Enforcement of the constitution, however, encountered several setbacks which led to a series of institutional crises, especially at the end of 1963, which led to 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, which have functions of good offices and creating confidence-building measures. From the start, these forces laid down ceasefire lines along the 180 km across the island, as well as a buffer zone between the areas controlled by the clashing forces, in which meetings have been held between both communities as well as monthly meetings by representatives of political parties organised by the Slovakian embassy.

Population: 800,000 inhabitants
Area: 9,250 km ²
HID: 32 (of 182)
GDP: 15,400 million dollars
Income per inhabitant: \$20,841
Facilitators: UN, Slovakia, Switzerland

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** entered into effect. Throughout almost all these years, Turkey has kept a contingent of 30,000 soldiers in the occupied zone on the island. Likewise, 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 body of EU laws was suspended for the northern part of the island.

Development of the peace process

The Cypriots have spent the last thirty years negotiating an agreement that would end the division of the island, often through initiatives promoted by different UN Secretary-Generals. Between 1977 and 1979, both communities discussed bicomunal, bizonal and federal formulas, none of them successfully. The first attempt came from Secretary-General K. Waldheim, who in 1997 managed to get both leaders of the communities at that time, Makarios and Denktash, to sign the **High Level Agreement of 1977**, which at that time determined that a future resolution to the conflict would have to be based on a federation of two states and two communities, that is, a **bizonal and bicomunal formula**. Makarios died just a few months later. This agreement was revised two years later in a direct meeting between leaders of both communities, but they could not reach agreement on several points and the negotiations came to a deadlock.

The second stage in negotiations got underway in 1984, and after three months of talks the same general conclusions were reached as in 1977. In January 1985, the second direct meeting between the leaders of both sides took place, although without any appreciable results. The following year, the UN Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuellar, presented a new proposal, a "Draft

Framework Agreement", which this time was rejected by the Greek-Cypriots. As a result, all the parties decided to return to the 1977 agreement and its 1979 revision. In view of the lack of headway, in 1989 the UN Secretary-General presented a set of ideas to the leaders of both communities, which bothered the Turkish-Cypriot leader as he viewed that Pérez de Cuellar was acting outside his authority.

In the 1990s possibilities of a federation and confederation were once again discussed, although an agreement was never reached on the proportion in which each community should participate in the institutions. During these years, Cyprus' negotiations to join the EU took centre stage (with some points in favour and others against). In response, Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriots decided to abolish passport controls, and relations between both communities became more complicated. In light of the stalemate, in 1992 the new UN Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali, presented another plan once again based on the principles of creating a bizonal and bicomunal territory, which yet again irritated the Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash. As a result, Boutros-Ghali decided to change tack, and he shifted to proposing a milder strategy based on **confidence-building measures** which would include a reduction in troops, fewer restrictions for people to interact and the like. Denktash accepted many of these measures, though not the entire package. In 1995 and 1996, the negotiations came to a total stalemate. Despite this, between 1994 and 1997 several peace-building initiatives did flourish through the workshops organised by the Conflict Resolution Trainer Group, supported by the Cyprus Fulbright Foundation and USAID. In 1995, the first Bicomunal Women's Groups were formed, which also held conflict resolution workshops. In 1998 the International Eco.peace Village (IEV) was started, spearheaded by women, which promoted an extensive network both inside and outside the island. In 1991, the Centre for Peace on Cyprus was founded, and in 2001 an extensive group of women started an NGO called Hands Across the Divide (HAD), which created alternative spaces where women from both communities could express themselves and demystify the "enemy images". Their multiple actions included the "Mountains of Peace", which consisted of gathering thousands of bottles with messages inside saying "peace", then piling them into a mountain and transporting them to the home of the Turkish-Cypriot leader. These and other initiatives, many of them spearheaded by women, were decisive in getting the Turkish-Cypriot community to massively back the United Nations' federal plan years later.

In 1997, the EU agreed to begin negotiations with Cyprus with a view to its becoming a European Union member, in the hopes that this might serve as an incentive for the peace process and the reunification of the island. Nevertheless, the results in the early years were fairly poor, as the decision as to when Turkey might also join the Union was delayed. In 1998 there were direct talks between the presidents of the two communities. The following year, Álvaro de Soto was named the UN Secretary-General's Special Council for Cyprus, and in 2000, Zbigniew Włosowicz was appointed as the UNSG's Special Representative for Cyprus. In June 2000, the Turkish prime minister suggested an amicable divorce, Czechoslovakia-style. November and December 2001 once again witnessed direct talks between the two presidents under the auspices of the UN after a four-year hiatus, and in May the UN Secretary-General paid a visit to the island. In September of the same year there was yet another meeting of the presidents, and both met with the UN Secretary-General in Paris and New York the following month. There they decided to create bilateral ad hoc committees to draft an agreement on a "common state". Turkey, meanwhile, pledged to reduce its military presence on the island. In November, the UN Secretary-General suggested that a confederate state with two cantons and a joint government be created. This was to definitively become the **UN Peace Plan**, which was revised on three occasions; the latest version was released in February 2003 with Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom as the guarantors. Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom appeared as guarantors. The plan was rejected by the Turkish-Cypriot leader, but it was backed by the leader of Turkey, Erdogan. In December 2002, the UN Secretary-General put forth another proposal which was once again rejected by the Turkish-Cypriot leader, which unleashed a massive demonstration by Turkish-Cypriots calling for reunification and asking the president to step down. In January 2003, Turkish-Cypriots held another mass demonstration asking for the president to resign.

Subsequently, talks were resumed between the two leaders. Both sides accepted that the UN would announce a public competition to choose a hymn and a flag.

In April 2003, the Turkish-Cypriot leader suggested setting **confidence-building measures** to help make headway in the peace process. The Greek prime minister visited the island, and the Turkish-Cypriot side lifted restrictions on free movement between both sides, so people were now allowed to cross the "green line". In May, the UNFICYP facilitated the passage of thousands of people and the confidence-building measures continued. The Greek-Cypriot government lifted its trade sanctions and granted the same rights and social benefits to Turkish-Cypriots. The EU also granted economic aid to the Turkish-Cypriot side.

In January 2004, both of the pro-European Turkish-Cypriot parties, the PRT and the PD (the latter led by President Denktash's son) reached an agreement for a collegial government to work towards reunification of the island by 1st March. The Greek and Greek-Cypriot prime ministers reaffirmed their commitment to re-launch negotiations based on the UN proposal. The Turkish prime minister, Erdogan, expressed his government's commitment to resolve the island's status before 1st May. Several weeks later, the UN Secretary-General encouraged the leaders of both communities to meet in New York, with participation by Greece, the United Kingdom and Turkey. They later met in Cyprus with Álvaro de Soto and the head of the UNFICYP. In April, the Turkish-Cypriot prime minister expressed his approval of the UN plan, but Russia vetoed the rest of the Security Council's support for a resolution encouraging the reunification plan to be supported in an effort to avoid meddling in the island's internal affairs. At the end of the month, 76% of the Greek-Cypriot voters rejected the reunification referendum, while 65% of the Turkish-Cypriots voted in favour of it. This behaviour by the Turkish-Cypriot community helped the EU to grant them aid totalling 259 million Euros for improving infrastructures. Mid-year, the UN Secretary-General stated that there was no longer any circumstances leading the UN to continue its efforts of good offices on the island, although it did not discard the possibility that a definitive reconciliation might take place in the future.

In February 2005 presidential elections were held in the Turkish part of the island, resulting in the winner, M. A. Talat, of the Turkish Republican Party, who had been in favour of the application of the UN peace plan for the reunification of the island. It is noteworthy that Rauf Denktash was at the helm of the Turkish-Cypriot community and thus the negotiations for 28 years, while during this same time lapse the Greek-Cypriots changed leadership four times. In May 2005 the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs of the UN, K. Prendergast, visited the island and in September the Secretary-General of the UN named Dane Michael Moller as its Special Representative for Cyprus, thus activating the role played by the UN in previous years.

At the beginning of 2006, **the Turkish government sent the UN Secretary-General an action plan for resolving the situation on the island**, which would also ease Turkey's accession to the EU. The plan consisted of eleven points and called for meetings between Greeks, Turks and members of both communities on the island. It also called for the opening of Turkish ports and airports to ships and airplanes from Cyprus. **However, the Greek-Cypriots rejected the proposal outright**, because in their opinion it did not contribute to creating the conditions needed to resume negotiations, rather it sought to consolidate Turkish interests in Cyprus. In early 2006, an inter-community group of archaeologists and anthropologists from the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus met for the first time. In February, the President of Cyprus, T. Papadopoulos, met in Paris with the UN Secretary-General and both coincided in a negotiating meeting as part of the goodwill of the Secretary-General, although K. Annan later stated that he would not accept a mediating position in the conflict until there had been more progress. Nevertheless, in July, after holding a meeting sponsored by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot leaders agreed to begin a process of technical negotiations on issues that affect the everyday lives of citizens of both communities, and simultaneously tackle substantial issues with the purpose of reaching a comprehensive agreement on the future of the island. They also agreed to a list of principles, including the commitment to

achieving unification of Cyprus based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation, as well as political equality, as recommended in the UN Security Council's resolutions.

During the second half of November, the United Nations suggested to the leaders of the Turkish and Greek-Cypriot communities a series of practical measures with views to resuming formal talks on reunification of the island by March 2007. In a letter sent to both communities by the Undersecretary General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, measures were recommended for accelerating the implementation of the pact agreed on in July by T. Papadopoulos and M. A. Talat, Grekk and Turkish-Cypriot leaders respectively, and has not produced results to date. In January, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities on the island demolished a controversial walkway in Nicosia, the divided capital of the island. This walkway had been built in 2005 and was heavily criticised by the Greek-Cypriot community, as they claimed that it favoured Turkish-Cypriot patrols and invaded the security zone controlled by the United Nations. On the site of the former walkway there are plans to build a passageway that would connect both communities, which would be added to the five that have already existed on the island since 2003. In mid-February, for the first time since 1974, the top religious leaders of both parts of the island, the Greek-Cypriot archbishop Chrysostomos II, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader A. Yonluer, met as part of an encounter presided over by the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, R. van der Linden, who was visiting the island to promote dialogue between both communities. Van der Linden also expressed his concern at the slow pace of implementation of the agreement reached in July 2006, which had been promoted by the United Nations. In March, the Greek-Cypriot government demolished the wall on Ledra street in the historic centre of the capital. In the second quarter, the Turkish-Cypriot leader, M. Ali Talat, in a letter to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, proposed a return to the negotiating table to reach a solution to the conflict in the island on the basis of the Annan Plan 2004, breaking with the agreement signed by both parties on 8 July between the two sides of the island (the so-called Gambari agreement, after the UN Assistant Secretary-General, I. Gambari) which contemplated the creation of working groups and parallel committees to cover questions affecting the daily life of the population as well as more substantial policy matters. In reaction to the Turkish-Cypriot announcement, the Greek-Cypriot National Council unanimously approved backing the Gambari agreement as the only way to resolve the dispute on the island. In mid-October, the Greek-Cypriot president, Tassos Papadopoulos, presented the UN with a new eight-point proposal aimed at accelerating implementation of the July 2006 agreements, which would include substantial participation by civil society with the purpose of ensuring that the process was closer to the people and monitored democratically. It also included both military and non-military measures to build trust between the two communities. The news of Papadopoulos' proposal came on the eve of Ban Ki-moon's meeting with the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat.

The winning candidate in the second round of presidential elections, Demetris Christofias, announced his intention to meet with his Turkish-Cypriot counterpart as soon as possible in order to discuss resolving the conflict on the island. He also issued an appeal for friendship with the northern half of the island, asking that they work together for the common cause of peace. At their meeting on 21st March, the political leaders of both communities on the island agreed to resume negotiations in order to seek a definitive solution to the conflict. The Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, and his Greek-Cypriot counterpart pledged to set up working groups and technical committees in both communities so that they could begin to prepare an agenda for resuming negotiations on reunification. As a positive symbolic gesture, the leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community, Mehmet Ali Talat, crossed the Greek-Cypriot part of Nicosia along the recently reopened Ledra Street in a move aimed at promoting reconciliation on the island. Some analysts described this move as unprecedented. On his walk, which was unannounced, Ali Talat bought Greek music and sent out a message of friendship. Despite this, in early May and for the first time since the start of his presidency in the country two months earlier, the Greek-Cypriot President, Demetris Christofias, expressed serious doubts about the resumption of the negotiations to resolve the conflict. Christofias criticised his Turkish-Cypriot counterpart for

echoing and drawing closer to the position of the Turkish National Security Council, which in a recent communiqué stated that the unification of the island would have to be preceded by the creation of two separate states which later might be joined as founding states under equal conditions. Christofias said this meant abolishing the Republic of Cyprus, an internationally recognised state.

In late June, the leaders of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat, respectively, expressed their agreement in principle with a single sovereignty, common citizenship and the international character of the future federation which would resolve the prolonged division of the island and be made up of two constituent states, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot. They also stated that regardless of the final resolution, they wanted to keep opening up more crossing points between the two communities, with special attention to Limnitis. The leader of the Greek-Cypriot community stated that his government was willing to demilitarise the old walled quarter of Nicosia. In early July, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, met separately with the leaders of both communities to support the *momentum* of the negotiation process, and he announced his intention to appoint the former Prime Minister of Australia, Alexander Downer, as his new Special Advisor on the island. After another meeting of both leaders, it was agreed that the solution chosen in the negotiation process will later be subjected to a separate, simultaneous referendum among both communities. On a visit to Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriot President, Demetris Christofias, stated that the proposed solution to the conflict, based on a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, would lead to a single federal state with a single sovereignty as well as a single international identity and nationality. According to Christofias, the country would evolve from the Republic of Cyprus to a federation, a vision that in his opinion Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot leaders did not share. Christofias stated that the solution did not consist of both states' embarking on a new type of relationship, rather that after having reached an agreement and signed a solution between the two communities, two states could then emerge that will be the constituent parts of the federation. In December, two new rounds in the negotiation process were held, led by the leaders of the island's two communities under the auspices of the UN. The agenda at these meetings still revolved around the first chapter on governance and power-sharing. Within this chapter, both leaders addressed issues related to the public administration at their meeting on 2nd December, while on the 16th they focused on foreign relations and the powers of the federal government. Parallel to the high-level meetings, the technical teams from both sides continued their meetings as well.

The peace process in 2009

After the meeting on the 5th of January, the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for Cyprus, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, claimed that the leaders of both communities had reached a full agreement on harmonisation and cooperation between the federal government and the constituent states, and that they were in total agreement on the hierarchy of regulations. Both leaders also agreed to set up an advisory council on the preservation, physical protection and restoration of the fixed cultural heritage of Cyprus. In mid-February, the leaders of both communities held two new weekly meetings on the issue of property, one of the thorniest issues in the negotiation process. According to Zerihoun, the next step would be to decide whether this issue can continue to be addressed in other venues, meaning that the bilateral meetings could then go on to the next issue on the agenda, namely EU-related issues. In turn, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament asked Turkey to withdraw its troops from northern Cyprus with the purpose of contributing to a climate favourable to resolving the conflict on the island. In mid-March, groups of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot businesspeople, along with their counterparts from Turkey and Greece, sent a written declaration asking both parties to reach a peace agreement by the end of 2009. In the meantime, the negotiations between the leaders of both communities on the island continued. At a meeting on the 5th of March, the parties concluded the dialogue on property issues, an affair that they would now transfer to their representatives to continue to address, given its complexity and the difficulties in reaching an agreement on it. In mid-April, the UN Secretary-General Special Advisor for Cyprus, Alexander Downer, stated that the leaders of

the two communities were making real progress in the negotiation process after months of difficult discussions. According to Downer, more had been agreed to and written than in any other of the peace negotiations since 1974. Likewise, according to the newspaper *Politics*, the United Nations' goal would be to conclude the negotiations on the resolution of the conflict before the end of 2009 and hold parallel referenda in January 2010. In the second half of April, the election of a new conservative and nationalistic-leaning government in the elections leading up to the 19th of April on the Turkish-Cypriot side of the island generated fears of the possibility of a hardening in the negotiating process in the Greek-Cypriot political world. The victorious party, the National Unity Party (UBP), which won 26 of the 50 seats in parliament, announced that it was not against the idea of a federal solution, but that it defined federalism differently. That is, the UBP defended recognition of the existence of two states and stated that it would support a solution based on the idea of two peoples, two states and two democracies. The chief of the UNFICYP mission, Taye-Brook Zerihoun, stated that he did not anticipate problems in the negotiating process after the UBP's victory. Likewise, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stated that he expected the new governing parties in northern Cyprus to support the peace process. In turn, the leaders of both communities on the island, the Greek-Cypriot President Demetris Christofias and the Turkish-Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat, stated their commitment to the negotiation process underway. As a result, they met once again as part of the rounds of direct contacts being facilitated by the UN. In turn, the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, stated that Turkey steadfastly supported the current talks on reunification. In late May, the new Turkish-Cypriot Prime Minister, Derviş Eroğlu, took possession of his post and issued an appeal to the Turkish-Cypriot community for unity and territorial integrity. In June, the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for Cyprus denied that the UN was preparing a plan or model of a solution to impose on the island. According to Downer, the solution entailed the local leaders negotiating an agreement, not the UN's development of a model. In mid-June, the Turkish-Cypriot leader asked that the talks be sped up in order to resolve the conflict on the island, and he criticised the Greek-Cypriot party for not accepting a negotiating calendar. However, Talat expressed his optimism about the process. Furthermore, the leaders of both communities continued with their rounds of direct meetings. At the last meeting, the 33rd, they both addressed territorial issues as well as the possibility of opening up a crossing point in Limnitis.

In mid-August, the Greek-Cypriot president and the Turkish-Cypriot leader concluded the first phase of the direct negotiations to resolve the conflict on the island. This first phase included 40 encounters, which were positively rated by both parties as well as by the United Nations, the facilitator of the process. The direct talks, which began on the 3rd of September 2008, included discussions on six chapters: governability and power-sharing, EU-related issues, security and guarantees, territory, property and economic affairs, and the drafting of the issues agreed to and in dispute. The second phase got started in September with issues on governability, and they will later go on to address issues like ownership. Generally speaking, in this second phase they will revisit issues on which there was disagreement. The Turkish-Cypriot leader stated that the issue of property would be the trickiest and hardest issue in the second phase of negotiations. Likewise, Talat reiterated that he would not accept a final structure that did not include Turkey as a guarantor. According to Christofias, the essence of the Cyprus problem was power-sharing and governability. He also suggested that if the Turkish-Cypriot side wanted to reach a solution by December, Turkey would have to modify its position and put an end to its presence in the northern part of the island and halt its policy of promoting settlements. However, he also expressed his commitment to a bizonal and bicomunal solution for the island. In early September, the Greek-Cypriot party in the peace negotiations decided to postpone the start of the second of round direct talks between the leaders of both communities. During the announcement of the decision, the Presidential Commissioner George Lacovou mentioned the problems faced by a group of around 500 Greek-Cypriot pilgrims who wanted to cross the Turkish-Cypriot third of the island; when several individuals were denied entry, they decided not to enter as a sign of protest. However, in mid-September, the Greek-Cypriot President, Dimitris Christofias, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, embarked on the second phase of direct talks to resolve the conflict on the island with a new meeting under UN mediation. According to the UN Secretary-General

Special Adviser for Cyprus, the parties discussed issues related to the election of a president and vice president of the future unified republic. To do this, both delegations offered new proposals to overcome their differences. An agreement on power-sharing was expected by late October. Prior to the meeting, at a scholarly event on an official trip to Italy, Christofias had stated that three conditions were needed to pave the way towards a solution to the conflict: a change in Turkey's position that would enable the Turkish-Cypriot regime to negotiate on the bases already agreed upon; the submission of proposals and positions by the Turkish-Cypriot delegation that would help to reach a solution based on a federal state, not on a confederation; and pressure from the international community on Turkey. Christofias also stated that despite the fact that the peace process was under the aegis of the UN, the EU also had an important role to play. After their meeting, Christofias and Talat together attended a reception for Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot artists whose works decorate the UN headquarters in Nicosia, including the room where both leaders met. The international organisation The Elders, which includes former leaders and other international personalities, supported the conflict resolution process through a regional tour after holding separate meetings with the leaders of both communities on the island. This group, whose members include Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter, stated that the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders had the determination and courage needed to unify the island.

"The Elders"

The Elders is an independent group of renowned world leaders who work along with Nelson Mandela individually and who also exert their collective influence and experience to support peace processes, help in humanitarian causes and promote essential aspects for humanity. The initiative got its start in 2007 after a conversation between entrepreneur Richard Branson and musician Peter Gabriel. The group, whose members currently include Martti Ahtisaari, Kofi Annan, Ela Braht, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Brundtland, Fernando H. Cardoso, Jimmy Carter, Graça Machel, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu, along with Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela as honorary members, has facilitated in Israel-Palestine, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Myanmar and Sudan on women's equality and other human rights issues. The working team is coordinated by Mabel van Oranje. The group recently decided to step up the pace of its meetings.

Website: www.theelders.org

In mid-October, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot governments cancelled their respective annual military exercises in order to facilitate a climate of trust and avoid tensions in the context of the negotiation process. In turn, the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, appointed a special envoy to supervise the talks on the reunification of Cyprus. The Austrian diplomat Leopold Maurer will provide the UN with assistance in the process. In late October, the UN Secretary-General Special Advisor called the meetings in recent weeks between the Greek-Cypriot president and Turkish-Cypriot leader fruitful and open. At them, they addressed issues such as property rights, foreign relations and the form and competences of the federal government as part of the second round of direct talks between both leaders to solve the conflict on the island. In the second half of November, Greece and the Greek-Cypriot government rejected Turkey's proposal to hold multilateral negotiations that would include both communities on Cyprus, along with Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, stating that the current negotiations under UN mediation were the only legitimate venue for reaching an agreement.

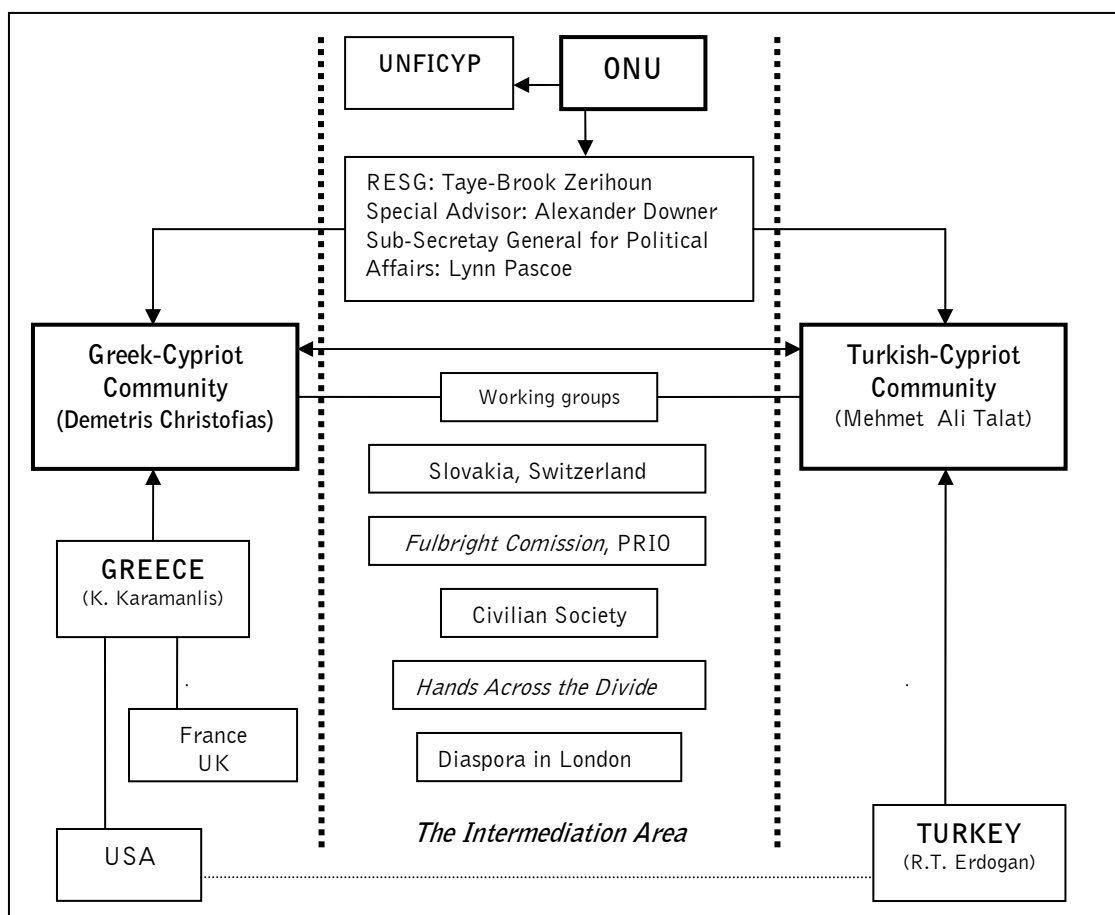
The most important events of the year

- The leaders of both communities had reached a full agreement on the harmonisation and cooperation between the federal government and the constituent states. The parties concluded a dialogue on property issues.
- The Greek-Cypriot President, Dimitris Christofias, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, started the second phase of direct talks to resolve the conflict on the island with a new meeting under UN mediation. According to the UN Secretary-General Special Adviser for Cyprus, Alexander Downer, the parties discussed issues related to

- the election of a president and vice president of the future unified republic.
- The Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot governments cancelled their respective annual military exercises this year in order to facilitate a climate of trust.

Websites of interest

- UN Security Council (www.un.org)
- UN Peace Plan (www.cyprus-un-plan.org)
- UNFICYP (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unficy)
- www.cyprus-conflict.net



KOSOVO / KOSOVE

Background to the conflict

A former Ottoman possession between the 14th and early 20th centuries, 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 population living in the former Yugoslavia reside in Kosovo, a small territory measuring 10,900 km² that has high unemployment rates and considerable economic backwardness compared to 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, in 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 that 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 NATO's military intervention.

<p>Population: 2 million Area: 10,900 km² HDI: +/- 70 GDP Serbia: 33,500 million dollars; Kosovo: some \$5,000 million. Per capita income Serbia: \$4,540 ; Kosovo: around \$2,200 . Deaths due to the conflict: 13,400 Armed actors: none currently Facilitators: UN (UNMIK, SGSE), OSCE, NATO (KFOR), Troika (USA, Russia, EU), EULEX</p>
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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 population. In 1997, shortly after the 1995 Dayton Agreements in which Kosovo was not mentioned, 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 which had 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 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.

Background to the peace process

At the end of 1998, a diplomatic mission led by Richard C. Holbrooke, in representation of the Contact Group, attempted to bring together Ibrahim Rugova and Slobodan Milosevic. The UN Security Council (resolution 1199) also called for dialogue and asked the Serbian police forces to

be withdrawn from Kosovo. In October 1998, the OSCE created its Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) with the purpose of monitoring the ceasefire and promoting respect for human rights in Kosovo. **After numerous diplomatic efforts, in 1999 the so-called Rambouillet Agreements** (named after the city in France) were signed, also called the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo. These agreements strove to put an end to the violence in the region, facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, adopt a new constitution for Kosovo that would respect the territorial integrity of the FR Yugoslavia and outline the principles of self-government for Kosovo. However, the Serbian delegation refused to sign the agreement, and Serbian military forces stepped up their operations in Kosovo, to such an extent that the OSCE observers had to withdraw from the region. In view of this situation, on 23rd March 1999 NATO initiated aerial attacks. In June 1999, a **Military Technical Agreement** was finally signed between the **KFOR** (NATO's Kosovo Enforcement Force, created in June by a UN mandate, approved two days later by Resolution 1244, and made up of forces from 35 countries), the government of the FR Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia. This agreement stated that the Serbian forces would be replaced by NATO soldiers that were part of the peacekeeping force, and that Kosovo would become an international protectorate administered by the UN through the **UNMIK** (United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo), created on 10th June 1999, while awaiting a decision as to its ultimate future status. In June 1999 through the **Helsinki Agreement**, the UCK was demilitarised and its members joined the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK). In July 1999, the OSCE established its Mission in Kosovo with departments on democratisation, human rights, elections and police training. However, this international presence did not manage to reconcile the Serbian and Albanian communities, or to avoid periodic outbreaks of violence or the resurgence of new radicalised groups. In 2002, the UN held the first elections in Kosovo with Ibrahim Rugova as the winner, followed by the PDK party of Hashim Thaci, the former leader of the UCK guerrilla. The 2004 legislative elections were boycotted by the Serbian community still living in Kosovo.

During 2006, several rounds of negotiations were begun between the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo to debate the status of the latter province. The first round had to be postponed several weeks due to the death of the president of Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova, who was replaced by Fatmir Sejdiu. **The Serbian president, Boris Tadic, proposed autonomous status for the province and a 20-year period to determine its ultimate status**, and he upheld the right of Serbians living in Kosovo to form mono-ethnic towns. In early March, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Bajram Kosumi, resigned from his post due to criticism from the international community and was replaced by Agim Ceku, former rebel leader and current head of the Protection Corps. In the second round of negotiations held in March in the city of Vienna under the auspices of the UN Special Envoy for the process on Kosovo's final status, Martti Ahtisaari, the **options for autonomy or independence for the province** were once again examined, although Serbia had already stated that it would oppose the latter. July witnessed the first meeting in which the heads of Serbia and Kosovo held direct conversations since June 1999. In late September, **the Serbian parliament unanimously approved a new constitution that claimed sovereignty over Kosovo**, thus reinforcing Serbia's rejection of the option of independence as the solution to the status of Kosovo. During the first half of October, the Special Envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, expressed his doubts as to the possibility of reaching a negotiated agreement on the future status of Kosovo, as the postures of the parties remained at odds with each other. Martti Ahtisaari's recommendation was for limited sovereignty, with continued international presence and partial competencies. During the first half of November, Martti Ahtisaari postponed submitting a new proposal on the ultimate status of Kosovo until after the Serbian parliamentary elections, guaranteeing that the decision would be taken without delay after the elections. The Serbian elections were scheduled for 21st January 2007. In view of the changes in the negotiating framework, the **Prime Minister of Kosovo, Agim Ceku, claimed that the province might unilaterally declare its independence if the talks with Serbian authorities did not respond to the Albanian Kosovars' demands**, who were the majority in the province, although he also claimed that he preferred independence reached with the support of the UN.

During the first few days of January 2007, the Special Envoy of the United Nations for the process of the future status of Kosovo presented his **proposal for the final status of the countries on the Contact Group**, before this was passed to the Security Council for discussion in April. The plan, regarded as a type of **independence under international supervision**, provides for Kosovo having its own constitutions and state symbols (flag, anthem) as well as its own army, albeit only with light weapons, and the authority to sign international agreements. The proposal also calls for a decentralised regime with sweeping powers for the local administration and the creation of new municipalities, as well as the possibility for special relations between Serbia and the municipalities with a Serbian majority in Kosovo and special protection for the sites of Serbian cultural and religious heritage. One of the main aspects is the emphasis on the guarantee of minority rights and human rights in general, with the goal of constructing a multiethnic, democratic Kosovo. The international supervision would materialise in the figure of an International Civilian Representative, who would also be the special EU representative and would oversee the civilian aspects of the plan. NATO troops would also remain on the ground. The plan proposed a 120-day transition period, during which the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) would continue to operate without changes. In this stage, the Assembly of Kosovo, in consultation with the International Civilian Representative, would be charged with approving a constitution and the laws needed to implement the plan for Kosovo. Martti Ahtisaari's proposal was initially rejected by Serbia and supported by Kosovo and the EU. In early March, the round of negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo held in Vienna came to a close without agreements. At the meeting, Serbia once again expressed its rejection of the plan as it also regarded it as a gateway to Kosovo's sovereignty, which it frontally opposed. Russia went so far as to ask that Martti Ahtisaari be replaced by another negotiator.

In November, the main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won the parliamentary elections held in the region, during which votes were also cast for local authorities and mayors. The PDK, led by the former commander of the armed group UCK, Hashim Thaci, won 34% of the votes, compared to the 28% it had earned in 2004. Thaci stated that Kosovo would declare its independence immediately. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the governing party, dropped from 45% of the votes won at the previous election to 22% this time. Only 45% of the population voted, and the majority of Serbs abstained from casting their votes. After the elections, Hashim Thaci insisted on upholding independence for Kosovo, to be coordinated by the USA and the EU. The subsequent negotiation rounds ended without any agreement, and each party stuck to the same positions they had at the start of the year. **The UN Security Council that met on 19th December** did not manage to overcome the existent divisions and was not able to shape a common stance on the matter, thus raising the likelihood that a solution to the crisis would be found outside the Security Council. Likewise, the EU showed an increasing willingness to accept a coordinated, gradual recognition of an independent Kosovo under international supervision without the need for a new Security Council resolution.

In early January, the Kosovar Parliament that emerged from the November elections backed the government coalition reached by the two main parties, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LKD), by a sweeping majority. It also elected the PDK leader, Hashim Thaci, as Prime Minister. Thaci immediately stated that Kosovo would proclaim its independence within a matter of weeks, in coordination with the USA and the EU. Shortly thereafter, **in mid-February, the Parliament of Kosovo unanimously approved the proclamation of independence** of what until then had been a province of Serbia. In response, the government of Serbia stated that the proclamation of independence was a violation of international law and withdrew its ambassadors to the USA, France and Turkey in protest against those countries' recognition of Kosovo's independence. Within the EU, there was no consensus on whether or not to recognise Kosovo's independence. **In early April, the Kosovar Parliament approved the new constitution which stated that Kosovo was a parliamentary, secular, democratic republic**, and that it regarded Kosovo as a sovereign, indivisible state. The text, drawn up based on the Ahtisaari plan, whose draft had been approved by the EU representative in Kosovo, Peter Feith, stipulated

that Albanian and Serbian are the two official languages of Kosovo, and it expressed the determination to guarantee minority protection. The new constitution came into force on 15th June, when the UN was scheduled to transfer the UNMIK's power to the Kosovar government and the EU. However, there still remained questions as to this transfer of power in view of the stalemate in the process within the UN Security Council. In June, the UN Secretary-General, **Ban Ki-moon**, publicised his plan to recast the UNMIK, so that the EU's EULEX mission would remain under the UN umbrella and that of its Special Representative. The plan also included holding a neutral position with regard to Kosovo's status, and it outlined the UN's intention to dialogue with Serbia in six areas: police, justice, border controls, Serbia's heritage, transport and infrastructures, and customs. The recasting of the UNMIK was aimed at making it fit in with the new situation in Kosovo after its declaration of independence and the entry into force of its new constitution. The EU would gradually take over the operational responsibilities in the areas of police, justice and customs throughout all of Kosovo. The UN's functions would be cut back and might include – along with others that have yet to be defined – supervising and drawing up reports, facilitating agreements for Kosovo to gradually align itself with international agreements, and facilitating talks between Belgrade and Pristina.

In late August, the UNMIK and the EU's EULEX mission signed an agreement to begin the transfer of assets from the UN to the European mission as part of the process of recasting the international presence in Kosovo. In early October, the UN General Assembly approved the Serbian government's proposal to ask the International Criminal Court for its opinion on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. In late November, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal to recast the UNMIK and gradually transfer its functions to the EU's EULEX mission, which would be deployed throughout Kosovo. The consultations with the interested parties would continue, specifically taking into account the circumstances and concerns of all the communities, and it would be coordinated by UNMIK. It finally got underway in December, months after the date initially set and after the plan to recast the UNMIK submitted by the Secretary-General included Serbia's demands (neutrality as to Kosovo's status and non-implementation of Ahtisaari's plan, among others).

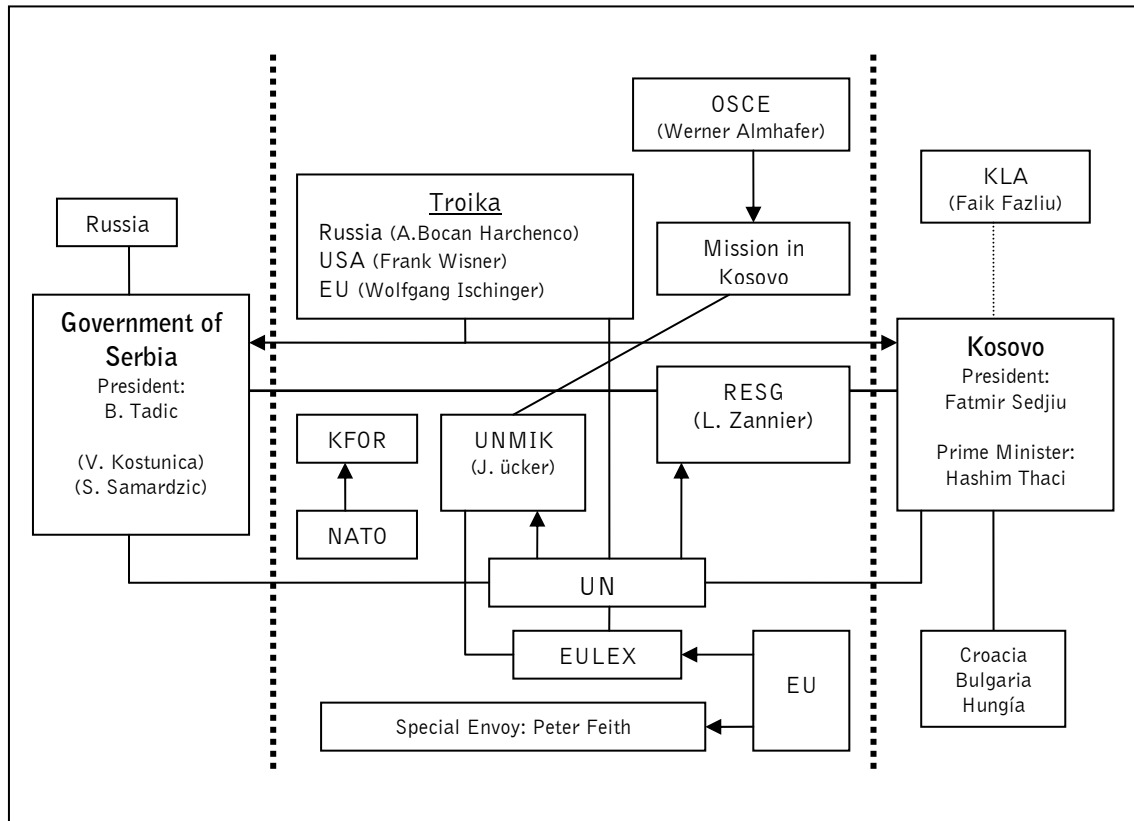
The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, the **Kosovo Security Forces (KSF)** started operating, taking over for the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The establishment of the KSF was contained in the plan developed by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. According to NATO, which will train and supervise the KSF, it is not a fully developed army, rather a lightly armed corps. Likewise, the NATO Secretary-General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, announced that he was willing to consider abolishing the military security zone established in 1999 on the border between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbia had suggested that it be eliminated back in 2008. In early February, the UNMIK announced that it was negotiating with Belgrade and Pristina to start talks on technical issues that affect both countries. Likewise, Kosovar leaders indicated that they did not want negotiations mediated by the UNMIK and that they preferred that they be facilitated by the EU or the USA. In mid-February, the Serbian President, Boris Tadic, declared that the country was placing its hopes to improve relations with Kosovo on an international ruling, but that it would never recognise Kosovo's independence. In March, the EU Special Envoy in Kosovo, Peter Feith, the Kosovar Prime Minister and other ministers issued an appeal for all the communities to participate in the process of decentralising powers in Kosovo. In mid-April, the Minister of the Interior of Kosovo, Zenun Pajaziti, announced that the 30th of June was the deadline for the reincorporation of the several hundreds of Serbian police officers from Kosovo who had left their jobs in protest since Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008. The date was agreed to at the ad hoc working group created to address this conflict, which is made up of police officers and local political representatives and members of the EU's EULEX mission, which supported this decision. *According to Pajaziti, the deadline should not be seen as a repressive measure against the Serbian police officers, rather as a means to create a multiethnic police force. In the second half*

of April, the President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sedjiu, stated that he had asked the UN to end its mission in the country, as he believed that its presence was no longer necessary more than one year after the declaration of independence. In late May, the US Vice President, Joe Biden, stated on a trip to Kosovo that independence was irreversible, stressing that it is imperative that Kosovo remain united and indivisible. On his visit to Serbia prior to his arrival in Pristina, Biden had declared that the USA did not expect Serbia to recognise Kosovo, and that it was not a requirement for maintaining friendly relations with this country. In mid-June, the Ministers of Defence of the NATO countries agreed to lower the number of peacekeeping troops in Kosovo from almost 14,000 to 10,000 in the forthcoming months. At the same meeting, they also addressed the possibility of lowering the total number of the mission to around 2,500 members in the long term down if the security situation in Kosovo remained stable or improved. In mid-September, the EU's EULEX mission and the Serbian Police Force (MUP) signed a cooperation protocol. Despite its initial rejection, the Kosovo government ultimately agreed to sign this pact, first stating its public opinion that it was not a threat to the sovereignty or territorial integrity of Kosovo. Despite this, several sectors of Kosovar society remained opposed to the agreement, which would include an exchange of information on organised crime and better control over the administrative border between Kosovo and Serbia.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sedjiu, stated that he had asked the UN to end its mission in the country, as he believed that its presence was no longer necessary more than one year after the declaration of independence. • The EU's EULEX mission and the Serbian Police Force (MUP) signed a cooperation protocol.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B92 (www.b92.net.org) • Courrier des Balkans (www.balkans.eu.org) • Government of Kosovo (www.ks-gov.net) • Government of Serbia (www.serbia.sv.gov.yu) • Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.org) • KFOR (www.nato.int/kfor) • UN (www.un.org) • OSCE (www.osce.org/kosovo) • UNMIK (www.un.org/spanish/kosovo/index.htm) • UNOSEK (www.unosek.org)



MOLDOVA (Transdnistria¹⁴)

Background to the conflict

Population: 537,000-700,000 inhabitants
Area: 4,163 km ²
HDI(Moldova): 117 (of 182)
GDP: 420 million dollars
Deaths due to the conflict: 1,000-1,500

Although internationally, the region of Transdnistria is considered to be part of the Republic of Moldova (an independent country since the beginning of 1992), most of its inhabitants (predominantly slaves) have considered themselves to be independent in the Republic since September 1990, which is the year when the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic of Transdnistria declared itself to be independent 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.

Situated between the Dniester and Nistre rivers, this regions 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 the Second World War it was annexed to Romania and later suffered the deportation of its inhabitants 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 included in 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 motives of the conflict in Moldova.

The conflict broke out as a result of the proclamation in August 1989 of Moldovan (written in the roman alphabet) as the official language of the country (compared with the Cyrillic used by a large part of the population in Transdnistria) and negotiations began to reunite with Romania (before the fall of Ceausescu in the December), a move that was rejected by the people of Transdnistria, which was proclaimed independent 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 at the start of 1992 and resulted in some 1,500 dead and 100,000 refugees. Shortly afterwards, in July, a ceasefire agreement was signed, making official the presence of the Soviet army in the area and the Joint Control Commission (JCC), which is supervising the ceasefire in the Security Zone and the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPF), formed by delegations from Russia, Moldova and Transdnistria. Since 1994, the OSCE Mission in Moldova has formed part of the JCC as an observer. In December 2006 there was a referendum which ratified overwhelmingly the independence of Transdnistria, which aspired to join Russia (the majority of the population speaks Russian) and which was blocked by the Republic of Moldova since the beginning of the armed conflict. The region, which represented only between 12 and 15% of Moldova nevertheless produces 35% of GDP, the greatest industrial wealth of Moldova (40%) and 90% of electrical production, which has caused significant economic tensions, among other reasons because of the capacity of the region to cut off the electricity supply to Moldova.

Since 1991, the president of the region of Transdnistria has been Igor Smirnov, who renewed his mandate in the 2006 elections with 82% of the vote.

Background to the peace process

In March 1992, the chancellors of Moldova, Russia, Romania and Ukraine met in Helsinki and agreed the principles for a peaceful solution to the conflict, creating consultation mechanisms to

¹⁴ The region is also known as Transdnistrier, Transnitria and Pridnestrovia (in Russian)

coordinate their efforts. A few months later several discussions took place at the headquarters of the CEI for the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Moldova. In July of that year an agreement was also signed in Moscow between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation for a peaceful solution to the conflict, which apart from a ceasefire also agreed to create a military free security zones for 10km either side of the River Dniester.

Since February 1993, the OSCE has been the body responsible for negotiations to find a solution to the conflict, through a Mission in Moldova, based in the capital, Chisianu. The objective of the mission is to define the status of Transdniestria through dialogue between the clashing parties. Since February 1995 they also have a branch in Transdniestria. According to the OSCE, the key areas of the conflict are language, the pretensions of the Moldavans to unite with Romania, the presence of Russian troops in Transdniestria and the definition of the status of that region. Since the initial ceasefire several failed conversations took place, despite pressure from Moldova, supervised by the OSCE, Russia and the Ukraine. In February 2004 Russia presented a plan, rejected by Moldova, which contemplated the permanent presence of Russian troops in the region. Ukraine also presented several proposals, although without any results. Between the summer of 2004 and October 2005, the negotiating process was broken off because of a series of disagreements over the overlapping jurisdiction of the local administrations. Since Autumn 2005, the EU and the USA have joined forces with the OSCE as observers. Negotiations broke off in February 2006. At the beginning of 2007, as a result of the referendum that took place in December of the previous year, the independent region *de facto* of del Transdniestria completely ruled out all plans to construct a common state with Moldova. A decision by the Supreme Council of the self-proclaimed independent republic rendered null and void all previous documents which contemplated the possibility of a confederation or a federal state with Moldova. In October 2007, the Moldovan delegation of the OSCE confirmed that the Government was prepared to return to the negotiating table without any pre-specified condition to resolve the conflict in the Transdniestria region. On the other side, the Moldovan executive also established working groups for the development of confidence-building proposals. Measure included the lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement of key figures in the Transdniestria regime, the joint participation of both sides in the drawing up and implementation of programmes for the restoration and implementation of infrastructures, demilitarisation and gradual disarmament measures followed by the creation of joint armed forces and the establishment of a joint television country, among other things.

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 promote confidence measures which would enable talks, which had been stalled for two years, to resume in a 2+5 format (Moldova and Transdniestria; Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as guarantors and representatives of the EU and the USA as observers). The meeting took place in Bendery, a city west of the River Nistru but controlled by the independent authorities, and was arranged following a telephone call between the two leaders. The meeting took place behind closed doors, with no state symbols and a very small team of people, and it was positively evaluated by both sides, in an atmosphere of moderate optimism. According to the leader of the nationalists, Igor Smirnov, the Moldovan president had assured that this type of meeting should be regular and that telephone conversations should also be held where necessary. It was agreed to establish working groups to draw up concrete proposals for confidence measures in the areas of foreign trade, agriculture, infrastructure development, rail networks, health and social protection of the residents of Transdniestria, education and youth, disarmament and demilitarisation and humanitarian aid. In October the Moldovan president confirmed that he had sent documents to the secessionist regime for the resolution of the conflict which contemplated that Transdniestria would receive republican status within Moldova along with its own state symbols, rights to legal initiatives in the Moldovan parliament, its own budget and the right to secession should Moldova change its status as an independent country. At the end of December, the Moldovan president, Vladimir Voronin, and the leader of the secessionist region of Transdniestria, Igor Smirnov, met following a number of failed attempts, without reaching agreement on the renewal of talk for peace negotiations in 5+2

format. Moldova has normally shown itself to be in favour of talks in the 5+2 format (Moldova, Transdnistria, OSCE, Russia and Ukraine; and the USA and the EU as observers), while Transdnistria preferred a 2+1 format (Moldova, Transdnistria and Russia).

The peace process in 2009

The Moldovan President, Vladimir Voronin, and the leader of the secessionist region of Transdnistria, Igor Smirnov, met in late December without reaching an agreement on the resumption of peace talks in the 5+2 format, although they did agree to continue the talks for the time being using the 2+1 format, which includes Russia. In late January, the NGO and Political Party Coordination Council, which encompasses more than 30 organisations and parties, asked the local people in the region of Transdnistria not to vote in the Moldovan parliamentary elections which were scheduled for April. They stated that there would be no force in Moldova that, once in power, could change the course of the conflict and that would recognise the region's independence. In mid-February, the EU renewed its ban forbidding the main leaders and officers in the regime of Transdnistria, a de facto independent state, from entering the EU for another year, until February 2010. *In turn, the pro-independence leader Igor Smirnov stated that the 5+2 process was only an advisory framework, and he upheld the need for a 2+1 dialogue format with Moldova under Russian mediation. However, Smirnov also stated that despite the absence of understanding on the political issues, economic cooperation should be established out of mutual interest. A new meeting of the committee of experts from both parties in the conflict was planned to address the establishment of trust-building measures. Likewise, the leader of Transdnistria stated that the country's army would be strengthened as a guarantee of stable development in his self-proclaimed republic. According to Infotag, Moldova and Ukraine debated the possibilities of creating a Euro-region that would include the Moldovan districts of Floresti, Donduseni, Soldanesti and Soroca, in the Camenca district in Transdnistria, and the Ukrainian region of Vinnytsya. The goal was to advance relations among local Moldovan and Transdnistria n authorities with the goal of resolving the conflict, as well as to secure EU funds. In mid-March, the governments of Moldova and the region of Transdnistria agreed that it would be advisable to transform the CIS peacekeeping mission into a new mission under the auspices of the OSCE once a solution to the Transdnistria conflict was reached. They announced this in a joint communiqué that had been promoted and signed by Russia as part of a trilateral meeting held at the Kremlin. In the document, the parties confirmed the importance of the 5+2 format, they agreed to create the conditions to resume work in this format as soon as possible, they stated that they would continue to keep up direct contact, and they asked the working groups to establish trust-building measures. In early April, demonstrators against the official Communist Party attacked and temporarily occupied the Parliament and the headquarters of the Presidency in a context of post-election violence after the victory of the Communist Party with 50% of the votes in the April 5th elections. Despite this, the Moldovan government stated that it was still committed to peacefully resolving the conflict through a rapprochement via the 5+2 format and the development of a special status for the region of Transdnistria that would respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. In early May, the leader of Transdnistria's Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Yastrebchak, stated that the region's position would not change, nor did it depend on the formation of the new Moldovan government. Yastrebchak said that in order to resume the negotiation process, Moldova had to desist from its use of pressure on the region. He also stated that representatives from Transdnistria would participate in a seminar in Helsinki in June aimed at strengthening trust between Moldova and the de facto independent region. At that meeting, the delegation from Transdnistria was expected to suggest cooperation between security forces on both sides, including on the level of expert groups. The EU, in turn, forwarded its proposals for trust-building measures in the realms of social policy, health, education and environmental protection to the government of Transdnistria. The EU's initiative aimed to generate trust on both sides of the Dniester River. The Transdnistria n Foreign Minister stated that this was a positive initiative that would be examined. The goal of these measures is to resume the dialogue process with Moldova in the 5+2 format, which had been on hold since 2006. However, Yastrebchak stated that the possibilities of resuming the dialogue process were*

slim. In early June, the Moldovan delegation at the Joint Control Commission warned that an escalation in tensions in the zone, coupled with the strict security regime of the government of Transdniestria , meant that the peacekeeping forces might lose control of the security in the region.

In early July, the leader of Transdniestria , Igor Smirnov, rejected the possibility of resuming the negotiation process without preliminary conditions. According to the government, that was the proposal suggested by the chief of the OSCE mission in Moldova, Philip Remler, to Smirnov as part of a meeting they had held. Smirnov also stated that there were indications that Moldova was tightening up the requirements for foreign companies to conduct economic transactions in Transdniestria . In mid-July, the President of Moldova expressed his support for resuming talks to reach an agreement with the region of Transdniestria and stated that this was one of the current government's top priorities. According to the Moldovan news agency Infotag, Voronin was in favour of guaranteeing the region a special status, in line with the principles of the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Moldova, and he added that Chisinau wished for the total demilitarisation and absolute neutrality of the country. Late in the same month, in the midst of a huge political division and in the wake of complaints from the opposition, new parliamentary elections were held in Moldova. The communists, who had been in power since 2001, backslid in these elections and did not achieve an absolute majority, although they did get a relative majority with 45% of the votes. In mid-August, the new coalition government, the Alliance for European Integration (made up of four parties), announced the main goals of its government, which included territorial reintegration and regulation of the conflict with Transdniestria , as well as the decentralisation of authority and the provision of real local autonomy, European integration and the restoration of the rule of law. With regard to the conflict, the new government planned to resume the negotiations on the conflict and seek productive mechanisms to regulate it. In late August, Moldova and the region of Transdniestria stated that they planned to hold consultations in the 5+1 format, that is, with both parties, Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE as international mediators, and one of the two observers in the 5+2 format (the EU or the USA). This agreement was reached between the Moldovan Minister for Integration, Vasile Sova, and the Ukrainian President's Special Envoy to resolve this conflict, Viktor Kryzhanivskyy. At the meeting, the parties discussed trust-building measures and the possible resumption of formal negotiations in the 5+2 format. In mid-September, the head of Foreign Affairs of Transdniestria stated that the internal political situation of Moldova would lead to delays in the process of resolving the conflict. According to Yastrebnchak, the political problems in Moldova might mean a delay in the visits by international mediators and observers to Moldova and the de facto independent region, although he did not discard the possibility of meeting on foreign soil without the participation of the clashing parties. *These declarations came days after the announcement of the resignation of the Moldovan president, Vladimir Voronin, after eight years in power. His resignation took place in a context of political uncertainty after the change in government due to the alliance agreement among opposing winning forces in the recent legislative elections. One of the new government's first measures was to dismantle the Ministry of Reintegration.*

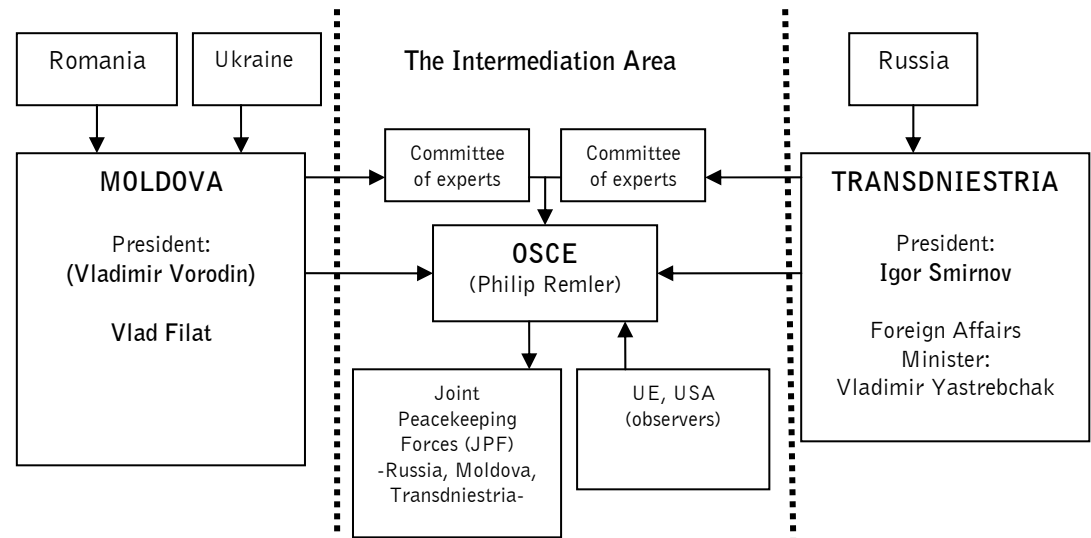
In mid-October, the head of Foreign Affairs of Transdniestria stated that the region was open to dialogue, but that this dialogue could not be spontaneous; rather it had to take place through a well-prepared mechanism with guarantees from the international community. The leader of Transdniestria , Igor Smirnov, also expressed his opposition to bringing back the so-called Kozak Memorandum, which had been prepared by Russia in 2003 and signed by Transdniestria but rejected by Moldova. According to Smirnov, this document – which proposed a federal solution – had become antiquated and no longer reflected the current needs. Likewise, the new Moldovan Prime Minister, Vlad Filat, stated that relations between both societies needed to be encouraged by promoting ties among young people, teachers, doctors and athletes, among others. He also stated that they would conduct joint projects to improve the standard of living. In early November, delegations from the parties to the conflict as well as international mediators and observers in the 5+2 format held a consultative meeting in Vienna. At this meeting, which was

not an actual resumption of the substantive negotiations under the 5+2 format, the parties expressed their agreement with the need to intensify the dialogue and studied possibilities for eliminating the obstacles to the resumption of the 5+2 negotiation process.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moldova and Ukraine debated the possibilities of creating a Euro-region that would include the Moldovan districts of Floresti, Donduseni, Soldanesti and Soroca, in the Camenca district in Transdnistria , and the Ukrainian region of Vinnytsya. • The governments of Moldova and the region of Transdnistria agreed that it would be advisable to transform the CIS peacekeeping mission into a new mission under the auspices of the OSCE. • The EU will develop several initiatives with the goal of resuming the dialogue process with Moldova in the 5+2 format, which had been on hold since 2006. • The Moldovan president, Vladimir Voronin, resigned after eight years in power. His resignation took place in a context of political uncertainty.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escola de Cultura de Pau (www.escolapau.org) • ICG (www.crisisgroup.org) • Moldova Azi (www.azi.md/en) • OSCE (www.osce.org/moldova) • Parliament of Transdnistria (www.vspmr.org/?Lang=Eng) • Pridnestrovie (www.pridnestrovie.net) • Transnistria.md (www.transnistria.md/en)

Main agents in the process



TURKEY (PKK-KCK-Kongra Gel)

Background to the conflict

Kurdistan, with a population of 33 million, most of whom are Muslims, and a total area measuring 550,000 km², 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. Its origins go back to the 18th century. In the Middle Ages, Kurds lived in relative freedom, and during the Ottoman Empire they enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. Upon the fall of this empire, and via 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 (74 million) Turkish Kurdistan (20 million)

Area: Turkey (784,000 Km²); Turkish Kurdistan (220,000 km²)

HDI Turkey: 79 (of 182)

GDP (Turkey): 593,000 million dollars

Per capita income Turkey \$8,030

Deaths due to the conflict: 37,000

Armed actors: KADEK (PKK)

Facilitators: EU (EUTCC), DTP, Abant Platform

There has been an armed conflict between the Turkish government and the **PKK** (Kurdistan Workers' Party) since 1984, with a total of 37,000 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 a 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 to brutally 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. Likewise, the **International Socialist** has a Working Group on the Kurdish Question (SIMEC), headed by 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 its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, managed to be 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 DTH 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.

Development of the peace process

The PKK decreed a unilateral ceasefire several times (1993, 1995 and 1998); however, this was not matched by a similar decree by the Turkish armed forces, nor did the decrees serve to initiate a negotiation process. The year after A. Öcalan was arrested, in **February 2000 the PKK announced the end of its armed struggle** for Kurdish autonomy, but the Turkish army rejected its **unilateral ceasefire**. In December of the same year, Turkish military officers opposed the EU's demands to set up a dialogue with the spokespersons of the PKK as a precondition for starting talks on EU membership. In April 2002, the PKK once again renounced its call for independence for Turkish Kurdistan and the armed struggle at its **8th Congress**, where the party changed its name to **KADEK** (Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan) or Kongra-Gel. A. Öcalan remained at the helm, although at that time he was still imprisoned and facing a death sentence. The Turkish Ministry of Defence claimed that it would continue to regard KADEK as a terrorist organisation and that it would ignore any unilateral ceasefires. In May 2002, the EU included the PKK on its list of terrorist organisations, and the Turkish government claimed that within a 4-month period it would lift the state of emergency declared fifteen years earlier after clashes between the army and the Kurds. This decision was part of the conditions that the European Union imposed on Turkey for its future EU membership. Other conditions included abolition of the death penalty and institutional recognition of the Kurdish minority's rights. To this end, in August 2002 the Turkish parliament passed several measures aimed at minimally complying with the requirements for joining the EU, including abolishing the death penalty and granting the Kurds cultural concessions (recognition of the freedom of education and expression in the Kurdish tongue). Nevertheless, the PKK always criticised the shortcomings of these measures, such as the one that allowed one hour per week of television to be broadcast in the Kurdish language.

With the PJD in power and Recep Tayyip Erdogan as Prime Minister, in July 2003 the Turkish parliament approved a **partial amnesty** for members of the Kurdish armed groups that had not taken part in serious human rights violations. Additionally, a new law permitted education in the Kurdish tongue in certain private academies, though not in public schools. In August 2004, the KADEK (formerly PKK) ended its ceasefire declared four years earlier as it deemed that the measures the Turkish government had taken against its militants obligated them to once again take up their weapons. In November, however, during a congress held in Baghdad (Iraq), the KADEK-PKK announced its decision to dissolve in order to become a broader, peaceful, democratic movement with the purpose of reaching a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish conflict. However, the military wing of the KADEK-PKK, called the **People's Defence Forces (HPG)**, did not hand over their weapons. In 2004, the First International Conference between the EU, Turkey

and the Kurds was held, organised by the **European Union Turkey Civil Commission (EUTCC)**, which is charged with monitoring Turkey's headway in fulfilling the criteria set for this country to join the EU. The fourth EUTCC conference was held in Brussels in October 2007. The Commission upholds the criterion that Turkey may not be allowed to join the EU until the problem of its borders has been resolved, and until it has a serious commitment to human rights and the fundamental freedoms and has clearly defined its minorities' rights.

In 2005, the PKK created the **Koma Komalen Kurdistan (KKK)** as a platform for promoting a federal process in Kurdistan. In August of the same year, the HPG forces declared a one-month hiatus as a friendly gesture towards the speech that Turkish Primer Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivered in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir. In this speech, he recognised that there existed a Kurdish people and a Kurdish problem in response to the efforts of several different groups of intellectuals aimed at giving a peaceful, democratic solution to the conflict a chance. Nevertheless, in response, the Turkish army stepped up its military operations.

In August 2006, the Executive Council of the KKK decided to initiate a new stage in achieving peace and democracy by issuing a **Declaration for a Democratic Resolution of the Kurdish Question**, in which it put forth a two-step process: the first to achieve a ceasefire, and the second to discuss an agenda, which in its opinion must contain the following steps:

Roadmap proposed by the KKK in August 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Recognition of the Kurdish identity under the identity of Turkish citizens as their main identity. 2 –Development of the Kurdish language and culture, and recognition of Kurdish as a second official language within the region of Kurdistan. 3 – Recognition of the right to freedom of thought, belief and expression. 4 –Undertaking a social reconciliation project based on releasing political prisoners, including the PKK leader. 5 –Withdrawal of military forces from Kurdistan and abolition of the system of keeping watch over Kurdish cities. 6 – Gradual disarmament of both parties and legal participation in the democratic social life.

The presentation of the declaration, which was to serve as a basis of asking for democratic autonomies on Turkey's borders and establishing a democratic culture for Turkey, was bolstered by the conflictive situation in the Middle East and the need to democratise the region, and by the belief that all the issues had to be resolved through peaceful means. In mid-September, however, retired general J. arrived in Turkey Ralston, US Special Envoy to fight against the PKK. **At the end of the same month, the leader of the PKK, A. Öcalan, asked the PKK from prison for a unilateral ceasefire from 1 October.** In his communiqué, Öcalan pointed out that it was impossible to reach a solution to the Kurdish problem through violence, rather it could only be achieved through democratic methods that would also serve as an example for other countries in the region. In Öcalan's opinion, this step should serve as the start of a process that would achieve the democratic unity of both Kurds and Turks, and he asked both the EU and the USA for support. He also asked the countries bordering Kurdistan to the south to contribute. In response to Öcalan's request, the **KKK's executive council declared a unilateral ceasefire** with the goals of establishing a platform for dialogue and peace, finding a political and democratic solution to the conflict and reaching a permanent bilateral ceasefire.

The Turkish Prime Minister initially rejected the possibility of taking a similar measure, noting that a ceasefire takes place between states, not with terrorist groups. However, in mid-October he softened his stance and declared that the PKK's decision was positive and offered a window of opportunity. He also expressed his disagreement with the stance of the military, which was in favour of not ceding to the PKK's proposal and continuing with its anti-terrorist military strategy, which entailed totally eliminating the PKK bases located in northern Iraq. The USA, on the other hand, saluted the PKK's decision. Around the same time, in October 2006, Australia played host to the 1st Australian Conference on the Political and Human Rights Dimensions of the Kurdish

Question, sponsored by the Australian senate. In November, Iraqi president Jalal Talabani requested amnesty for the PKK, claiming that this step would aid in resolving the Kurdish problem. He also claimed that he would not allow Iraqi soil to be used to launch attacks against other countries. In December, the PKK considered ending its unilateral truce started on 1st October if the attacks by the Turkish army against the rebels and discriminatory practices against the Kurdish people continued, as announced by Cemil Bayik, PKK commander. He claimed that in view of attacks and attempts to eliminate the PKK, it was impossible to implement the ceasefire. Likewise, the USA stepped up its cooperation with Turkey to counter the PKK. Frank Urbanic, one of the coordinators of the counter-terrorism in the US State Department, paid a visit to other officials within the departments of state, justice and the treasury in different western European capitals to persuade their governments to block the PKK's financial resources and prevent the use of European soil as a PKK base of operations. Tens of DTP representatives were facing trials, accused of praising and supporting the PKK, which the DTP denounced as a political lynching campaign.

In the first few days of January, the main Turkish pro-Kurd party, the DTP, denounced the Turkish authorities' indifference to the unilateral truce announced by the PKK in late September and its entry into force on 1st October 2006. The Turkish prime minister, R. T. Erdogan, also accused the USA of not getting involved in countering the PKK, despite the fact that it had appointed a special US envoy to expel the PKK from its Iraqi bases and cut off its financing. The Leader of the PKK, A. Öcalan, who is serving a life sentence, issued a new appeal to the Turkish government to resolve the Kurdish conflict, while the armed forces stepped up their offensive in the southeast of the country. Öcalan launched a proposal to create a truth and justice commission on the Kurdish conflict with the purpose of making headway towards peace between Turks and Kurds. He also stated that when the time came to lay down their weapons, they would only do so before this type of commission. The former Kurdish deputy, Leyna Zana, also stated that the vast majority of Kurds would choose to live alongside the Turks, but with equal rights. However, during the second quarter of the year the Turkish army stepped up its attacks against the PKK and expressed its willingness to mount an incursion in the north of Iraq to dismantle the Kurdish bases set up there. The USA, NATO and the EU immediately advised against this option, despite the fact that the **PKK extended to the government a new offer for a bilateral ceasefire in June**, with the explicit pledge not to interfere in the election process. The government once again rejected this offer. Additionally, the Shiite religious leader of Iraq, Moqtada al Sadr, claimed that he would not remain silent if Turkey bombed northern Iraq, and that his duty was to defend the Kurds in his country. The Turkish parliament approved the direct election of the president, as well as an amendment that made it even more difficult for independent candidates to enter parliament, with repercussions for the pro-Kurdish electorate. It is worth noting that the official Party of Justice and Development (PJD) won 46% of the votes and 341 of the 550 seats in parliament in the general elections held on 22nd July. **The Kurdish party, DTP, won parliamentary representation (24 seats) for the first time in the past decade**, and 13 years after several Kurdish deputies were expelled from the parliament (and later tried legally) due to their purported links with the armed opposition group PKK. During the election campaign, the DTP candidates advocated a political and dialogued solution to the Kurdish conflict and demanded that Ankara put an end to the military operations against the PKK, as well as greater recognition of the unique features and rights of the Kurdish minority. In August, the Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, was elected president of Turkey after three rounds of voting. The pro-Kurdish party DTP suggested that the new cabinet formulate a regional development plan, and the **Turkey Peace Parliament**, a civil organisation that is a continuation of the conference held in January to seek solutions to the Kurdish question, **was founded in Ankara on 1st September** as a structure independent from politics that is aimed at sponsoring political, social and cultural proposals such as the lifting of obstacles to Kurdish identity and political representation. Later, this civic platform agreed to meet directly with all the parties to the conflict as soon as possible in order to contribute to a peaceful, democratic solution. In early October, in a communiqué that commemorated the first anniversary of the PKK's declaration of a ceasefire in October 2006, the executive council of the KCK (another name by which the PKK is known) denounced what it

deemed the Turkish government's policy of aggression and oppression, and it criticised the fact that there had been no positive response to the steps taken by the PKK in asking for a negotiated solution. Days later, **the Turkish parliament approved, with a clear majority, an authorisation for the government to order a large-scale operation against the PKK in northern Iraq**, a decision that was valid for one year. Despite this, the PKK reiterated that the group was willing to responsibly discuss a project aimed at a political solution, and it appealed to the international community to support a peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict. In November, the prosecutor's office of the Supreme Court asked the Constitutional Court to ban the pro-Kurdish party Democratic Society Movement (DTP), which it accused of having ties to the armed opposition group PKK. The party denied these allegations. For its part, the PKK demanded that Turkey recognise the rights of the Kurdish people in the constitution. This would include recognition of the Kurdish language as the second official language in the country; the release of PKK members; the withdrawal of the Turkish army from the southeast of the country; the creation of a joint committee between Turkey and the PKK to prepare for Kurds' integration into a political process; and the announcement of a general amnesty for the PKK combatants. Late in the year, 122 women, many of them singers, writers, scholars and journalists, began a campaign in favour of peace that consisted of using Internet to launch alternative messages to the typical war discourses. The organisers issued a call to men to initiate a similar campaign. Despite, this in December the Turkish army launched its air and land military attacks against Kurdish positions located in northern Iraq, with information provided by the USA.

No public negotiations were opened with the PKK from Turkish Kurdistan during the first quarter of the year. In early January, **the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, rejected outright any kind of negotiation with the PKK**, stating that a political solution with the armed group would be impossible given that they are terrorists. According to Gül, the Turkish government was working on a series of economic and social measures, such as raising economic investment in the southeast of the country and bolstering the freedoms of the Kurdish population, but they were not a political solution. **The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, announced that the government was planning to invest around 12 billion dollars in a five-year programme to finance programmes for the economic development of southeast Turkey** as part of the expansion of the anti-terrorist strategy to include economic, social and cultural initiatives. The ultimate goal was for the Kurdish people to withdraw their social support for the armed group PKK. Likewise, the government clarified that the amnesty measure that the Prime Minister announced in December would not involve a new law, rather it would consist of enforcing article 221 of the penal code, known as the repentance law, with PKK members. In February, the Turkish armed forces launched a sweeping offensive in northern Iraq to combat the PKK's rearguard bases, leaving hundreds of victims in its wake. The operation ended only after the appeal issued by US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates recommending that the operation end as soon as possible. Nevertheless, the Chief of Staff, General Yasar Büyükanit, stated that new operations might be conducted in the north, although at the same time he admitted that military means alone would not resolve the Kurdish question. The Chief of the Army, General Ilker Basbug, stated that in addition to military measures, economic measures to favour the southeast of Turkey were also needed. On other matters, the Turkey Peace Parliament, which includes organisations and members of Turkey's civil society, claimed that finding a peaceful political solution to the Kurdish question was urgent. In March, Erdogan announced the government's intention to devote a state TV channel to broadcasting in the Kurdish language, an initiative that could begin within a few months. In parallel, **in a new communiqué spread around the National Congress of Kurdistan (KNK), the KCK, another name by which the PKK is known, appealed for a dialogued solution to the conflict**, stating that should the government agree it would be willing to shoulder all the responsibilities and open up a new phase in which weapons would have no place in the quest for a resolution to the Kurdish question. However, the Prime Minister of Turkey refused to address the Kurdish question with the pro-Kurd DTP until the group admitted that the armed group PKK was a terrorist organisation.

During the second quarter, the clashes between the Turkish army and the PKK continued, leaving no room for negotiations to get underway. However, it is worth noting that **the EU's Court of**

First Instance nullified the EU's decision to include the PKK and its political wing, Kongra-Gel, on the terrorist lists for 2002 and 2004, as they had not fulfilled the requirement of notifying the party involved of the decision to be included on the lists. Despite this, the repression of pro-Kurdish sectors continued, and the 53 Kurdish mayors in southeast Turkey, on trial since 2006 for writing a letter to the Danish Prime Minister asking him not to close a pro-Kurdish TV channel, were finally sentenced to two years and 15 days in prison for deliberately supporting the PKK. However, their sentences were commuted with fines. In May, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, revealed new details of the official investment plan for the southeast of the country in a public speech in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, which had been boycotted by local politicians. The plan, which had been announced back in March, aimed to revitalise the GAP project launched in the 1980s, focusing mainly on infrastructures and energy. According to Erdogan, 800 million dollars (507 million Euros) would be earmarked for infrastructure projects in 2008. Furthermore, the investment mega-plan also called for 30,000 hectares of de-mined land near the border with Gyrus to be used for farming. The project was criticised by some sectors, who alleged that the GAP project was more beholden to the energy demands in the western part of Turkey than to the social and economic development of the people living in southeast Turkey. As a positive development, in June the Parliament of Turkey passed amendments to the law on state radio and television that would pave the way for broadcasts in languages other than Turkish. These amendments were passed with 225 votes in favour and 75 against. The new law enabled the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) to devote one of its channels to 24-hour broadcasts in Kurdish.

In late June, the military leader of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, asked the Turkish government to start talks with the armed group and put an end to what he deemed an aggressive policy and alignment with Iran and Syria against the Kurds. In civil society, the Abant Platform, a discussion forum that addresses a variety of key issues for Turkey, organised a national debate on the Kurdish question, which brought together Turkish and Kurdish scholars, community leaders, intellectuals, politicians and business leaders in order to create a venue of honest dialogue where proposals could be generated that truly respond to the current situation. One of the conclusions of the gathering was the need to create mechanisms and channels of communication that would put an end to the lack of dialogue on the issue. In September, the pro-Kurdish party DTP presented its defence before the Constitutional Court as part of an open trial against this group because of its purported collusion with the PKK. In mid-October, the National Security Council (MGK) announced restructuring measures for the institutions that spearhead the fight against the PKK. These changes, which were also addressed in a summit on terrorism held in Turkey, included the creation of an anti-terrorist unit within the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate all the agencies involved in anti-terrorist matters. Some newspapers described this change as a shift of leadership to civilian power in the pursuit of the PKK. Meanwhile, the PKK military commandant, Murat Karayilan, stated that his group was still open to dialogue with Turkey, but he accused the government of not listening to the Kurdish organisation. Furthermore, the government's commitment to begin broadcasts in Kurdish and other minority languages in October was postponed. According to the heads of the publicly-owned Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), the broadcasts could begin in March of the following year, which would mean a five-month delay compared to the timelines initially set by the government. As a symbolic development, the number two official in the government party AKP, Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, and the leader of the pro-Kurdish DTP, Ahmet Türk, former schoolmates, held an informal meeting about the Kurdish question after an apparently coincidental meeting in a restaurant in Ankara. Türk stated that the Turkish government should work with the DTP on the Kurdish problem instead of working with the Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq. In late October, the DTP sent the Prime Minister and all the MPs a book of proposals to solve the Kurdish question. The text compiles the ideas contained in the Political Attitude Document presented during a party convention in 2007. The suggested changes include dividing Turkey into 20 or 25 regions, in which each region would govern itself according to the system chosen by its inhabitants. In turn, it called for greater authority for the local administrations, including governors elected by the

people. It also upheld recognition of the Kurdish identity in a new constitution and suggested changing the notion of Turkish nation to the nation of Turkey.

In November, two PKK leaders, Murat Karayilan and Zübeyir Aydar, congratulated Barack Obama on his victory in the US presidential elections in an open letter, and asked him to use the US's relations with Turkey to contribute to solving the Kurdish conflict through dialogue. Likewise, according to a report published by the EU research centre, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), several Kurdish leaders from northern Iraq stated that there was an overall consensus that currently the individual with the most prominent role in military and political planning within the PKK was Murat Karayilan. It also stated that the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) had met with Karayilan twice. On 8th December, the PKK announced a unilateral nine-day ceasefire on the occasion of the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Adha, while a Turkish court sentenced the Kurdish politician Leyla Zana to ten years in prison for belonging to a terrorist organisation, referring to the PKK. Zana had been incarcerated in 1994 for taking possession of her seat in Parliament with a speech delivered in Kurdish, and she remained in prison until 2004. Likewise, according to the Turkish newspaper Taraf, Turkey, Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Administration in northern Iraq were drawing up a multiple-stage plan to address the violence of the PKK, in which the two leading Kurdish parties in Iraq, Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), had decided to work together to counter the PKK's activities. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister of the Kurdish government in northern Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, stated that his administration would not conduct armed actions against the PKK. At the same time, he also stated that the Kurdish question was a political problem rather than a question of terrorism, and that the Kurdish demands for democracy should be resolved through peaceful means. According to Barzani, dialogue is essential in order to properly define the problem.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-February, the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, asked the Turkish authorities for a dialogue with the Kurds on the tenth anniversary of his arrest. The government did not respond to Öcalan's new message, issued through his lawyer. In turn, the Abant Platform organised a two-day meeting with the slogan "Searching for peace and a future together" in Erbil (Iraq), in which 200 Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian and Arab intellectuals participated, among others. The meeting stressed the need to deepen relations between Turkey and the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan in order to contribute to the peace and stability of the region. In late February, political tensions rose regarding the Kurdish question after the speech delivered in Kurdish by the leader of the DTP party, Ahmet Turk, at a meeting of his parliamentary group at the Turkish Parliament. The majority political class described the acts as provocative and illegal, alleging that the law on political parties forbade the use of languages other than Turkish in parliamentary activities. According to media reports cited by Today's Zaman, the Kurdish leader in Iraq, Massoud Barzani, might be holding talks with the PKK in order to negotiate a plan that would allow the PKK to lay down its weapons in exchange for amnesty for some of its members for a given period of time. Furthermore, the Turkish army was not blocking this option, according to the Turkish newspaper Taraf. In turn, the Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq were preparing an international conference at which Kurdish representatives from all over the world would appeal to the PKK to lay down its weapons. In mid-March, Turkish prosecutors ordered the excavation of several areas in southeast Turkey which might hold the remains of the people who vanished in the 1990s as part of the armed conflict. In parallel, the groups of mothers of missing persons, known in the 1990s as the "Saturday mothers", gained momentum once again with new demonstrations in Istanbul asking for information on the whereabouts of their missing family members, which included PKK members and sympathisers, as well as civilians with no ties to the Kurdish question. According to the newspaper Vatan, the USA was preparing a plan to address the Kurdish question, which might include the disarmament of the PKK. The President of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, also urged the PKK to lay down its weapons and stated that the age of armed conflict between the PKK and Turkey had come to an end.

In mid-April, the Istanbul court accepted a new battery of accusations against the PKK for its alleged help in the cause of the Ergenekon network, which presumably aimed to bring down the government through an affiliated organisation known as the Kurdistan Democratic Confederation (KCK). According to these accusations, the KCK was responsible for creating chaos in urban areas through protests and acts of civil disobedience. This new extension of the trial took place in a context of post-election tension after the victory of the pro-Kurdish DTP in numerous towns in the east and southeast of the country, along with a wave of arrests against leaders and members of the party. The arrests came one day after the DTP issued a call to the country to recognise the PKK as a valid interlocutor for discussions aimed at finding a solution to the Kurdish question. **On the 13th of April**, the PKK announced a ceasefire until the 1st of June through the Executive Council of the KCK in order to facilitate the quest for a negotiated solution to the Kurdish conflict. In the communiqué, the group stated that from December 2008 until the election date of the 29th of March, it had abstained from participating in clashes as a demonstration its desire to find a political way out as well as to ensure a tension-free election climate. The PKK stated that for the first time the possibility of resolving the conflict appeared the country's agenda. However, the group also warned that the army's operations in Sirnak and Dersim and the post-election incidents, with the deaths of two Kurdish youths and the arrest of dozens of DTP members, were making it harder to find a solution to the conflict. In the communiqué, they asked the Turkish state and other forces in the country, as well as the US government and other regional and international forces, to contribute to resolving the conflict through peaceful means. According to the PKK, the election results and victory of the DTP in major cities in the southeast proved that a solution to the conflict would not be found without the support of the PKK, its leader Abdullah Öcalan and the DTP. In his annual speech to the military academy of Istanbul, the Chief of Staff, Ilker Basbug, claimed that the Turkish state had never tried to assimilate its citizens, especially those of Kurdish descent, and he stressed the need to distinguish between the Kurdish people and the PKK. The leader of the pro-Kurdish party DTP, Ahmet Türk, met with the President of the USA, Barack Obama, who was travelling to Turkey. Apart from the meeting, Türk stated that his party wanted to sit down with the army to seek a solution to the violence besetting the country, and that there was an opportunity for peace and democracy. Nevertheless, he suggested that there was no political will in the country to undertake constitutional changes that would support advances in the rights for the Kurdish people. According to Türk, an amnesty for the PKK would be one step towards reconciliation, but it was not enough in itself to resolve the problem, so he suggested that measures were needed to improve the status of the Kurdish people. Furthermore, **the Ankara prosecutor's office opened up legal proceedings against the self-proclaimed Kurdish Parliament in Exile, which had been established in 1995 and folded in 1998**, according to Today's Zaman, when it came to be part of the Kurdistan Democratic Confederation platform, which official media claimed had ties to the PKK. According to the prosecutor's office, the group operated as the political wing of the PKK, promoting international support for the group. He asked for between 15 and 21 years in prison for 31 people.

In early May, the leader of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, issued an appeal for the government to seek a dialogued solution that would put an end to the armed conflict, and he stressed that there was an opportunity for peace. In an interview with the newspaper Milliyet, Karayilan emphasised that the government should not delegate the problem to the army. According to Karayilan, it was possible to cease using weapons in the Kurdish question, and he asked the government to show understanding. In turn, Karayilan suggested that there had been some changes in the army, and that it was no longer like it used to be. Despite this, he underscored the fact that there were shortcomings in the political arena involving a lack of leadership. Karayilan also stated that if the government would take some steps towards openness, the armed group would also take measures. Karayilan also highlighted the fact that it is important to remember that the top leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, and another 4,000 of its members were still in prison. Karayilan stressed that it was possible to reach a political solution to the conflict, and that the conditions were in place for this to happen, so he insisted that this opportunity should not be let slip by and a peace process should get underway. He stressed the group's desire to hold direct talks with the

government, or if this is not possible, a dialogue through the pro-Kurdish party, DTP, or a "group of wise men". The military leader of the PKK also suggested that if the conflict is not resolved, the countries that oppose Turkey's entry into the EU, like France and Germany, will have even more reasons to oppose it, with arguments that Turkey does not respect human rights and freedoms. However, Karayilan also stated that he would not lay down weapons in exchange for anything. The leader of the PKK also stressed that the group was the main guarantor of secularism in the southeast of the county, and the main guarantor that Islamic fundamentalism did not lay down roots in the region. Likewise, the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, stated that the country's main problem was the Kurdish issue. In this respect, he stated that everyone was aware that progress had been made. He also stressed that the army, civilians and intelligence services had more frequent and open contacts, creating a favourable atmosphere which might yield positive results. According to Gül, there was a window of opportunity that should not be missed. On other matters, according to sources from the newspaper Today's Zaman, the government was preparing a package of measures that would include a new rapprochement and a new impetus to the Kurdish question, lifting the restrictions on the times when television programmes could be broadcast in Kurdish, establishing centres for Kurdish studies in the universities in southeast Turkey, completing the project of returning the people who had been displaced by the conflict to their homes, completing the GAP economic project and accelerating and reforming the existing partial amnesty measures, which are currently subjected to cooperation clauses with the government, which the PKK regards as treason.

In late May, in an interview with The Times, the leader of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, reiterated its offer to the Turkish government to find a solution to the armed conflict within the framework of Turkey's territorial integrity, respecting Turkish borders. Karayilan compared the situation of the Kurds in Turkey with the relationship between the Scottish and English, pointing to this framework as a possible solution for the conflict. Karayilan ordered PKK members to remain in a passive defensive position until the 1st of June in order to give the Turkish government time to consider his proposal. The Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, described the current juncture as a historic opportunity. However, this claim inspired diverse reactions in the political sectors, as different political parties, including the NHP and the RPH, stated that there was no consensus on the best solution to the conflict. Likewise, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri Al-Maliki, once again expressed his conviction that the armed opposition group PKK could be eliminated by joint cooperation with Turkey. **In early June, the PKK extended its ceasefire until the 15th of July and renewed its call for a dialogued solution to put an end to the conflict.** In its communiqué, the group acknowledged that positive conditions were in place to extend the ceasefire, and he hinted at the possibility of extending it until the 1st of September if the PKK detected suitable reactions from the government towards resolution of the conflict. For its part, the PKK announced that in August the leader of the group, Abdullah Ocállan (in a high-security prison since 1999) would present a roadmap on a possible dialogue process which would be drawn up taking into account the opinions of a variety of Kurdish institutions. The Chief of Staff of Turkey, however, stated that the fight against terrorism would continue until the PKK was eliminated.

In mid-July, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) decided to extend its unilateral ceasefire declaration for the third time, in what they described as an action to foster a peaceful solution to the conflict with the government of Turkey. In declarations to a pro-Kurdish news agency, a PKK leader explained that the decision meant a cessation of military activities, with the exception of defensive actions, until the 1st of September, as the group awaited the announcement of a roadmap by the leader of the group, Abdulá Öcállán. In early August, at an unprecedented political encounter, **the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met with Ahmed Ahmed Türk, leader of the Democratic Society Party (DPT), a Kurdish nationalist group, for more than an hour with the purpose of making headway in a solution to the Kurdish conflict.** The gesture was interpreted by the media as a move by Erdogan to open up the dialogue with the Kurds in Turkey. Türk stated that it was an important day, that he had been able to share his proposals with Erdogan and that from now on each party had responsibilities to shoulder. In mid-August, the Turkish Prime Minister issued an appeal to all the political parties to help with the

process started by the government to find a solution to the Kurdish conflict. The speech was described as historic by some local pro-government media. In turn, the President of Turkey also declared a new age in early August, and a new understanding for solving the Kurdish question, which he described as Turkey's most pressing problem. Likewise, Erdogan stated that before the end of the year his government would set into motion projects for reforms that would benefit the Kurdish people. The project would be coordinated by the Minister of the Interior, Beşir Atalay, and it would include meetings and consultations with intellectuals, representatives of civil society and politicians. Before the announcement of the roadmap (scheduled for the 15th of August and ultimately delayed) the top leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, stated that a new period had gotten underway, new and different and as important as the founding of the Turkish Republic. He added that it would mean completing what had been started in the 1920s. According to Öcalan, everyone would have to take their own decisions. He stated that the people could not make him responsible for everything, as the solution would not be forced on them. Young people, women and the entire population would take their own decisions, according to Öcalan, who reiterated that everyone working together would make this process work. The leader of the PKK stated that he did not want a federal state, an option that his group would not accept even if it were offered. He said instead that his position was similar to the European model, but more developed. In this sense, he suggested that the state be involved in resolving the Kurdish question, but that it would be a state that respected freedoms. His model of solution would entail the coexistence of the state and a democratic Kurdish nation, in which the Kurds would recognise the existence of the state and accept it, while the state in turn would accept the Kurds' right to be a democratic nation. According to Öcalan, this is how the two positions could converge. Everything else would come later, he claimed, including the possibility whether the state wanted flags or whether Turkish was taught all over the country. Nevertheless, to accomplish this he reiterated that the Kurds must be allowed to exist as a democratic nation. According to Öcalan, if the Kurds could organise their own education, sports, religious organisations, municipalities and parliament, they would. He even mentioned that they might organise their own defence.

In the meantime, the government continued to develop its package of reforms to encourage a resolution of the Kurdish question. The executive was referring to this initiative as a "democratisation package", which would not solely affect the Kurdish people. According to sources from the Turkish newspaper Today's Zaman, the government nixed any change to the unitary governing system in Turkey, as well as an amnesty that would include Abdullah Öcalan, two factors that it would not accept. The package of reforms and measures is focused on the short, middle and long term. The long-term measures included constitutional amendments and a new definition of citizenship in the constitution. Furthermore, the technical team involved in developing the measures is studying processes pursued by other countries with similar problems. The cases studied include the conflicts in the Basque Country and Ulster. The round of contacts held by the Minister of the Interior included prominent figures from civil society, as well as political representations, including the pro-Kurdish party DTP. Another measure being studied was the restoration of Kurdish names to the towns in the southeast, whose place names were forcibly changed to Turkish, as well as the return of Kurdish refugees from the Mahmur camp in northern Iraq, along with thousands of Kurds living in Europe who lost their Turkish citizenship because they were accused of being involved with the PKK. In the midst of this atmosphere of rapprochement and openness, families of Turkish soldiers and PKK members who died in combat met in Diyarbakir to issue a call for peace and reconciliation. At this gathering, the likes of which had never been seen since the start of the war, mothers of Kurdish insurgents embraced their Turkish counterparts and offered them white handkerchiefs as a sign of peace.

However, in mid-September, contradicting the government plans outlined above, the Turkish army stated that it would continue its military operations against the PKK until it was eliminated. The Chief of Staff responded thus to a call from the pro-Kurdish DTP party asking for an end to the military offensives as they believed that they were hindering the government's efforts to resolve the Kurdish question. The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stated that the army would continue its operations. Along the same lines, the Kurdish leader Öcalan stated from

prison that the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, did not seem aware of the **threats coming from the so-called deep state (a term used in Turkey to refer to actions outside the law by ultra-nationalist sectors, including the criminal network Ergenekon).** The Higher Council for Education, the highest authority on education in Turkey, approved a proposal that would allow Kurdish to be taught at a Turkish university, in line with the current climate favourable to partial reforms that improve the status of the Kurdish people. According to the measure, Kurdish and other minority languages could be taught to second-cycle university students. In the remaining universities in the country, Kurdish was still banned for the time being. Finally, prior to a visit to Turkey the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, claimed that Syria supported the so-called democratisation initiative of the Turkish government, and that his country was ready to help implement it.

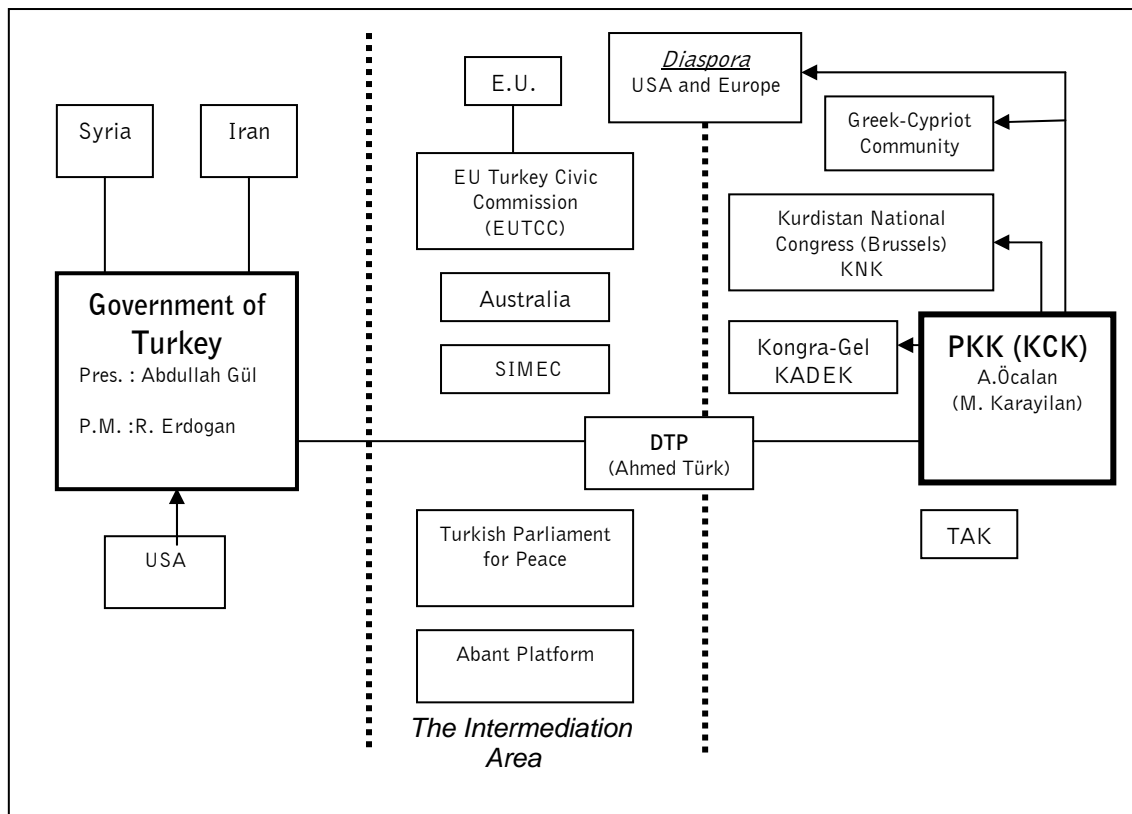
In mid-October, the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, stated from prison that the process of resolving the Kurdish conflict was blocked because the parties, including the PDD, did not fully grasp the essence of the problem. According to Öcalan, changing an article of the constitution would not entail resolving the conflict per se. Öcalan also cited Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as examples within the United Kingdom, along with the autonomous regions in Spain and the system in the USA or Italy, among others. Meanwhile, the leader of the opposition party CHP, Deniz Baykal, agreed to meet with the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to address questions including the government initiative to resolve the Kurdish question. Both leaders had not met since July, when the government announced that it was preparing reforms. In the second half of November, **the government presented in Parliament the first specific measures in its democratisation initiative to resolve the Kurdish question, as a continuation of the parliamentary discussion begun in November. They include several short-term advances in culture, politics and society.** The decisions announced by the Minister of the Interior, Besir Atalay, included the **possibility of restoring the original names of municipalities and localities** which had been forced to adopt a Turkish name. This measure would take shape in the guise of binding referenda that would previously be approved by the Minister of the Interior. According to government estimates, around 100 towns might change their names in 2010. Likewise, **an independent commission would be created to investigate human rights violations, especially in the southeast of the country.** In parallel, Turkey planned to ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture. **Furthermore, although Turkish will remain the official language of Turkey, obstacles will be lifted on the use of Kurdish.** These include the elimination of time restrictions on Kurdish broadcasts and on private radio and television broadcasters in Kurdish, and encouragement for the native languages to be learnt, even though they may not be taught at public schools. **Furthermore,** the political parties will be allowed to use different languages in their campaigns. The Koran will also be translated into Kurdish. In turn, the people who fled from Turkey after the military coup in 1980 and divested of their Turkish citizenship may now get it back, including people of Kurdish extraction, with the exception of those involved in terrorism and armed acts. For the time being, there will be no general amnesty for the members of the armed groups; however, prison sentences will be reduced. The initiative was presented during a parliamentary session regarded as historical by some analysts, at which the Turkish nationalist opposition harshly criticised the government initiative, describing it as cooperation between the AKP and the PKK. In turn, the pro-Kurdish DTP asked the government to clarify its intentions as quickly as possible and to explain how it was going to implement the measures announced. According to the leader of the DTP, Ahmet Türk, if the process is handled properly, the weapons may well be silenced within three months. **The government also changed its isolation regime of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who had been the only prisoner in the jail on the island of Imrali for ten years.** Four other PKK members and one member of the armed group TIKKO were transferred to the Imrali prison, where new facilities had been built. Öcalan will be allowed to see the other prisoners for ten hours a week. In mid-December, the Constitutional Court illegalised the pro-Kurdish party DTP because of its purported ties to the PKK, which cast doubt on the feasibility of the government's plan to undertake reforms. The PKK interpreted this as a declaration of war.

The most important events of the year

- According to some media, the Kurdish leader in Iraq, Massoud Barzani, might be holding talks with the PKK in order to negotiate a plan that would allow the PKK to lay down its weapons in exchange for amnesty for some of its members for a given period of time. In turn, the USA was preparing a plan to address the Kurdish question, which might include the disarmament of the PKK.
- On the 13th of April, the PKK announced a ceasefire until the 1st of June through the Executive Council of the KCK in order to facilitate the quest for a negotiated solution to the Kurdish conflict. The ceasefire was extended several more times. The leaders of the PKK reiterated their offer to the Turkish government to find a solution to the armed conflict within the framework of Turkey's territorial integrity, respecting Turkish borders.
- The Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met with Ahmed Ahmed Türk, leader of the Democratic Society Party (DPT), a Kurdish nationalist group, for more than an hour with the purpose of making headway in a solution to the Kurdish conflict.
- To the PKK, the model of solution would entail the coexistence of the state and a democratic Kurdish nation, in which the Kurds would recognise the existence of the state and accept it, while the state in turn would accept the Kurds' right to be a democratic nation.
- The government continued to develop its package of reforms to encourage resolution of the Kurdish question. The executive was referring to this initiative as a "democratisation package" which would not solely affect the Kurdish people.
- The government presented in Parliament the first specific measures in its democratisation initiative to resolve the Kurdish question, as a continuation of the parliamentary discussion begun in November. They include several short-term advances in culture, politics and society.
- In mid-December, the Constitutional Court illegalised the pro-Kurdish party DTP because of its purported ties to the PKK, which cast doubt on the feasibility of the government's plan to undertake reforms. The PKK interpreted this as a declaration of war.

Websites of interest

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- KADEK (www.pkkgercegi.net)
- Kurdish Human Rights Project ([www,khrp.org](http://www.khrp.org))
- Kurdish Info (www.kurdish-info.net)
- Kurdish Media (www.kurdmedia.com)
- Kurdistan National Congress (www.knc.org.uk)
- Kurdistan Observer (kurdistanobserver.servehttp.com)
- Today's Zaman (www.todayszaman.com)
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- Washington Kurdish Institute (www.kurd.org)
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b) Caucasus

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN (Nagorno-Karabakh)

Context of the conflict

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) in 1988, when the local assembly voted to be administrated by Armenia and the Azerbaijan authorities rejected this decision. Tension in this conflict escalated until open warfare war broke out between 1991 and 1994. More than 30,000 people died in this war and a million people were displaced. **A ceasefire was signed in 1994**, and peace negotiations have been underway since then. These 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 British Petroleum company has enormous influence over Azerbaijan, an oil-rich country.

Population: Nagorno-Karabaj (145,000); Armenia (3 million) and Azerbaijan (9 million)

Area; Armenia (30,000 km²); Azerbaijan (87,000 km²); Nagorno Karabaj (4,400 Km²)

HID: 84 (Armenia), 86 (Azerbaijan), (of 182)

GDP. Armenia: 7,900 million dollars;
Azerbaijan: 22,600 million dollars

Income per inhabitant. Armenia: \$2,630 ;
Azerbaijan: \$2,640

Deaths due to the conflict: 30,000

Displaced persons: 720,000

Armed actors: Armed forces in the two countries

Facilitators: OSCE, Minsk Group (France, Russia and USA), Turkey

Background to the peace process

Attempts to reach a peace agreement in the last decade have been blocked by the non-acceptance of one of the sides, Azerbaijan, of mediation by the **OSCE** and the **Minsk Group**, and for the continued proliferation of proposals and plans by different countries. The OSCE The OSCE has been acting as mediator since 1995. The organisation's strategy is to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries. In August 1995, the director of the OSCE designated a Personal Representative for this area. In October 2000, Armenia along with Russia and four other republics of the CEI, signed the revitalisation agreement of the Tashkent Treaty of 1992 (Collective Security Treaty) which includes legal procedures for the deployment of troops in case of aggression.

In July 1999, the OSCE approved the setting up of a Branch in Erevan (Armenia), operational since February 2000, carrying out political, economic, environmental and human activities. It functions independently of the Minsk Group, copresided by France, Russia and USA, which promotes peaceful agreement in the conflict. This is the result of an agreement adopted by the CSCE (former name of the OSCE) in 1992, with the intention of holding a conference to reach a peace solution. Although this conference has not been held, the "**Minsk process**" continues. Presidents Robert Kocharian, of Armenia, and Heydar Aliyev, de Azerbaijan, who after handing power to his son Ilham Aliyev, had met 20 times from the first meeting in 1999 to the month of April 2001, when an agreement was reached on the so-called "**Paris Principles**", with mediation by President Chirac, which were not finally signed. Both parties joined the Council of Europe the same year. Subsequently, a year and a half passed with no direct meetings. The presidents finally met again in August 2002. The two leaders are both focussed on keeping power, do not trust each other and do not involve their people in the quest for peace. The President of Azerbaijan was critical of the mediation of the OSCE and the role of the UN. In addition, he has always been opposed to any representatives from the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno Karabakh taking part in the negotiations.

Early in 2006, the subcommittee on Nagorno Karabakh in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe presented a document proposing autonomy as a model for resolving the conflict, and recommending that the status of the region be determined in a subsequent phase of the so-called "Prague Process". Representations of the Azeri chancellery pointed out that their government could accept the definitive status of the region through a national consultation process, but one in which the entire population participated, including the Armenian and Azeri communities in Karabakh. In May, Armenian and Azeri representatives met in Washington (USA) and managed to bring their positions in the peace negotiations closer together. This meeting took place after the OSCE's Minsk Group met and decided to send the French representative, Bernard Fassier, to talk with both parties and agree to a new meeting, as Armenia and Azerbaijan had broken off contact. In December, **the self-proclaimed independent Republic of Nagorno Karabakh held a referendum which approved a constitution that described the region as a sovereign, democratic and social state with powers over the territory currently controlled by the separatist government.** However, this referendum did not broach issues such as citizenship or the thorny question of the return of Azeri refugees in a region with an Armenian ethnic majority. The de facto president of Nagorno Karabakh, Arkady Ghukassian, claimed that the constitution was not the answer to all the problems in the land, although it was an opportunity to increase the possibility of being recognised beyond its borders. According to preliminary results, at least 98.6% of voters supported the text in a referendum held on the 15th anniversary of the vote in a referendum on its independence, which had 54 observers, mainly from Armenia, Russia and France. The Armenian Foreign Minister, Vartan Oskanian, claimed that the positions were making inroads and that there was a chance of reaching an agreement even on the more difficult points. He also mentioned that **both parties were discussing the option of holding a referendum on the status of the region.** His Azeri counterpart, Elmar Mammadyarov, pointed out that all the issues were resolved except one, purportedly the **status of the territory.** **On this issue, Azerbaijan remained in favour of autonomy within the Azeri state, while Armenia advocated self-determination.** According to certain analysts, these latest efforts to reach a solution more quickly were framed within the need to reach an agreement before the parties became immersed in the pre-election dynamics of the 2007 parliamentary elections in Armenia and the 2008 presidential elections in both countries.

At the beginning of 2007, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Vartan Oskanian and Elmar Mammadyarov, respectively, held several meetings to address the conflict over the territory of Nagorno Karabakh. The first was held in Moscow and was also attended by US and French diplomats and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the second was held in Geneva. **Armenia and Turkey expressed their desire to improve their relations,** which until then had been characterised by the absence of diplomatic ties and the closure of the joint border since 1993 due to the conflict pitting Armenia against Azerbaijan, the latter an ally of Turkey. **In June, for the first time since November 2006, the presidents of both countries met,** taking advantage of the CIS summit, although no headway was made. In late June, **the leaders of Nagorno Karabakh called for direct participation in the conflict-resolution process,** whose current format excluded the authorities from the enclave in dispute ever since Azerbaijan demanded their exclusion in 1997 after several years of participation.

The criticism came within a climate of heightened recriminations **and Azerbaijan's questioning of the OSCE's mediation format.** Similarly, the Azeri government asked the Secretary-General of the OSCE for clarification of all the possible procedures for replacing or ending the presidency of the Minsk Group, although later both presidents pledged to continue cooperating with the international mediator. In August, after a visit to the province, the Armenian Minister of Defence, Seyran Ohanyan, declared that the authorities and people of Nagorno-Karabakh should take an active part in the negotiations that would lead to a resolution to the conflict. In his opinion, they could participate in the final phase of the negotiations. In late September, the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, deemed that there was a new opportunity to try to resolve the conflict. The Turkish government, which was involved in a process of diplomatic rapprochement with Armenia in order to overcome the longstanding enmity between both countries, suggested a triple meeting

among the three countries, taking advantage of the UN General Assembly. At the meeting, they addressed the **Turkish proposal to create a new regional mechanism, which would include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey, under the aegis of the Caucasus Cooperation and Stability Platform**, the name of the Turkish initiative. According to the Turkish Foreign Minister, his Armenian and Azeri counterparts conveyed to him their support for the platform and asked him to organise more trilateral meetings. Nonetheless, some analysts pointed out that Armenia was not in favour of Turkey's acting as the mediator in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, even though they would allow it to have some degree of participation in the process.

In early November, the Armenian and Azeri presidents signed a joint agreement, which had also been promoted and signed by their Russian counterpart, in which they pledged to continue with the direct dialogue between both parties with mediation by the OSCE's Minsk Group. The agreement also stated that the process would continue at the level of presidents and foreign ministers. The leader of Nagorno-Karabakh, Bako Sahakyan, was pleased with the renewed international attention to the matter and the attempts to resolve the conflict in the region in the Moscow Declaration (signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 2nd November), but he also stated that it was necessary for Nagorno-Karabakh to take part in the peace process. The Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, also approved of the fact that Azerbaijan signed the so-called Moscow Declaration, in which it rejected the use of force. **Sargsyan stated that Azerbaijan should recognise the right of self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh**, and that this step would be followed by others. Along the same lines, he stated that control of the lands, in an allusion to the Armenian presence, was not an end in itself but a means of protecting Nagorno-Karabakh. Aliyev reiterated his position in favour of a stage-by-stage resolution plan, in which first Armenia's control of areas within Azerbaijan would be removed and the displaced population would be allowed to return home. According to Aliyev, if these issues were resolved, the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh could be discussed, even though its ultimate status must respect – according to Aliyev – Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Likewise, the Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan, Naser Hamidi Zare, stated that **Iran was willing to help resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh**, and that he had shared proposals on this issue with Azerbaijan.

The peace process in 2009

In mid-January, and in the midst of several violations of the ceasefire, the Azeri President, Ilham Aliyev, stated that the November 2008 Moscow Declaration showed that the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh could only be resolved based on a several-stage plan. **According to Aliyev, Azerbaijan's immobile position would first require the withdrawal of Armenian's forces and the resolution of the security problems through international guarantees.** Once these problems are resolved, then the future status of the territory can be addressed, according to the Azeri President. In turn, the government of Armenia began to prepare an economic compensation programme to foster the return of the Armenian people displaced from areas of the country near the border with Azerbaijan in the war in the 1990s and the subsequent insecurity. **The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Lluís María de Puig, stated that the sub-committee on Nagorno-Karabakh would resume its activities in the near future with a view to contributing to resolving the conflict.** The Armenian and Azeri presidents, Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev, met in Zurich in a new round of negotiations within the peace process being mediated by the OSCE's Minsk Group. The Azeri spokesperson stated that no major headway was made. In turn, **the Turkish government claimed that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh concerned Turkey, but that the country would not be a party to the plan to resolve the dispute**, thus denying recent reports in the Turkish press.

In the second half of April, the Azeri President stated that the decision on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh might be indefinitely postponed, as there could be no unilateral decision. Aliyev reiterated, just as on past occasions, that Azerbaijan is not participating nor would it participate in a process that entails the legal separation of the enclave. At the same time, he stated that it was understood that it was important for Armenia to keep up land connections with Nagorno-Karabakh, and that he saw no problem with that. According to Aliyev, questions on the Lachin

corridor may be solved to ensure that no concerns were triggered either in the people living in the enclave now nor in the Azeri people who – according to Aliyev – would return to the land once the conflict was resolved. Aliyev stated that he understood that in order to resolve the conflict, the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh needed to feel secure and that they should have a chance at self-government. In this sense, he stated that he would not interfere in their lives, but he also stressed that the solution to the conflict included a restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Armenian troops and the return of displaced persons. In early May, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan concluded yet another meeting on resolving the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh without any headway. In the meantime, the presidents of the OSCE's Minsk Group, which is acting as a mediator in the conflict, expressed their optimism at the progress in the talks. Some analysts warned about the gap between local perceptions and the international view of the possibilities of resolving the dispute. In late May, on the occasion of the day of the republic, the President of Azerbaijan declared that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be based on the principle of territorial integrity and that he would consider no mechanism stipulating that this region might win independence from Azerbaijan. Aliyev stated that the international community backed his government's position in the negotiations. In early June, the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia held a bilateral meeting as part of an international economic forum. This was the fifth meeting in the past year. There were no reports about major advances from this new meeting.

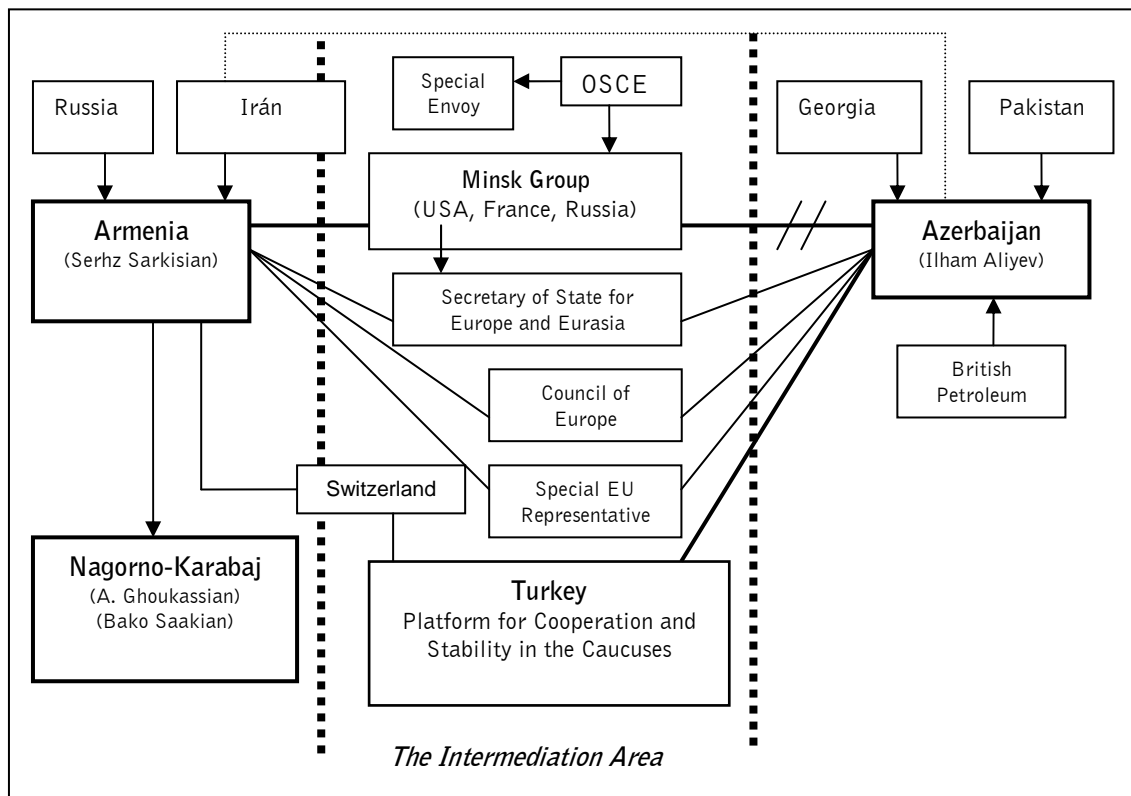
During the third quarter, intellectuals from both countries took a joint tour around both countries and around the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, organised by the ambassadors of both states, in which they held meetings with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan and with other political and civil representations. The presidents of both countries backed the initiative, which was the second of its kind; the first had been held in 2007. In mid-July, after having held several meetings, the presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan stated that they were willing to discuss other means of constructively resolving the conflict. In late August, Armenia and Turkey agreed to re-launch diplomatic efforts in order to resume relations. In a joint communiqué, both parties announced that they would start consultations to sign two protocols: one to establish diplomatic ties and another to develop their relations. These talks, which would continue under Swiss mediation, were expected to last six weeks. The parliaments of both countries had to ratify the agreement on this normalisation process. The agreement excluded any preconditions. The Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, stated that Turkey would look after Azerbaijan's interest in its process of reconciliation with Armenia, in an implicit reference to the two countries' dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. According to some Turkish media sources, Turkey would link normalisation with Armenia to a resolution of this conflict. However, the Armenian president denied that there was any connection between the two processes. Later, the presidents of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, and Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, went together to the World Cup football match between Armenia and Turkey. Gül had invited Sargsyan, in yet another gesture of what has come to be called "football diplomacy". In 2008, Gül had become the first president of Turkey to visit Armenia, a trip he made at an invitation by Sargsyan to watch the World Cup match between Armenia and Turkey. In mid-September, the Azeri Foreign Minister stated that it might consider opening of the border with Armenia in exchange for the handover of five districts around Nagorno-Karabakh which have been under the control of the Armenian forces since the end of the armed conflict. According to the spokesperson from the Foreign Ministry, this possibility had already been expressed on previous occasions and was part of the first phase in resolving the dispute. This stage would also include the return of the internally displaced people.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Azeri president reiterated, just like on previous occasions, that Azerbaijan is not participating nor would it participate in a process that entails the legal separation of the enclave. According to Aliyev, Azerbaijan's immobile position would first require the withdrawal of Armenian's forces and the resolution of the security problems through international guarantees.

- The Azeri Foreign Minister stated that it might consider opening of the border with Armenia in exchange for the handover of five districts around Nagorno-Karabakh which have been under the control of the Armenian forces since the end of the armed conflict.
- Armenia and Turkey re-established their diplomatic relations and used "football diplomacy" to draw closer.

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- Peace Building & Conflict Resolution (www.peacebuilding.am/eng)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Swiss Peace (www.seisspeace.org)



GEORGIA (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)

a) Abkhazia

Context of the conflict

Georgia maintains the conflict in the region of **Abkhazia**. There has been a conflict in the Abkhazia region of Georgia, in the northeast of the country, since 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 was created **UNOMIG** for the observation of 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 Georgian Ex-President I. Shevardnadze promised, on several occasions "to broaden powers" of self-government to Abkhazia, but forming an integral part of Georgia. In recent years, Russia has kept a troop of 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.

Population. Georgia: 4 million inhabitants; Abkhazia, 0.5 million inhabitants.
Area: Georgia: 70,000 km²; Abkhazia: 8,400 km².
HDI Georgia: 89 (of 182)
GDP Georgia: 9,300 million dollars
Per capita income Georgia: \$2,1200
Deaths due to the conflict: 6,000
Displaced population: 240,000
Facilitators: OSCE, UN, France, Turkey

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 1992, when a Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peace force brought about a ceasefire. 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 confrontations 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 with Abkhazia

The **OSCE** has had a mission in Georgia since December 1992. Its headquarters are in Tbilisi and its aim is to promote peace negotiations for the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The mission also supports the UN's peace efforts. It has a member of staff in the UN Human Rights Office in Sukhumi. The mission's mandate is to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to assist in the development of democratic institutions. Since December 1999, the mandate has also included monitoring the border between Russia and Georgia. The deadlock situation in the Abkhazia process can be described as a "dynamic non-peace process" since there has been no progress in key matters: the return of the 200,000 refugees Georgians, the final status of Abkhazia and the future economy of the republic. Throughout 2004, the new president of Georgia M. Saakashvili requested the collaborations of Russia to resolve the conflict, and Abkhazia showing an initial willingness to negotiate with the new government.

At the beginning of 2005, the Georgian president reiterated his offer of negotiation. However, the president of Abkhazia refused to negotiate with the new Special Envoy of the Georgian government (as he had been pro-Georgian in exile). In March, the Georgian president proposed that **a form of autonomy be established in Abkhazia based on the Italian model in the Alto Adige region**, which until 1972 was under Austrian control. During the second quarter of 2005, the parties engaged in a number of trust-building and detente measures, stating that they wished to work jointly on issues such as security, political affairs and economic cooperation, as well as on resolving the problem of people who had been displaced by the conflict. In a context in which the tension increased in the district of Gali, the Abjasian president, S. Bagapsh, wrote a letter to the Security Council proposing several measures aimed at resolving the conflict, including international guarantees to ensure that hostilities would not resume and Georgia would not attack Abkhaz land, and to put an end to the international isolation that Abkhazia had suffered from in recent years. The only aspect which S. Bagapsh was not prepared to negotiate was the political status of Abkhazia, given that it had already been decided in the 1999 referendum. In June, **the government of Georgia presented a peace plan to the parliament** based on the principles of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, autonomy for the region, the return of displaced people and participation in the project by international bodies. Finally, **the UN working group to resolve the conflict in Abkhazia** met once again for the first time after a five-year hiatus.

The attempts to resolve the conflict deteriorated during the third quarter, especially this country's relations with Russia, despite the different peace proposals that had been set forth in the preceding months. In July, **the UN Secretary-General nominated J. Arnault as head of the UN Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)**, substituting H. Tagliavini. In his last appearance, H. Tagliavini pointed out that significant headway had been made in the dialogue between the Georgian authorities and the Abkhaz separatists, although he also stressed the importance of the UN's role as police in the region and the need for it to be able to enter both areas of the conflict. **The Abkhaz government announced that it would only resume negotiations with Georgia when the Georgian government pledged to withdraw its troops from the upper part of the Kodori Pass**, respecting the agreements reached in 1994 that banned the presence of the Georgian army in this region. Tensions between both countries were related to Russia's support – condemned by Georgia – of the Georgian separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and especially to the fact that Russia was paying pensions, issuing passports and stationing peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia. **Georgia's current proposals calls for updating and changing the negotiation mechanisms stipulated in the early 1990s.** They also state that a new phase should be entered with direct dialogue between the parties, without preconditions, and addressing at least the issue of re-establishing trust. However, the authorities from Abkhazia rejected the offer, arguing that the appropriate conditions for starting negotiations did not yet exist. **In turn**, the EU prepared a package of measures aimed at promoting trust between Georgia and Abkhazia. The proposals, submitted by the EU's Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, included launching programmes with the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy; promoting trade between the separatist regions and Georgia; promoting European participation in the security sector, with the EU playing the role of facilitator and advisor; and exerting pressure to achieve a greater emphasis on minority rights in Georgia. A short time later, **Georgian Prime Minister, Z. Noghaideli, presented the UN Security Council with Georgia's new proposal to resolve the conflict with Abkhazia**, which revolved around three main points. First of all, it called for the voluntary return of the Georgian population that was forced to leave Abkhazia because of the armed conflict. Secondly, the proposal entailed recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia. And thirdly, it called for a referendum to be held on the future status of Abkhazia, which would only be held after the voluntary return of the displaced population. The plan clashed with the views of the pro-independence leaders of Abkhazia, who until then had expressed their reluctance at a global return of the displaced people, accepting however a gradual return which would entail first the return to the southern part of Abkhazia and other districts only thereafter. In any event, the leaders of Abkhazia claimed that they would not

resume talks with Georgia until the latter complied with the Moscow agreement on ceasefire and the separation of forces.

At the end of November, the president, Mikhail Saakashvili, left his job to begin the election race for the early presidential elections on 5th January, and he was replaced by the parliamentary spokeswoman, Nino Burjanadze, as acting president. In the last few weeks of the year, **diplomatic tensions rose over the conflict in Abkhazia** because of several denouncements by government authorities as well as the Georgian media about the supposed declaration of a state of emergency in Abkhazia by the pro-independence authorities, the fact that the Abkhaz regime was supposedly laying mines in the district of Gali and along the border with Georgia, as well as a possible increase in the Russian military presence in the zone of conflict. The Foreign Minister of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, Sergei Shamba, also claimed that Abkhazia might stop accepting any country that recognises the independence of Kosovo and not of Abkhazia as mediators in the conflict.

In March, the Russian ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, warned Georgia that if it joined NATO the real secession process in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would begin. In early April, **the President of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili, announced a new peace plan to resolve the conflict in Abkhazia, which offered the region what the Georgian government labelled “unlimited autonomy”** within Georgia, and which included the creation of the post of Vice President, which would be filled by a representative from Abkhazia. Additionally, according to the peace proposal, Abkhazia was guaranteed representation in all the central government bodies, and these representatives would have the power to veto all the decisions by the central authorities that affected the Abkhaz population or were related to its constitutional status. Likewise, according to Saakashvili, the peace proposal included meaningful preconditions related to preserving and developing the Abkhaz culture, language and identity. The new peace initiative was maintained along the same lines as the proposals launched in June 2006 by the government, although there was greater emphasis on the economic dimension. The plan thereby contemplated the creation of a joint free trade zone between Georgia and Abkhazia in the two Abkhazian districts of Ochamchire and Gali. With regard to security, the President of Georgia suggested that the police forces on both sides be merged, and that a common border and customs area also be created with autonomy in the region. It also proposed that a joint police force be created in the security area, which encompasses 12 kilometres on the Georgian side and as many on the side controlled by the pro-independence authorities. Predictably, **the peace proposal was rejected by the Abkhaz leaders**, who labelled it as propaganda and repeated their refusal to resume the negotiating process until Georgia withdrew from the Upper Kodori area and a mutual agreement not to use force was signed.

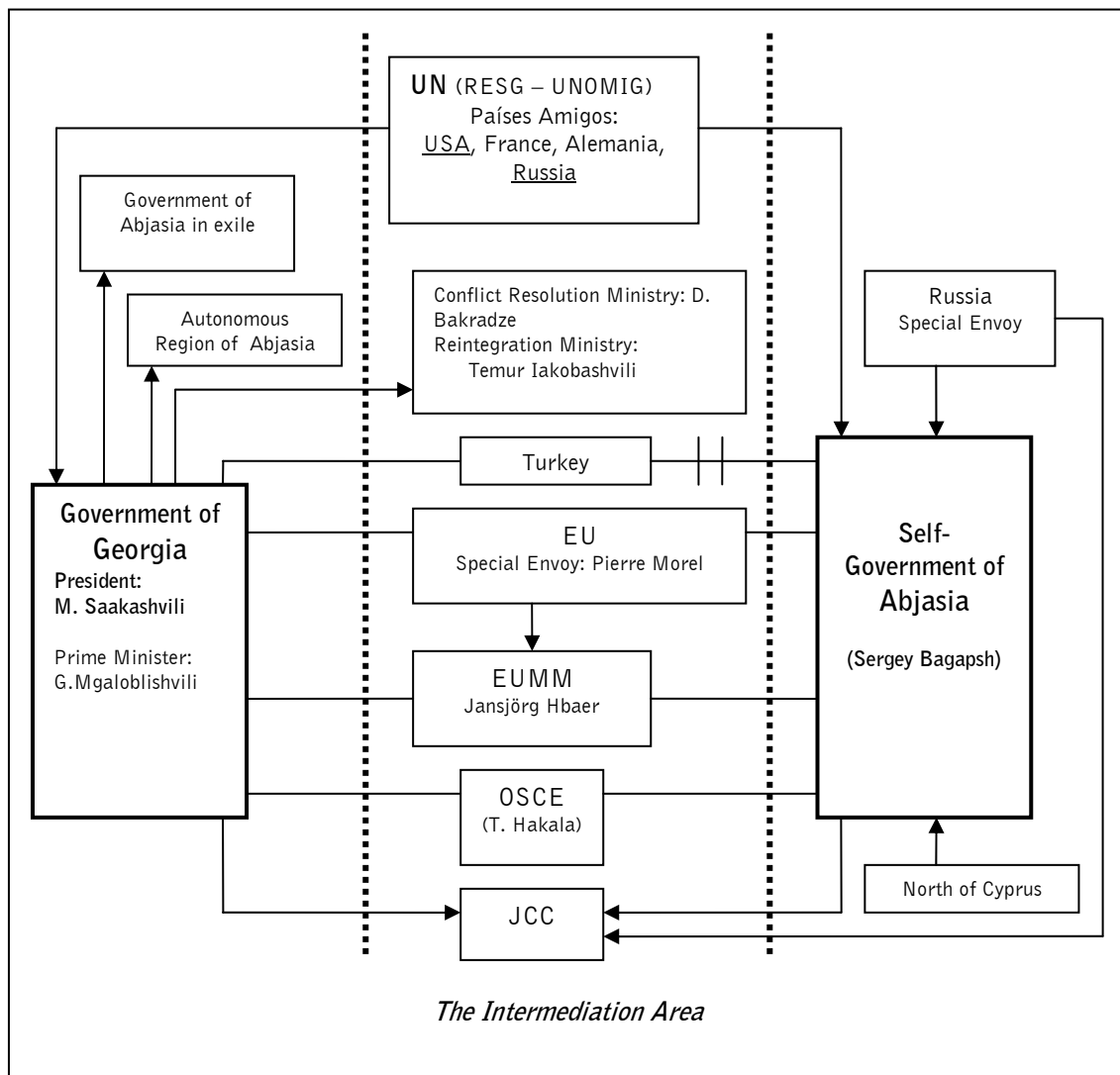
One of the most newsworthy episodes in the third quarter of the year was the **clashes between Georgia and Russia** as a result of the rising tension in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and shortly after the UN Secretary-General's Group of Friends of Georgia met in Berlin on 2008th June to address the tension in the zone of Abkhazia and discuss proposals for defusing it. During the second half of August, after serious clashes in South Ossetia in the wake of Georgian armed forces attacks on several towns in South Ossetia with a death toll of 300 and a harsh military response by Russia that encroached on South Ossetian land, **Russia formally recognised South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence**. With regard to its military presence, it kept similar posts in Georgia outside the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, including some in the towns of Senaki (west) and Poti (port city), as well as in zones north of the city of Gori. This meant that Russia called “security zones” and “zones under the responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping forces” what Georgia viewed as a military occupation and an unacceptable violation of international law and the specific ceasefire agreement signed in mid-August.

Ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia dated 12th August 2008
1 – To not resort to the use of force (renunciation of the use of force).
2 – To fully halt all military activities.

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| 3 – Free access to humanitarian aid.
4 – For the Georgian armed forces to return to their usual places.
5 – For the Russian troops to withdraw to the line that existed prior to the conflict.
6 – To start an international debate on forms of security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. |
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In early September, at a meeting held in Moscow the Russian and French Presidents agreed to implement the agreement reached in August, leading the Russian troops to withdraw from the zones in Georgia outside of Abkhazia and South Ossetia within one month, after the deployment of international mechanisms of no fewer than 200 EU observers, which must be in place by 1st October. This withdrawal was also considered conditioned upon the guarantee not to use force against Abkhazia and South Ossetia through legally binding documents. The agreement also stated that UN and OSCE observers would be able to carry out their usual activities prior to the conflict. In turn, the agreement called for starting international talks on 15th October in Geneva, which would at least address issues related to stability and security in the region, the return of refugees based on internationally recognised principles and practices in the field of resettlement in post-conflict situations, and other issues that were agreed to mutually between both parties. The EU Foreign Ministers supported the **creation of the EU Monitoring Mission for Georgia (EUMM)**, which was included in the agreement dating from 8th September between the Russian and French Presidents to move towards implementation of 12th August agreements. The EUMM, directed by Hansjorg Haber, would be based in Tbilisi and would have 200 unarmed observers who would be deployed in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia that had been controlled by Russian troops since the war in August. In early October, Russia completed the withdrawal of its troops from the so-called "security zones" (areas outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia that were seized by the Russian army during the war with Georgia in August), although Russia would keep a military presence of 3,800 soldiers in Abkhazia. In mid-October, the international talks to address the August conflict between Georgia and Russia were called off owing to disagreements on the procedure to follow, although they were scheduled to resume one month later. Late in the year, Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia put a positive spin on the informal talks held on 19th November in Geneva, sponsored by the UN, the EU and the OSCE, which also called the meeting constructive, unlike the first one held in October, which had to be called off due to differences on procedure and format. The meeting took place through two working groups, one devoted to security and the other to the displaced persons, at which each of the parties was individually represented. The participants expressed their agreement with developing a mechanism to prevent and manage day-to-day incidents, as well as with reflecting on a ceasefire and peacekeeping system and setting up routes to ensure that people could move about unimpeded. In December, the Abkhaz authorities issued an appeal to resume the weekly four-party talks, known informally as the Chuburkhinji Sessions, which had been paralysed since November 2006, in which representatives from Abkhazia, Georgia, Russia and UN observers had taken part. Likewise, the Abkhaz leader, **Sergey Bagapsh**, expressed his willingness to participate in new international talks in Geneva, which had got underway after the war in August.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berghof Center (www.berghof-center.org) • Civil Georgia (www.civil.ge/org) • Coalition Resources (www.c-r.org/about) • Eurasia Net (www.eurasianet.org) • Georgia Update (www.csis.org) • Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/agreements/europe.html) • OSCE (www.osce.org/georgia) • Partners for Democratic Change (www.partnersglobal.org) • Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int) • UNOMIG (www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig)



b) South Ossetia

Context of the conflict

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 1992, when a Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peace force signed a ceasefire agreement and deployed a tripartite peacekeeping force (Georgia, Russia and Ossetia). 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 confrontations 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, forming a unified territory to be called **Alania**. A de facto government was later created in the region, which was in favour of remaining part of Georgia. As a result, there are two simultaneous governments in South Ossetia, neither of which is recognised by the international community. In 2008, however, and after some military confrontations between Georgia and Russia, South Ossetia declared independence.

<p>Population: Georgia: 4 million South Ossetia: 70,000</p> <p>Extension South Ossetia: 3,900 km²</p> <p>HDI Georgia: 89 (of 182)</p> <p>GDP Georgia: 9,300 million dollars</p> <p>Renta por habitante Georgia: \$2,120</p> <p>Deaths due to the conflict: 1,000</p> <p>Displaced population: 12,000</p> <p>Armed actors: ----</p> <p>Facilitators: OSCE, UN (UNOMIG), OTAN, UE, France, Patriarca Ilia II</p>
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Background to the peace process

The **OSCE** has had a mission in Georgia since December 1992. Its headquarters are in Tbilisi. In March 1994 its mandate was expanded with the goal of promoting peace negotiations for the conflict in South Ossetia. The mission also supports the UN's peace efforts. It has a member of staff in the UN Human Rights Office in Sukhumi. The mission's mandate is to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to assist in the development of democratic institutions. Since December 1999, the mandate has also included monitoring the border between Russia and Georgia. In 1992 the **Agreement on Principles between Georgia and Russia for Resolving the Georgia-Ossetia Problem** was signed, with a ceasefire and the creation of a **Joint Control Commission (JCC)** made up of representatives from Georgia, Russia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia. Russia has never looked favourably upon this commission, as it views itself as a minority in it.

Days after the conflicts in July 2004, the representatives of Georgia and South Ossetia signed a **protocol to peacefully resolve the conflict**. The Georgian prime minister presented a plan to end tensions, and he pledged to demilitarise the area and expand the OSCE's mandated on the ground. Georgia also asked the EU and the OSCE to get more involved in resolving the conflict. In early 2005, however, the leader of this region rejected the **Georgian president's proposal for autonomy**. However, in March an agreement for the **demilitarisation of the region** was nevertheless reached. The first stage involved dismantling trenches and fortifications, followed by steps towards economic cooperation.

In June, the Georgian authorities made a commitment to resolve their territorial conflicts in a non-military, peaceful way in cooperation with the international organisations. They also promised to **accept NATO's plan**. However, tensions were heightened in August due to a rising lack of security. The Georgian government also expressed its disagreement with the format of the peace talks, as it deemed them ineffective. Talks were held as part of a **Joint Control Commission**

(JCC) involving Georgia, South Ossetia, North Ossetia and Russia. Furthermore, the USA announced that it intended to get involved in resolving the dispute. At the end of the year, the JCC discussed the Georgian proposal to include the OSCE, the EU and the USA in the peace negotiations. In December 2005, the leader of the Republic of South Ossetia, E. Kokoity, put forward a **three-step peace proposal**: demilitarisation of the area, social and economic rehabilitation of the region and the establishment of relations between the Republic and Georgia. Both Russia and Georgia initially welcomed the proposal. However, Georgia changed its stance a few weeks later.

In 2006, the Georgian government accused the representatives of South Ossetia of wanting to leave the negotiations. The Georgian parliament recommended that an international mission replace the Russian peacekeeping forces supervised by the OSCE which had been deployed in the region since the signing of the peace agreement in 1992. Both the Russian government and the USA criticised parliament's decision. The OSCE expressed its regret at the cancellation of the meeting of the JCC which was to have been held in Vienna. In April, **the government of Georgia put forth a draft law to return properties in South Ossetia to people who had been harmed by the conflict, as a mechanism for fostering peace in the region.** The situation also deteriorated in the third quarter due to the **poor relations between Georgia and Russia**, the latter which held military exercises in the northern Caucasus. Georgia accused Russia of exerting psychological pressure and of supporting the leader of the rebel militia operating in the Kodori Pass. During the first half of November, **the province supported a referendum which was not internationally recognised for independence of the territory**, with more than 90% of the 50,000 voters in favour of secession and the re-election as president of the region of E. Kokoity, who stated independence from South Ossetia and integration with Russia as one of the political priorities. To vote, the residents had to have a South Ossetian passport, but **the majority of the ethnic Georgian population in the province has no passport.** They, in turn, held their own alternative consultation process, which was not legally recognised either, in which they voted to remain part of Georgia and voted D. Sanakoyev as president. The President of the self-proclaimed republic of South Ossetia, E. Kokoity, stated that the region would not unite with Georgia, arguing that what his nation wanted was independence.

The Head of the OSCE Mission in Georgia, R. Reeve confirmed in April 2007 that the current format of the negotiations to resolve the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia was inefficient, stating that nobody expected serious results from this format. The OSCE mission also received the new Georgian proposal for its transformation, but according to R. Reeve the plan should be agreed by both sides of the conflict. In mid-April, **the Georgian parliament approved the "Law on the Creation of the Appropriate Conditions for the Peaceful Resolution of the Former Autonomous District of South Ossetia"**. This law paved the way for the creation of a temporary administration in South Ossetia with the purpose of "facilitating the participation of the local communities by delegating a central government authority to the representatives of the local communities, ensuring the conditions of European-style autonomy, ensuring self-governance and the preservation of identity and the cultural rights of the Ossetians living in the zone, as well as preparing the conditions for holding democratic elections in the region". Days later, the president of Georgia also stated that the members of the new administration would also serve as vice minister in around ten Georgian ministries, with specific mandates to undertake actions in South Ossetia. The parliament of South Ossetia, however, rejected the new peace plan announced by Georgia. As an alternative, Georgia reiterated its willingness to have Russia and South Ossetia participate in the Georgian state commission created recently to develop the autonomy of the region in conflict. To date, Moscow has ignored this body, while Tskhinvali has deemed it absurd and illegal. In September, the government of Georgia announced that it was willing to host a plenary session of the JCC, offering the OSCE headquarters in the capital of Georgia as the venue. The president, Mikhail Saakashvili, asked the UN General Assembly for a complete revision of the UN observation mission in Georgia and the peace processes in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and he presented a proposed solution for both territories. **According**

to Saakashvili, the current format of the peace processes benefits the heads of the ethnic cleansing undertaken during the armed conflicts, as well as a minority of activists, militias and their international supporters. The president claimed that any peace plan must be focused on economic development and the return of displaced persons. His proposal included the offer and recognition of the full right to self-governance for everyone living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, yet under Georgian sovereignty and borders and with international guarantees. In October, Terhi Hakala, former Finnish ambassador for the South Caucasus, was appointed the new OSCE ambassador for Georgia. Just a few days later, the first plenary session of the **Joint Control Commission (JCC) held since October 2006 ended without headway**. The Georgian delegation called the JCC superficial and pointless, and they criticised their South Ossetian counterparts for not willing to accept compromises and engage in constructive dialogue. **South Ossetia's main demand in the plenary session of the JCC was to develop an agreement not to use force**, which was rejected by Georgia until inroads was made in demilitarising the zone of conflict. In late November, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Grigori Karasin, met in Moscow with the pro-independence leader of the region of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoity, to address the status of the unresolved conflict. According to Karasin, the only way to resolve the conflict lay in negotiations between the parties within the framework of the existent negotiation formats.

At the beginning of 2008, the *de facto* leader of the independent region, Eduard Kokoity, announced that he wished to meet the Georgian president, Mikheil Saakashvili, and that he wanted to discuss three questions with him, namely: the withdrawal of troops from the conflict zone, including the signing of an agreement on the non-use of force; economic recovery; and the political status of South Ossetia. On the economic front, Kokoity claimed that he wanted to **address the proposal to create an "economic preference zone"** which would include South Ossetia, the Alagiri region in North Ossetia and the Georgian region of Gori (southern border of South Ossetia). The proposals were part of the three-stage plan proposed in late 2005 by the leaders of the self-proclaimed republic in response to Georgian initiatives. Kokoity also reiterated his government's interest in continuing the talks with Georgia through the four-party **Joint Control Commission**, a format that he did not regard as having exhausted. In late February, however, the parliament of the self-proclaimed Republic of South Ossetia issued an appeal to the international community to recognise its independence, claiming that the Kosovo process was both a precedent and a convincing argument for recognising South Ossetia. In March, **Georgia announced its decision to withdraw from the four-party mediating body**, the Joint Control Commission, and its proposal to reformulate its structure to transform it into a 2+2+2 format. The new format proposed giving the EU and the OSCE a mediating role, which was rejected by South Ossetia. The Russian Foreign Minister discarded any possibility of changing the current format and warned Georgia against internationalising the conflict, asking it instead to work within the format of the already-existing mechanisms.

One of the most significant episodes of the third quarter were the **confrontations between Georgia and Russia**¹⁵, One of the most newsworthy episodes in the third quarter of the year was the **clashes between Georgia and Russia** as a result of the rising tension in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and shortly after the UN Secretary-General's Group of Friends of Georgia met in Berlin on 30th June to address the tension in the zone of Abkhazia and discuss proposals for defusing it. In early September, at a meeting held in Moscow the Russian and French Presidents agreed to implement the accord reached in August, leading the Russian troops to withdraw from the zones in Georgia outside of Abkhazia and South Ossetia within one month, after the deployment of international mechanisms of no fewer than 200 EU observers, which must be in place by 1st October.

¹⁵ See the previous comments in the Abkhazia section.

The peace process in 2009 in Georgia as a whole

In mid-February, the parties to the conflict, under mediation from the UN, the OSCE and the EU in Geneva, agreed to proposals to establish joint mechanisms to prevent and respond to incidents. In a joint communiqué, the mediators stated that the measures included weekly meetings, or more frequently if deemed necessary, among the structures in charge of security and public order in the tense zones, as well as international organisations. Furthermore, a 24-hour communication line was established, and joint visits would be conducted to the zones triggering concern. The rotating president of the EU described the agreement as a major step forward. With regard to **Abkhazia**, the Georgian President stated that the UN mission was not effective and that he would not seriously regret if it stopped operations. The Georgian Ministry of Defence and the EU's observation mission, EUMM, signed a memorandum that stipulated restrictions on the movement of the Georgian forces in zones adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to the chief of the EUMM, this was a unilateral step by Georgia which is contributing to implementation of the August ceasefire agreement. According to the agreement, Georgia could not deploy more than one battalion of troops at least 15 kilometres from the border of Abkhazia, a measure that would also be applied to South Ossetia. Nor could it deploy calibre 120 weapons or higher in these zones, among other measures. In mid-February, the leader of Abkhazia stated that there would be no EU observers in Abkhazia, and he asked the Council of the EU and the European Parliament to understand that there would be no further discussions on the status of Abkhazia. The Georgian government suggested that Abkhazia be demilitarised, and he also suggested the need to send an international police force to the region. In the meantime, the Abkhazian government stated that it had no plans to rejoin Russia or any other state, rather its goal was to build an independent state. The President of Abkhazia, Sergey Bagapsh, also announced that he was studying whether or not the country would continue to participate in the international talks in Geneva on the security and stability of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to Bagapsh, this negotiating process had no future.

With regard to the region of South Ossetia, which Russia recognised as an independent state last year, in late January the Georgian Minister of Defence and the EU's observation mission (EUMM) signed a memorandum that stipulated **restrictions on the movement of the Georgian forces in zones adjacent to South Ossetia**. In mid-February, the OSCE countries agreed to extend the presence of the 20 additional observers, who had deployed in the zones adjacent to South Ossetia back in August 2008, until the 30th of June. This decision does not affect the end of the OSCE mission in the country, which closed on the 31st of December 2008 without having reached an agreement to renew it due to Russia's opposition. In mid-March, the government of South Ossetia announced that it was about to sign a military agreement with Russia that would enable the latter to use Ossetian territory to create military bases for a period up to 99 years. Likewise, the Ossetian leader, Eduard Kokoity, stated that the EU and the OSCE were responsible for the deeds in August 2008, and he expressed disagreement with the EU'S observation mission, the EUMM, as he labelled its efforts insufficient.

In late May, the Geneva talks on security in the southern Caucasus between Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Russia and Georgia, which are being mediated by the UN, the EU and the OSCE with participation by the USA, were suspended for several days. The Abkhazian delegation withdrew as it said that the UN Secretary-General had not turned in the report on the UN mission in the region on time, and because it deemed it unacceptable that an earlier report considered Abkhazia as part of Georgia. Later, the delegations from South Ossetia and Russia also refused to take part in the fifth round of these negotiations after claiming that they made no sense without the presence of Abkhazia. The Abkhazian delegation warned that it would not continue the dialogue if the United Nations and the EU were partial to Georgia. Along the same lines, the President of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoity, condemned the EU's double-faced policy and claimed that both the EU and NATO were co-responsible for what he called the genocide against the Ossetian people because they had sold weapons to Georgia. Kokoity declared that both South Ossetia and Abkhazia wanted to participate in the talks in Geneva, but on equal footing with the other

participants. The government of Georgia criticised Russia's withdrawal from the talks, as it said that the only purpose for this withdrawal was to thwart the peace process. In turn, the US government declared that the withdrawal of the three delegations was a coordinated action aimed at eroding the Geneva talks. Russia expressed its dismay at the interruption in the negotiations, but it also criticised the joint NATO and Georgia military exercises and warned that Georgia was rearming. Days later, the Russian government announced its intention to open two military bases in Gudauta (in the eastern part of Abkhazia) and in Tskhinvali (the capital of South Ossetia) in 2010 as part of the agreements reached by both republics after the war last August. Around 3,700 soldiers would be deployed at each base, a number lower than the initial estimates. However, Moscow also announced that a considerable military contingent would be deployed on Russia's border with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and that joint military exercises were about to be conducted on Russian soil. Abkhazia, in turn, announced that it would create its own army with between 10,000 and 15,000 members, who would be trained in Russia, with which it had reached agreements.

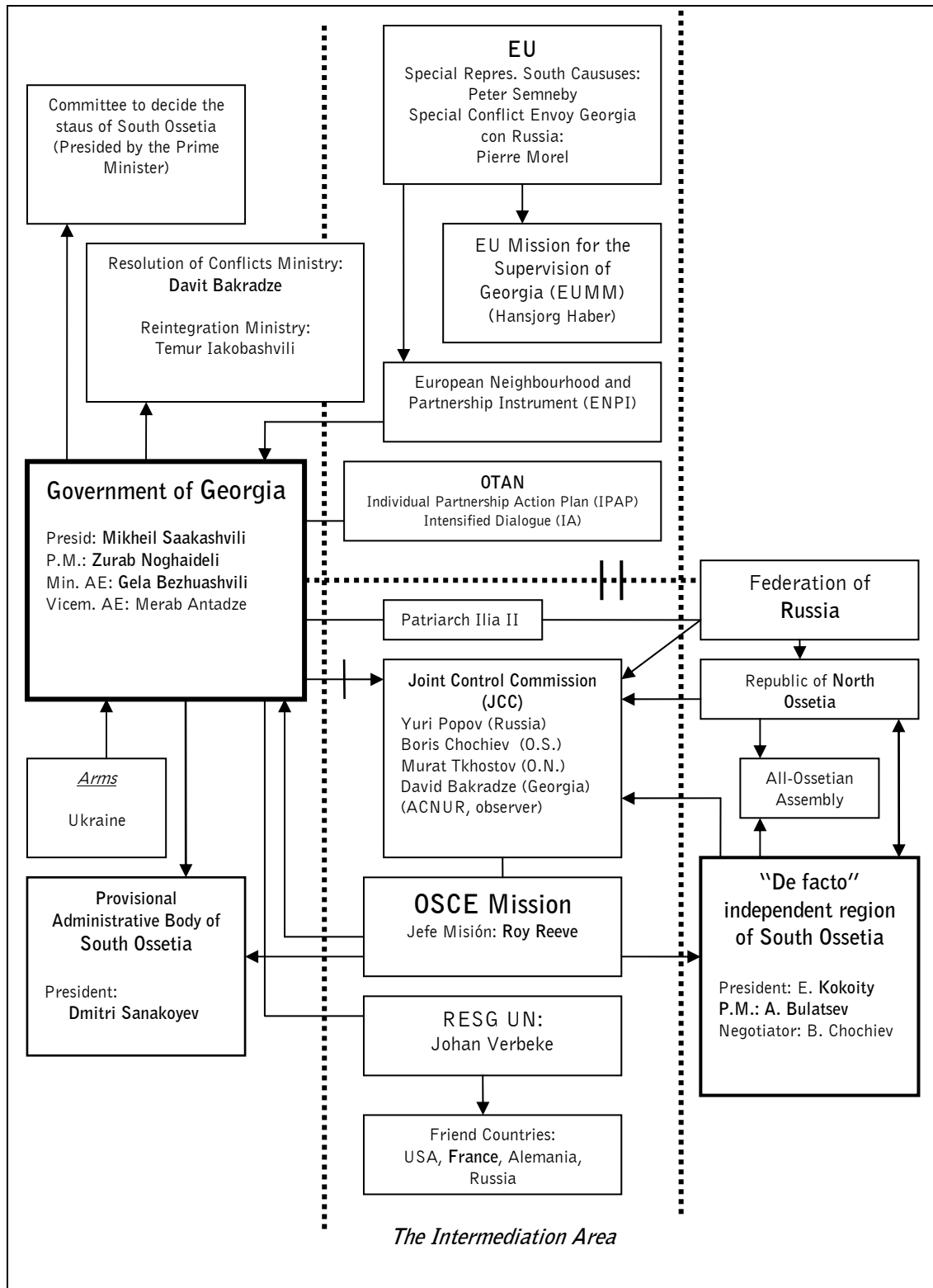
The Abkhazian leader, Sergey Bagapsh, stated that he would ponder whether or not Abkhazia needed to continue participating in the process of talks in Geneva, which included Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to Bagapash, Abkhazia was participating in this format only out of respect for the plan signed by the presidents of Russia and France. The authorities in South Ossetia, in turn, stated that they would continue to participate in the negotiation process in Geneva, but they also announced that at the next meeting they would question the legitimacy of the USA's participation because of this country's military support of Georgia. In mid-June, **Russia vetoed the renewal of the UN's mission in Abkhazia (UNOMIG)**, which would pave the way for the dismantlement of the mission. This decision, reflected in a vote of ten in favour and one against a UN Security Council resolution on extending the mission, revolved around the discrepancies as to whether or not to recognise Georgia's territorial integrity, its "red line". The resolution vetoed by Russia included mention of a previous resolution that included references to Georgia's territorial integrity. Russia, which considers its recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia irrevocable, suggested as an alternative a brief temporary extension of the mission without mentioning the territorial integrity of Georgia. However, this text was never addressed by the Security Council. Finally, in early June **the official-leaning Unity Party linked to Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoity won the parliamentary elections in the pro-independence region of South Ossetia** with 46% of the votes and 17 of the 34 seats; however, these elections were not internationally recognised. The Unity Party was followed by the People's Party and the Communist Party, with 22.6% and 22.2% of the votes, respectively (nine and eight seats). Voter turnout was 80% according to the election commission.

In the midst of constant tensions triggered by maritime incidents, in mid-August the third meeting of the parties to the conflict was held in Gali as part of the mechanism to prevent and manage incidents for the region of Abkhazia. In mid-September, representatives from Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia met once again under the auspices of the UN and the EU observation mission (EUMM) as part of the mechanisms to prevent and respond to incidents agreed to in the Geneva process. At the trilateral meeting, the parties also discussed access to education by the Georgian people living in the district of Gali (Abkhazia). With regard to the region of South Ossetia, which is independent de facto, in mid-August representatives from Georgia, Ossetia and Russia met in the Georgian town of Dvani as part of the third meeting in the mechanism to prevent and manage incidents. The meeting was facilitated by the EU supervisory mission. Another meeting was held in September. In late October, the EU Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia, Pierre Morel, stated that the talks in Geneva (dialogue process between Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, mediated by the UN, the OSCE and the EU with participation by the USA) was entering a second phase whose goal was to achieve a more developed security regime and framework for humanitarian protection with the purpose of boosting regional security. According to Morel, **the basic factors for a framework agreement on the non-use of force were slated to be addressed at the next round of talks**. Despite this, the authorities from South Ossetia decided not to participate in the meeting scheduled for the 19th of November as part of the mechanism to

prevent and manage incidents, and they warned that they would not take part in this forum until they received information on the whereabouts of the Ossetian citizens arrested by Georgia in previous periods. Furthermore, they also criticised this framework of discussion, alleging that it only resolved the issues posed by Georgia.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Georgian President stated that the UN mission was not effective and that he would not seriously regret if it stopped operations. • The Abkhazian government stated that it had no plans to rejoin Russia or any other state; rather its goal was to build an independent state. • The government of South Ossetia announced that it would sign a military agreement with Russia that would enable the latter to use Ossetian territory to create military bases for a period up to 99 years. • The delegations from South Ossetia and Russia also refused to take part in the fifth round of these negotiations after claiming that they made no sense without the presence of Abkhazia. • The official-leaning Unity Party, linked to Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoity, won the parliamentary elections in the pro-independence region of South Ossetia, although these elections were not internationally recognised. • The basic factors for a framework agreement on the non-use of force were slated to be addressed at the next round of talks.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AlertNet (www.alertnet.org) • Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (www.cipdd.org) • Caucasian Knot (eng.kaukaz-uzel.ru) • Caucaz Europeanews (www.caucaz.com) • Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst (www.cacianalyst.org) • Civil Georgia (www.civil.ge/eng) • Euobserver (euobserver.com) • Eurasia Daily Monitor (www.jamestown.org) • EurasiaNet (www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia) • European Commission Delegation to Georgia and Armenia (www.delgeo.cec.eu.int) • European Commission. External relations (ec.europa.eu/external_relations/georgia) • Georgia Today (www.georgiatoday.ge) • Government of Georgia (www.government.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) • Media News (www.medianews.ge) • Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (www.mfa.gov.ge) • NATO Parliamentary Assembly (natopa.ibicenter.net) • OSCE Mission to Georgia (www.osce.org/georgia) • Parliament of Georgia (www.parliament.ge) • Partners-Georgia (www.partners.ge) • Presidency of Georgia (www.president.gov.ge) • Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (www.rfel.org) • Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int) • Republic of South Ossetia (comino.org) • Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org) • UNAG online Magazine (www.civil.ge) • UN Association of Georgia (www.una.ge) • UNOMIG (www.unomig.org)



MIDDLE EAST

IRAQ

Context of the conflict

Iraq was occupied by the USA, the UK and other countries allied in a military coalition created especially for this purpose. Subsequently, the regime of S. Hussein was overthrown in May 2003. At the end of 2004 the presence of weapons of mass destruction in the country was finally ruled out, and this had been one of the reasons given for the occupation. Since then, attacks against the occupying forces and the Iraqi civilian population have continued. In

2004, the main targets of these attacks included the members of the new interim government (established one year after the beginning of the occupation), the government's security forces and the occupying powers.

Population: 28.8 million inhabitants
Area: 438,000 km²
HID: ---
Displaced persons: 2.2 million since 2003
Refugees: 2 million
Deaths due to the conflict: More than 150,000
Armed actors: irregular militias, occupying armies
Facilitators: UN, OIC, Finland (CMI)

Background to the peace process

To date, there has been no peace process to speak of, despite the attempts made to approach some of the insurgent groups that operate in the country. The wide variety of armed actors, the religious divisions and the nature of the foreign occupation make it difficult to start a peace process. In 2004, a process of disarmament began for the militias of the cleric M. Al Sader, in exchange for the release of arrested supporters of the cleric, financial compensation and an end to US military operations in Sader City. There were also promises of an amnesty for the individuals and groups who handed over their arms.

There were many calls for national reconciliation at the beginning of 2005. They came from the interim government, some of the Iraqi Kurds and Shiite leaders who had emerged victorious in the elections, and the US administration. This resulted in the establishment of formal contacts with Iraqi political and social groups who were against the occupation and had boycotted the election. It is revealing that in the face of the precariousness of the situation, the Prime Minister I. In view of the precariousness of the situation, it is revealing that the prime minister, I. Allawi, had continued to unsuccessfully contact members of the illegalised Baath party in an effort to negotiate the return of some of the party's leaders to the new political situation in exchange for the demobilisation of the insurgency and the entry of its combatants into the new Iraqi security and police forces.

The Baath Arab Socialist Party, the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance and the Association of Intellectuals against the Occupation signed a joint declaration in September, stressing the need for open dialogue between all political groups in the country as the only way to resolve political differences and ensure international recognition of Iraq's legitimate resistance to foreign occupation. The following month, the Iraqi constitution was approved. It received 78% of votes in favour and a 70% turnout. However, Sunni communities claimed that there had been irregularities in the process. In November, a conference was held in Cairo which was attended by over 100 Iraqi representatives from different political groups. The aim was to involve the Sunni community in the elections, after its exclusion following the boycott that it had called during the January elections. Finally, President J. Al-Talabani said that he was willing to negotiate with the Iraqi insurgency if it offered to lay down its weapons and participate in the political process.

Parliamentary elections were held at the end of the year, with a solid voter turnout. The standing prime minister and representative of the secular Shiite sectors, I. Allawi, made a call for national reconciliation and undertook to ban the Islamic militia that were threatening to take the country into internal armed conflict.

Despite the fact that throughout the year mortal attacks fell off, the attempts to slow down the violence continued without much success. In July, the main Sunni bloc in the parliament, the National Concord Front (NCF), called upon the United Nations to deploy a peacekeeping force made up of soldiers from the Arabic and Islamic countries as a means of putting a stop to the sectarian violence plaguing the country. The NCF also asked for more police officers from the Sunni minority, as well as their presence at checkpoints. Finally, it also called on Shiite and Sunni leaders to take measures to prevent further clashes. **According to Prime Minister, N. Al-Maliki**, several different Iraqi groups, some of them armed, had expressed their interest in the National Reconciliation Plan submitted on 25th June by the Iraqi prime minister to diminish sectarian violence. A joint communiqué issued by Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey **asked Iraqi religious leaders to meet as a measure for national unity and to transfer security issues to the Iraqi government.**

Early in 2007, a delegation from the Iraqi parliament made up of parliamentarians from the main parties representing the Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds and other minorities, visited Spain and Germany in order to learn about the territorial model in each country in view of the current debate on constitutional reform in Iraq. In early March, the vice president of Iraq, T. Al-Hashimi, met in Damascus with his Syrian counterpart, F. Al-Shara and issued a call to the Arab countries and all the countries in the region in general to contribute to resolving the Iraq crisis. In March, the Iraqi minister for National Reconciliation and Dialogue, S. Al-Muttalibi, communicated that **conversations were being held with some of the insurgents that were not linked to al-Qaeda.** Despite the daily attacks against the occupation forces and among different political and religious sectors of the country, explorations of ways to lower the tensions still kept apace. In May, the Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr announced that he would cooperate with the Sunni factions to counter the US occupation and try to lower the sectarian violence that was plaguing the country. Sadr addressed his followers in a prayer session held in the city of Kufa, this cleric's first appearance in several months. He entreated them to use peaceful means to oppose the USA, the occupation and Israel. In June it was divulged that the US forces had embarked on a new strategy that would consist of arming the Sunnite militias to combat Al-Qaeda. According to certain media, the US army would be providing the weapons, munitions, money and oil to certain groups that had had links with Al-Qaeda in the past but that had now distanced themselves from its methods. Several sectors have opposed this measure as they believe that it could rearm both sides, potentially triggering a civil war.

Also worth noting is the fact that in August **the Shiite leader Maqtada Al-Sadr** ordered the El-Mahdi Army to call off all its activities for six months, including attacks against the USA, until it was restructured to eliminate the undisciplined and dissident groups in that movement. Likewise, around a dozen **Iraqi political leaders met in Finland** in late August on the initiative of the Crisis Management Initiative in order to draw lessons from other peace processes such as the ones in Ireland and South Africa. The participants, members of the Sunni and Shiite communities in Iraq, including Moqtada Al-Sadr's group, pledged to follow twelve recommendations to begin formal negotiations. These recommendations include a ban on the use of weapons during negotiations, the formation of an independent commission to supervise the disarmament of the militias, measures to stop the murders and forced displacement, the promotion of development and putting an end to military actions by the foreign forces. Also worth mentioning is the fact that after months of crisis, **several Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish leaders reached a reconciliation agreement in late August**, laying the foundations for future steps towards integration of the former Ba'ath party members in political life, a mechanism for releasing arrested persons, a law on the distribute of oil revenues and a commitment to hold provincial elections. However, the

followers of Moqtada Al-Sadr were not among the signatories. In September, the UN Secretary-General named Staffan de Mistura, a Swede, as his special envoy in Iraq.

In early October, the vice president and Sunni leader **Tariq Al-Hashimi** met with the **Great Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani** after Al-Hashimi presented a proposal for the country's reconciliation. According to Al-Hashimi, Al-Sistani supported his proposal, which was called the Iraqi National Pact. This pact asks for control of the militias and the end to sectarianism. It also includes an appeal to the United Nations and the Arab League to act as the guarantors of a possible agreement and to monitor its subsequent progress. Likewise, the **Shiite Moqtada Al-Sadr leader** signed an agreement with **Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim**, leader of the **Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq** to try to put an end to violence between the rival Shiite groups which had been unleashed a few months earlier.

At the start of the year, the head of UNAMI, Staffan De Mistura, claimed that the security situation in the country had improved, but that a political consensus had to be reached for the violence to be curtailed in the long term. Furthermore, some analysts posited the impossibility of approving a new law for the local elections on 1st October in view of the disagreements expressed by the vice president, dealing yet another blow to the attempts at reconciliation. In early July, then then-Prime Minister, **Nouri al-Maliki**, declared that his government was negotiating a new security agreement with the **USA** that might set a calendar for the withdrawal of **US** troops. This is the first official announcement along these lines, although the **US** administration denied the existence of any negotiation on an exit calendar. Late in the year, the Iraqi Parliament approved the Status of Forces Pact, which will regulate the presence of **US** troops in the country stating that they will leave Iraqi streets before mid-2009 and the country as a whole by the end of 2011. The text also states that a referendum will be held before the middle of next year. The supporters of this agreement included the main Kurdish and Shia parties, who received the support of the minority Sunni party, while the text was opposed by Moqtada al-Sadr's Shia bloc.

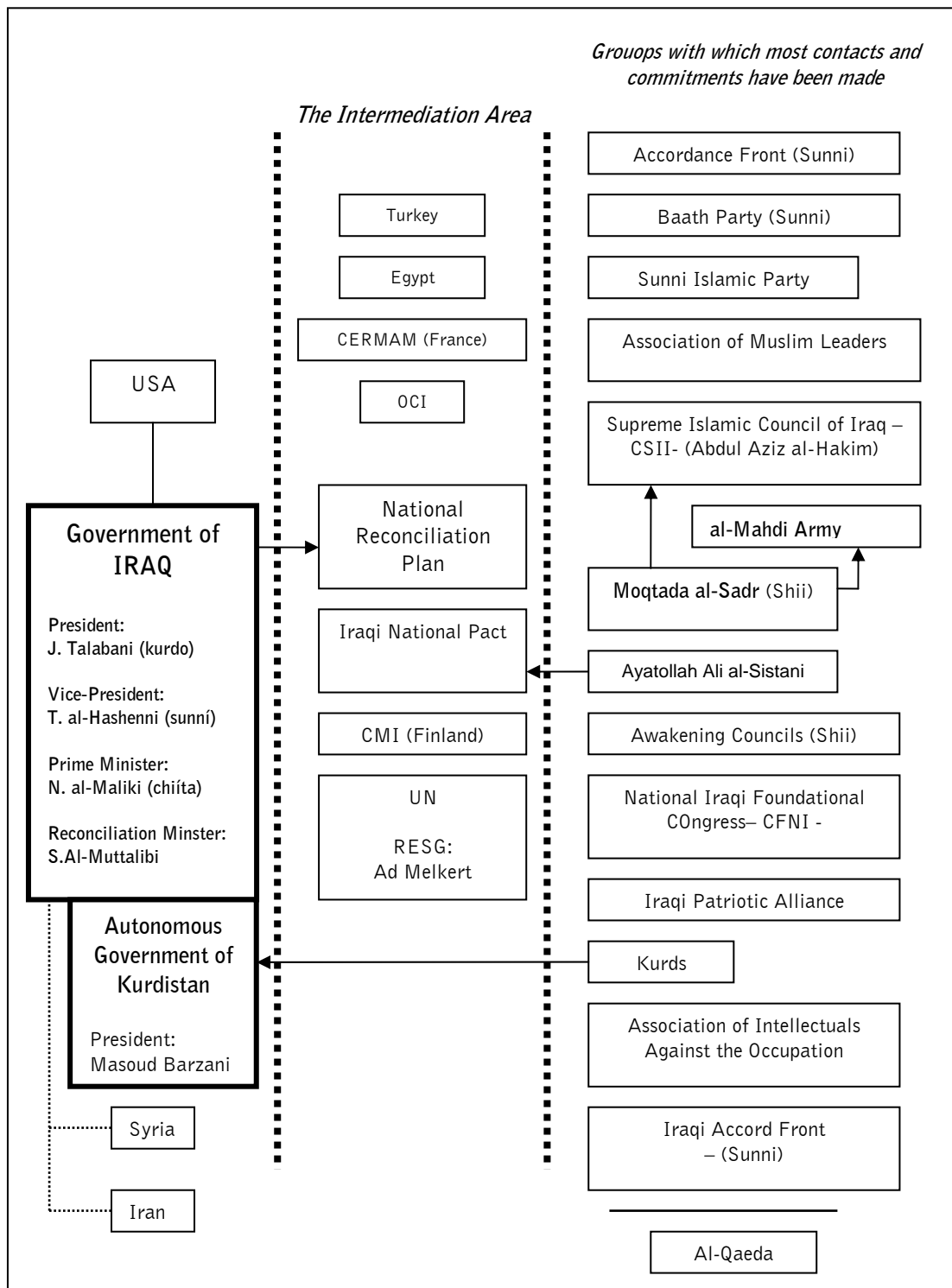
The peace process in 2009

At the start of the year, Iraq resumed a commercial air route between an Eastern European country and Baghdad after 17 years without service. In early February, provincial elections were held in the country, with 51% voter turnout according to figures from the Election Commission. According to government figures, the voter turnout was higher in the Sunni areas, even though the Sunni community had boycotted the previous elections. In mid-March, the government of **Nouri al-Maliki** issued an appeal for reconciliation among the different groups in the country, requesting pardon for those who worked in the government of the former President **Saddam Hussein**, after attending a reconciliation conference with a Shiite tribe. Al-Maliki declared that a significant part of the reconciliation plan was aimed at creating tribal councils that would play an important role in the local government. This initiative was opposed by several Iraqi politicians, who stated that it only reflected Al-Maliki's intention to get good results in the parliamentary elections scheduled for the following year. On the other hand, **Kurdish, Turkmen and Arab representatives**, all vying for power in the northern city of **Kirkuk**, reached an agreement that stipulated that the government of the district will be occupied by a Kurd, the vice-government by an Arab and the presidency of the local council by a Turkmen. In late July, the Iraqi Prime Minister, **Nuri al-Maliki**, travelled to Washington on his first trip to the United States since **Barack Obama** had been elected President. The US leader conveyed to his Iraqi counterpart the White House's interest in implementing political reforms that will lead to national reconciliation in Iraq, with measures that primarily relate to the distribution of oil profits and power-sharing among the different ethnic and religious groups that live together in the country. Obama stated the United States' priority of promoting national unity in Iraq, and warned about the risks of internal disputes leading to a spiral of political violence in the country, especially with a view towards the national elections to be held the following January. In early August, the leaders of

Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan took the first major step towards attempting to resolve their conflict on territories and oil resources. After one year of a standstill in the dialogue, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nuri al-Maliki, travelled to Iraqi Kurdistan to meet with the recently re-elected President of the region, Masoud Barzani. This was Al-Maliki's first trip to the zone since he became President in 2006. At this meeting, the leaders resolved to hold talks and set up a joint committee to examine the disputes still pending.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government of Nouri al-Maliki issued an appeal for reconciliation among the different groups in the country, and he stated that a significant part of the reconciliation plan was aimed at creating tribal councils that would play an important role in the local government. • Kurdish, Turkmen and Arab representatives, all vying for power in the northern city of Kirkuk, reached an agreement. • The President of the USA expressed his support for implementing political reforms that will lead to national reconciliation in Iraq, with measures that primarily relate to the distribution of oil profits and power-sharing among the different ethnic and religious groups that live together in the country.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baghdad (www.baghdad.com) • Electronic Iraq (www.electroniciraq.net/) • ICG (www.crisisgroup.org) • Iraq Body Count (http://icasualties.org/oif/) • Iraq Revenue Watch (www.iraqrevenuewatch.org/) • Iraq War timeline (www.motherjones.com/bush_war_timeline/index.html) • Relief Web – Iraq (www.reliefweb.int)



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 and under the Mandate System adopted by the League of Nations, which lasted from 1922 to 1947. During this time, many Jews emigrated 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, via Resolution 181, decided to divide the territory under British mandate into two

states with no territorial continuity. This division was never wholly implemented. The partition by the United Nations of the Holy Land and the subsequent declaration of the State of Israel in 1948 were the main factors that sparked off 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**, which would soon afterward be led by Yasser Arafat. In the "6-Year War" of 1967, Israel occupied the Sinai peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights, establishing an security ring around Israel, intensifying the Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank and provoked 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 Palestine refugee **camps** of Sabra and Shatila, and led to the expulsion of Arafat in 1983, which 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 as Arafat began gestures of coming closer to 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 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis. In 2002, Israel began to build a wall to separate the two communities, thus spurring increasing criticism from the international community .

Population: Israel (7 million inhabitants); Palestine (4 million)

Area: Israel (22,000 km²); Palestine (6,240 km²)

HID: Israel (27 out (of 182)); Palestine (110 out (of 182))

GDP Israel: 159,200 million dollars; Palestine: 4,500 million dollars

Per capita income Israel \$22,170 ; Palestine: \$1,290

Deaths due to the conflict: 5,500 since 2000.

Refugee population: 4.2 million

Armed actors: Israeli armed forces, Hamas, Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, Islamic Jihad, Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades

Facilitators: Diplomatic Quartet (USA, Russia, EU, UN), Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Arab League (Follow-up Committee), Switzerland.

Background to the peace process

In 1990, the **first secret negotiations began in Oslo**, leading to the 1993 signing of an initial agreement between Israel and Palestine. Two years earlier, in 1991, the **Madrid Conference** had been held, the main topic of which had been the principle of exchanging "land for peace". In addition, the foundations were laid for a future bilateral negotiation. In 1995, the "**Barcelona Process**" got underway. The aim of this process was to encourage cooperation among all the Mediterranean countries, including Israel. In 1995 the Oslo II process started as well. This addressed the creation of an area under Palestinian control, another area with a mixed administration and an area controlled by Israel, with roadways that would join the areas under Israeli administration. In 1998, this process was completely stalled. Since then, the number of suicide attacks by Palestinians has increased.

The peace negotiations that the US President, B Clinton to **open**, at the end of 2000, between the Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat in **Camp David**, and which predicted the broadening of the zone under Palestinian control and an exchange of territories, did not come

to anything, and neither did the negotiations in January 2001 in **Taba** (Egypt), which broadened yet further the area under Palestinian control and gave access to the River Jordan. After that, the second Intifada began and the spiral of violence and dynamic of action-reaction has justified the halt of numerous plans and proposals made by different actors, organisations and countries.

By 2002, the conflict had completely worsened. The number of peace initiatives multiplied, such as the creation of an **International Task Force on Palestinian Reform**, the activities of the **Diplomatic Quartet** (USA, Russia, EU and the UN) and their peace plan or "**Road Map**" of December 2002 in particular. The Road Map was a three-stage plan that would be completed in 2005 with the creation of an independent Palestinian state. In November, before Israel finally rejected the plan, the **Geneva Agreement** was made public. This was endorsed by intellectuals, politicians and members of the Israeli and Palestinian military. It proposed the creation of two independent states with the 1967 borders and renounced the use of force by either party. The main points of conflict were the return of the occupied territories and returning to the borders before the war in 1967 the status of East Jerusalem as capital of Palestine, the dismantling of the Jewish settlements in occupied territories and the right to return for the Palestinian refugees who were displaced during the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948.

In 2005, the conflict between Israel and Palestine experienced a qualitative leap following the death of Y. Arafat, of the electoral victory of M. Abbas in the Palestine presidential elections and the subsequent opening up of direct contacts with the Israeli government. The new Palestinian president introduced an internal plan to update the restructuring of the Palestinian security forces, as required under the Road Map. A month-long ceasefire was announced by armed Palestinian groups in January, conditional upon Israel guaranteeing the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, putting an end to its selective assassinations and withdrawing its troops from the occupied territories. Meanwhile, Hamas and Islamic Jihad made contact with Egyptian government officials, whose role was to serve as intermediaries between the Palestinians, the Israelis and the Americans. In February, the Sharm el-Sheikh summit was held. The Egyptian president and the King of Jordan attended. At the end of the same month, an International Meeting on Palestine was held in London, backed by the British government. The 23 participating countries supported the **Disconnection Plan designed by the Israeli government to address withdrawal from the Gaza Strip**. Hamas announced that it would participate for the first time in the July parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Autonomous Areas of the occupied territories, indicating that it wanted to join the PLO. Hamas joined the Islamic Jihad and 11 other radical Palestinian factions in agreeing in Cairo to an informal ceasefire for 2005. In May the Israeli Prime Minister, A. Sharon, declared that if Hamas participated in Palestinian parliamentary elections without disarming its military wing, Israel would not move forwards on the Road Map. At the same time, calls for disarmament by the Palestinian Home Office Minister, N. Yussef, received a rejection from Hamas.

Throughout 2006, the difficult peace process between Israel and Palestine was initially marked by the **victory of Hamas in the January elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council**, and by the subsequent **international block on the new Islamist government**, which was conditioned upon recognition of Israel, an end to the violence and acceptance of the agreements signed by the PNA. Immediately after its triumph, Hamas announced its desire to begin negotiations with all the political parties to form a national unity government. In February, one of the main leaders of Hamas, K. Meshaal, declared that his organisation would be ready to make headway toward peace if Israel were to do the same, and he spoke about a **possible long-term truce if Israel withdrew from the occupied territory on the West Bank, recognised the Palestinian refugees' right to return home and dismantled all the settlements**. Later, with international pressure on Hamas and the threat of withdrawing ANP financing, the Russian President V. Putin, invited Hamas representatives to visit Moscow. In March, the new Palestine parliament dominated by Hamas withdrew the law giving more power to President Abbas, and which was approved in February when Fatah still maintained the parliamentary majority.

Even though the conflict as it was portrayed in the media was dominated by the clashes between the Hamas and Fatah due to the controversy triggered after the Palestinian president's announcement that he would call a referendum to vote on a national unity document, during the second quarter of the year there were also many calls for dialogue and negotiation. **In April, the new Prime Minister and leader of Hamas, I. Haniya, defended the Palestinians' right to continue their struggle for independence, yet he also expressed his desire to embark on talks with international actors in order to put an end to the conflict with Israel. He simultaneously expressed his support for ongoing international involvement in the peace process, referring to the Quartet and especially to Europe.** The PLO issued a call for an international peace conference to be held as part of the Road Map, and it expressed its willingness to negotiate with any Israeli prime minister. In May, the Israeli defence minister, A. In May, the Israeli Defence Minister, A. Peretz, issued a call to begin serious, honest peace talks with the Palestinians before Israel carried out its unilateral Convergence Plan. Nevertheless, in June **Hamas ended the self-imposed truce it had upheld for a year and a half** after two militants from the organisation were murdered in an Israeli attack. Finally, it should be pointed out that the resignation of the Envoy for the Middle East Quartet, J. Wolfensohn (in protest at the attitude of the western governments who want to cut aid to the ANP following the Hamas electoral victory), and the **naming of the K.M. Kennedy as Special UN Vice-Coordinator of the Middle East Peace Process.**

During the first quarter of 2007 the new steps were taken to relaunch the peace process in the Middle East from different sectors, such as **reactivating the Quartet**, the visit of the US Secretary of State, C. Rice, or the request of the Minister for the Spanish Armed Forces, M.A. Moratinos, to hold another Conference on the Middle East, held 15 years ago in Madrid. According to Moratinos, a solution to the Israel-Palestine and Syria-Lebanon conflicts will only be possible if it also addresses the situation of Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Iran. Days after the **official meeting between the Israeli prime minister and the Palestinian president, the Israeli Foreign Minister, T. Livni, met in secret with Palestine leaders to present a specific and direct peace plan that rejected the prior condition of having to fight against terrorism, as had been defined in the Route Map;** In a subsequent interview, she stated that her plan was based on the formula of two national states and that it acknowledged that the Arab League's proposal driven by Saudi Arabia contained positive elements. The Israeli Prime Minister also expressed his willingness to seriously address the proposal. **The Pakistani president P. Musharraf, and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia also agreed on the need to re-launch new initiatives for a solution to the Israel-Palestine dispute as a way of bringing harmony to the Muslim world. The Palestinian president, M. Abbas, the Prime Minister, I. Haniya, and K. Meshal, as a representative of Hamas, met in Mecca under the auspices of the Saudi king to try to reach agreement that would unblock the current situation in the occupied territories.** The Quartet, made up of the USA, the EU, Russia and the UN, also met in Washington for the first time in four months. In February, however, the Palestinian-Israeli summit which brought together in Jerusalem, the Prime Minister of Israel, E. Olmert, to the Palestinian president, M. Abbas, and the US Secretary of State, C. Rice, ended without agreement. In March, the King of Jordan, Abdullah II, advocated greater involvement by the USA, and in the middle of the same month, the President and Prime Minister of Palestine reached an agreement to form a national unity government.

In April, the armed wing of Hamas, called the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, announced the end of the ceasefire agreed to the previous November. In June, the Palestinian President, Mahmud Abbas, declared a state of emergency and formed a new executive without Hamas members headquartered in Ramallah (West Bank) and led by the independent Salam Fayyad. The Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, declared that creating a new Palestinian government that did not include Hamas offered opportunities for peace. Abbas also illegalised the armed wing of Hamas, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades. Also worth noting is that the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the Middle East for two years, Álvaro de Soto, stated in a confidential end-of-mission report that the diplomatic actions in recent years aimed at putting an end to the Israel-Palestine conflict have failed largely due to the USA's pressure on the UN.

Around the same time, the Egyptian and Jordanian Foreign Ministers visited Israel to present a peace plan that was backed by the Arab League and would include recognition of Israel if it withdrew from the occupied territories. The government of Israel, in turn, released more than 250 Palestinian prisoners in a gesture of support for President Abbas. None of the released prisoners belonged to Hamas. In August, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and the Palestinian President, Mahmud Abbas, met in Jericho on Palestinian soil for the first time in several years as part of the series of meetings scheduled for prior to the Palestinian peace conference to be held the forthcoming November and driven by the USA. Later, the Palestinian president met with Olmert in the latter's office. Both leaders agreed to set up teams to negotiate the essential issues in a permanent solution to the conflict. Olmert also stated that he would prefer to reach an agreement on a brief document that reflects the principles for achieving a peace agreement.

The peace conference held in Annapolis (Maryland, USA) finally ended on 27th November. It was the first peace talk between Israel and the PNA in seven years. The conference brought together more than 40 countries and international agencies, and Syria also ultimately participated, although it did not confirm its attendance until the last minute. However, Hamas did not attend, as it was not invited. **The conference declared the launch of negotiations based on the Road Map**, which were to begin on 12th December with the fortnightly meeting of the negotiating teams under the leadership of a joint management committee. The Israel Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and the President of the PNA, Mahmud Abbas, issued a joint communiqué stating that they agreed to pledge to hold vigorous, ongoing negotiations and that they would both make every effort to reach an agreement before the end of 2008. The communiqué also stated that **they agreed to deal with each of the fundamental issues without exception in an attempt to create an independent Palestinian state. The fundamental issues agreed to, known as the "final status", were the future of Jerusalem, the borders, water, refugees and settlements.**

In early January, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, stated that **confidential contacts between Israel and Hamas would be set up in Switzerland**, as he had been notified by the Federal Councillor of Switzerland, Micheline Calmy-Rey. The Prime Minister in Gaza, Ismael Haniya, also participated in these talks. According to the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps*, the documents would be a statements of intention in which both parties would consider the negotiation for a long-term ceasefire (at least ten years) in which Hamas would stop launching Kassam rockets and Israel would put an end to its "liquidation" policy. In March, Hamas offered Israel a ceasefire in exchange for an end to the attacks by the Israeli army and the reopening of the Gaza crossing points. Hamas also expressed its desire for a decision on these crossing points, an issue that was rejected by Israel. In a speech by Ismael Haniya, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, on 12th March, he stated that the ceasefire must be reciprocal, complete and simultaneously, while it must also be applied to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the launch of a dozen rockets and projectiles on the same day, 12th March, put an end to four days of de facto ceasefire between both parties, after the large-scale Israeli offensive that left a death toll of more than 100 in Gaza. Despite this setback, official Egyptian sources reported on the presence of Hamas delegations (headed by Mahmoud al-Zahar) and Islamic Jihad on 6th March to negotiate a possible ceasefire with Israel. The delegations met with collaborators of the Head of Egyptian Intelligence Services, Omar Suleiman. Likewise, the USA sent a top-level official from the State Department, David Welch, to Cairo to support the mediation efforts.

In mid-April the former US President, Jimmy Carter, met with several Hamas leaders in Egypt, the West Bank and Syria. In Damascus, where he also met with the President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, Carter spoke with the Hamas leader in exile in Syria, Khaled Meshaal, who once again offered Israel a ten-year ceasefire if it would withdraw back to the 1967 borders, as an alternative to recognition. Carter declared that he was not trying to mediate in the Arab-Israeli conflict but that he believed that peace could not be attained without dialogue with Hamas and Syria. In mid-May, the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, met in the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh with the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, as part of the mediation process aimed

at achieving a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Days before, **12 armed Palestinian groups had met in Cairo and unanimously accepted the principle of a ceasefire with Israel**, first in Gaza and later in the West Bank. Islamic Jihad, the organisation behind the majority of rockets that had been launched in Gaza, was present at the talks in Egypt but did not sign the proposal. However, it did announce that it would not oppose its implementation. The French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, admitted in turn that informal contacts had been made with Hamas. Finally in June **Israel and Hamas agreed to a total cessation of hostilities in Gaza for six months** with Egyptian mediation. In the agreement, the armed Palestinian militias pledged to suspend all attacks against the settlements on the border with the Gaza Strip, while Israel pledged to end the blockade it had imposed on Gaza in June 2007 and gradually open up the border crossing points except for the one in Rafah, which would be addressed further in the future. In a subsequent phase, the agreement would also include a pledge to exchange prisoners. Likewise, as part of the peace talks between Israel and the PNA, the head Palestinian negotiator, Ahmed Qurei, declared that the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had agreed to begin to draw up a document that would reflect their positions. According to Qurei, both parties were discussing the issues that were at the core of the conflict, including borders, Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees.

In early July, as part of the summit held in Paris to found the Union for the Mediterranean (UM), the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, met with the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and stated that Palestinians and Israelis had never been so close to peace before. In August, the Israeli government revealed a plan in which it offered to grant Palestinians 93% of the West Bank, including a corridor between the West Bank and Gaza which would remain under Israeli sovereignty but where Palestinians could pass freely without Israeli checkpoints. As revealed by the newspaper Haaretz, the plan refused Palestinian refugees' right to return, although it did call for exceptions for the sake of family reunification. The plan made no mention of Jerusalem. After the announcement of the offer made on 10th August, the spokesman for the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, declared that the offer was not serious and that they rejected it because it did not include a Palestinian state with territorial continuity and its capital in Jerusalem.

In November, Nir Barkat, a secular politician, won the elections for the mayor of Jerusalem with 52% of the votes, compared to the 43% earned by his rival, the ultra-orthodox Rabbi Meir Porush. Barkat was opposed to the division of Jerusalem as part of a possible peace agreement with the Palestinians, although he also promised that he would undertake extensive construction in East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Palestinian President, **Mahmoud Abbas**, and the Israeli Minister, Tzipi Livni, reaffirmed their commitment to the representatives of the Middle East Quartet meeting in the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh to continue with the peace negotiations. Both representatives reached a series of agreements on the principles that are to guide the negotiating process. They include: the need to engage in bilateral, direct, uninterrupted and continuous negotiations; the principle that nothing will be considered agreed to until everything is agreed to; and the need to reach a complete agreement that addresses all the issues at stake, as called for in Annapolis, as opposed to an agreement on certain isolated issues. After the meeting, they also announced that a conference would be held in Moscow in spring 2010 to promote the peace process. Late in the year, for the second time in 2008, the former US President Jimmy Carter met in Syria with the exiled leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashaal. Around the same time, however, **Israel launched a large-scale, disproportionate military offensive against the Gaza Strip that killed more than 800 and left thousands injured**, in response to the rockets launched by Hamas, which had broken the ceasefire days before after Israel murdered several of its members.

The peace process in 2009

The start of the year was profoundly marked by the **Israeli offensive against the Gaza Strip on the 27th of December 2008**, the most violent operation since the 1967 war. Before the start of this operation, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, had declared that Israel had to bring down Hamas. The attack was waged at the end of the six-month truce between Hamas and Israel, which

ended on the 19th of December. After several attempts, on the 8th of January the UN Security Council approved a resolution submitted by the United Kingdom, Resolution 1860, with 14 votes in favour and the US abstaining, which called for an immediate, lasting and fully respected ceasefire. This ceasefire would entail a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, the distribution of provisional food, fuels and medical treatment in the region, and an intensification of international efforts to prevent the illegal trafficking of weapons and ammunition in the Gaza Strip. Prior to the resolution, several proposals had already been submitted by international bodies to put an end to the hostilities in Gaza, including a 48-hour truce proposed by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, a provisional ceasefire proposed by the EU, a long-term truce proposed by the Middle East Quartet, and an immediate ceasefire for a limited period of time proposed by Egypt. In late January, Hamas declared its willingness to accept a one-year truce, while the Israeli government demanded that it last 18 months, after the truces declared by the parties on the 18th of January in the wake of the Israeli offensive in Gaza were violated several times. Hamas' offer demanded that in exchange Israel lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip and that it open all the passage points into Gaza. The US government's envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell, visited the region at the same time as the first violations of the ceasefire declared on the 28th of January and appealed to Egypt to contribute to consolidating the agreement. In mid-February, after the Israeli offensive against Gaza and the separate declarations of truce issued by Hamas and Israel on the 18th of January, the talks sponsored by Egypt on the establishment of a long-term truce continued underway. During the negotiations, the two parties' positions on issues like the establishment of a 300-metre containment zone along the border between Gaza and Israel drew closer. However, the main disagreement lay in Israel's demand for the release of a soldier captured by Hamas in 2006 as a prerequisite for any agreement. In early March, **the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, visited the Middle East for the first time since she assumed the post and claimed that a two-state solution was inevitable.** Clinton claimed that the USA was willing to start aggressive diplomacy with all the parties in order to achieve a global agreement that would bring peace and security to both Israel and its Arab neighbours. In mid-March, Hamas blamed Israel for the failure in the indirect negotiations mediated by Egypt for the exchange of prisoners, which had come to a standstill on the 18th of March after Israel declared that Hamas had stepped up its demands at the last minute. Hamas had demanded that a total of 1,000 prisoners be turned over, but stating only 450 names. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stated that his position had been generous, but that there were lines that Israel was not willing to cross. Hamas declared that it bore no responsibility for the launch of rockets from Gaza, and that it would take measures against those who launched them.

In early April, the United Nations appointed a team to investigate the accusations of war crimes committed in the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip the past December. The investigative mission was approved in the UN Human Rights Council at a special session held in January after the widespread allegations of war crimes committed by the Israeli forces in Gaza. The mission was led by the South African judge Richard Goldstone. On his trip to Turkey, the US President Barack Obama reaffirmed his country's commitment to a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the creation of two states. Obama's declarations came just a few days after the formation of the new conservative Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who for the time being refused to issue declarations on the creation of two states. The Foreign Minister of the new executive, Avigdor Lieberman, rejected the calls from several Western countries to resume the peace talks, stating that the government needed at least two months to define its new policy. Lieberman also declared that the peace efforts with the Palestinians had come upon a dead end. In this sense, the former Israeli chief negotiator and Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, stated that the new government's behaviour demonstrated that it was not committed to peace. However, on the 11th of April, ten days after the Prime Minister was sworn in, Netanyahu held his first contact with the Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, to whom Netanyahu announced his intention to resume the talks and cooperation to promote peace. This contact had been restored through a telephone call from Abbas. During the election campaign, Netanyahu had stated that he was willing to negotiate with the Palestinians but that speaking about a new state was premature. In exchange, he offered "economic peace".

In early May, the President of Palestine met with the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, and with the President of the Arab league, Amr Moussa, to coordinate and make headway in the peace process with Israel. According to Abbas, the consultations aimed to draw up an overall Arab plan that would help to solve the problems in the Middle East. He further specified that it would address not only the Palestinian question but also the Israeli occupation in general. Abbas referred to the recent visit by the King of Jordan, Abdallah II, who met with the US President, Barack Obama, stating that he did so on behalf of all Arabs. In turn, the new Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, met with Mubarak and declared that he wanted Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security and prosperity. Ever since Netanyahu was sworn in as Prime Minister, and especially since the swearing in of his extremely right-wing Foreign Minister, Egypt has expressed its concern over the peace process. According to reports in the newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi, **the Arab states were revising elements from the 2002 peace plan so that Israel would agree to the establishment of a demilitarised Palestinian state.** The changes also entailed modifications in the Palestinians' right to return within Israel, an issue that arouses a great deal of controversy in Israel. The same source indicated that the changes were due to a request from the US President, Barack Obama. In turn, Pope Benedict XVI took a trip to the zone and met with the Israeli President, Shimon Peres, with the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and with the President of the PNA, Mahmoud Abbas. **Benedict, who visited Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, expressed his position in favour of two states,** stating that Palestinians have the right to a homeland. He also expressed his concern over the families with arrested members and over the restrictions on movement, while he stated his support for raising the Israeli embargo on Gaza. The Pope's visit had special resonance, as it was held next to the separation wall built by Israel in the Aida refugee camp. Pope Benedict also met with Orthodox Christian leaders. In late May, the Israeli Prime Minister met with the President of the US in Washington to discuss peace in the Middle East. Obama stated that his administration supported a solution to create two states, one Israeli and one Palestinian. Netanyahu expressed his agreement with greater autonomy, but not with the creation of a second state, alleging that if the government of the new state fell into the hands of Hamas, Israeli's security would be seriously compromised. However, Netanyahu also expressed his support for a resumption of the peace negotiations with the Palestinians once they recognised the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. In turn, the Palestinian President stated that his two conditions for the dialogue were to halt the construction and expansion of the Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory and to allow a Palestinian state to be created. In early June, the US President's Special Envoy for the Middle East, George Mitchell, visited the zone to promote the opening of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Mitchell conveyed the message from the US President that the establishment of a Palestinian state was the only solution to the conflict and the Jewish state had to halt its colonisation of the West Bank. In turn, the Palestinian Authority confirmed that it would not negotiate with Israel again until it froze construction of the settlements and openly supported a two-state solution. Hamas stated that it would not block any political action aimed at creating a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders. In mid-June, the Israeli Prime Minister delivered a speech at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv in which he stated his willingness to create a Palestinian state as long as it is demilitarised and that the Palestinians recognise Israel as a Jewish state. According to Netanyahu, a future Palestinian state would have no control over its air space, nor would it have the possibility of trafficking in weapons.

In early September, the first bilateral meeting in six months was held between a Palestinian and Israeli minister. The Vice Prime Minister of Israel, Silvan Shalom, held a meeting with the Minister of the Economy of Palestine, Bassem Khoury, with the purpose of discussing proposals for improving the living conditions of Palestinians. This was the highest-level meeting in half a year, since Benjamin Netanyahu had been sworn in as Prime Minister of Israel. In mid-September, the bilateral dialogue between Israel and Palestine was called off until December, while Special Envoy George Mitchell stressed the urgency of resuming it. Abbas demanded a total halt to the settlements, but Netanyahu only offered to temporarily stop them, though not in Jerusalem or in cases in which the construction of homes had already been approved. In this

context, the US President met Netanyahu and Abbas with in New York as part of the UN General Assembly, although he did not manage to unblock the peace talks in the Middle East. At the trilateral meeting, Obama stressed the urgency of reviving the peace negotiations so as not to miss a historical opportunity, but until late September both parties' positions remained at odds with each other. In early November, in a signal of frustration with the stall in the Middle East peace process, the President of Palestine announced his decision not to run for re-election in the next general elections scheduled for the 24th of January. Abbas was frustrated by the US's policy on the construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; Obama backed the need to fully stop the construction of new colonies, but in recent weeks Washington had begun to show more flexibility with this condition for the negotiations. In the second half of November, days after the announcement of the construction of new settlements, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu expressed its willingness to partially suspend the colonisation of the West Bank for a ten-month period. However, this would only be applied to new permits; that is, the construction of the settlements already underway would not be stopped. This policy also excluded East Jerusalem. The construction of settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories got underway in 1967, and there are currently 500,000 colonists.

Palestinian in-fighting

With regard to inter-factional fighting among Palestinians, after five days of negotiations sponsored by the President of Yemen, leaders of Hamas and Fatah signed the so-called "Sanaa Document" which called for a resumption of talks in April. At these talks they would discuss a return to the situation that prevailed in Gaza prior to Hamas' coming to power last June, the possibility of holding early elections in Palestinian territories, resuming the dialogue based on the Cairo (2008) and Mecca (2005) agreements, reinstating the security forces led by the PNA, and a national union government. One of the Hamas delegates in the talks in Yemen, Moussa Abu Marzuk, stated that Fatah had committed the mistake of sending a delegation that had nothing to do with the question between Fatah and Hamas, rather it had sent a delegation from the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which includes Fatah). In early June, the **Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, issued an appeal for national dialogue and reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas** based on the Yemeni initiative reached the previous March. Abbas appealed to the calls issued by the Arab countries and friends to return to the situation in Gaza prior to Hamas' rise to power. The offer was welcomed by Hamas, according to a communiqué from the organisation's spokesman, Taher Nunu. What is known as the 'Sanaa Declaration' was signed by the parliamentarian of Fatah, Azzam al-Ahmed, and the second-ranking Hamas member, Mussa Abu Marzuk. The Palestinian Prime Minister in the West Bank, Salam Fayyad, also confirmed that he had secured 1.4 billion dollars in new investments in the West Bank and Gaza, the majority for high-tech projects and homes. According to Fayyad, the projects would create 35,000 jobs. In June, after two days of talks in the capital of Senegal, a joint communiqué from Hamas and Fatah stated an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between both parties had been regained.

In early August 2008, the clash between Fatah and Hamas supporters in Gaza was revived with the murder of three Hamas police officers and six armed men linked to Fatah, in the most serious incident since Hamas had taken power a little over a year earlier. In mid-August, Hamas and four other Palestinian groups agreed to resume the internal dialogue to achieve reconciliation among Palestinians, and in a communiqué they expressed their gratitude for Egyptian and Arab support. Representatives of Hamas, the PFLP, the DFLP, the Palestinian People's Party and Islamic Jihad met in Gaza to discuss the resumption of the talks. **In a public communiqué, the five groups agreed to stop the internal division between Gaza and the West Bank, to activate the Palestinian parliament and to rebuild the PLO through democratic elections, while they also pledged to release prisoners from both sides.** In late August, Egypt held separate talks with the Palestinian groups as part of its mediation to put an end to the **Palestinian in-fighting during the month of Ramadan, which started on the 1st of September.** The Egyptian mediators met with Hamas and Fatah, as they had already done with Islamic Jihad, where they discussed the presence of Egyptian security councillors in the Gaza Strip. The

Head of the Egyptian Intelligence Services, Omar Suleiman, met with a delegation from the Palestinian People's Party (PPP), headed by the party's Secretary-General, Bassam al-Salhi. In this context, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, met with his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak. As a negative development, there was a clash between Hamas and members of the Dogmush clan in mid-September which led to the death of 12 people in the city of Gaza. In October, a **top leader of Hamas stated that his organisation had agreed along with Egyptian mediators to form a national Palestinian government and to reform the security services in Gaza and the West Bank** as part of the attempt to check the crisis with Fatah. According to Mahmoud Zahar, Hamas had reached an agreement on several issues, including a political agreement, reconciliation and the reunification of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Egypt was expected to call for a Palestinian national dialogue for November, and it was slated to facilitate bilateral talks between Hamas and Fatah on 25th October, which would entail the first official encounter between the two rival movements since the start of the clashes between them the previous year. However, the reconciliation talks were delayed after Hamas threatened to boycott the encounter, accusing the President of the PNA, Mahmoud Abbas, of hindering the release of 400 members and sympathisers with its organisation who had been arrested. Likewise, Palestinian sources in Damascus, as well as Hamas leaders in Egypt, indicated that both Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and al-Qaeda, all of them groups that opposed Abbas, would boycott the talks in Cairo. In December, as part of celebrations of Hamas' 21st anniversary, the leader of Hamas, Ismael Haniya, claimed at a multitudinous gathering in the Gaza Strip that the President of the PNA, Mahmoud Abbas, who was a Fatah member, did not have the legitimacy to remain in his post after 9th January, when his mandate came to an end. Abbas alluded to the possibility of extending his presidency based on fact that Hamas' seizure of Gaza the previous year made it impossible to hold elections there. With regard to the tensions between the two rival organisations, a group of MPs from both Fatah and Hamas announced their intention to draw up a document in which they would ask both parties to stop attacking each other in the press, to release political prisoners and to hold a new round of talks on reconciliation. However, late in the year, in view of the PNA President's coolness after Israel's attacks on Gaza, a serious breach once again opened up between both political groups.

In early February 2009, Hamas called for a new representative of the Palestinian people, a claim which was regarded as unacceptable by the President, Mahmoud Abbas. Within the context of the situation in Gaza, both groups were in **talks with Egyptian mediation to try to bring their positions closer together**. This was the first direct encounter between the clashing groups in ten months. Cairo suggested a meeting between both parties on the 22nd of February, but the Hamas spokesperson, Fawzi Barhoum, declared that his organisation was asking first for a committee to be set up with members of both parties for the release of the "political prisoners" in order to lay the groundwork for the reconciliation talks. Just a few days later, however, both political groups agreed to create five committees aimed at forming an interim national unity government that would pave the way for the presidential and legislative elections and coordinate the reconstruction of Gaza. In mid-March, several rival Palestinian groups meeting in Cairo **agreed to hold legislative and presidential elections before the end of January 2010**, even though they would remain in disagreement about the formation of a unity government charged with organising the elections. According to the participants, the main differences between Fatah and Hamas were regarding whether the new government should be made up of political groups or independent technocrats, as requested by several Western countries and Egypt. Shortly after the negotiations were interrupted on the 19th of March, it was announced that they would resume on the 1st of April. In late May, the last round of negotiations between Fatah and Hamas closed in Cairo (Egypt) without any advances. The mediator and head of the Egyptian intelligence service, Omar Suleiman, expressed his frustration after a year of trying to reach an agreement between the parties, reminding both groups that as long as the Palestinians did not manage to resolve their differences, the Palestinian cause and peace process would be thwarted. The negotiations on the creation of a joint security force in Gaza, which was supported by Fatah, stumbled upon the opposition of

Hamas, which feared that in view of the lack of agreement on political power-sharing, this force might be the source of new clashes between both groups. Egypt's proposal to create a committee made up of representatives of Hamas and Fatah and three other Palestinian political groups was rejected by both groups. The purpose of this committee would be to supervise reconstruction of Gaza, modernise the security forces and prepare the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for the 25th of January 2010. Egypt reported that the last round of negotiations would be held on the 5th of July, and the 7th of July was set as the deadline for reaching an agreement, although it did not mention the actions it would take if these deadlines were not met. The new government was sworn in with Salam Fayyad, an independent politician, as the new Prime Minister. No member of Hamas was part of the new cabinet, and the group charged that this was illegal. Fayyad is a former World Bank economist whose efforts to put a stop to corruption when he was at the helm of the Ministry of the Economy between 2002 and 2005 won widespread accolades. He became the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority in 2007, but he left that post when negotiations started on power-sharing with Hamas. Hamas had asked for his resignation. In June, Egyptian mediators were holding separate meetings with representatives of Hamas and Fatah to try to bring their stances closer together. In the middle of the same month, the former US President Jimmy Carter visited the Gaza Strip and met with Hamas leaders.

The internal negotiations between the Palestinian groups reached a milestone in early August when the **first Al Fatah congress in 20 years** was held in the city of Bethlehem, with the presence of around 2,300 delegates who discussed the future of the Palestinian political organisation. This meeting, which was also the first one on Palestinian soil, was held in the midst of an intense discussion on the fate of the group, which was facing accusations of corruption and ineffectiveness, as well as its future challenges and leadership options. At this congress, the party founded by Yasser Arafat in 1958 sought to revitalise its direction in a political context marked by disputes with Hamas. Almost 400 Fatah delegates living in the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by Hamas, were unable to attend the event. The Islamist group prevented them from leaving the territory until the Palestinian security forces released around 1,000 Hamas members being held in West Bank prisons. In his inaugural speech, the current leader of Al Fatah, Mahmoud Abbas, claimed that the Palestinians wanted peace with Israel, but that they did not discard resistance as an option. **Fatah chose to renew its leadership** after several days of deliberations on the future of the Palestinian group. President Mahmoud Abbas was confirmed in his post, although the press analyses highlighted the triumph of Marwan Barghouti, who had been elected new member of the Central Committee of the group founded by Yasser Arafat. According to press reports, the Israeli government was divided on whether or not to release Barghouti, a popular figure among Palestinians who is imprisoned in Israel with five life sentences. Fatah tried to rid itself of the image of corruption and internal divisions, a job that seemed crucial for the Middle East peace plan being driven by the US government, along with closer relations with Hamas, the rival party that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007. **In late August**, the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, presented an action programme that called for the creation of a de facto Palestinian state in early 2011, regardless of the course of negotiations with Israel. Fayyad, who had hinted at his intentions in an interview with the British newspaper The Times, suggested that creating a Palestinian state was an indispensable condition for regional stability. The programme defined the actions that each institution and ministry in the Palestinian Authority must conduct in the next two years, on issues like security, infrastructures, health, justice and social services. **Fayyad reiterated that the Palestinian government was committed to putting an end to the division with the Islamist movement Hamas**, which controls the Gaza Strip. In late September, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, announced that the Islamist group was hoping to meet with Fatah in mid-October in order to ratify a mediation and reconciliation agreement being promoted by Egypt. Preliminary reports indicated that the pact would include a commitment on prisoners from both factions in Gaza and the West Bank and on the elections scheduled for the next year, which in theory would be postponed from January to June. In late October, the Egyptian mediation that was striving for reconciliation between the main Palestinian groups, Hamas and Fatah, ran into a dead end,

while tensions were heightened after the announcement of the elections in January 2010. Hamas announced that these elections would not be held in Gaza, a territory which has been under its control since 2007, and it stressed that the elections could not be held until a national reconciliation agreement had been reached.

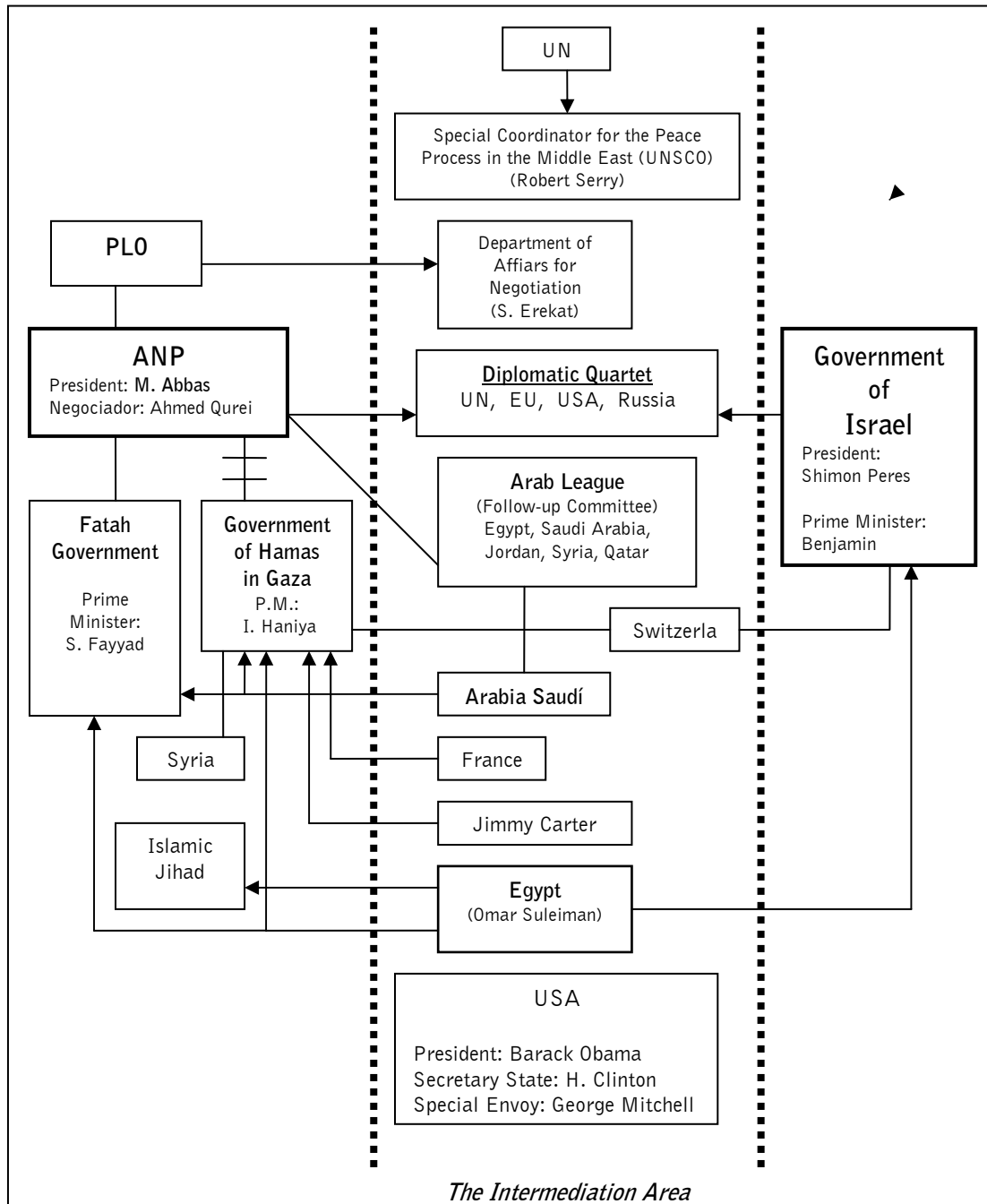
The most important events of the year

- On the 8th of January, the UN Security Council approved a resolution submitted by the United Kingdom, Resolution 1860, with 14 votes in favour and the US abstaining, which called for an immediate, lasting and fully respected ceasefire, which would entail a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.
- In early March, the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, visited the Middle East for the first time since she assumed the post and claimed that a two-state solution was inevitable.
- Ten days after the Prime Minister was sworn in, Netanyahu held his first contact with the Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, to whom Netanyahu announced his intention to resume the talks and cooperation to promote peace.
- The Arab states were revising elements from the 2002 peace plan so that Israel would agree to the establishment of a demilitarised Palestinian state.
- Pope Benedict XVI took a trip to the zone and met with the Israeli President, Shimon Peres, with the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and with the President of the PNA, Mahmoud Abbas. Benedict expressed his position in favour of two states.
- The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, delivered a speech at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv in which he stated his willingness to create a Palestinian state as long as it is demilitarised and that the Palestinians recognise Israel as a Jewish state.
- In early September, the first bilateral meeting in six months was held between a Palestinian and Israeli minister.
- The leaders of Hamas and Fatah signed the "Sanaa Declaration", which included the resumption of talks. This joint communication by Hamas and Fatah stated that an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect had been re-established between the sides. In October, a top leader of Hamas stated that his organisation had agreed along with Egyptian mediators to form a national Palestinian government and to reform the security services in Gaza and the West Bank as part of the attempt to check the crisis with Fatah.
- The first Al Fatah congress in 20 years was held in the city of Bethlehem. Fatah chose to renew its leadership.
- The Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, presented an action programme that called for the creation of a de facto Palestinian state in early 2011, regardless of the course of negotiations with Israel. Fayyad reiterated that the Palestinian government was committed to putting an end to the division with the Islamist movement Hamas.

Websites of interest

- Alternative Information Center (www.alternativenews.org)
- PNA (www.pna.gov.ps/Peace_Process)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- InterPeace (222.interpeace.org)
- IPCRI (www.ipcri.org)
- Mideast Web (www.mideastweb.org)
- MIFKAD (www.mifkad.org.il/eng)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel (www.mfa.gov.il/mfa)
- Mundo Árabe (www.mundoarabe.org)
- United Nations (www.un.org/spanish/peace/palestine)
- Oxford Research Group (www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk)

- Paz Ahora (www.pazahora.org)
- Peace and Security (www.peacesecurity.org.il/english)
- Peace Watch (www.ariga.com/peacewatch)
- PLO Negotiation Affairs Department (www,nad-plo.org/index.php)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- The Consensus Building Institute (www.cbi.web.org)



Israel-Syria

Context of the conflict

Syria was freed from its French mandate in 1946. The following year, the United Nations General Assembly approved the partition of Palestine into two states, and in 1948 the Jews proclaimed the independence of the state of Israel, triggering the first Arab-Israeli war and the consequent enmity between Israel and Syria. During the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel occupied part of Israel, the Golan Heights – an extremely valuable border zone. In 1973, Egypt and Syria once again clashed with Israel in the Yom Kippur War, although Syria did not manage to win back the Golan Heights.

Population: Israel (7 million); Syria (20 million)
Area: Israel (22,000 km ²); Syria (185,000 km ²)
HID: Israel (27 out of 182); Syria (108 out of 182)
GDP: Israel (159,200 million dollars); Syria (\$35,300 million)
Income per inhabitant: Israel (\$22,170) Syria (\$1,780)
Armed actors: armed forces of both countries
Facilitators: Turkey

Background to the peace process

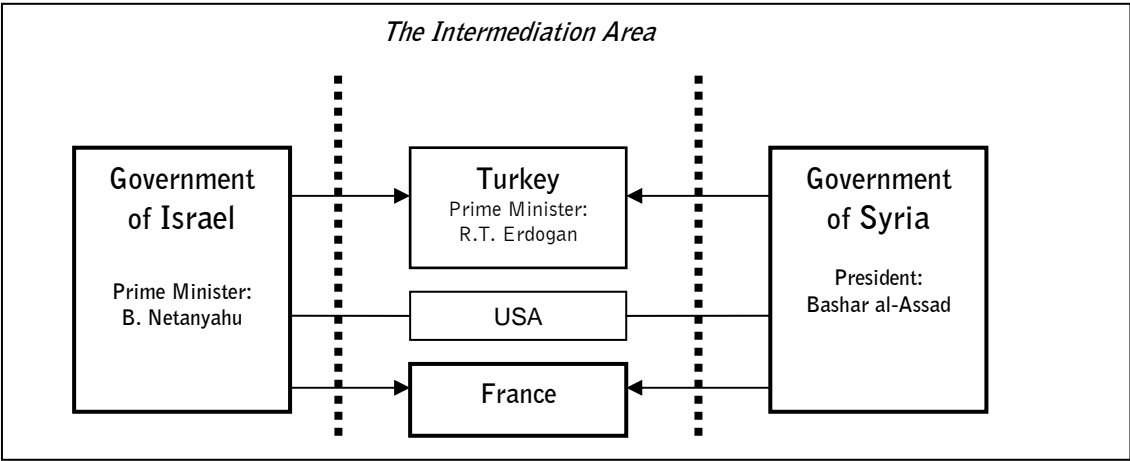
In mid-April, a member of the Syrian government stated that the Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, had declared that he was willing to return the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for peace. Minister Buthain Shaaban stated that this message had been conveyed through the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had shared it with President Bashar al-Assad on the 22nd of April by telephone. Olmert's office refused to issue any statement on the matter, but in a recent interview the Prime Minister declared that he was interested in pursuing peace with Syria and that both parties knew what the conditions were. Afterwards, in two communiqués issued by Jerusalem and Damascus, the governments of both countries stated that they would begin negotiations to reach a peace agreement with mediation by Turkey. Months before, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister confirmed that his government had sent secret messages to Syria about the possibility of resuming peace negotiations through a third party, presumably in reference to Turkey. In early May, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met in Damascus with the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, in an attempt to reach an agreement between Syria and Israel. Erdogan reported that his help in the mediation had been requested by both parties and that for the time being the talks are being held at a low level and if they made headway, they would then involve high-level leaders. Israel and Syria had held negotiations before, but they formally ended in 2000 due to disagreement over the border between the two countries. In mid-June, **representatives of the Syrian and Israeli governments finally held indirect talks in Ankara, Turkey, for two days as part of the resumption of the negotiations.**

In early September, the Syrian president, Bachar al-Assad, announced the cancellation of the fifth round of talks scheduled as part of the peace process underway between both countries due to the resignation of the head of the Israeli delegation. In a subsequent communiqué, the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, indicated that the fifth round of talks had been postponed until 18th -19th September. In the last communiqué, al -Assad claimed that France and the USA had joined the negotiating table between both countries. Likewise, **the Syrian President also reported that he was awaiting a response from Israel to a six-point document delivered through the Turkish mediator which contained a list of proposals to lay the groundwork for direct talks between both countries.** However, in late September, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, declared that she had no need to meet with Syrian representatives while the country continued to allow smuggled weapons to reach Hezbollah in Lebanon. In late October, the acting Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, declared that he wanted to resume the indirect peace negotiations with Syria after they were suspended because of a resignation due to allegations of corruption. The spokesman for the Prime Minister indicated that Olmert valued the importance of continuing the dialogue with Syria, and other sources close to the Prime Minister stated that Olmert was only aiming to promote the diplomatic process rather than reach an agreement. Until then, four rounds of talks had been held through Turkish mediators.

The peace process in 2009

After the Israeli offensive in Gaza in December 2008, the Syrian government announced the suspension of indirect talks with Israel mediated by Turkey. In mid-March, the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, claimed that it would be possible to reach a peace agreement with Israel, but that relations could only be normalised if Israel ended its conflict with the Palestinians. Likewise, two envoys from the US administration held meetings with senior leaders from the Syrian government, the first high-level contacts between the USA and Syria since 2005. In late May, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, expressed his support for resuming peace negotiations with Syria after meeting with the US President, Barack Obama, in Washington. However, he stated that he would make no concessions that would endanger his country's security, and he had already expressed his refusal to withdraw from the Golan Heights, a condition that Syria regarded as essential for any kind of agreement. The President of **Turkey**, the mediating country until the negotiations had been suspended in December 2008 with Israel's decision to attack Gaza, once again offered both countries his services to resume talks. In turn, the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, declared to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Damascus that his country wanted peace in the Middle East, but that Israel was the greatest obstacle to achieving this peace. He reaffirmed that the Jewish state had to return the illegitimately occupied Arab territories. **During the second half of November**, the Israeli government stated that it would be willing to resume talks with Syria on withdrawal from the Golan Heights. According to press reports, the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, delivered this message from the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to the Syrian President, Basher al-Assad. Days later, Netanyahu publicly reiterated his willingness to negotiate either **directly or through an impartial mediator, perhaps France**, because of Sarkozy's closeness with both leaders. Until then, this role had been performed by Turkey, but the Israeli and Ankara governments had become distanced in recent weeks, especially after Turkey's rejection of the Gaza offensive.

The most important events of the year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early in the year, the Syrian government announced the suspension of indirect talks with Israel mediated by Turkey.• Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his support for resuming peace negotiations with Syria after meeting with the US President, Barack Obama, in Washington.• Late in the year, the Israeli government stated that it would be willing to resume talks with Syria on withdrawal from the Golan Heights either directly or through an impartial mediator, perhaps France.	



LEBANON

Context of the conflict

A multi-religion and multiethnic country that is full of minorities, with a Shiite community that has become the most prominent in the country, and with a very large portion of its population living abroad, Lebanon has suffered from lengthy bouts of war since its independence in 1943. This was especially true between 1975 and 1990, when it was enmeshed in a civil war that left 140,000 dead, 18,000 missing and over 200,000 injured, in a total population that right now stands at 3.5 million people. The war in 1975 was triggered by Islamic-Palestinian progressives who were waging a battle against conservative Christians. Many of Lebanon's clashes with Israel are related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began in 1948, with Israel's consequent strategy of reinforcing its borders by annexing adjacent territories.

Population: Israel (7 million); Lebanon (4 million)
Area: Israel (22,000 km²); Lebanon (10,000 km²)
HID: Israel (27); Lebanon (83) out (of 182)
GDP: Israel (159,200 million dollars); Lebanon (23,800 million dollars)
Income per inhabitant: Israel (\$20,170); Lebanon (\$5,800)
Deaths due to the conflict in 2006: 1,400
Armed actors: Israeli armed forces, Hezbollah, Fatah Al-Islam
Facilitators: UN, Palestinian groups

One of the constant features in these conflicts is third countries' manipulation of the tensions. In the 1970s, Lebanon received a significant amount of Palestinian refugees and has thus been a focal point for tension with Israel. In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanese territory to attempt a clean-up operation against the Palestinian resistance. In 1978, this led the United Nations to create the **UNIFIL** as a peacekeeping force and to confirm Israel's subsequent withdrawal. In 1982, Israel once again invaded Lebanon and reached the outskirts of the capital in support of Falangist Christians. This led to the massacre at the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. This invasion gave rise to the Shiite resistance movement **Hezbollah**, which is strongly influenced by the Iranian revolution, and which shortly thereafter perpetrated suicide attacks against Israel and other Western countries. This in turn led to a reinforcement of the Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, which is regarded as a buffer zone. Israel did not withdraw its troops from this zone until May 2000. With the withdrawal, the UN troops laid down the "Blue Line", monitored by UNIFIL. While the Lebanese government limited itself to monitoring the northern part of this line, the area between the blue line and the border with Israel remained in the hands of Hezbollah, which coexisted there alongside the UNIFIL forces and undertook an extensive social assistance and educational programme amongst the people of this region. During these years, Hezbollah never stopped plaguing Israel with occasional attacks with short-range missiles. Currently, Hezbollah is part of the government of Lebanon through two ministers, and it has a contingent of 14 deputies in this country's parliament. Since 1992, it has been led by Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, and it has always had the implicit support of Iran and Syria. It is calculated to have between 3,000 and 5,000 armed men.

In this chapter we shall particularly examine Lebanon's crisis with Israel in 2006, the skirmishes with the Fatah Al-Islam militia in 2007 and the country's internal political crisis.

Background to the peace process

The long Lebanese war ended in 1990 with the **Taif Agreement** (named after the Saudi Arabian city where it was signed). This same year, the Second Republic was proclaimed, and the state strove to gain control over the entire country. Likewise, a process of reconstruction got underway, and all the internal and external militias that fought in the war (around 40,000 people) were disarmed with the exception of Hezbollah, which was entrusted with keeping watch over the southern part of the country. In 1991, Lebanon participated in the Madrid Conference on the

Middle East, taking advantage of the occasion to demand that around 1,000 km² of land in southern Lebanon occupied by Israel be returned, including the Shebaa farms. These virtually uninhabited lands were seized from Syria in 1967, when Israel occupied the Golan Heights. Likewise, until beginning its withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Syria kept control of the strategic points in this country, with around 30,000 military troops deployed all around its land. The definitive withdrawal took place in 2005, after the so-called Cedar Revolution and the fall of the pro-Syrian Lebanese government.

It is also worth pointing out that Israel and Hezbollah have already negotiated an exchange of prisoners on prior occasions. In 2004, for example, they exchanged Hezbollah prisoners for a captured businessman and the handover of the corpses of three soldiers kidnapped in 2001, with mediation by Germany. In September 2004, in view of the upcoming Lebanese presidential elections, the Security Council approved resolution 1559 asking all the foreign armed forces to withdraw from Lebanon, as well as the dissolution and total disarmament of all the Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias present in the country. However, Hezbollah did not comply with this resolution.

Management of the 2006 crisis with Israel

The latest episode in the clashes between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon began on 12th July 2006 with a Hezbollah attack on Israel using missiles and mortar projectiles in which eight Israeli soldiers were killed and two others captured. Israel called the attack an act of war and began a process of military escalation that lasted 33 days. The overall body count of this short war was 1,183 Lebanese dead and 151 Israeli dead. More than one million people were forcibly displaced (1,140,000 Lebanese and 20,000 Israelis), and the Israeli air force destroyed 7,000 dwellings (especially in Beirut's Shiite neighbourhoods), 900 businesses, 630 km of motorways and 145 bridges. The missiles launched by Hezbollah also wrought destruction in different parts of Israel.

The first initiatives to try to seek a solution to the conflict emerged from the G-8 Summit in Saint Petersburg on 16th July, where a consensus was reached to issue a joint communiqué that called for a ceasefire and the release of imprisoned Israeli soldiers. The EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, J. Solana also visited the Lebanon accompanied by the UN Special Envoy for the Middle East, T. Rod-Larsen. For his part, the Lebanese Prime Minister, F. Siniora, demonstrated willingness to deploy Lebanese troops up to the border with Israel to prevent Actions by Hezbollah. **Also in July, the international community met in Rome to attempt to seek a solution to the crisis, but its positions were divided:** while the Arab leaders and the UN Secretary-General were in favour of putting a quick end to the conflict through an immediate truce, the USA believed that a lasting solution had to be sought, beyond the short-term juncture of the conflict.

Days later, despite requests by the UN Secretary-General that the Security Council condemn certain actions undertaken by Israel, the USA vetoed this possibility. Nevertheless, **the attempts to resolve the conflict revolved around the UN Security Council, which was starkly divided on the issue.** The United States and the United Kingdom clearly supported the Israeli government, while France criticised the disproportionate actions of the Israeli armed forces. **On 12th August 2006,** the UN Security Council finally approved a resolution (number 1701), to be enforced as of 14th August, that put an end to the escalation in violence and was based on a total end to hostilities, the deployment of Lebanese troops in the south, a reinforcement of UNIFIL, the creation of a demilitarised area, the disarmament of all the armed groups and preventing more weapons from reaching Lebanon. Israel and Hezbollah kept the combat open until the last minute that the ceasefire contained in the UN's resolution was to go into effect.

At the beginning of 2007, the **Secretary-General of Hezbollah, N. Nasrallah**, the formation of which led the demonstrations calling for the downfall of the government of F. Siniora, **declared that he was in favour of all mediation or initiatives that permitted a solution to the crisis in the country to be reached**, a statement that was received favourably by the Primer Minister. On another front, the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, announced that he would invite Hezbollah to participate in a conference on Lebanon that might be held in Paris and would try to address the crisis that the country was undergoing. Thus, in mid-July, the French government brought together different Lebanese political actors in the Cell-Saint-Cloud castle in an attempt to put an end to the tensions in the recent months. In the closed-door meeting, 30 heads of around 14 Lebanese political parties and civic movements participated, including Hezbollah. According to the host of the gathering, the French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, the participants agreed to not use violent means to achieve political ends. Likewise, the UN Secretary-General, **Ban Ki-moon**, recommended in a report on Lebanon that a border monitoring agency be set up. The report also recommended that a multi-agency mobile force be created focusing on arms trading and that it be given the authority to confiscate any weapons it found, as well as to redesign and restructure the border points in order to ensure better control of the country. Finally, in December, a car bomb killed General François Al-Hajj, who was slated to replace the current head of the Lebanese armed forces after being picked as a possible candidate for the presidency of the country. The general had also led operations against the Fatah Al-Islam militia in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp the past summer.

The Arab League submitted a plan in January, with the approval of Syria, which called for the election of a new President, the formation of a national unity government and the adoption of a new election law. However, in February, tensions were heightened after the murder in Damascus of Imad Moughniyeh, Head of Special Operations of the Islamic Resistance, the armed wing of Hezbollah, while Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace. In March, the government of Lebanon rejected Syria's invitation to attend the Arab League summit that was to be held in Damascus on 29th March, in the midst of an institutional crisis that led the presidential election to be postponed until 22nd April after 17 attempts. In mid-April, the peacekeeping forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) started to build a barbed-wire fence along the border with Israel, known as the Blue Line, to prevent violations of the borderline which had been established in 2000 by the United Nations after Israel's withdrawal from the southern part of the country. Likewise, in mid-May, the Lebanese government and the opposition reached an agreement in Doha, Qatar, after five days of talks, which put an end to the skirmishes that had left 65 dead and 200 wounded in its wake in just one week. The agreement, reached with the mediation of the Arab League, granted the opposition the power of veto in the future government, in which it would have 11 ministerial posts, as it had requested. In late May, General Michel Suleiman was elected President of the country after the post had been vacant for six months since Émile Lahoud stepped down on 24th November 2007. Suleiman's appointment was the outcome of the agreement reached in Qatar, according to which the parties pledged to elect a President, to ban the use of weapons in internal conflicts and to reach an agreement on a new law that would divide the country into smaller election districts. According to the agreement, the Parliamentary majority proposed that the Prime Minister currently in place, Fouad Siniora, should remain in the job, and his candidacy was supported by 68 of the 127 members of Parliament. However, in June, serious disputes arose in the attempts to form a national unity government as no agreement was reached on the ministerial posts.

After the agreement reached in Qatar between the government and the opposition, the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, declared in June that he was in favour of total political openness if it would contribute to reunifying the country. Furthermore, in view of an imminent exchange agreement between Hezbollah and Israel, the Israeli government declared that all the issues in the dispute, including the Shebaa Farms, could be included in the negotiations, so there was no reason why Israel should not negotiate with Lebanon. In early July, the parliamentary majority and the opposition agreed to form a national unity government after six weeks of talks. Syria and Lebanon also agreed to open up embassies in both capitals for the first time. In late August, on a

visit to Syria by the Lebanese President, Michel Suleiman, both countries decided to normalise their diplomatic relations and address the question of delineating their borders. However, Syria declared that the issue of the borders would not bring an end to one of the subjects that has triggered the most disputes, the Shebaa Farms, until Israel withdrew. Other issues agreed upon included the fight against corruption, economic cooperation and the commitment to the Arab initiative in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In early September the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, declared that his organisation would not lay down its weapons even if the disputed Shebaa Farms, an area that Israel still occupies, were freed. **According to Nasrallah, the resistance is a defence plan for Lebanon, and he accused Israel of threatening the country** after members of the Israeli government warned in late August that civilian infrastructures in Lebanon might become a legitimate target should Hezbollah attack Israel. Nasrallah also praised the efforts of the Lebanese political leader Hariri to try to stop the violence after the latter met with several local leaders to try to calm the situation. He further claimed that Hezbollah was willing to turn over a new leaf and heal all the wounds, as national unity would serve to strengthen the organisation's resistance against Israel. In mid-September, the leaders of the different political parties in Lebanon resumed the dialogue on the future of the country at an encounter presided over by the President, Michel Suleiman, and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. The "national dialogue" which started on 16th September should focus on debating a "national defence strategy" that would address the armed role of Hezbollah.

In other developments, **Sunni and Alawite leaders in Tripoli and the Northern Province reached a reconciliation agreement** on 8th September in an attempt to end the tensions that had led to sectarian clashes in the zone and the death of at least 22 people. The meeting was held in the house of the Mufti of Tripoli, Sheikh Malek al-Shaar, and it took place under the auspices of the Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora. The agreement reached, known as the **"Tripoli Document"**, contained six points, including the issue of persons who had been internally displaced because of the violence. The agreement included a call to allow the displaced persons to return to their homes; it also offered compensation to residents whose houses were damaged, and it provided temporary shelter to those who needed it. In mid-October, Syria and Lebanon set up diplomatic relations for the first time in 60 years and pledged to mutually respect the sovereignty and independence of each country. In late October, **the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, met with the leader of the Future Movement, Saad Hariri, to prepare for the national dialogue sessions** that were to begin shortly thereafter. The dialogue was part of the agreement reached in May which helped to defuse the political tension in the country after months of political and institutional stalemates. Late in the year, **the leader of the Free Patriotic Movement and one of the opposition leaders associated with Hezbollah, Michel Aoun, met with the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, on a historical visit to Damascus.** Aoun was the latest Lebanese leader to visit Syria since both countries re-established diplomatic relations the previous October. The prominent Maronite Christian leader had fought against Syrian troops during his country's Civil War from 1975 to 1990. Aoun declared that his ill will against Syria ended when he left the country. The Maronite leader described his meeting with al-Assad as frank and declared that the latter had expressed his support for legislative elections to be held in Lebanon during the forthcoming spring and that he had promised not to interfere.

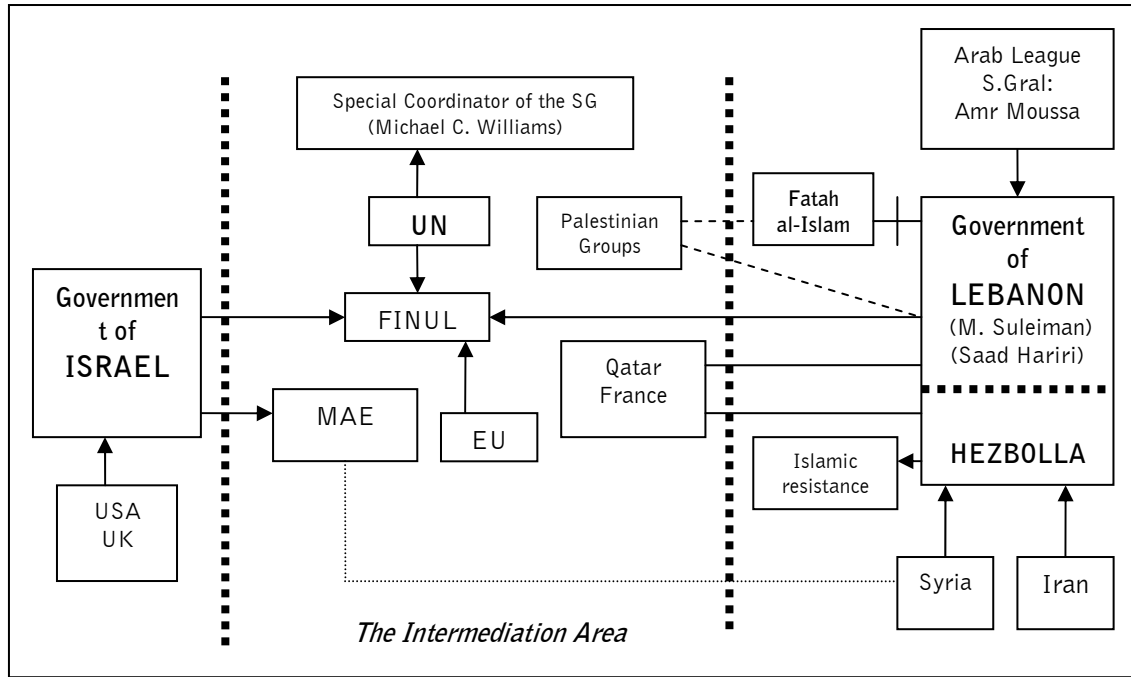
The peace process in 2009

In mid-March, the government of the United Kingdom declared that it had restored contacts with **the political wing of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah**, stating that this came in response to the positive political evolution in the country. This step came ten months after Hezbollah signed a unity agreement and joined the Lebanese government. In 2008, the British government had added the military wing of Hezbollah to its list of banned organisations because of its presumed involvement in training insurgents in Iraq. The spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry declared that they were exploring the possibility of holding official contacts with the political wing of Hezbollah, including with parliamentarians, and that they aimed to promote its renunciation of violence and its constructive, democratic and peaceful role in Lebanese politics. However, the

same sources stated that the United Kingdom would have no contacts with the military wing of Hezbollah. Parliamentary elections were held in early June in which the coalition led by Saad Hariri won with 71 of the 128 seats, one more than in the previous elections held four years earlier. In the middle of the same month, **the British ambassador in Lebanon met with political representatives of Hezbollah for the first time since 2005**, after the British government approved this decision. At the meeting, they addressed the formation of a new Lebanese government. In 2008, Hezbollah had been added to the British list of terrorist organisations, but in March 2009 the British executive took the first steps towards establishing contacts with the political wing of the organisation after deeming that positive headway had been made. Likewise, days earlier **the EU Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy**, Javier Solana, had met in Beirut with one of the 11 Hezbollah parliamentarians. In early November, five months after the elections, a national unity government was finally formed in Lebanon, headed by the Prime Minister, Saad Hariri. The President of the country, Michel Suleiman, announced that the cabinet would include 30 members, 15 of whom were members of Hariri's coalition, which had won in the elections and was backed by the West. Another ten ministers came from the opposition, including two members of Hezbollah.

The most important events of the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government of the United Kingdom declared that it had restored contacts with the political wing of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah. Likewise, the EU Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana , had met in Beirut with one of the 11 Hezbollah parliamentarians. • Late in the year, a new government was formed with the participation of Hezbollah.

Websites of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berghof Research Center (www.berghof-center.org) • UNIFIL (www.un.org/spanish/Depts/dpko/unifil) • Government (www.lp.gov.lb) • Hezbollah (english.hizbollah.org) (almashriq.hiof.no/Lebanon) • Arab League (www.arableagueonline.org) (www.arabji.com) • Middle East Conflict and Peace Process (www.mideastweb.org) • Middle East Report Online (www.merip.org) • UN (www.un.org)



YEMEN

Background to the conflict

Since mid-2004, this conflict has pitted the government against the **followers of Shiite cleric Hussein Badreddin Al-Houthi**, head of the Zeydi (or Zaydi) sect headquartered in the mountainous northwest region of Sa'dah (or Saada), which shares a border with Saudi Arabia. This group aims to institute a theocratic regime with the help of religious institutions from Iran, and even from Libya, according to government sources. The majority of the Yemeni people are Sunni Muslims. In September 2004, Hussein Badreddin Al-Houthi died in combat and was replaced by his son, Abdul Malik Al-Houthi . The current Yemeni regime, presided over by Ali Abdullah Saleh , head of the General People's Congress (GPC), which completely dominates the country's parliament, is an ally of the United States, one of the reasons behind the conflict pitting it against the Shiite insurgency.

Population: Yemen (22 million inhabitants); Saada (0.7 million)
Area: Yemen (528,000 km²); Saada (12,400 km²)
HID: 140 (of 182)
GDP Yemen: 19,400 million dollars
Per capita income Yemen 870 \$
Deaths due to the conflict: (around 2,000)
Displaced population: 175,000
Armed actors: followers of Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the armed forces of Saudi Arabia
Facilitators: Qatar

Background to the peace process

In May 2005, the president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh , offered an amnesty for all the rebels, which they rejected. In 2006, the Yemeni government released 600 Shiite rebels as part of this amnesty process.

Months after the government of Yemen offered an agreement with the Al-Houthi rebels in February 2007, **both parties reached a ceasefire agreement on 16th June** which strove to put an end to the conflict that had gotten underway three years earlier and had broken out again in early 2007, leading to thousands of deaths and displacements. The agreement was signed by the spokesman of the rebel group, Addul Malek Al-Houthi, and was reached **with mediation by Qatar** under the leadership of its emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. According to the agreement, the government made a commitment to undertake a reconstruction programme (financed by Qatar and other countries) for the rebel provinces in the north in exchange for the surrender of heavy weapons and a **temporary exile of the rebel leaders**, who had to refrain from undertaking any political and media activities against the government. According to a government authority, a commitment was also made that the rebels can form their own political party once peace has been achieved. In May, Al-Houthi had announced that the group was willing to turn over its weapons in exchange for an amnesty, following the proposal issued by the Foreign Minister a few days earlier.

In the third quarter, the agreement signed on 16th June might be brought close to failure due to **non-compliance with the deadline to surrender weapons** and the withdrawal from the rebel posts, as members of the agreement mediation committee reported in July. This committee included Yemeni parliamentarians and three civil servants from Qatar. Additionally, the causes behind the crisis boiled down to Al-Houthi's refusal to depart for Qatar via the airport in the Yemeni capital, as had been agreed. Instead, he proposed a Saudi airport as an alternative. Al-Houthi also accused the presidential committee of acting in bad faith, while the army called into question Al-Houthi's willingness to achieve peace. The Qatari delegation, which took over the mediation of the negotiations, went back to Qatar in view of the stand-off in positions, although they promised to return after the end of Ramadan. Despite these setbacks, in a message from the head of the presidential committee, Yasir Al-Awadhi , in early August, he stated that the majority of the articles of the June agreement had been implemented. In the midst of the crisis, on 9th August

Al-Houthi conveyed a message to the president, Ali Abdullah Saleh , offering reconciliation. He cited the situation in Lebanon as an example and compared his ideology to that of Hezbollah's. During the remainder of the year, however, **there were sporadic clashes** between the armed forces and the followers of Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi in Saada. Likewise, the parliamentarian Aidarous Al-Naqeeb announced the need for the Qatari mediating committee to start operating once again after being inactive for several months in order to make possible a new dialogue between the government and Al-Houthi's followers. At the end of the year, the Yemeni government concentrated troops in the area, fearing a resumption of the clashes.

In early January, local sources reported on the rising military presence in several districts in the province of Sa'ada and several clashes between the army and followers of the cleric al-Houthi, after the rupture of the ceasefire reached the previous year. One month later, however, the spokesman of the mediating committee in charge of supervising the recent peace agreement in the province of Sa'ada, Abdu Mohammad al-Jundi, stated that 347 people had been released in compliance with the agreement and that the remaining would be released in the forthcoming days. **The agreement signed on 1st February**, with mediation by Qatar, was a renewal of that signed the previous June, which had failed after the combats resumed early in the year. According to the leader of the rebel group, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the goal of the recent agreement was to implement the points included in the first, although he also stated that the parties had agreed not to reveal the complete contents of the new documents. Despite this, the government stated that four sub-committees had been set up: one to evaluate the damage and calculate compensation (through the Qatar Red Cross Committee), a second to control the violations and guarantee compliance with the law in all districts; A third committee to receive the list of names of missing persons and people detained to be able to free them; and finally, another committee to receive the list of arms in hands of the followers of al-Houthi. In March, the representative of al-Houthi's followers, Sheikh Saleh Habra, warned that it was impossible for them to leave their mountain positions, as stipulated in point seven of the Doha agreement signed with the government, as army troops still remained in the villages and rural areas, counter to the agreement. Likewise, the president of the presidential mediating committee, Abdu Mohammad al-Jundi, which is charged with supervising compliance with the agreement, reported that the government had refused to release al-Houthi's followers for fear of getting involved in new clashes, as happened in 2006. In mid-April, local sources reported on the possibility of a resumption of fighting between the army and al-Houthi's followers owing to the rejection by the head of the Northern Command of the armed forces to implement the appendix to the agreement signed, which states that the army has to abandon houses, farms and other public areas.

In late June, several members of the Yemeni Parliament and activists issued a call to the government and al-Houthi's Shia rebel group to stop the clashes in the northern province of Sa'ada in view of the deterioration in the humanitarian situation. This statement was issued during a symposium held in the capital by the local NGO Hiwar Forum to discuss ways of building peace and the role of the mediation committees. According to the participants in the symposium, there have been seven mediating committees since 2004. Nevertheless, in mid-July **the government and al-Houthi's followers reached a ceasefire agreement**, giving rise to a curtailment in the violence despite the accusations of violations of the ceasefire by both sides. **Simultaneously, members of the Hashid and Bakil tribes were gathering together in the Amran zone in the name of a new organisation, the Popular Army, which might be preparing for skirmishes with al-Houthi's followers.** Finally, in September a bomb attack was launched against the US embassy in Sanaa, killing 16 people. The attack was attributed to al-Qaeda. In mid-October, tribal sources reported that the situation in the Sa'ada province was calm with the exception of a few local disputes which had been unleashed by the actions of the pro-governmental tribes, specifically the al-Bushr tribe, against al-Houthi's followers.

The peace process in 2009

In late January, the Saada Mediation Committee got the Yemeni authorities to allow 100 Al-Houthi followers injured in the latest clashes in the province to seek treatment in other hospitals outside of Saada. In this context, a **press communiqué from leader Abdul Malek al-Houthi** stated that 30 prisoners from the armed forces and security corps had been released and turned over to the Mediation Committee as a gesture proving the group's good intentions and as a step towards activating peace. In late February, however, the situation in the province of Saada remained tense despite the official discourse to the contrary, according to tribal sources. These sources claimed that the government had not held up its end of the agreement with Al-Houthi's followers, specifically the release of its 1,200 members in security prisons, in addition to the military and security leaders' insistence on re-stationing troops in areas where the government had agreed to remove them. In the opinion of the tribal leaders, the war might resume at any time and the situation was being aggravated by the added tension between Al-Houthi supporters and tribes that remained loyal to the government. During the third quarter, all negotiations with followers of Abdul Malik al-Houthi were permanently broken off. In September, **the government of Yemen rejected external mediation** to try to resolve the conflict that was affecting the north of the country, where the escalation in violence was triggering a severe humanitarian crisis. In declarations to the Al Jazeera television station, the Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abu Bakr al Qirbi, claimed that international intervention of this kind would only complicate the current situation. The minister expressed his support for an internal dialogue and stressed that the government was willing to talk only with whomever was willing to obey the Yemeni laws and constitution. In mid-October, the local press reported that there was local mediation underway being spearheaded by the tribal groups, and that progress towards a truce was being made. However, the verbal offensive continued in the public sphere. In early November, the clashes in the border zone between Yemen and Saudi Arabia were stepped up after the Saudi forces' intervention against the Shiite rebels who were fighting the Yemeni government forces. Saudi airplanes bombarded the positions of Al-Houthi followers. The Shiite insurgents charged discrimination, called for greater autonomy and a more prominent role for the Shiite version of Islam, and accused Saudi Arabia of supporting the Sanaa government. In turn, the Yemeni government stressed that the insurgents aimed to restore a Shiite imamate in the zone and that they were receiving support from Iran. Around 175,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. Some analysts believed that if Saudi Arabia continued its attacks against the Shiite rebels in Yemen, Iran might decide to back the insurgents, if it was not already doing so.

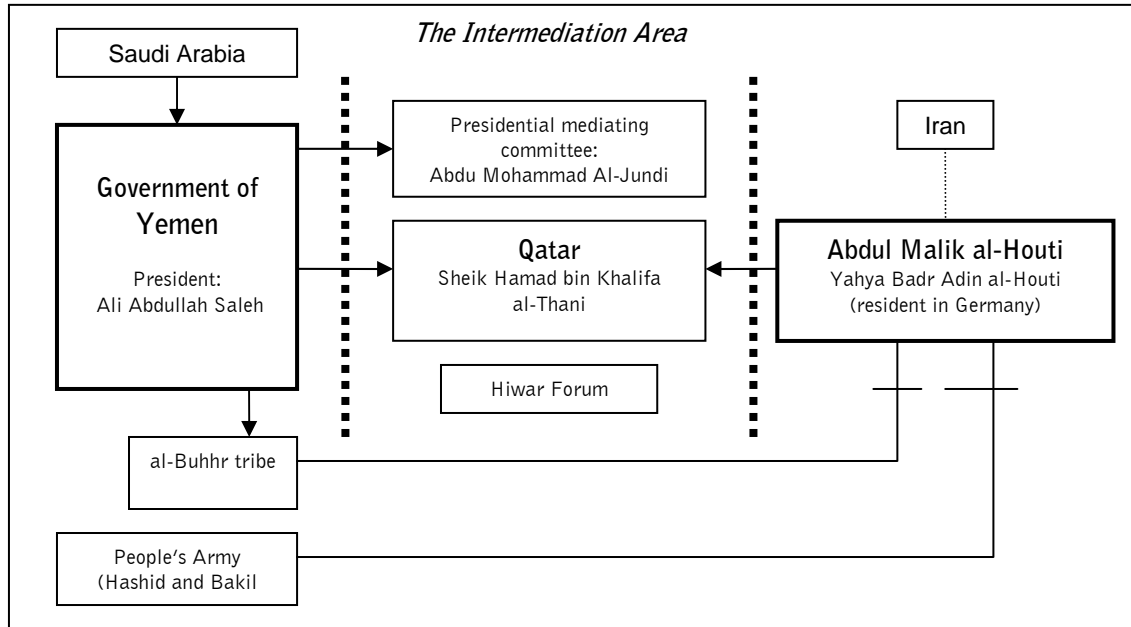
The most important events of the year

- The government of Yemen discarded continuing to negotiate with the followers of Abdul Malik al Houthi and rejected external mediation to try to resolve the conflict that was affecting the north of the country, where the escalation in violence was triggering a severe humanitarian crisis.
- The clashes in the border zone between Yemen and Saudi Arabia were stepped up after the Saudi forces' intervention against the Shiite rebels who were fighting against Yemeni government forces.

Websites of interest

- Alertnet (www.alertnet.org)
- Almotamar (www.almotamar.net/en)
- Arab News (www.arabnews.com/services)
- BBC (news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles)
- ISN Security Watch (www.isn.ethz.ch/news)
- News Yemen (www.newsyemen.net/en)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.org)

- Saba News Agency (www.sabanews.net)
- Wordpress.org (www.worldpress.org)
- Yemen Times (yementimes.com)
- Yemeni Coalition of Civil Society (www.hrinfo.net/en)



ANNEX

Appendix 1. Negotiation times in some conflicts (situation at the end of 2009))					
	Beginning of conflict	Beginning of the negotiations	Years the conflict has lasted ¹⁶	Years of negotiation ¹⁷	Years elapsed until the first negotiation
India-Pakistan	1947	1949	62	60	2
Guatemala	1960	1989	36	7	29
Colombia – ELN	1964	1991	45	18	27
Colombia – FARC	1964	1983	45	26	19
Palestine	1967	1990	42	19	23
Philippines – NPA	1969	1986	40	23	17
Northern Ireland	1970	1985	35	20	15
Philippines - MNLF	1972	1993	24	3	21
Angola	1975	1991	27	11	16
Cabinda	1975	2002	30	3	27
Western Sahara	1975	1991	34	18	16
Timor-Leste	1975	1998	24	1	23
Indonesia – GAM	1976	2000	29	5	24
Philippines - MILF	1978	1998	31	11	20
India – CPI	1980	2002	29	7	22
India – NSCN	1980	2003	29	6	23
Senegal – MFDC	1982	1991	24	13	9
Sri Lanka	1983	1983	26	25	0
Sudan – SPLA	1983	1999	22	6	16
Turkey – PKK	1986	1994	23	15	8
Uganda – LRA	1984	2009	25	0	25
Armenia-Azerb.	1991	1994	18	15	3
Sierra Leone	1991	1996	10	5	5
Somalia	1991	2000	18	9	9
Algeria	1992	1999	17	10	7
Bosnia-H.	1992	1992	3	3	0
Georgia-Abkhazia	1992	1992	17	17	0
Tajikistan	1992	1994	5	3	2
Burundi –FNL	1993	2002	13	4	9
DRC – FDLR	1994	2004	15	5	10
Nepal – CPN	1996	2003	10	3	7
Congo- Ninjas	1998	1999	5	4	1
Ethiopia-Eritrea	1998	1998	2	2	0
DR Congo	1998	1998	3	3	0
Liberia-Lurd	2000	2002	3	1	2
Côte d’Ivoire	2002	2002	4	4	0
Sudan – Darfur	2003	2003	6	6	0
Sudan – East	2005	2006	1	1	1
Kenya	2008	2008	1	1	0
Georgia-Russia	2008	2008	1	1	0

(In boldface, the conflicts that are now over)

¹⁶ Years the conflict has lasted

¹⁷ The years of negotiation include the years with interruptions.

Appendix 2. Political ideology of current armed groups		
	Beginning of conflict	Political ideology
Myanmar – KNU	1947	(irrelevant)
Colombia – FARC	1964	Communist
Colombia – ELN	1964	(Socialist)
Indonesia - TPN	1965	(irrelevant)
Thailand – PULA	1968	(irrelevant)
Philippines – NPA	1969	Maoist
Philippines – MNLF	1969	(irrelevant)
Ethiopia – OLF	1973	(irrelevant)
Angola (Cabinda) – FLEC	1975	(irrelevant)
Sahara –POLISARIO Front	1975	(irrelevant)
Philippines - MILF	1978	(irrelevant)
India – CPI	1980	Maoist
India – NSCN/IM	1980	Socialist
Senegal – MFDC	1982	(irrelevant)
Lebanon	1982	(irrelevant)
Sri Lanka – LTTE	1983	(irrelevant)
Colombia - AUC	(1983)	(irrelevant)
Turkey – PKK	1984	(irrelevant)
Ethiopia – ONLF	1984	(irrelevant)
Uganda – LRA	1986	(irrelevant)
Palestine – Hamas	1987	(irrelevant)
Myanmar – CNF	1988	(irrelevant)
India – ULFA	1989	Maoist
India – Hizbul Mujahideen	1990	(irrelevant)
Russia (Chechnya) – (several)	1991	(irrelevant)
Somalia (several)	1991	(irrelevant)
Philippines – Abu Sayyaff	1991	(irrelevant)
Algeria – GSPC (AQMI)	1992	(irrelevant)
India – NDFB	1992	(irrelevant)
Burundi –FNL	1993	(irrelevant)
DRC – Mai Mai	1993	(irrelevant)
DRC – FDLR	1994	(irrelevant)
Afghanistan – Taliban	2001	(irrelevant)
Iraq – (several)	2003	(irrelevant)
Sudan – SLA / JEM	2003	(irrelevant)
Nigeria – MEND	2004	(irrelevant)
Nepal – JTMM	2005	Maoist
Chad – FUC	2004	(irrelevant)
Central African Republic - APDR	2005	(irrelevant)
Central African Republic - UFR	2005	(irrelevant)
Sudan – Eastern Front	2005	(irrelevant)
Sudan – NRF	2006	(irrelevant)
DR Congo – CNDP	2006	(irrelevant)
Mali – ATNM	2007	(irrelevant)
Niger – MNJ	2007	(irrelevant)

Note: We use the term “irrelevant” to indicate that the groups mentioned do not act so much based on a specific political ideology as on aspirations for political or territorial domination, on religious beliefs or on other reasons. Of the 45 groups indicated, only 7 (15%) have a clear political ideology.

Appendix 3. Groups on the EU terrorist list (situation at 15 June 2009)									
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Groups	13	33	33	36	48	51	48	48	47
entries	13	20	0	3	13	3	0	0	0
Incoming groups	Continuity IRA (CIRA) ETA GRAPO Hamas-Izz al Din al-Qassem Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) Orange Volunteers Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Real IRA Read Hand Defenders (RDH) Epanastakiti Pirines Dekati Evdomi Noemvri Epanastatikos Laikos Agonas Ulster Defence Association (UDA/UFF)	Al-Tafkir y al-Hijra New People's Army Organización Abu Nidal (ANO) Brigades Martyrs of AlAqsa Aum Shinrikyo Babbar Khalsa Gama'a al Islamiyya (Askatasuna) (as part of ETA) Holy Land Foundat. ISYF (Juventud Sikh) Kahane Chai (Kaeh) PKK Lashkar e Tayyaba Organisation Muyahidines Jalk Liberation Front Palestine (PLF) Popular Front Liberation Palestine FPLP-Commando Gen. FARC DHKP/C Sendero Luminoso AUC	(Batasuna) (such as part of ETA)	IBDA-C ELN Stichting Al Aqsa	(Communist Party of the Philippines as part of the NPA) Al-Aqsa e.V. Nuclei Territoriali Antiimperialisti Cooperativa Artigiana Fuoco ed Affini Nuclei Armati Comunismo CCCCC (Italia) Solidarietà Internazionale Brigate Rosse per la Costruzione del P.Comunista Combattente Brigata XX Luglio Nucleo di Iniziativa Proletaria Rivoluzionaria Nuclei di Iniziativa Proletaria Federazione Anarchica Informale Hizbul Muyahidines Khalistan Zindabad Force	LTTE Hofstad-groep TAK			
Outgoing groups		0	0	0	1 (Lashkar and Tayyaba, to be added to the UN terrorist list)	0	3 Nucleo di Iniziativa Proletaria Rivoluzionaria Nuclei di Iniziativa Proletaria Nuclei Territoriali Antiimperialisti	0	1 Mujahed-e Khalq Organisation

Countries with groups on the EU list of terrorists

	TOTAL 2009	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Palestine	9	2	5	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Italy	7	-	-	-	-	10	-	(-3)	-	-
Northern Ireland	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
India	4		2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Turkey	4	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Colombia	3	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Greece	(2)	3	-	-	-	-	(-1)	-	-	-
Spain	2	2	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	*
Pakistan (**)	(1)	-	1	-	-	(-1)	-	-	-	-
Philippines	1	-	1	-	-	*	-	-	-	-
(Egypt)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peru	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middle East	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Japan	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asia	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Israel	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iran	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka 163	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Iran	0	-	1		-	-	-	-	-	-1
Total	47	13	20	0	3	12	3	0	0	0

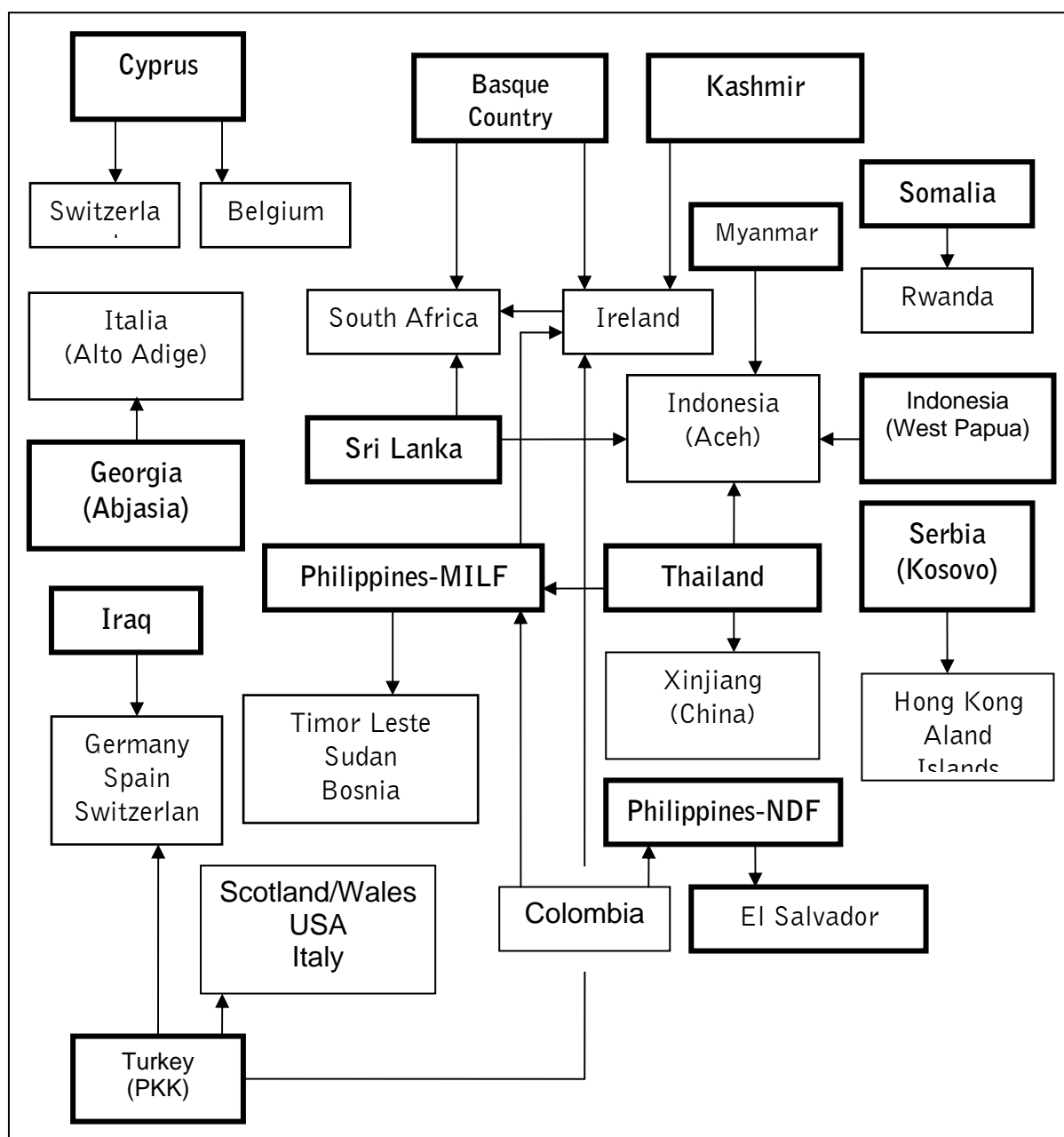
(*) Inclusion of a movement similar to a group already listed.

(**) In mid-2005, the EU withdrew the Pakistani group Lashkar e Tayyaba (LET) from its lists, as the United Nations included the group on its list of entities associated with Al-Qaeda.

Appendix 4. Deaths in the conflicts analysed		
+ 1,000,000	1	DR Congo
200,000 – 1,000,000	3	Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), Burundi
100,000 – 200,000	3	Colombia, Philippines, Iraq
50,000 – 100,000	3	Ethiopia-Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan
25,000 – 50,000	4	Angola (Cabinda), Uganda, India-Pakistan (Kashmir), Armenia-Azerbaijan, Turkey (Kurdistan)
10,000 – 25,000	2	Myanmar, Indonesia (Western Papua)
- 10,000	19	, Niger, Nigeria (Delta), Senegal (Casamance), Ethiopia (Ogaden), Chad, Central African Republic, Mali, Western Sahara, India, Nepal (Terai), Pakistan, China (Tibet), Thailand (South), Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Israel-Palestine, Israel-Syria, Lebanon, Yemen
Total	35	

Appendix 5. Ranking of the countries analysed on the Human Development Index in 2007 (for a total (of 182) countries)		
1 to 25	0	
26 to 50	2	Cyprus, Israel
51 to 75	1	Kosovo
76 to 100	8	Colombia, China, Thailand, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lebanon
101 to 125	6	Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia, Moldova, Palestine, Syria
126 to 150	8	Sudan, Sahara, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar, Yemen
151 to 182	12	Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Burundi, Chad, R. Central Africa, DR Congo, Uganda, Afghanistan
Total	37	

Appendix 6. 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 aspects of all of them that explain why they attract attention, because of their methodology, their goals or for other reasons. This table illustrates processes in which the stakeholders, either governmental or armed actors, have studied, observed or travelled to other regions to learn firsthand about what they did to develop their process, thus creating interesting mirrors where they could find inspiration when dealing with their own difficulties.

Appendix 7. Conflicts, peace processes and resolutions of the Security Council in 2009		
Mali		
Niger		
Nigeria (Niger Delta)		
Djibouti-Eritrea	1862 – 1907 -	
Ethiopia-Eritrea		
Ethiopia (Ogaden)		
Somalia	1863 – 1872 – 1897 – 1907 -	
Sudan (Darfur)	1870 – 1881 – 1891 -	
Sudan (South)		
Burundi (FLN)	1902 -	
Chad	1861 -	
CAR	1861 -	
DR Congo (East)	1896 – 1906 -	
Uganda		
Algeria		
Western Sahara	1871 -	
Colombia		
Afghanistan	1868 – 1890 -	
India		
India-Pakistan (Kashmir)		
Nepal (Terai)		
Pakistan		
Sri Lanka		
China (Tibet)		
Philippines		
Indonesia (Western Papua)		
Myanmar		
Thailand (South)		
Cyprus	1873 -	
Kosovo		
Turkey (PKK)		
Armenia-Azerbaijan		
Georgia	1866 -	
Moldova (Transdnistria)		
Russia (Chechnya)		
Russia (Ingushetia)		
Iraq	1883 – 1905 -	
Israel-Palestine	1860 -	
Israel-Syria		
Lebanon	1875 - 1884 – 1899 -	
Yemen		
Total cases: (41 countries)	(21 resolutions)	

In 2009, the United Nations Security Council approved 48 resolutions, 24 of which (around 50%) were related to the countries in conflict or with peace processes examined in this yearbook. However, it is worth pointing out that of the 25 cases on the table (countries in bold), the majority of them with negotiations underway, only 8 (32%) received the attention of the Security Council via some type of resolution.

Appendix 8. United Nations Peacebuilding Committees

The Commission for the Consolidation of Peace is a intergovernmental assessment body of the United Nations that supports peace efforts in countries in which conflicts arise and is added as a fundamental element to the capacity for promoting peace on a large scale among the international community.

The Commission for the Consolidation of Peace has as its principal purpose: 1) Group together all the agents interested in uniting resources, such as donors and international financial institutions, the national governments and the countries that contribute contingents; 2) channel resources and 3) propose integrated strategies for the consolidation of peace and recovery following conflicts, and where necessary, highlight any deficiencies that may threaten peace.

In simultaneous resolutions through which the General Assembly and the Security Council established the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace also provided for the establishment of a Peace and a Support Office for the Consolidation of Peace, which jointly make up the structure of the United Nations for the consolidation of peace.

There are currently Commissions in four African countries: Burundi (10-2006), Sierra Leone (10-2006), Guinea Bissau (1-2008) and the Central African Republic)

Source: United Nations (www.un.org/spanish/peace/peacebuilding/pbc-countrymtgs.shtml)

Appendix 9. Websites of interest

- Alertnet (www.alertnet.org)
- Armed Conflict Database (acd.iiss.org)
- Berghof Research Center (www.berghof-center.org)
- 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 (www.konfliktbarometer.de)
- 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)
- Escola de Cultura de Pau (www.escolapau.org)
- European Centre for Conflict Prevention (www.conflict-prevention.net)
- FEWER (www.fewer.org)
- FriEnt (www.frient.de)
- German Working Group on Development and Peace (www.frient.de)
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (www.gppac.org)
- Incore (www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries)
- International Alert (www.international-alert.org)
- International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
- International Peace Academy (www.ipacademy.org)
- Kreddha (www.kreddha.org)
- Naciones Unidas (www.un.org)
- Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre (www.peacebuilding.no)
- Peace and Justice Update (peace.sandiego.edu/reports/updates.html#bottom)
- Peace Negotiations Watch (www.publiinternationallaw.org)
- People Building Peace (www.peoplebuildingpeace.org)
- PRIO (www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict/current)
- Project Ploughshares (www.ploughshares.ca)
- Public International Law & Policy Group (www.publicinternationallaw.org)
- Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int)
- Responding to Conflict (www.respond.org)
- SIPRI (www.sipri.se)
- Swiss Peace (www.swisspeace.org/fast)
- The Conflict Resolution Information Source (www.crimfo.org)
- The Joan B. Kroc Institute (kroc.nd.edu)
- Today's Mediation News (www.crimfo.org/news_feeds/v2_negotiation.cfm)
- United States Institute of Peace (www.usip.org/library/pa.html)
- UN Peacemaker (peacemaker.unlb.org)
- Uppsala University (www.ucdp.uu.se)
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (www.wilsoncenter.org)

Appendix 10. School for a Culture of Peace

The School for a Culture of Peace (*Escola de Cultura de Pau*) was created in 1999 with the purpose of organising a variety of academic and research activities related to the culture of peace, conflict prevention and transformation, disarmament and promoting human rights.

The *School* is principally financed by the government of Catalonia through the Catalan Development Cooperation Agency. It also receives support from other departments within the Generalitat de Catalunya, and from town halls, foundations and other entities. The *School* is run by Vicenç Fisas, who holds the UNESCO Chair on Peace and Human Rights at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

The main activities held by the *School for a Culture of Peace* include the following:

- The post-graduate diploma in the Culture of Peace (post-degree programme consisting of 230 classroom hours and 60 places).
- Elective subjects: "Peace culture and conflict management" and "Educating for peace and in conflicts".
- **Peace Processes Programme**, which monitors and analyses the different countries with peace processes or formalised negotiations underway, as well as those countries with negotiations still in the exploratory phase. It includes awareness-raising initiatives and intervention in conflicts to facilitate dialogue amongst the actors in a conflict.
- **The Human Rights Programme**, which monitors the international status of human rights and especially corporate social responsibility and transitional justice.
- **The Education for Peace Programme**. The team in this programme strives to promote and develop the knowledge, values and skills for Education for Peace.
- **The Disarmament and Human Security Programme**, which works with different issues in the area of disarmament, with special emphasis on micro-disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes (DDR) for combatants, and monitoring weapons exports.
- **Programme on Conflicts and Peace-building**, a programme that monitors international events related to armed conflicts, situations of tension, humanitarian crises and the gender dimension in peace-building on a daily basis in order to draw up the annual report Alert!, bimonthly reports and quarterly publications.
- **Post-war Rehabilitation Programme** through which international aid for peace-building in warlike and post-war situations is monitored and analysed.
- **The Arts and Peace Programme**, which analyses the contributions that music and the other arts can make towards peace-building.

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This fifth edition of the **Yearbook on Peace Processes** the conflicts in which negotiations are being held to reach a peace agreement are analysed, regardless of whether these negotiations are formalised, are in the exploratory phases, are bearing fruit or, to the contrary, are stalled or enmeshed in crisis. It also analyses certain cases in which the negotiations or explorations are partial, that is, they do not encompass all the armed groups present in the country (as is the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, for example). The majority of the negotiations are linked to armed conflicts, but other situations are also analysed in which despite the fact that there are currently no armed clashes taking place, the parties have yet to reach a permanent agreement to put an end to the hostilities and pending disputes. Thus, the negotiations are relevant for preventing the beginning or resurgence of new armed confrontations.

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